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# LIFE EXPERIENCE CREDIT

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Through Portfolio Development



**NEW HOPE AND LIFE SCHOOL OF RELIGION THEOLOGY & SEMINARY**

## Establishing Life Experience Credit Through Portfolio Development

All of us gain experiences as we walk through life, and very often we learn important lessons through these experiences. It may be that you have done this, and that the lessons you have learned and the skills you have developed correspond to those you would have received in a college level course. If you think this may be the case, you can pursue the demonstration of this learning and transfer of it by meeting with your Dean or Faculty Advisor.

NHL recognizes experiential learning generally to be at least as valid as classroom instruction, and in some cases even superior. Classroom learning often begins with receiving information through lectures or reading, assimilating and organizing that information into principles, and then applying the principles to specific situations. In experiential learning, one begins by acting and observing, then understanding the effects of his action in specific circumstances. From that a general principle is developed, which can then be applied to a new set of circumstances.

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### The Priority of “Life as a Teacher” in the Bible

God places a much higher value on life as a teacher than is done in much of Western education. Many accrediting boards actually down-play the experiences of life as being subordinate and inferior to actual classroom learning. We see God doing the exact opposite in Scripture.

Paul was full of classroom instruction when God revealed Himself on the Damascus road and then took him into seclusion in Arabia for three years to learn directly from him (Galatians 1:15-18).

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for 40 days to be tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1-14). He then returned “in the power of the Spirit” to begin His public ministry.

God took Moses to the backside of a wilderness for 40 years of preparation so he could be sufficiently trained to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 2 -4).

Jesus called the twelve disciples to “be with Him”, to be mentored by Him, and thus equipped to be world-changers (Luke 6:12-19). His classroom was on the streets and in the hills. The twelve learned by watching Jesus minister and ministering along with Him. The Master Teacher chose this teaching methodology rather than sitting them down in a classroom to instruct them.

Perhaps Western education needs to re-adjust itself. Perhaps it needs to come to **value life as a teacher** as Jesus, God, and the Bible value the learning which comes from life.

At New Hope And Life School of Religion Theology & Seminary, we believe that the lessons one learns from life are the truest and often most valuable and enriching lessons one will ever

receive. They are often far superior, far deeper, and far more life-changing than what is learned in the classroom. Many who have both walked the road of life and tasted of the classroom would vouch for this truth. Once you leave the classroom life's lessons begin.

That is not to say that all people learn from experiences they have. The Israelites in the wilderness did not learn from life, and so they died in the wilderness. It is tragic to live and not learn from what life is saying to you.

We highly honor the wisdom and knowledge that has come through the experiences of life. We are more than pleased to give credit for the education you have received simply by living an active life.

## Basic Policies Which Guide The Establishment of Life Experience Credit

1. Credit is awarded for experience that **results in learning**.
2. The Learning should be college level. For New Hope And Life School of Religion Theology & Seminary, that means the learning provided a balance academic insights, attitudinal changes, and behavioral out-workings.
3. Credit cannot be given twice for the same learning experience.
4. If a student wants to appeal the decision of how much credit was awarded (or not awarded), he or she may do so. In such a case, the Dean of Faculty Instructor will take the documentation to two additional qualified instructors and together as a team they will reach an agreement on the credits to be awarded. This decision will be final and binding.
5. A fee of \$20.00 per credit will charged for all life experience credits earned.
6. **Associates Degrees & Bachelor Degrees** tend to deal with general studies. Therefore, Life Experience credits applied to undergraduate degrees may come from any and all life learning experiences.
7. **Graduate-level Degrees (Masters & Doctoral)** involve specialized training, so any Life Experience credits applied to graduate degrees must be from actual training in the specialized area which relates to the degree title being awarded. This means *actual training seminars and courses attended, and books read, not just the fact that you worked in the area.*

## Steps In Establishing Life Experience Credit

1. **Contact the Dean.** Develop the “large picture” by discussing your educational goals, what courses are being transferred in from other institutions, and what courses you and your advisor feel strongly that you really need to take in order to gain the experience the course offers because you do not have these experiences in your life. This information may be furnished by completing the form entitled “New Student Questionnaire” from the Dean of Each Degree Level.
2. You should also include a **brief resume** (one page is sufficient) which briefly lists your life’s activities, experiences, and accomplishments. In addition to listing formal education received and jobs held, include apprenticeship training, ministry vocations, mission trips, specialized training seminars attended (e.g. Youth Conflicts Seminar, worship symposiums, conferences, etc.), lists of sermons preached...
3. **Develop a “Life Experience Portfolio”** which, when completed, is submitted to your Dean for Credit evaluation.

4. **NOTE: The following skills are required of all New Hope And Life School of Religion Theology & Seminary Graduates.**

Although students may demonstrate life experience for many courses, there are a number of core life skills which each student must be able to model and demonstrate in order to graduate. These skills may come from either courses taken or from life experience, however one way or the other, **they must be present in the students life.** No student will be allowed to graduate who cannot demonstrate the following skills.

- Thorough working knowledge of the Bible
- Ability to apply biblical principles to their area of specialty.
- Ability to hear the voice of God and live out of it.
- Ability to live in the Spirit and anointing of God.
- Ability to worship in Spirit and truth.
- Ability to hear God through their dreams.
- Ability to walk in financial freedom.
- Commitment to walking in principles of health.
- Ability to communicate well with people.
- Ability to model close caring relationships.
- Ability to model principles of success in their chosen field.

5. Make your portfolio development a **growing experience.**

Providing the following documents will prove to be a **growing experience for you** as you remember and gather into one place the major lessons God has taught you throughout your lifetime. Many people have never experienced the blessing of prayerfully reflecting on their life's experiences and writing out the insights received. Many great spiritual leaders in history have kept journals throughout their lives. Ask God to grant you revelations and understanding as you write the following reports. Make this a time of spiritual insight and revelation as you reminisce about your life's story under the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Relax and make this a heart activity as well as a mind activity. As you are at rest, you will find memories and revelation pouring forth from your heart and spirit. Don't let this be busy work. Make it a time of spiritual in-gathering.

## How To Develop a Life Experience Portfolio Which Properly Documents Life's Learning Experiences

Include the following information in a typed report:

1. Jobs (with title), which I held. Length of time I held them. Average hours per week involved in the job. Total estimated number of hours I spent. Job responsibilities included...Skills and lessons I learned were... (Complete these steps for EACH job or ministry you have performed).

Two examples are below:

- **Sunday School Teacher of teenagers for three years at Calvary Church (1996-1998)**

Estimated hours involved – 3 hours per week = 300 hours. Lessons learned: how to hold a class (s) attention, how to impart life change. Conflict resolution skills, covered by the book of Acts in depth, covered dating and marriage in depth.

- **Receptionist in office for three years at Harpers Inc. (1997-2000)**

Estimated hours involved – 40 hours per week = 6000 hours. Lessons learned: typing, computer skills with Microsoft Word, Access and Power Point, filing, telephone conversation skills, and management of two other employees.

2. Conferences I have attended...title...hours involved...lessons learned.
3. Conferences I have led...title...hours involved...lessons learned.
4. Sermons I have preached...titles
5. Books I have read...listed by title and author with page number.
6. Other ministry activities I have been involved in...description of them, length of time and lessons learned.
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Provide 3<sup>rd</sup> party documentation whenever possible to verify the above activities. This could include Newspaper articles, church bulletins, certificates, etc. Provide a couple of character endorsements from those whom you have worked under.

The following rule of thumb is used in determining how many life experience credits to award for an experience. One credit can be awarded for every 10 hours of instruction plus 20 hours of experience or homework (i.e. total of 30 hours).

You will be billed **\$20.00** for each credit hour awarded. Partial payment of **\$100** may be requested up front to reimburse the reviewer for time spent examining your portfolio.

Early payment does not mean credit will be automatically awarded. However, if you have discussed the issues thoroughly with the Dean before you begin your portfolio development, you should be able to satisfactorily document those experiences and earn appropriate credits.

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## **What to Include in Each of the Sections of Your Life Experience Portfolio**

### **Section One – Portfolio Requirements**

Put all instructions you receive from the Dean or your Instructor in this section.

### **Section Two – Resume/Life Overview**

Your one-to five-page resume goes in this section.

THIS MUST FOLLOW THE PATTERN PROVIDED IN THE SECTION ENTITLED “How to Develop a Life Experience Portfolio Which Properly Documents Life’s Learning Experiences” on page 3.

### **Section Three – Original Transcripts**

All original transcripts go in this section.

### **Section Four – Documentation of Courses, Practica & Internship**

Life Experience Portfolio report with accompanying letters of endorsement from your various supervisors, leaders, etc. go in this section.

### **Section Five – Additional evidences**

This can include promotional brochures which show what you have created or what you do, licenses and certificates you have received, samples of your achievements, books you have written, items you have created, etc.

Complete and include in this section the “**Supervisors’ Reports**” (found at the close of this section) from three people for whom you have worked. This form may be duplicated.

# New Student Questionnaire – From Dean of Students

This form is to be completed by students who are seeking to transfer in life experience credits or transcripts from other colleges or Bible schools.

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax** \_\_\_\_\_

Our desire is to work with students in helping them personalize a curriculum package which best trains them to fulfill their God-given destiny. In doing this, we want to start with the call of God upon their lives, the gifts He has given them and the experiences they already have had. We will then merge a complementary curriculum to this.

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In order to help us more effectively develop the curriculum program that will best meet your needs, please answer the following questions.

1. State briefly your major goals and objectives in gaining a degree from New Hope And Life School of Religion Theology & Seminary. What is it God is calling you to become as a result of your training with us? What vocation is He calling you into? What kind of work do you want to do? How will this fulfill your deepest heart's desires and motivations? What would you consider as "success" for yourself in your chosen area?



2. If you are applying for Life Experience Credit, please do the following: On one or two typed pages, give a very **brief** overview of the experiences you have had which you feel could be considered for Life Experience Credit. We will go into **further detail concerning these at a LATER time**. This is only to be a brief 1-2 page overview. This will give the Dean of Students the **big pictures** of your life's experiences, so that he or she can begin to discern how to place your life experiences properly for college credit. He will then contact you to discuss how to best fit all your experiences together. Next he or she will send to you a Life Experience Portfolio Notebook, where you will document in detail the experiences you have had, and validate them for college credits. You will then return this completed notebook to the Dean for final assessment.

3. Please mark the following courses which you feel you would not necessarily need to take because of your life experiences or because of transcripts you have from previous schooling. Code each course as follows:

"Life" = I believe I have learned this through life experiences

"Transfers" = Transfer in from transcripts from earlier schooling

"Take" = I would like to take this course in order to master the skills and knowledge taught in this course.