



**Policy Series #: 3000 – Educational
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Credit for Prior Learning**

PURPOSE:

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) offers students a way to earn credit for verifiable college-level learning acquired through life or work experience. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the process by which a student's learning from experience is assessed and evaluated for purposes of granting credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. (*Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles and Procedures; Fiddler, Marienau, Whitaker; 2006*)

The purpose is to require system colleges and universities to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate college and university-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings and to establish consistent practices among all system colleges and universities for evaluating and granting undergraduate credit for such learning.

APPLICABILITY:

Institutional Policy and Procedure. Each system college and university shall provide students with a means for evaluation of prior learning and shall develop policies and procedures consistent with Procedure 3.35.1 Credit for Prior Learning.

Compliance with Legislation. Each system college and university shall grant credit for prior learning for a veteran's military training or service in compliance with **Subd.2 of Minnesota Statute 197.775 Higher Education Fairness.**

Information Dissemination. Each system college and university shall provide accessible and timely information to prospective and admitted students regarding opportunities for credit for prior learning.

Riverland Community College currently accepts the following methods of prior learning assessment:

- Credit by examination - Standardized examinations
 - Advanced placement (AP)
 - International Baccalaureate (IB)
 - College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - 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)
 - Credit by examination – course-specific examinations designed by college faculty
- Credit by portfolio review and/or competency demonstration
- Industry recognized credential review
- Skills assessment
- High School Articulation
- Military coursework and skills documentation

Riverland Community College has made a commitment to student learning and excellence in the granting of credit for prior learning by adopting the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Standards of Assessment. These standards serve as a guide in the process, awarding and transcribing of credits earned through the prior learning assessment process

While Riverland Community College has made a commitment to recognize experiential learning as part of academic offerings, there are no requirements of faculty and/or departments to participate in the PLA process. Each faculty member will determine which of their courses and/or programs will allow credit for prior learning.

Organizational Structure/Roles:

- Faculty – determine whether they will participate in prior learning assessment; determine the documentation requirements of courses for which they will consider credit for prior learning; serve as primary assessors of college-level learning; award credit based upon assessment of documentation, testing and/or skills demonstration.
- CPL Faculty Manager/Coordinator – instruction of CARE 1400 Portfolio course; assist students with portfolio development; facilitate professional development opportunities for faculty; manage PLA program logistics; oversight and education of policy and procedures with counselors and enrollment advisors; recordkeeping
- Academic Dean –academic dean to oversee PLA program from an administrative stance;
- Registrar – transcription of credits awarded through PLA
- BusinessOffice – processing of PLA fees and CARE 1400 tuition
- Counselors/Enrollment Advisors – be aware of and advise students as to CPL options

College Level Learning

Riverland Community College faculty will determine the attainment of college level learning. This learning will largely be based upon meeting objectives and outcomes outlined in the Master Course Outline (MCO) of the course for which the student is seeking credit. Students must meet and/or document a minimum of 75% of course outcomes in order to be awarded credit for any given course.

Acceptance of Prior Learning Transfer Credits

Riverland Community College will allow the transfer of credits earned through Prior Learning Assessment at another Minnesota State institution so long as those credits correlate to a specific course that is required for the student's program major, and given that the course in question is equivalent to a required Riverland Community College course.

Maximum Credits

Students may be awarded a maximum of two-thirds (2/3) of required credits for the student's declared program of study through Credit for Prior Learning. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning will not be considered for residency requirements in the awarding of degrees/diplomas/certificates.

Application for Credit for Prior Learning

Students may apply for Credit for Prior Learning at any time after their application and acceptance to Riverland Community College and one semester prior to program completion, with the exception of single-semester programs.

Students may apply for Credit for Prior Learning only for those courses required for their program of study; this may include general education and elective courses.

Students who are currently on academic suspension are not eligible to apply for Credit for Prior Learning.

Application for Credit for Prior Learning does NOT guarantee an award of credit.

Prerequisite Courses

Credit for prior learning may be awarded for courses with prerequisites at the discretion of the faculty. Credit allowances for un-earned prerequisite courses will be satisfied with general elective credits. Students should work with Enrollment Advisors and the Registrar's Office to identify program completion criteria.

