

# Winona State University



Number: 3-35

Responsible Officer: AVP of Distance Education & Summer Session  
Responsible Office: Adult & Continuing Education

## Title: Credit for Prior Learning Policy

### PURPOSE:

#### Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the requirements for implementation of WSU Credit for Prior Learning opportunities for evaluating and granting credit to students admitted to Winona State University for successful college and university-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings. In addition, the purpose is to establish consistent practices throughout the university for evaluating and awarding undergraduate or graduate credit for prior learning.

#### Section 2: Authority

The authority for this policy shall be Minnesota State Policy 3-35 (Credit for Prior Learning Policy), Minnesota State Procedure 3-35-A (Credit for Prior Learning Procedure), 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 Subd.2 of Minnesota Statute 197.775 Higher Education Fairness.

#### Section 3: 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.

### Competency-based education and assessment

A type of education and assessment that focuses on learning and the application of that learning, rather than on the time spent in class or on materials. Progress is measured by learners demonstrating what they know and can do, through a system of rigorous assessments.

### 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.

### 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 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.

### Portfolio review

Portfolio review is a method of prior learning assessment that includes, but is not limited to, documentation review, candidate interview, performance assessment, product review, a combination of these methods, or other means.

### Retroactive credit

Retroactive credit is a practice at WSU that allows students to obtain academic credit for prior language study. Students must demonstrate competency by earning a grade of "A" or "B" in language courses 102, 201, or 202. Students may obtain a "P" (Pass) grade for language courses that are at a lower level than the course that was successfully completed.

### World languages certificates and seals

State bilingual and multilingual certificates and seals awarded by high schools to students who demonstrate an advanced-low level or intermediate high level of functional proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. Certificate and seal assessments are aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines or equivalent valid and reliable assessments.

### Section 4: Opportunities for Students

WSU shall provide current and accessible information on opportunities to obtain credit for prior learning to prospective and admitted students as part of degree planning and advising. WSU shall provide opportunities for enrolled students to demonstrate college and university-level learning in non-credit generated or experiential settings that is applicable to their courses and programs. Credits awarded for prior learning may be used for general, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) and/or elective courses.

### Section 5: Assessment

Methods of assessing credit for prior learning include a broad range of nationally recognized and locally developed examinations as well as portfolio review or assessment of competence. University credit will be granted for documented, authenticated, and demonstrated college and university-level learning outcomes and not for experience alone. Credit will be awarded based on the 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. An examination for prior learning credits may not be repeated for the same course.

Prior Learning can be evaluated using one or more of the following methods:

1. National and international standardized exams in specified disciplines, e.g., Advanced Placement (AP) exams, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), and International Baccalaureate (IB). Awarded as non-resident credits.
2. University faculty developed challenge exams for local courses such as credit by exam or retroactive credits. Awarded as resident credits.
3. Evaluated non-college programs, e.g., National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) or American Council on Education evaluations of corporate training and military training. Awarded as non-resident credits.
4. Individualized assessments, particularly portfolio-based assessments, such as those conducted by University faculty within departments at WSU and from the CAEL LearningCounts.org. Awarded as resident credits.

## Section 6: Awarding Credit for Prior Learning

WSU shall award credit to students who demonstrate prior learning that is at the college or university level and equivalent to one or more courses offered at the awarding college or university. WSU may also award credit to students who demonstrate prior learning that is at college or university level and individualized or interdisciplinary. Credits awarded for prior learning may be used for general, MnTC, and/or elective courses.

Any procedure or practice developed pursuant to this policy shall:

- a. Support the awarding of prior learning credits using consistent procedures and practices throughout the university.
- b. Provide for ease of access and implementation by students and faculty.
- c. Ensure that prior learning credits satisfy student learning outcomes and course and program objectives.
- d. Provide departments the guidance and information to best assess whether or not to accept prior learning credits toward their majors and minors.
- e. Describe clearly, simply, and in a timely manner CPL policy and procedures in all university electronic and paper publications for prospective and admitted students.
- f. Provide guidance on the number/percentage of credits that can be awarded toward degree completion.
- g. Provide guidance on the number/percentage of credits that can be awarded towards a major or minor.
- h. Have a clear appeal process when applicable.
- i. Recognize the responsibility for interpreting and applying CPL policy through an established CPL Advisory Committee.

## Section 7: Student Appeals

Student appeals of credit for prior learning decisions will be guided by the WSU Academic Integrity Policy, <http://www.winona.edu/sld/academicintegrity.asp>. The student has the right to appeal credit for prior learning assessment decisions through the Academic Appeal Committee, [www.winona.edu/advising/appeals.asp](http://www.winona.edu/advising/appeals.asp).

## Section 8: Exceptions

Any exception to this policy requires review and recommendation by the CPL Advisory Committee through established university shared governance process.

### **Related WSU Documents:**

- WSU Procedure 3-35-A, Credit for Prior Learning Procedure
- WSU Academic Integrity Policy

### **Related Minnesota State Documents:**

- Policy 3.21 Undergraduate Course and Credit Transfer and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum.
- Procedure 3.15.1 Advanced Placement Credit
- Procedure 3.16.1 International Baccalaureate Credit
- Procedure 3.21.1 Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer

- Procedure 3.33.1 College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) Credit
- Procedure 3-35-A Credit for Prior Learning
- Minnesota Statutes §197.775 Higher Education Fairness
- Minnesota Statutes §120B.13 Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs
- Minnesota Statutes §120B.022 Elective Standards
- PROCEDURE: 3-35-A Credit for Prior Learning Procedure

SIGNATURE, TITLE AND DATE OF APPROVAL

This policy needs to be signed by the appropriate officer (listed below) before it is considered approved.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
President 

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Date 5-11-17

Policy History:

Date of Adoption:

Date of Implementation:

Date & Subject of Revisions: