



Procedure Name: Credit for Prior Learning

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

Date of Adoption: August 8, 2014

Date of Next Review: September 2032

PROCEDURE

External Assessments of Prior Learning

1. Advanced Placement (AP)

The AP Program is sponsored by the College Entrance Examination Board and administered by Educational Testing Services (ETS). AP allows secondary students to participate in college-level course work while in high school. Students may receive credit, advanced placement, or both from colleges and universities that participate in the AP program. AP examinations are scored on a 5-point scale, and students can earn grades ranging from 1-5 (1 being lowest). Examinations generally cover two semesters of college-level credit.

AP credit granted by other colleges/universities is not automatically granted by Minnesota State University, Mankato. Minnesota State University, Mankato awards credit for AP examinations in a variety of subjects. A list of these can be obtained by contacting the Office of Admissions or visiting the Transfer Credits Types [webpage](#).

- A. Academic departments will determine the specific courses for which credit shall be awarded.
- B. Minnesota State University, Mankato shall award lower division credit in accordance with Minnesota State System [Procedure 3.35.1, Credit for Prior Learning External Assessments](#).
- C. AP credit is considered non-resident credit for purposes of graduation requirements.
- D. Any substitution in the granting of course credits is determined by the appropriate academic department.
- E. A list of the number of credits awarded and the courses to which they apply is available on the University [website](#).

- F. Students must ensure AP examination scores are forwarded to the University for the credit review process to occur. Original AP examination scores must be submitted for determination of credits to be awarded. Students should avoid registering for courses for which AP credit may be granted.

2. Certification

Certification credentials must be recognized by the appropriate department as a standard in a related field. This may include, but is not limited to, assessment governed by a board that is determined to meet specific competencies relevant to various courses of study. Requests for the use of certifications for prior learning will be reviewed by the appropriate department(s). Information about the use of certifications for prior learning credit can be found on the Credit for Prior Learning website.

3. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Minnesota State University, Mankato awards academic credit if certain scores are achieved on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests. University credits are granted based on the American Council of Educations' recommended credit granted score guidelines. Credit will be granted for computer-based general or subject exams if a score of 50 or greater is obtained (based on a CLEP 20-80 scale). Exceptions include the Level 2 foreign language examinations as recommended by ACE, for which specific minimum scores are required. Scores will be evaluated using current benchmarks as defined by the American Council on Education (ACE).

CLEP assessments must observe the following guidelines:

- A. Students must request that CLEP scores be sent to the Minnesota State University, Mankato Office of Admissions to initiate the process of determining which credits may be granted.
- B. Upon receipt of a student's CLEP score in the Office of Registration and Academic Records, a University staff member evaluates the scores, utilizing course equivalency guidelines previously approved by academic departments. Once this process is complete, a credit evaluation report will be emailed to the student by the Office of Registration and Academic Records.
- C. CLEP credits granted by other colleges/universities do not automatically translate into course credits at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Original examination scores must be submitted for determination of credits to be awarded.
- D. Students are not eligible to take CLEP exams that cover University course work for which credit has been earned at any current or prior college/university.

- E. Students will not be awarded double credit for a course if both General and Subject exams have been taken in related areas.
- F. There is no limit on course credits granted based on CLEP exam scores. However, a student must complete a minimum of 30 undergraduate residency semester credit hours from Minnesota State University, Mankato to earn a Minnesota State University, Mankato degree.
- G. For information regarding CLEP testing sites, cost, and contact information, please visit <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/reg.html>
- H. A list of the number of credits awarded and the courses to which they apply can be obtained by contacting the Office of Admissions or visiting the Transfer Credit Types [website](#).

4. International Baccalaureate (IB)

The IB program is a two-year high school curriculum through which students facilitate geographic and cultural mobility and promote international understanding by a shared academic experience. The IB curriculum and examination consists of six subject groups: Language A, Language B, Individuals and Societies, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics, and Electives. IB Diplomas are awarded to eligible students who have completed at least one subject from each of the subject groups and have fulfilled additional diploma level requirements. Students who have not completed requirements of the IB Diploma are awarded a Certificate for the examinations completed. Minnesota State University, Mankato's policy is based upon Minnesota State Colleges and Universities [Board Policy 3.35.1](#).

The University may award academic credit to students who complete an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma in high school. Students may earn specific University course credits by demonstrating a specified level of performance on selected higher level (HL) and/or standard level (SL) standardized IB examinations taken prior to enrolling at the University. Students must forward IB examination scores to the University to initiate the credit review process. IB credit granted by other colleges/universities does not automatically translate into course credit at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Original IB examination scores must be submitted for determination of credits to be awarded using the following guidelines:

- A. IB examinations are scored on a 7-point scale, and students earn grades ranging from 1 (very poor) to 7 (excellent).
- B. Students submitting IB examination scores to the University should not enroll in courses for which IB credit may be granted.
- C. MSU Mankato shall award lower division credit in accordance with Minnesota State System [Procedure 3.35.1](#).

- D. IB credit is considered non-resident credit for purposes of graduation.
- E. A list of the number of credits awarded and the courses to which they apply can be obtained by contacting the Office of Admissions or visiting the Transfer Credit Types [webpage](#).

5. Military Course Completion using the American Council on Education (ACE)

Guidelines

Military personnel access a variety of educational programs while serving in the Armed Forces. Acceptable educational experiences include but are not necessarily limited to: Military Courses (classes developed and taught by military personnel); University Course Work (classes taken at regionally accredited two or four-year institutions while in the military); and Examinations (CLEP as well as the CLEP portion of DANTES Language School). These experiences are reported to colleges and universities in the following ways: Army/ACE Registry Transcript System (AARTS) transcripts; DD295 Forms (Navy, Coast Guard and Marines); Community Colleges of the Air Force transcripts; Department of Defense Forms (DD214); Joint Service Transcript (JST); and Certificates of Completion. Students will contact the Office of Registration and Academic Records to initiate the application for credit process.

