Credit for Prior Learning Policy

Institutions may offer credit for prior learning under the conditions enumerated below. This policy is designed for institution-based assessment and crediting processes and does not apply to credit for prior learning practices that take place outside of an institution, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), DSST, Advanced Placement, or American Council on Education (ACE) evaluations of workforce-acquired learning, where recommended credit may be transferred in (see the Transfer of Credit Policy regarding Validation of Extra-Institutional and Experiential Learning).

DEFINITIONS

Credit for Prior Learning

Credit for prior learning is a practice used by institutions, typically at or near the time of a student’s enrollment, to recognize or award credit for demonstrated college-level learning gained in settings outside of higher education.

Prior Learning Assessment

Prior learning assessment is one type of credit for prior learning practice: “the evaluation and assessment of an individual’s life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. Prior learning assessment is often applied to military and work experience, as well as community service, informal online learning, and other [college-level] learning acquired outside traditional academic institutions” (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning).

GUIDELINES

1. Credit may be awarded for no more than 25% of the credits required for a degree.
2. Credit is awarded only for documented and assessed college-level learning that ties the student’s prior experience(s) to the content of the relevant academic field or discipline at the appropriate level of learning.
3. Credit is awarded only in areas which fall within the regular curricular offerings of the institution.
4. Institutions that use portfolios, documentation, and interviews in lieu of examinations demonstrate that the evidence of learning provided by the student provides academic assurances of equivalency to credit earned by traditional means.
5. Assessment should be focused on student learning and based on clearly-articulated standards and criteria at an acceptable level of learning.
6. No assurances are made in advance regarding the number of credits a student may earn.
7. Credit is awarded only by faculty with appropriate subject matter expertise and academic qualifications. The faculty member ensures that assessment procedures are appropriate for the credit awarded.
8. Credit is only awarded to matriculated students and is identified on the student’s transcript as credit for prior learning. The institution is prepared, on request, to furnish documentation describing the
learning that was assessed, how such learning was evaluated, and the basis on which such credit was awarded.

9. Steps are taken to ensure that credit for prior learning does not duplicate credit already awarded or remaining courses planned for the student’s academic program.

10. Policies and procedures for assessing and awarding credit for prior learning (including provisions for appeals) are adopted, transparently described in appropriate institutional publications, and reviewed at regular intervals.

11. Fees charged are realistically related to the cost of the assessments. Adequate precautions are provided to ensure that payment of fees does not influence the award of credit.

Approved by the Commission, November 2015