

# MISSOURI CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING MODEL

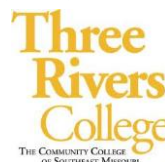
2013



Missouri Community College Association  
MoHealthWINS and MoManufacturingWINS



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## PREFACE

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This guide is designed to help Missouri public two-year institutions develop or reevaluate their college's prior learning assessment (PLA) practices and policies. It explains the importance and role of PLAs in Missouri, providing and introducing basic elements of prior learning. Importantly, the guide also demonstrates where 13 of Missouri's public two-year institutions came together to support and implement the state's first ever statewide standard for credit for prior learning by way of Missouri's two major grant training programs, MoHealthWINS and MoManufacturingWINS. Both programs are funded through the USDOL Trade Act Adjustment Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) grant—for healthcare and manufacturing training, respectively—totaling over \$35 million in funds. With this precedent, more grant opportunities are trending to mandate credit for prior learning practices in support of accelerating adult learners in the traditional educational delivery systems.

The need for a statewide standard for credit for prior learning assessment was presented to the 13 public two-year institutions during the fall of 2010, where for the first time, the institution leaders established a statewide career training consortium to compete for the mentioned TAACCCT grant, which Missouri received and named MoHealthWINS. One of the grant solicitation's key funding priorities was to increase attainment of degrees, certificates, and other industry-recognized credentials and better prepare the targeted population, and other beneficiaries, for high-wage, high-skill employment. One evidenced-based strategy presented was the utilization of granting academic credit for prior learning. The consortium leaders along with the support of the Governor's office, the Missouri Department of Economic Development, the Division of Workforce Development and the industry partners committed to improve retention and achievement rates and/or reduce time to completion by developing a statewide system standard of practices to award credit for prior learning.

Upon the grant award, the grant management team assembled a small work group representing all 13 public two-year institutions to begin work on developing a first ever statewide standard. During the first year of the grant, the work group met monthly discussing current credit for prior learning policies and practices across the state. The consortium contracted with the noted grant solicitation leader, Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL) to come to Missouri and train some 45 two-year institution administrators and faculty in the value of developing a standard along with the various types of credit for prior learning assessments, practices and policies. The work group further engaged in evaluating seven-state model standards to benchmark what would work for Missouri and what would not. The seven-state model standards evaluated were Vermont, Pennsylvania, Florida, Minnesota, Colorado, Indiana, and Oklahoma. The work group's consensus resulted in developing a draft model utilizing the Colorado model standard framework. This particular model recognized policies of various colleges within the State of Colorado and served to set a minimum statewide policy and standard for credit for prior learning.

Thus after additional meetings, the 13-member MoHealthWINS work group (combined later to include MoManufacturingWINS), bolstered by support of their respective institutions' staff, administrators and faculty, developed and presented a first draft at the 2012 Fall Missouri Community College Convention in Kansas City. This began an essential statewide open dialogue and vetting of the draft Missouri Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) state standard. The formal proposed standard was presented to the Chief Academic Officers in early 2013 and was adopted by the 13 Presidents and Chancellors on March 6, 2013.

## **The MoHealthWINS TAACCCT Grant Credit for Prior Learning Work Group Members:**

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### **Draft Model Feedback Submissions:**

The MoHealthWINS Credit for Prior Learning Work Group is interested in hearing from all staff, faculty, administrators and educational partners for input to the draft Missouri Credit for Prior Learning model standard over these next 30 days. Feedback may be provided via email to both Work Group Chairs as follows:

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## CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING HANDBOOK

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## **I. What is Credit for Prior Learning?**

Prior Learning is an alternative education or experience-based learning that has been attained outside the sponsorship of an accredited postsecondary education institution. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) includes learning acquired from work and life experiences, community and volunteer extension courses, individual study and reading, civic, community and volunteer work, and participation in informal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry. CPL is not awarded for EXPERIENCE but for college-level LEARNING which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained as a result of their prior learning experiences.

