



## **Credit for Prior Learning Riverland Policy #3.35**

### **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*)

### **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.

**SCOPE:** Students, Staff & Faculty

### **Compliance with Legislation.**

**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
- 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
- Digital badges

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.

CPL assessments will be officially documented to ensure academic integrity, consistency, and transparency.

### **Organizational Structure/Roles:**

- Faculty – determine whether they will participate in prior learning assessment; determine the assessment method(s) and student requirements of the 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 Coordinator —assist in facilitating professional development opportunities for faculty, counselors, and enrollment advisors; manage CPL and PLA program logistics; oversight of policy and procedures; oversee recordkeeping
- Academic Dean —each academic dean to oversee the PLA process in assigned area from an administrative stance
- Registrar – transcription of credits awarded through PLA
- Business Office/Cashier – processing of PLA fees
- Enrollment and Academic 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. CPL credits will be awarded only for college-level learning that balances theory and practical application. 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. Faculty administering the Prior Learning Assessment must also document that the student has met at least 75% of the course outcomes.

### **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.

### **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.

Students may not apply for Credit for Prior Learning for a Riverland course in which they are currently enrolled, unless the PLA process can be completed prior to Day 5 of the semester.

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

### **Residency**

CPL credits designed and assessed externally will not count toward the enrollment of a specific academic term, nor will credit be counted in determining part-time or full-time student enrollment status.

CPL credits awarded through internally-designed Prior Learning Assessment methods will count for institutional residency and toward graduation residency requirements as found in Minnesota State Board Policy 3.36 and Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs. These include Credit by Exam: Faculty-Designed, Portfolio Review, and Skills Assessment.

### **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 are not included in calculating a student’s GPA, and 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	Y
Portfolio Review	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
Industry Credential Review	N	N	Y	N	Y	P*
Skills Assessment	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y
High School Articulation	N	N	N	N	N	N
Military Course/Skills	N	N	Y	N	Y	N
Non-College Education and Training	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y

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### **Financial Aid**

Students may not use Financial Aid to pay Prior Learning Assessment fees. The 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.

### **Credit by Standardized Examinations**

When standardized examination outcomes covers substantially similar material to course competencies, Riverland will award equivalent course credit. Externally-designed standardized examinations may be administered at any time in a given semester. A link to available standardized examinations accepted by Riverland will be provided on the Riverland CPL webpages. The list of accepted standardized examinations includes the following:

- **Advanced placement (AP)**
  - Riverland will grant credit for AP examinations according to the following:
    - A score of 3 shall be the minimum for credit awards
    - AP testing information can be found at [www.collegeboard.org/AP](http://www.collegeboard.org/AP)
- **International Baccalaureate (IB)** The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is an internationally recognized program through which secondary students complete a comprehensive curriculum of rigorous study and demonstrate performance on IB examinations. The examination for the diploma covers six subjects, three or four of which must be at the higher level and others at the subsidiary level.
  - Riverland will grant credit for IB examinations according to the following:
    - IB diploma
      - Students who attain an IB diploma will be granted six (6) lower division course credits for scores of 4 or higher on each higher level IB examinations and two (2)

lower division course credits for scores of 4 or higher on each standard level IB examination.

- Individual IB examinations
  - Higher level examinations. A student will receive three (3) or more course credits for scores of 4 or higher on individual higher level IB examinations.
  - Standard level examinations. A student shall receive two (2) or more credits for scores of 4 or higher on individual standard level IB examinations.
- **College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**
  - Riverland Community College will accept CLEP exams as equivalents for many of its courses. A current list of Riverland courses and their equivalent CLEP exams can be found at [www.transferology.com](http://www.transferology.com).
  - A minimum score of 50 is required on all CLEP exams except for certain foreign language exams.
  - Level 2 foreign language examinations require scores of:
    - 59 or higher for French language
    - 65 or above for Spanish language
- **Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP)** exams are similar to final exams for college courses. College credit is awarded based on scores earned on the Thomas Edison State College Examination Program.
- **Excelsior Examinations (UExcel)** is a credit by examination program offered in a computer-based format at thousands of test centers globally. These exams include the Excelsior College Examination or UExcel exams and their predecessors, the Regents College Examination and the ACT Proficiency Exam Program.
- **New York Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP)** tests three skills: listening, reading, and writing in over 50 languages.
- **National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)** delivers assessments or standardized tests for students studying career and technical programs.
- **DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)** is a series of 37 examinations in college subject areas that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate course examinations in liberal arts and sciences subject areas.
  - Credit awards will be made according to the ACE recommendation of three (3) semester hours of credit per test.
  - A list of DSSTs may be found at <https://www.getcollegecredit.com/>.
  - DANTES course equivalencies are available using [Transferology](http://www.transferology.com).
- **World Language Seals and Proficiency Certificates** are awarded to high school graduates who demonstrate the required levels of language proficiency in speaking, writing, reading and listening for languages other than English, including American Sign Language (ASL) and American Indian (indigenous) languages.
  - World Language Proficiency Certificate
  - Bilingual or Multilingual Gold Seal
  - Bilingual or Multilingual Platinum Seal

Credits earned through standardized exams are not resident credits and may not be used to satisfy resident credit requirements for graduation nor do the credits count toward financial aid calculations.

When a standardized examination outcome is deemed to be college-level, but is not substantially similar to an existing course, elective course credits may be granted in a program area and/or in a Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC) goal area(s).

### **Credit by Exam: Faculty-Designed (Challenge Exam or Test Out)**

Credit by Examination (also referred to as Challenge Exam or Test out) is an opportunity for a student to demonstrate college-level learning through course-specific institutional examination designed by college faculty who teach the course. The exam may be written, oral, or both, and may include elements of other assessment methods such as

interview, simulation, or demonstration. Credit is granted for demonstrated proficiency of 75% of the course's student learning outcomes by the student through successful completion of the examination.

- Students should not enroll in the course for which they plan to attempt a faculty-designed Credit by Exam.
- Credit by Exam: Faculty-Designed may not be attempted for a course in which the student is currently enrolled, has previously taken (earned a grade, failed or withdrawn), or has transferred from another institution
- Students are limited to two challenge examination attempts per course. After two unsuccessful examination attempts, students should enroll in the course.
- Students who fail a credit by exam-test out may not seek credit for prior learning for the course through portfolio review or any other prior learning assessment method.

### **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
- Current resume
- Learning products/documentation (essays, work samples, learning logs)
- Course competencies matrix
- Performance or examinations, oral or written
- Demonstrations or simulations

Evidence of learning will be authenticated by the CPL Faculty Assessor and/or CPL Coordinator.

Students must present a complete portfolio for each course for which they are seeking credit. If denied credit on the first attempt, the student shall be allowed to make a second attempt. 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. 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 program.

### **Skills Assessment**

Students seeking credit for prior learning through skills assessment will work with the CPL Coordinator to schedule a skills assessment with the assigned faculty assessor. The skills assessment will be documented and recommendation of credit award shall then be made. Credits awarded must be required of a student's declared program.

### **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). **The ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services** will be used as the evaluation tool. For further

information see *[A Transfer Guide: Understanding Your Military Transcript](#)* and ACE Credit Recommendations at [www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx](http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx) 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.**

A fee shall not be charged for analysis and awarding of credit for training delivered by the United States military as found in Minnesota State Board Policy 5.11 and Procedure 5.11.1 Tuition and Fees. Information about military credit transfer options can be found at [www.veterans.mnscu.edu](http://www.veterans.mnscu.edu) .

### **Non-College Education and Training**

Students may earn credit toward their diploma, certificate, or other academic award through the evaluation of non-college education and training, provided it meets the standards for college-level learning and recency requirements. Types of non-college education or training Riverland Community College accepts are:

- **ACE CREDIT: Education, Workplace and Training**, utilizing the American Council on Education's Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training which recommends credit for non-accredited general education, corporate, workplace and non-military training.
- **Technical or Professional Apprenticeship** is a review of apprenticeship programs. Credit is considered for a combination of comprehensive on-the-job training and related instruction of theoretical and practical aspects of highly skilled occupations.
  - The following conditions apply:
    - Technical or Professional Apprenticeship must be checked for validity.
    - Apprenticeship knowledge and skill may need to be verified through demonstration.
    - Faculty may award credit for multiple courses, dependent upon the Technical or Professional Apprenticeship.
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- **Technical or Professional Licensure** is a review of technical or professional licensure programs.
  - The following conditions apply:
    - Licensure must be valid.
    - Licensure may need to be verified through demonstration of continuation of the knowledge and skill required.
    - Licensure must be current as of the last day of the awarding semester.
    - Faculty may award credit for multiple courses, dependent upon the content of the licensure.
- **Digital Badges** are an online validation of proof of skills, achievement, outcome, competency, or completion of a course that a student has earned. Badges enable academic institutions and professional associations to recognize professional and experimental learning achievement in a way that can be verified and shared online.
  - The following conditions apply:
    - Badges must be checked for validity.
    - Badges may need to be verified through demonstration of continuation of the knowledge and skill required.

### **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 CPL Coordinator for program requirements.

### **Feedback –Prior Learning Assessment**

Faculty assessors will provide feedback to the student regarding evidence of learning from any PLA attempt involving portfolios, internally-designed exams, or skills assessments, regardless of the awarding of credit.

### **Faculty Assessors**

When an Academic Dean is seeking a faculty member to serve as Faculty Assessor for a Prior Learning Assessment, priority shall be given to Riverland faculty members who are teaching the petitioned course or who have taught/regularly teach the course. If an appropriately qualified Unlimited Full-Time, Temporary Full-Time, or Temporary Part-Time Riverland faculty member cannot be engaged, the Dean may offer the Faculty Assessor

opportunity to a qualified, experienced Riverland adjunct faculty member or to appropriately credentialed, experienced faculty member in the MinnState system who has taught an identical, or nearly identical course.

The assigned Faculty Assessor will assess evidence of learning provided by students seeking credit for prior learning. Faculty Assessors will also provide to the student and to the institution documentation of the assessment method(s), note the time and place the PLA occurred, provide a list of student learning outcomes met/not met, and the recommendation to award or not award credit.

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 Prior Learning Assessment according to the MSCF contract.

### **CPL: Prior Learning Assessment Learning Fees**

Students will be assessed a fee for their designated Prior Learning Assessment option. Fees will be listed on Riverland's Credit for Prior Learning webpages. Students will be charged a fee only for those methods of PLA that require faculty assessors.

### **Quality Assurance**

Riverland's Credit for Prior Learning program policies, fees, 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.

### **Collection and Reporting**

Riverland will collect, track, evaluate, and report the awarding of Credit for Prior Learning.

### **Professional Development – Faculty**

Faculty participating in Prior Learning Assessment will be provided professional development and support.

### **Evaluation**

At the culmination of the Prior Learning Assessment process, regardless of the awarding of credit, students may 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~~ may be asked to evaluate the PLA program periodically.

### **Appeal Process**

Students wishing to appeal their Credit for Prior Learning / Prior Learning Assessment decision will follow the standard Academic Appeals Process. The student must submit an appeal within six months of notification of the CPL assessment decision.

## **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 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 FORMS:**

Pursuant to Minnesota State College and Universities Board Policies:

[3.35 Credit for Prior Learning policy \(System\)](#)

[3.35.1 Credit for Prior Learning – External Assessments procedure \(System\)](#)

[3.35.2 Credit for Prior Learning – Internal College/University Assessments \(System\)](#)

[3.35.3 Military Courses and Military Occupations procedure \(System\)](#)

[3.21 Undergraduate Course and Credit Transfer and the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum procedure \(System\)](#)

[3.29 College and University Transcripts policy \(System\)](#)

[3.29.1 College and University Transcripts procedure \(System\)](#)

[3.36 Academic Programs policy \(System\)](#)

[3.36.1 Academic Programs procedure \(System\)](#)

[5.11 Tuition and Fees policy \(System\)](#)

[5.11.1 Tuition and Fees procedure \(System\)](#)

Minnesota State Statute 197.775; [Subd.2 Higher Education Fairness](#)

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