Credit Model

Prior Learning Assessment credit may be awarded to students who show a level of learning comparable to the objectives and outcomes required for course completion. These objectives and outcomes can be found on the Master Course Outline for every Riverland Community College course.

Transcription of Credits

Credits awarded through Prior Learning Assessment will be transcribed as follows:

Credits ...	Are eligible for Financial Aid	Appear as a "regular" course	Apply toward awarding of degree/diploma/certificate	Will impact student's GPA	Will be included in completion rate	Will be awarded a grade
Standardized Examination	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Credit by Exam: Faculty designed	N	N	Y	N	Y	P*
Portfolio Review	N	N	Y	N	Y	P*
Industry Credential Review	N	N	Y	N	Y	P*
Skills Assessment	N	N	Y	N	Y	P*
High School Articulation	N	N	N	N	N	N
Military Course/Skills	N	N	Y	N	Y	N

* Pass

Financial Aid

Students may not use Financial Aid to pay Prior Learning Assessment fees. The required CARE 1400 Portfolio course (for students seeking the award of credit via portfolio review) may be included in a student's financial aid award, dependent upon the student's eligibility.

Standardized Examinations

Standardized examinations may be administered at any time in a given semester. A list of available standardized examinations will be provided upon request.

Credit by Exam (faculty designed)

Students seeking credit by exam must do so during the first week of the semester in which they prefer to have the credit transcribed.

Courses eligible for credit by exam must be approved by the AASC. A list of approved courses will be provided upon request.

Portfolio Review

Students must present evidence of college level learning that meets the requirements of the course(s) for which they are seeking credit. This evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- Testimony regarding confidence
- Learning products (essays, work samples, learning logs)
- Performance or examinations, oral or written

- Demonstrations or simulations

Evidence of learning may be authenticated by the CPL reviewer.

Students must present a complete portfolio for each course for which they are seeking credit.

Faculty portfolio reviewers may request additional information prior to making a decision on the awarding of credit. If a student is not awarded credit after a first review of the portfolio, he/she may submit the portfolio for a second review based on the feedback of the assessor. There will be a fee for the second review. A portfolio submitted for a second time will be reviewed by the initial faculty assessor. A portfolio will be reviewed a maximum of two times.

Students wishing to appeal the outcome of a portfolio review will follow the standard academic appeal process. The appropriate Academic Dean may initiate a review by a second party assessor if deemed appropriate.

Industry Credential Review

Students may be awarded credit for attainment of current industry-recognized credentials based upon faculty approval. Credential curriculum must meet 75% of course outcomes identified on a given Master Course Outline, as verified by the faculty member. Faculty may award credit for multiple courses, dependent upon the content of the industry credential. Initial request for credential reviews must be approved by the department's Advisory Committee Chairperson and must be presented to and approved by, AASC. Credentials must be current as of the last day of the awarding semester. Credit will be awarded for the semester following the request; exceptions will be made for those requests made during the initial drop/add period of the semester. Credits awarded through credential review must be required of a student's declared major.

Skills Assessment

Students seeking credit for prior learning through skills assessment may be required to register for a credit based "Options for Success" credit course in the program for which they are seeking credit. If an "Options for Success" course is not available, the student should work with the Prior Learning Manager to schedule a skills assessment with the appropriate faculty member.

High School Articulation (Tech Prep)

Students who enrolled in articulated high school courses and successfully meet specific criteria for each course may request to have Minnesota High School Tech Prep College Credits entered on their Riverland college transcript. Credits will be granted for competencies mastered within the preceding two years at grade levels of "B" or better on a grade scale of "A-F." Credits will only be awarded if Riverland Community College appears on the face of the Minnesota Tech Prep College Credit Certificate with an articulated course equivalency. The student must be enrolled at Riverland and the course must be a requirement for their major.

Military Coursework and Skills Documentation

Credit achieved through military training will be considered for transfer according to the Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services by the American Council on Education (ACE). Information about military credit transfer options can be found at www.veterans.mnscu.edu.

