



Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System Procedures Chapter 3 – Educational Policies

Procedures 3.35.1 Credit for Prior Learning

Part 1. Purpose of Procedure 3.35.1.

Subpart A. Scope of procedure. The procedure defines the requirements for implementation of Policy 3.35 for evaluating and granting undergraduate credit to a student admitted to a system college or university for successful college-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings.

Subpart B. Methods of assessing credit for prior learning included in this procedure. Credit for prior learning includes a broad range of nationally recognized and locally developed examinations as well as the portfolio review or competence demonstration. Board of Trustees policies and procedures exist for three of these nationally recognized examination programs that are referenced in this procedure: Advanced Placement examinations; (3.15, 3.15.1); International Baccalaureate (3.16, 3.16.1); and College Level Examination Program (3.33, 3.33.1).

Part 2. Definitions.

Subpart A. American Council on Education (ACE). The American Council on Education is a coordinating body for the nation's higher education institutions. ACE provides recommendations for granting credit for college-level learning obtained in non-college settings.

Subpart B. College-level learning. College-level is learning that meets college-level standards and results in credits which can be applied toward the requirements of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

Subpart C. Credit by examination. Credit by examination is a method of prior learning assessment that includes standardized examinations such as the 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, DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), ACE endorsed examinations, and course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty.

Subpart D. Credit for prior learning (CPL). Credit for prior learning is the outcome of a prior learning assessment by which a student earns credit for college-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings.

Subpart E. Portfolio review and competence demonstration. Portfolio review and competence demonstration are methods of prior learning assessment that include, but are not limited to, documentation review, candidate interview, performance assessment, product review, a combination of these methods, or other means.

Subpart F. Prior learning assessment (PLA). Prior learning assessment is the process of faculty evaluation of student learning obtained through sources other than college-level coursework.

Part 3. Implementation of Procedure 3.35.1. Each system college and university shall implement a policy and procedure on credit for prior learning that includes the components listed below.

Subpart A. Prior Learning Assessments.

1. **Nationally recognized examinations.** Each system college and university shall provide opportunities for an admitted student to demonstrate college-level learning through nationally recognized examinations.
 - a. **Credit by examination.** The college or university policy shall specify the type of credit by examination opportunities available to an admitted student. It shall also specify which courses qualify for credit by examination. The list of available credit by examination opportunities include, but are not limited to, the following options.
 - 1.1 Examination programs mandated by Minnesota Statute and Board of Trustees policy.
 - Advanced Placement (AP) examinations;
 - International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations;
 - College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations
 - 1.2 Other nationally recognized examination programs.
 - Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP);
 - Excelsior examinations, New York University Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP); National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI);
 - DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
2. **Course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty.** Each system college and university may provide opportunities for an admitted student to demonstrate college-level learning through course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty. The college or university shall specify which courses are available to an admitted student for credit by faculty-designed examination.

3. **Credit by portfolio review and/or competence demonstration.** The college or university may offer a student the opportunity to earn college credit through portfolio review and/or competence demonstration, and, if so, it shall specify which courses and in what areas qualify for credit by portfolio review and competence demonstration. At system institutions offering this option, a student shall have the opportunity to submit evidence as appropriate to his/her degree program in specified areas of college-level learning for prior assessment. A system college or university may offer a course designed to teach a student how to prepare an effective portfolio; the institution may decide whether a student shall be required to take this course as a prerequisite to presenting a portfolio for evaluation. A student who is required to take such a course shall be provided an opportunity to appeal this requirement. If a system college or university elects to not offer assessment of learning through portfolio review or competence demonstration, the institution shall make available to students a list of system colleges and universities that offer this option to students.
4. Prior learning shall be assessed by faculty in the academic discipline appropriate to the student assessment request as determined by college or university policy and procedure.
5. Each system college and university shall grant credit to a student who earns an institutionally determined score or higher on national examinations, including but not limited to DANTES, TECEP, and NOCTI. Minimum scores for earning credit set by the college or university shall be easily accessible and available to students.
6. Each system college and university policy shall state that credit for prior learning shall be granted according to the standards and equivalencies of the American Council on Education or the equivalent.

Subpart B. Related Policies.

1. **Recording of credit granted.** Each system college and university shall record the credit earned through prior learning assessment on the official student transcript in compliance with Board Policy 3.29 and Procedure 3.29.1, College and University Transcripts.
2. **Fees for prior learning assessment.** When applicable, a student shall be charged for the services related to the prior learning assessment process in accordance with Policy 5.11 and Procedure 5.11.1, Tuition and Fees.
3. **Resident credit.** Each system college or university shall grant credit for prior learning consistent with the residency and graduation requirements found in Board Policy 3.36 and Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs. The college or university faculty shall determine whether faculty-assessed credit earned through prior learning assessment as specified in Part 3, Subpart A. of this procedure, shall be counted toward the residency requirement.

Method of Prior Learning Assessment	Name or type of prior learning assessment as referenced in Part 3, Subpart A of Procedure 3.35.1	Counts as residency credits at the institution awarding the degree?
Credit by examination	1. Nationally recognized examinations. 1.1 Examination programs mandated by Minnesota Statute and Board of Trustees Policy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Placement (AP) • International Baccalaureate (IB) • College Level Examination Program (CLEP) 1.2 Other nationally recognized examination programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP) • Excelsior examinations, New York Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP) • National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) • DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) 	No
Credit by examination	2. Course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty.	As determined by college or university policy
Credit by portfolio review and/or competence demonstration	3. Credit by portfolio review and/or competence demonstration.	As determined by college or university policy

4. **Transfer of credit.** Credit for prior learning shall be accepted in transfer by a system college or university in accordance with Board Policy 3.37 and Procedure 3.37.1 Minnesota Transfer Curriculum and Board Policy 3.21 and Procedure 3.21.1 Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer.

Subpart C. Credit for military training or service. Each system college and university policy shall reference Minnesota Statute 197.775, Subdivision 2, Recognition of Courses, which directs Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to recognize courses and award credit for a veteran's military training or service if the courses meet the standards of the American Council on Education or the equivalent.

Subpart D. Student responsibility. A student seeking credit for prior learning shall provide requested supporting information for the prior learning assessment as specified by the college or university's policy and procedure.

Subpart E. College or university responsibility. Each system college and university shall provide a student with timely and readily accessible information about opportunities for credit for prior learning in official publications, such as the college catalog, Web sites, and advising materials and a timely decision regarding the evaluation process.

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