

Credit for Prior Learning Policy draft

For the past several years a system-wide taskforce has worked to promote Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) within the New Mexico State University system. This group has made several presentations to the System Round Up and to system campus presidents. The goal is to create a more unified policy regarding CPL and create a framework to guide campus CPL efforts.

Credit for Prior Learning has existed in several forms within the NMSU system. These are outlined in the University Catalog at <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#enrollmenttext> – they include Credit by College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Credit by Examination, and Credit for Military Service. Additionally, DACC has used a portfolio assessment through the COLL 185 course.

Following the guidance from the American Council on Education, many universities have expanded the options to receive CPL. In addition to portfolios, campuses such as the University of Arizona also allow certifications and workforce training documentation to be used to assess CPL.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is a term used for various institutional strategies for evaluating the college-level learning that a student has acquired outside of a formal college course, for college credit. Nontraditional students often come to a postsecondary institution bringing prior knowledge from years on the job, corporate or military training, non-college training programs, or self-study. Institutions can assess that learning, determine whether it is equivalent to the learning outcomes a student is expected to have gained in college coursework, and award credit (or advanced standing) to that student.

The University of Arizona's policy is attached to this document.

Using the taskforce work and the UA policy, the following language is proposed as a draft to broaden CPL options for NMSU system students.

Members of the System Wide Taskforce included:

- Beth Humphreys, NMSU Grants - Assoc. Professor, Rhetoric & Composition
- Becky Ross, NMSU Alamogordo – Director of Allied Health
- Terry Mount, DACC – Commercial Technologies Dept. Chair
- Patti Wojahn, NMSU Las Cruces - Interdisciplinary Studies Dept. Head
- Erin Kuh, NMSU Carlsbad - Allied Health Dept. Chair
- Sarah Cerra, formerly NMSU Alamogordo

Additional reference/information:

- **Student Form:** https://www.cnm.edu/student-resources/credit-for-prior-learning/documents/request_for_evaluation_of_prior_learning.pdf
- **Quick Reference Guide to show process and fees:** <https://www.cnm.edu/student-resources/credit-for-prior-learning/documents/cnm-cpl-quick-reference-guide-2.pdf>

Rationale for Proposed Change:

The current profile and population of the college student have dramatically changed from the traditional age student (18-25) to an increasing number of nontraditional students (26 and older) who live busy lives and possess prior knowledge, skills and abilities from either work or military experience. The delivery modality of teaching and learning in higher education is rapidly evolving, driven in part by a growing demand by students to integrate their use of technology which allows for more accessibility, flexibility, adaptability and cost reduction, and accommodates their busy 21st Century schedules. Students, particularly nontraditional students, enroll in college already having a wealth of learning and knowledge gained through life experiences. That is why many colleges and universities provide opportunities to receive credit for the knowledge already gained. Additionally, credit for prior learning (CPL) can help students minimize educational costs because this reduces the number of courses the student needs to take, helps decrease remediation, reduces the time to graduation, and gets the student into the workforce quicker. The NMSU campuses are aware of the challenges and opportunities today's students face. The institutions take a proactive student centric approach to increasing completion by developing a coherent and cohesive policy to encourage students to apply for CPL. These efforts not only help students achieve their goals but also increase enrollment, retention, persistence and reduce student debt. Earning credit through prior learning helps NMSU recognize value in lifelong experiential learning.

CPL is awarded based on the assessment of prior learning, commonly referred to as "prior learning assessment" (PLA). A report conducted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) found that among 62,475 students surveyed who completed the PLA, 56 percent of students who received CPL earned a postsecondary degree within seven years, as opposed to only 21 percent of students who did not earn credit. CPL allows students to progress more quickly toward a credential, and CAEL research has found that adult students with CPL are two and a half times more likely to complete their degrees.

Proposed Policy:

In order to receive credit for prior learning, students must:

1. Be admitted into the institution [*concern: For many military students, this is a deciding factor as to whether or not they will even attend a school.*]
2. Be currently enrolled as a degree seeking student accepted in a program
3. Need the credit to satisfy a degree requirement

Following credit recommendations from the American Council on Education (ACE), prior learning may be assessed using one of the following methods:

1. Credit by College Level Examination Program (CLEP)¹
2. Credit by Examination¹
3. Credit for Military Service¹
4. Workforce certifications
5. Other workforce training documentation
6. Portfolios

The faculty in academic units responsible for the student's degree program make the final determination on the total *number* of credits that can be awarded for prior learning, up to a maximum of CPL credits equaling no more than 50% of the credits required to obtain the credential or degree the student is pursuing, unless otherwise approved.

CPL is not calculated in the student's GPA and cannot duplicate previously awarded credit. CPL will only count toward lower division course work and does not substitute for residency requirements.

Each college can establish specific procedures for assessing CPL beyond items 1-3 above as long as those procedures are approved by the University Curriculum Committee, shared with appropriate advising units, and published on the college's website.

Appeals Process:

Appeals will be reported to the college's Associate Dean for Academics (main campus) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) of the respective community college.

¹ This option is already in use. See catalog pages

Proposed Revised Catalog Language (current catalog language provided on pgs 8-9 below)

Credit by College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Prior to or during a student's enrollment at NMSU, credits may be earned through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Entrance Examination Board. CLEP is a national program of credit by examination that offers the opportunity to earn credits for college level achievement wherever or however the student learned. Earned CLEP credit will be treated as transfer credit without a grade, will count toward graduation, and may be used in fulfilling specific curriculum requirements. A current NMSU CLEP policy as well as test schedule information is available at [*provide website here*].

Recommended Fees (as currently established - DACC testing service):

- \$129 fee (\$40 proctor fee; \$89 CLEP fee)

Credit For Prior Learning (CPL) Examination

New Mexico State University (NMSU) System students will be provided the opportunity to demonstrate existing personal college-level knowledge of a subject matter through credit for prior learning examination. Application for credit for prior learning is the responsibility of the student and is dependent on meeting with the director of the college of study prior to application.

Exams consist of subject matter assessment questions provided by NMSU faculty in the identified area of study and reflect the student learning outcomes for the course.

Each course the student completes via exam to earn Credit for Prior learning will be assessed an administrative fee of \$25.00 fee and \$45.00 [*to whom/by whom?*] per credit hour. Students may earn up to 12 credits by CPL Exam.

Criteria for eligibility to earn credit by exam includes [*language is not consistent here; some of these are redundant w/ "Proposed Policy" above; some may be inconsistent – e.g. do students need to be "in good standing and a GPA of at least 2.0" for all forms of CPL, not just by examination?*]:

1. Currently enrolled in the college and have an academic record in good standing and a GPA of at least 2.0.
2. If you have already enrolled in or attempted a course at NMSU or any other institution, you may not receive CPL by exam.
3. Exam may only be taken one time for each course.
4. A maximum total of 12 credits can be earned through examination.
5. A minimum number of credits that must be completed within the NMSU System based on your program of study [*i.e. residency requirement*]. Specific information can be found at <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/#academicprogramsofstudytext>.
6. A completed application must be submitted to the college of study and all fees paid 30 days in advance of testing date.
7. All approvals (signatures) must be secured prior to the examination. [*how/where?*] The student must schedule the exam with the respective department in which the course is being challenged.
8. Students must earn a grade of "C-" or better to receive credit. The grade received is recorded on the student's record as "CR" or better to receive credit. A grade below C- will result in no

credit awarded and will not be entered in the student's transcript. The grade received is recorded on the student's record as "CR" and is not included in the grade point average.