Recency Requirements

Experiential learning assessed for credit must have occurred within the past 15 years. More stringent requirements may be required by specific programs of study; students should inquire with the PLA Program Manager for program requirements.

CARE 1400 Portfolio Development Course

Students seeking Credit for Prior Learning through Portfolio Assessment must follow the required steps to register for the required CARE1400 Portfolio Development course. A student must have an Accuplacer English cut score of 78 or completion of English 960 (College Prep 2) to register for CARE 1400. This course will guide the participant through the process of developing a portfolio to document the competencies achieved through various experiences such as military service, education, work, specialized certification programs, training programs, personal experience and inquiry. The student will receive feedback from the course instructor and the faculty evaluator of the portfolio. A student passing the CARE 1400 course with a grade of "C" or better will not be required to re-take the course for the submission of consecutive portfolios. While the development of a portfolio is required for this course, submission of the portfolio for prior learning assessment is not required.

Feedback – Portfolio Review

Faculty assessors will provide to the student feedback regarding portfolio presentation and evidence of learning, regardless of the awarding of credit.

Faculty Assessors

Faculty will assess evidence of learning provided by students seeking credit for prior learning. Riverland Community College faculty receive professional development/training in the area of PLA prior to assessing student portfolios.

Riverland Community College faculty will determine the awarding of college credit; industry experts may make recommendations of credit awards to the appropriate college faculty upon request.

Faculty Compensation

Faculty will be compensated for the review of Credit for Prior Learning.

Credit for Prior Learning Fees

Students will be assessed a fee for their designated Credit for Prior Learning option.

Quality Assurance

Riverland's Credit for Prior Learning program policies and procedures will be reviewed periodically and amended as needed. Riverland Community College has made a commitment to student learning and excellence in the granting of credit for prior learning by adopting the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Standards of Assessment. These standards serve as a guide in the process, awarding and transcribing of credits earned through the prior learning assessment process.

Professional Development – Faculty

Faculty participating in portfolio review will be provided professional development activities. Adjunct faculty will be allowed to assess prior learning if they have completed professional development activities and are credentialed to teach the course for which credit is being sought. Unlimited Full-Time faculty that teach the course for which credit is being sought will be given preference in the assessment of credit.

Evaluation

At the culmination of the Prior Learning Assessment process, regardless of the awarding of credit, students will be asked to evaluate the PLA process. This information will be used to continually improve Riverland's PLA program and implement change as needed. Faculty will be asked to evaluate the PLA program periodically.

Appeal Process

Students wishing to appeal their Credit for Prior Learning decision will follow the standard Academic Appeals Process.

DEFINITIONS:

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 credits for college-level learning obtained in non-college settings.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP): exams to test mastery of college-level material acquired through general academic instruction, significant independent study or extracurricular work.

College Level Learning: the level of learning that college students are assumed to have attained.e.learning beyond the secondary education level.

Credential Review: review of an industry-recognized credential by faculty and/or experts applicable to the major of study.

Credit by Exam: examination designed to demonstrate knowledge in a subject where the learning was acquired outside a traditional classroom.

Experiential Learning: learning that has been gained as a result of reflecting upon the events or experiences in one’s life in contrast to formal education *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles and Procedures; Fiddler, Marienau, Whitaker; 2006)*

Master Course Outline (MCO): document approved by the Academic Affairs Standards Committee (AASC) to communicate detailed information about a course. The course outline is the document used to evaluate courses for transfer within the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities system and serves as the standard by which all courses are taught.

Portfolio Review: review and evaluation of documented college-level learning by faculty and/or topic experts to determine award of credit.

DOES THIS POLICY HAVE A PROCEDURE? Yes.

LIST RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES OR PLANS HERE:

Pursuant to Minnesota State College and Universities Board Policy; Chapter 3; Educational Policies; Procedure 3.35

Minnesota State Statute 197.775; Subd.2 Higher Education Fairness

Date of Initial Review by Riverland Council: 5/2/2014
AASC Review (if applicable): 4/23/2013; 1/21/2014; 5/3/16
FSGC Review (if applicable): N/A
Date of Final Approval / Policy Adoption: 2/13/214; 10/13/2016
Date & Subject of Revisions: