



Policy Name: Credit for Prior Learning

Custodian of Policy: Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date of Adoption: August 8, 2014

Date of Next Review: September 2032

POLICY:

Section 1: Standards and Criteria

- Minnesota State University, Mankato makes no promises to prospective students regarding the awarding of credit for prior learning until an evaluation has been conducted.
- Minnesota State University, Mankato will award credit for prior learning consistent with University residency and graduation requirements.
 - Credits assessed through internal assessment will count toward University residency credit requirements.
 - Credit earned through external assessments (national standardized exams, military credit, corporate training, and other forms of third-party assessments) will not count toward University residency credit requirements.
- Credit for prior learning credit may not be repeated for the same course.
- An official grade of Pass will be posted on the transcript. Conventional letter grades will not be used. The transcript will not indicate an unsuccessful attempt to earn credit for prior learning.
- To be eligible to earn credit for prior learning, a student must be enrolled and registered at Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- Graduate credit can only be awarded if the student has already completed a bachelor's degree.
- A student cannot be enrolled in, or have already successfully completed, the course for which prior learning credit is being requested.

Section 2: Methods of Assessment

University credit will be granted for achievement of documented, authenticated, demonstrated university-level outcomes, and not for experience alone. Credit will be

awarded based on a method of prior learning demonstrated by the student. All credit for prior learning shall be granted according to the standards and equivalencies of the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), or the equivalent.

For undergraduate students, prior learning can be evaluated using one or more of the following methods:

External Assessments

- National examinations such as Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP), Excelsior examinations, the New York University Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP) examinations, the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessments, and the DANTES subject standardized tests (DSST).
- Military Course Completion using the American Council on Education (ACE) Guidelines.
- Project Lead the Way (PLTW).

Internal Assessments

- Course-specific assessments developed and evaluated by the appropriate academic department, consistent with Minnesota State Board of Trustees policy.
- Internal assessments may include oral interview, credit by exam, portfolio review, written research paper, research project evaluation, skills demonstration, or creative process demonstration. Such assessments must be in accordance with relevant accreditation guidelines and/or other appropriate external requirements.

For graduate students, prior learning can be evaluated only using the course specific assessment of credit by examination. Credit by examination must be approved by the course instructor, academic department, academic dean, and graduate dean, and be consistent with Minnesota State Board of Trustee policy. Assessments must be made in accordance with relevant accreditation guidelines and/or other appropriate external requirements.

Section 3: Student Appeals

Student appeals for credit for prior learning follow the procedure defined in the University's Grade Appeal policy.

Section 4: Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy require the approval of the Dean of the college in which the credit is being awarded and the Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs (or their designee).

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide all students at Minnesota State University, Mankato with opportunities to obtain college credit for prior undergraduate or graduate-level learning acquired through noncredit or experiential settings. Students must demonstrate prior undergraduate or graduate-level learning according to the procedures established for evaluating and granting credit for such learning.

The authority for this policy shall be [Minnesota State Board Policy 3.35 \(Credit for Prior Learning\)](#), [Minnesota State Procedures 3.35.1 \(Credit for Prior Learning - External Assessments\)](#) and [3.35.2 \(Credit for Prior Learning - Internal Assessments\)](#), [Minnesota State Policy 3.21 \(Undergraduate Course and Credit Transfer and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum\)](#), [Minnesota State Procedure 3.21.1 \(Transfer of Undergraduate Courses, Credit, Associate Degrees, and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum\)](#), and the [IFO Minnesota State Master Agreement](#). The university shall grant credit for prior learning for a veteran's military training or service in compliance with [Minnesota statute 197.775, Subd.2 Higher Education Fairness](#).

Definitions

American Council on Education (ACE)

The American Council on Education is a coordinating body for the nation's higher education institutions. ACE provides a third-party evaluation of student learning accomplished through workplace, military courses and occupations, corporate training, or other types of nontraditional forms of training taken outside traditional degree programs. ACE provides recommendations for the number of credits that colleges and universities may award.

Certification

A credential earned by an individual through various study, training and assessment programs that are sponsored by educational, community or work-based, professional or industry agencies or organizations, and recognized as a standard in the related field. This may include but is not limited to assessment that is governed by a board and determined to meet specific competencies.

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

CAEL is a national nonprofit organization that works at all levels within the higher education, public, and private sectors to make it easier for people to get the education and training they need. CAEL is a leader in linking learning and work to enhance learning opportunities for adults around the world.

Credit by Exam

Course-specific examinations that assess prior learning and are developed by college or university faculty or college or university departments.

Credit for Prior Learning

Academic credit awarded for demonstrated college and university-level learning gained through learning experiences outside of the college or university classroom, assessed by academically sound and rigorous processes.

External Assessments

Assessment methods that could result in credit for prior learning achieved and assessed through a nationally recognized third-party assessment organization, accredited postsecondary institution, or non-credit instruction. Students demonstrate a level of proficiency that is recognized through curriculum, instruction, program, or a standardized exam. CPL external assessment types may include, but are not limited to, AP, IB, CLEP, and other national standardized assessments, world languages seals and certificates, industry recognized credentials, licenses, and certifications, and non-credit instruction in programs such as registered apprenticeships, work-based training, continuing education, and customized training. For military training and occupations, see System [Procedure 3.35.3 Military Training and Military Occupations](#).

Internal Assessments

Assessment methods and processes used by Minnesota State University, Mankato faculty members to assess students' demonstrated learning and/or competence. Such assessments determine competence-to-credit comparability, course-equivalency or individualized subject status, and application to degree requirements or electives. CPL internal assessment types may include, but are not limited to, portfolio assessment, interview, skills and/or knowledge demonstration, individualized subject-area assessment, group or seminar assessment, credit by exam, and competency-based assessment.

Military Occupational Training

Military occupational training provides an opportunity for an active member of the military or a veteran of the armed forces to have their occupational training aligned with college level learning.

National Exams

Standardized examinations administered and scored by nationally recognized third-party assessment organizations that are criterion referenced including, but are not limited to Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations, Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP), Excelsior examinations, New York University Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP) examinations, The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessments, and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST).

Prior Learning

Prior learning is a term that educators use to describe learning that a person acquires outside a traditional academic environment. This learning may have been acquired through work experience, employer training programs, independent study, non-credit courses, volunteer or community service, travel, or non-college courses or seminars.

Prior Learning Portfolio Assessment

A process that provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their college level learning through the completion of a portfolio evaluated by a college or university faculty member to determine credit equivalence.

Summary of Changes: Expanded CPL opportunities to graduate students. Defined external and internal assessments of prior learning.

Rationale:

History of Revisions:

Effective Date of Last Review: August 1, 2026

Date of Last Review: September 2025

Revisions Made:

Enter revisions here.

References:

Vice President's Recommendation

President's Approval