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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many students  
2       enrolled in public institutions of higher education possess  
3       college-level knowledge and skills acquired through military  
4       service, workforce training, apprenticeships, professional  
5       certifications, and other structured learning experiences  
6       outside of traditional classrooms.

7       The legislature further finds that inconsistent and opaque  
8       practices for evaluating prior learning may delay degree  
9       completion, increase student costs, and create inequities among  
10      similarly situated students.

11      The legislature further finds that appropriate recognition  
12      of prior learning may reduce time to degree, lower educational  
13      costs, and support workforce development by enabling students,  
14      including working adults and veterans, to efficiently complete  
15      certificates and degrees aligned with Hawaii's workforce needs.

16      The purpose of this Act is to authorize the university of  
17      Hawaii to establish a systemwide framework for the assessment



1 and award of academic credit for prior learning, while  
2 preserving faculty authority over academic standards and campus  
3 autonomy over implementation.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
6 and to read as follows:

7 "§304A- Prior learning assessment framework. (a) The  
8 university of Hawaii shall establish a systemwide framework to  
9 guide the assessment of prior learning for the purpose of  
10 awarding academic credit, where appropriate, toward certificates  
11 or degrees offered by the university.

12 (b) The framework shall:

13 (1) Be developed in consultation with faculty governance  
14 bodies and academic leadership across the university  
15 system;

16 (2) Identify categories of prior learning that may be  
17 eligible for assessment, which may include but are not  
18 limited to:

19 (A) Military education and training;

20 (B) Industry-recognized credentials or  
21 certifications;



1        (C) Registered apprenticeships or workforce training  
2        programs;

3        (D) Credit-by-examination or challenge examinations;  
4        and

5        (E) Portfolio-based assessments evaluated by  
6        qualified faculty;

7        (3) Establish principles to ensure that any academic  
8        credit awarded for prior learning reflects college-  
9        level learning outcomes equivalent to those required  
10       for credit-bearing coursework;

11       (4) Preserve faculty authority over curriculum, academic  
12       standards, and the evaluation of prior learning;

13       (5) Permit campuses and academic programs to determine how  
14       awarded credit may apply toward degree or certificate  
15       requirements, including limitations on applicability  
16       to major, elective, or general education requirements;

17       (6) Promote transparency and consistency in prior learning  
18       assessment practices across campuses, to the extent  
19       practicable, including through the publication of  
20       campus level policies or guidance regarding prior  
21       learning assessment; and



(7) Include publicly available guidance describing the general processes, assessment methods, and categories of prior learning through which students may seek academic credit.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to:

(1) Require the award of academic credit for any particular form of prior learning;

(2) Require uniform acceptance of prior learning credit across campuses or programs;

(3) Alter admissions standards or degree requirements; or

(4) Limit the authority of faculty to determine academic rigor and equivalency.

(d) The university may implement the framework in phases or through pilot programs, as determined appropriate by the university, including in academic or workforce aligned programs where prior learning assessment may most effectively support student completion."

SECTION 3. No later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2028, the university of Hawaii shall submit a report to the legislature describing:



- 1           (1) The status of the prior learning assessment framework  
2           established pursuant to section 304A-       , Hawaii  
3           Revised Statutes;
- 4           (2) The categories of prior learning assessed, and the  
5           general types of academic credit awarded;
- 6           (3) Aggregate data on student participation and outcomes,  
7           including the number of students assessed, general  
8           categories of prior learning evaluated, the  
9           approximate number of academic credits awarded, and  
10          impacts on time-to-degree, where available;
- 11          (4) Recommendations for any proposed legislation; and
- 12          (5) Any identified implementation challenges or barriers,  
13          and recommendations to improve access, consistency, or  
14          effectiveness of prior learning assessment.
- 15   The report shall not include personally identifiable student  
16   information.

17       SECTION 4. In codifying the new sections added by section  
18   2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute  
19   appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating  
20   the new sections in this Act.

21       SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. J.", written over a horizontal line.

JAN 28 2026



# H.B. NO. 2577

**Report Title:**

Higher Education; Credit Transfer

**Description:**

Establishes a statewide framework for the assessment and the award of academic credit for prior learning acquired through military service, workforce training, apprenticeships, professional certifications, and other structured learning experiences outside of traditional classrooms.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