Minnesota State University, Mankato may grant credit for military course completion after review of each applicant's military service experience. The University reviews learning experiences associated with position responsibilities with documented learning outcomes and or on-the-job training activities. A student's military service documents are examined utilizing the American Council of Education (ACE) guides including:

- A. Credit awarded for education and experiential programs taken while serving in the military is entered onto a student's record as lower division elective credit on a "pass" (no letter grade) basis.
- B. Military credit is considered non-resident credit for purposes of graduation.
- C. A list of the number of credits awarded and the courses to which they apply can be obtained by contacting the Office of Admissions or visiting the Transfer Credit Types [webpage](#).
- D. The University has determined that Basic Training does substitute for Performance and Participation (Goal 11) course work in General Education.
- E. The University does not limit the number of credits which can be obtained through military service experience.

6. National Exams

As stated in Minnesota State System [Procedure 3.35.1](#), standardized examinations administered and scored by nationally recognized third-party assessment organizations provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate college-level knowledge acquired through prior experience, independent study, and/or cultural pursuits. The general examinations test knowledge gained in broad areas of study. The subject examinations demonstrate specific knowledge or skills gained through job experience, outside course work and/or specialized independent reading. These examinations include, but are not limited to: Advanced Placement (AP) examinations; International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations; College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations; Cambridge International examinations; DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST); Excelsior College UExcel examinations; The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessments; New York University Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP) examinations; and Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP).

7. Project Lead the Way (PLTW)

PLTW is a program offering high school level courses with the opportunity to earn college level credit. PLTW's high school programs are PLTW Engineering, PLTW Computer Science, and PLTW Biomedical Science, and are aligned with national standards in STEM education.

Minnesota State University, Mankato may award academic credit to students who either: (1) complete a specific three-course sequence of PLTW courses in high school, or (2) complete specific individual PLTW courses. Students may earn specific university course credits by demonstrating a specified level of performance on a selected course or course sequence taken prior to enrolling at the University. Students will not be granted double credit for a course taken at the University and granted experiential credit through PLTW. PLTW credit is considered non-resident credit for purposes of graduation.

To be considered for experiential learning credit:

- A. The student's high school must be certified in the PLTW program.
- B. The student must have earned a class grade of 80% or higher on any PLTW course.
- C. The student must obtain a minimum Stanine score of 4 (out of 9) on the End of Course assessment (i.e., final exam) for EACH of the three courses taken in the three-course sequence, or for each individual course for which credit is desired.

The academic departments will determine the specific courses for which credit may be awarded, and any substitutions in the granting of course credits are determined by the academic departments. A list of the available course credits to be awarded is available through the Office of Admissions and found on the PLTW Course credit application form.

Students must forward their PLTW scores to the University to initiate the credit review process and will complete the PLTW Course credit application form and pay the appropriate fee (\$100 per course) to initiate the assessment process. PLTW credit granted by other colleges or universities does not automatically translate into course credit at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and original PLTW scores must be submitted for determination of credits to be awarded.

8. World Language Seals and Certificates

Minnesota State University, Mankato follows Minnesota State System [Procedure 3.35.1, part 6](#), regarding World Languages and Certificates.

Internal Assessments of Higher Learning

Course-Specific Assessments

The evaluation of prior learning using course specific assessments is completed by University faculty with expertise in the subject matter. Department faculty will determine the content areas eligible for assessment. Course Specific Assessments may include oral interview, credit by exam, portfolio review, written research paper, research project evaluation, skills demonstration, or creative process demonstration. Such assessments cannot be offered in areas in which the University does not have faculty expertise.

Course-Specific Assessments must observe the following guidelines:

- A. Students may request a Course-Specific Assessment through the department housing the identified course.
- B. Course-Specific Assessments may not be available during the summer terms and/or other days when faculty are not on duty.
- C. The means of assessment are determined by the faculty in the academic program, and undergraduate students may use one or more of the previously mentioned methods. Graduate students must use credit by examination. The student will be assessed using established, documented learning outcomes for the identified course.
- D. The student will pay a fee of \$100.00 per credit. The fee is non-refundable. Students will pay for the credits prior to completing the assessment. The number of credits for the exam will be the same as those offered by the regular course.

Students will not be allowed to complete the assessment until after payment has been received.

- E. The department will report the results of the assessment to the Office of Registration and Academic Records via the appropriate form.
- F. The Office of Registration and Academic Records will record results of the examination on the student's transcript for the term in which the student completes the assessment. If the assessment occurs outside of a regular term, results will be recorded for the term immediately prior to completion.
- G. An official grade of Pass or No Credit will be posted on the transcript in accordance with the normal grading method for the course. The source of the credit will be coding as Credit for Prior Learning in the student information system but will not be displayed on the official student transcript.

Course-Specific Assessment Standards:

- A. Credit for prior learning is not based on experience alone. The student must demonstrate competency against defined learning outcomes.
- B. Prior learning must have a general applicability outside the specific situation in which it was acquired.
- C. Prior learning must be publicly verifiable.
- D. Prior learning must be at the college level. The learning should be uniquely distinguished from learning everyone gains through common life experiences and should relate to the course and subject matter for which the student is requesting. The learning must have a subject area in which theoretical and practical elements can be identified and verified.

Course specific assessments will be conducted by the faculty of each program and/or college. Information about course-specific assessments will be available on the University's Credit for Prior Learning website.

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 assessments that are 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 with 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.

History of Revisions:

Effective Date of Last Review: August 1, 2026

Date of Last Review: September 2025

Revisions Made:

Enter revisions here.

References: