



# **Competency-Based Credit for Prior Learning Policy**

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## Introduction

With the evolution of diverse strategies for education and for the evaluation of learning, the competency-based awarding of college credit for prior learning outside of the traditional college classroom (“Competency-based Education”) has emerged. This is a strategy to promote degree completion as well as to identify members of an educated workforce.

Traditional recognition of learning in the United States (U.S.) post-secondary education system is based on the number of student hours spent in the college classroom. As students complete courses, they earn a certain number of credit hours. In Maryland one semester hour of credit is awarded for a minimum of 15 hours (50 minutes each) of actual class time; for 30 hours of laboratory time; or for 45 hours of instructional situations such as a practicum, internships and cooperative education placements. Students must accumulate the credit hours identified by the institution and its faculty to earn a degree. To award college credits for external or prior learning experiences, institutions of higher education must assess their learning outcomes and competencies, and match these to the equivalent college-level courses and credits for degree progression.

Coppin State University (CSU) is committed to assisting students as they transition from the global work environment into a progressive educational program using the base knowledge and skills that they have acquired outside the classroom to flourish academically. CSU is also committed to supporting the successful transition of veterans, consistent with the Maryland Veteran’s Full Employment Act of 2013. Consistent with these commitments, and with the national goal of increased degree completion, CSU recognizes its responsibility to assess and

award college credit for those who have accrued verifiable and measurable learning experiences outside of our college classrooms.

CSU is further committed to assuring that a student who receives college credit for prior external learning has met the terminal learning objectives of the identified course and academic program. CSU has a strong commitment to assuring that the standards and integrity of the academic degree are protected and promoted, regardless of the learning settings or strategies.

Therefore, CSU may grant college credit to an individual for prior learning, including learning outside of the classroom, using the following evaluation strategies and procedures:

- Standardized Examinations
- Other Evaluation Strategies
  - Course-by-Course Evaluation
  - Challenge Examinations
  - Individual Assessments

## **Standardized Examinations**

### **Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations**

CSU may grant credit for successful completion of Advanced Placement (AP) examinations in high school. The student will provide the admission counselor and transfer coordinator with the official score report from the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) if taken at a site other than CSU. Credit will be granted for a score of 3, 4, or 5 on examinations that are applicable to program requirements.

## **College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

CSU may award credit for successful completion of CLEP general examinations based upon the American Council of Education (ACE) recommendations for award of credit. Credit will be granted for a score of 50 or higher on examinations or following CLEP's Credit Granting Recommendations. The student will provide the admission counselor and transfer coordinator with an official score report from CLEP. The students may access [www.collegeboard.com/clep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clep) for information about how to request an official score report.

### **DSST Exams**

CSU may award credit for acceptable scores on DSST college-level examinations as recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE). The student will provide an official score report to the admissions counselor and transfer coordinator. The transfer coordinator and assistant registrar will verify acceptability with the dean and chairperson of that respective college and department.

## **Other Evaluation Strategies**

### **Military Training**

CSU may grant credit for military service training based upon the recommendations provided in the most current American Council of Education (ACE) *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services*. To receive credit based upon competencies gained through military training, the student must submit an official copy of such training. The Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard use a transcript service called Joint Services Transcript (JST). The student will request an official copy to be sent to CSU for transfer credit consideration by

completing the online JST system ACE provides quality assurance and policy guidance to the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps for military transcripts. Air Force service members will continue to order their military transcripts through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). The transfer coordinator will collaborate with the respective colleges and departments to evaluate the transcript and award college credit based on the following strategies:

- **Course-by-Course Evaluation:** Courses and trainings are evaluated on a course-by-course basis.
- **Challenge Exam:** A Challenge Exam is an exam developed by CSU faculty that allows a student to demonstrate that they have met the learning objectives of a course. Successful completion of a Challenge Exam, as evaluated by the discipline head, allows a student to earn credit for that course.
- **Portfolio Individual Assessment:** CSU recognizes that many adult learners have acquired training, skills and knowledge through education in non-formal as well as in formal schooling. If a student's learning is not directly equivalent to a particular course but is at the postsecondary level, the student can compile a portfolio to demonstrate that they have met a set of critical competencies.

### **Criteria for Awarding College Credits for External Learning**

- The applicant must provide CSU with original documents from their primary source(s).
- The documentation provided to CSU for evaluation must include the detail required to evaluate the equivalency of the student's knowledge and/or skill in relation to the requested equivalent objectives.

- The course that the student completed or the work experience that the student has documented must reflect the current industry standard and have been completed within ten (10) years prior to the request for recognition, or five (5) years prior if a course in the Health Professions.
- All of the course competencies and objectives must be demonstrated.
- Course competencies and objectives must be demonstrated at the level equivalent for a grade of “C” or better in the requested course is undergraduate, and “B” or better if graduate.
- The documentation must confirm that granting the student request for credits is in the best interest of the student and his or her advancement in the chosen field.
- The awarded credits will be treated as advanced placement credits.

### **Procedure for Appeals**

An applicant who decides to appeal a decision regarding a request for credit by external learning may submit a request for review of that decision, following the Appeals Procedure below.

- The applicant will submit a request for review of the decision to the transfer coordinator within 4 weeks. The request must specify the reason for the objection, and provide evidence in support of the requested change.
- An Appeals Committee, composed of the departmental chair, a faculty member who has the expertise and familiarity with the course for which credit is requested, and the transfer coordinator, will convene.
- The Appeals Committee will review the request for review.
- The decision and rationale will be presented to the applicant within 2 weeks.

- The applicant may make a final appeal in writing to the Academic Review Board within 2 weeks if the student disagrees with the decision of the Appeals Committee.

## **Conclusion**

CSU is committed to removing unintended barriers to the recognition of student learning, as well as to quality education and the integrity of the academic degree. In support of those policies, CSU has clear criteria and procedures that facilitate the accurate evaluation of external or prior learning that is equivalent to the terminal objectives of its for-credit courses.