Recommendations for CPL Tuition and Fees

Reference: Central New Mexico CPL Tuition and Fees:

https://secure.touchnet.com/C20016_ustores/web/store_cat.jsp?STOREID=2&CATID=18

- \$25 per test (CNM)
https://secure.touchnet.com/C20016_ustores/web/store_cat.jsp?STOREID=2&CATID=27

Credit for Military Service

New Mexico State University will award academic credit to United States military personnel for courses and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), based on the American Council of Education Guide (ACE) as well as through national standardized tests, such as CLEP, AP, PEP and DANTES. Credit for military-training is in accordance with NMSU Faculty Senate Legislation Proposition 24-07/08, which was passed in May 2008. Military Training and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) must have a recommendation evaluation by ACE (in the ACE Guide) for credit to be awarded. Courses accepted for transfer credit become part of the student's official NMSU transcript and academic record. If a student wishes to appeal a decision regarding the acceptance of military training/education and/or MOS for academic credit, the student must submit a written statement of appeal to the Dean of the College to which the student has applied. The Dean will review the merits of the appeal and render a decision. The decision of the Dean is final.

Only Primary MOS (s) are eligible for academic credit in the initial review and evaluation. Credit for Duty and/or Secondary MOS may be eligible for academic credit if the student petitions the college's Associate Dean. Primary MOS is the primary specialty of a soldier and reflects the broadest and most in-depth scope of military experience. Veterans, active-duty personnel, National Guard and Reservists who are current students or students applying for admission to New Mexico State University may be granted academic credit on a case-by-case basis upon evaluation of military transcripts - the Joint Service Transcript (jst.doded.mil) and the Community College of the Air Force transcripts. Course equivalencies and credit hours awarded for a particular NMSU degree are determined by colleges and/or academic departments. Credit hours may be awarded for specific courses toward degree requirement, or as elective credit. The number of credit hours awarded will be determined by the college and/or academic department.

NOTE: Students submitting military transcripts for credit evaluation must keep in mind the Maximum Time Frame policy. See Financial Aid Section.

Recommended Fees

Credit for Military Service - *currently do not charge – comes in as transfer credit; consistent with all incoming transfer credit*

Credit for Certifications and Licensures

State and nationally recognized industry credentials may be used to award academic credit. Those credentials that have already been approved, via a cross-walk between the need-to-know criteria of the industry credential and the student learning outcomes/competencies of the course.

Specific cross-walks may be found at the following links: [will be developed; updates ongoing]

The [ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training](#) or [ACE's CREDIT search tool](#) may be utilized to determine if a certification has ACE credit recommendations.

Fees for Credit for Certifications and Licensures: \$50 evaluation fee plus \$10 per credit hour

Recommended Fees

- **Workforce certifications** - \$25 per certification

Credit for Workforce Experience and On-the-Job-Training

Individuals often gain invaluable experience through work their place and on-the-job-training opportunities that directly align with the student learning outcomes of academic courses. New Mexico State University will award academic credit to those individuals who are able to demonstrate significant alignment of student learning outcomes (course competencies) of a course with those that are integrated into their workforce experience and on-the-job-training.

Credit may be granted for training provided by employers that have developed articulation agreements with the institution (example New Mexico Fire Academy). The student learning outcomes that an individual has acquired through workforce experience or on-the-job-training *that have not been identified through articulation agreements*, may be demonstrated through development of a portfolio in the FYEX2994 Credit for Prior Learning Portfolio course. The portfolio content will be evaluated by subject-matter experts. Through these processes credit hours may be awarded for specific courses toward degree requirement, or as elective credit. [*Dacia has suggested this be transcribed as the course for which the student is receiving credit.*]

Courses accepted for transfer credit become part of the student's official NMSU transcript and academic record. If a student wishes to appeal a decision regarding the acceptance of workforce experience or on-the-job-training for academic credit, the student must submit a written statement of appeal to the Dean of the College or Community College Division Head in which the student is pursuing their degree. The Dean or equivalent will review the merits of the appeal and render a decision. The decision of the Dean or equivalent is final.

Fees for workforce experience and OJT: \$25 processing fee plus \$40 per credit hour

Recommended Fees

- **Other workforce training documentation** - \$25

Portfolios:

A portfolio is prepared by a student to demonstrate and validate credit for learning acquired outside of the classroom and must be relevant to the student's degree program. Program faculty use rubrics to evaluate a student's portfolio, which will include documentation, such as certificates of training, work samples, awards and honors, job descriptions, performance evaluations, samples of artwork, evidence of self-directed learning, and resumes. A student may be required to take a portfolio course.

Recommended Fees

1 credit of FYEX2994: 4 earned credits Ratio. [portfolio evaluation paid to individual or institution? panel of evaluators? *Dacia has suggested this be transcribed as the course for which the student is receiving credit.*]

- Campus should determine if evaluating faculty member or panel should be compensated or if it is part of their regular work load.
- \$74 per credit hour (for up to 4 credits) + \$125 processing fee

Current Catalog Language:

Credit by College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Prior to or during a student's enrollment at NMSU, credits may be earned through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Entrance Examination Board. CLEP is a national program of credit by examination that offers the opportunity to earn credits for college level achievement wherever or however the student learned. Earned CLEP credit will be treated as transfer credit without a grade, will count toward graduation, and may be used in fulfilling specific curriculum requirements. A current NMSU CLEP policy as well as test schedule information is available through Testing Services DACC East Mesa, RM 210. Testing Services may be reached at: (575) 528-7294.

Credit by Examination

Any enrolled student with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 currently attending classes may, with permission of the appropriate department, challenge by examination any undergraduate course in which credit has not been previously earned except an independent study, research or reading course, or any foreign language course that precedes the final course in the lower-division sequence. The manner of administering the examination and granting permission shall be determined by the department in which the course is being challenged. Students may not enroll in a single course, challenge it by examination, and drop it during the drop/add period, unless they enroll in an additional course. In exceptional cases in which a student demonstrates outstanding ability in a course in which he is already registered, he may be permitted to challenge the course. A student desiring to apply for special examination may obtain the necessary forms from the University Student Records Office. The fee for challenging a course is the same as the approved tuition rate. Courses may not be challenged under the S/U option. The special examination privilege is based on the principle that the student, exclusively, has the responsibility for preparing for a special examination.

Credit for Military Service

New Mexico State University will award academic credit to United States military personnel for courses and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), based on the American Council of Education Guide (ACE) as well as through national standardized tests, such as CLEP, AP, PEP and DANTES. Credit for military-training is in accordance with NMSU Faculty Senate Legislation Proposition 24-07/08, which was passed in May 2008. Military Training and Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) must have a recommendation evaluation by ACE (in the ACE Guide) for credit to be awarded. Courses accepted for transfer credit become part of the student's official NMSU transcript and academic record. If a student wishes to appeal a decision regarding the acceptance of military training/education and/or MOS for academic credit, the student must submit a written statement of appeal to the Dean of the College to which the student has applied. The Dean will review the merits of the appeal and render a decision. The decision of the Dean is final.

Only Primary MOS (s) are eligible for academic credit in the initial review and evaluation. Credit for Duty and/or Secondary MOS may be eligible for academic credit if the student petitions the college's Associate Dean. Primary MOS is the primary specialty of a soldier and reflects the broadest and most in-depth scope of military experience. Veterans, active-duty personnel, National Guard and Reservists who are current students or students applying for admission to New Mexico State University may be granted

academic credit on a case-by-case basis upon evaluation of military transcripts - the Joint Service Transcript (jst.doded.mil) and the Community College of the Air Force transcripts. Course equivalencies and credit hours awarded for a particular NMSU degree are determined by colleges and/or academic departments. Credit hours may be awarded for specific courses toward degree requirement, or as elective credit. The number of credit hours awarded will be determined by the college and/or academic department.

NOTE: Students submitting military transcripts for credit evaluation must keep in mind the Maximum Time Frame policy. See [Financial Aid](#) Section.