The Missouri Community College Association supports the concept of life-long learning to meet the retraining, upgrading and personal enrichment needs of students. It is the policy of the Association that a student's experience outside the college classroom shall be evaluated for college credit. MCCA recognizes that each two-year institution in Missouri administers individual credit for prior learning policies and procedures designed to reflect their institutions educational philosophy, mission, and/or board policy. Each institution's specific CPL guideline/policy will be made available on their respective websites. Credit for Prior Learning evaluative processes must be initiated by the student requesting credit. Missouri Community College Association is committed to supporting all two-year institutions' prior learning credit guidelines and policies.

The purpose of this handbook is to inform students of common methods of obtaining credit for prior learning in Missouri two-year institutions. CPL may apply towards an academic degree or certificate. The policies of two-year institutions in Missouri may exceed or limit certain conditions listed in this handbook.

## **II. Methods for Awarding Credit for Prior Learning**

### **A. Standardized Tests**

- College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- American College Testing Proficiency Program (ACT-PEP/RCE/EXCELSIOR)
- Defense Activity for Nontraditional Educational Support (DANTES)
- Advanced Placement (AP)
- International Baccalaureate (IB)

### **B. Institutional Challenge Examinations**

- Exam equivalent to the comprehensive final exam
- Exam may be written, oral, demonstration or a combination of all three
- Evaluated by an area Dean or designated subject matter expert

### **C. Published Guides**

- American Council on Education (ACE) for military training and experience
- ACE (non-collegiate) for industrial and corporate training programs
- Other published guides developed by nationally recognized organizations

#### **D. Educational Documentation**

- Students can present prior learning experiences in portfolio format, to colleges that accept portfolios. Credit could be awarded after portfolio evaluation by subject matter experts who have portfolio evaluation training.

#### **E. Industry Credentials**

- Students will need to supply documentation of any valid industry certifications awarded. Alternative time limits may apply specific to programs of study at each individual college.

### **III. Standards for Awarding Credit for Prior Learning**

- A.** Academic credit will be awarded only for those courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements at the college of enrollment and to the student's declared certificate or degree program as outlined in college publications.
- B.** A student may use CPL to fulfill all degree/certificate graduation requirements except for mandatory institutional requirements.
- C.** CPL may be applied toward the courses in the AA, AFA AS, AAT, AGS-Articulated or AAS degree programs only for the purpose of satisfying graduation requirements.
- D.** All work assessed for CPL must meet or exceed "C" level work. "C" level work criteria shall be determined by each institution.

### **IV. Policy and Procedures**

- A.** At least one credit hour must be successfully completed and transcribed into the student's records before any CPL credit can be awarded, applicable to the degree program at each individual college.
- B.** All prior learning methods will be posted to the college's specific degree program.
- C.** The maximum prior learning credit applicable towards graduation is up to the residency requirements of each college, from any combination of all CPL methods.
- D.** If CPL is applied to the AA, AFA AS, AAT, AGS-Articulated, or AAS degree requirements, transferability and transfer guarantees may be affected. Consult an advisor or designated faculty/staff member at the specific college for details.
- E.** All portfolios, documentation, and files regarding a student's prior learning credit will be maintained by the college of enrollment.
- F.** A student wishing to appeal a non-credit for prior learning decision should follow the standard appeal procedure in place at the college of enrollment.
- G.** Prior learning experiences shall be evaluated only if requested by the student.
- H.** Academic credit will be awarded only for those courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements at the college of enrollment and to the student's declared certificate or degree program as outlined in college publications.
- I.** Each individual two-year institution in Missouri may award prior learning credit based on their respective institution's guidelines/policy. Please note predetermined fees may apply.

## V. Transferability of Credit for Prior Learning

- A. Students planning to transfer to another college or university should contact the receiving institution to determine the acceptability of transferred credit for prior learning.

## VI. Steps for Pursuing Prior Learning Credit

- A. Students should review prospective college websites, current college catalogs, the MCCA website, the MoHealthWINS website, or the MoManufacturingWINS website to view CPL programs for specific institutions. Course requirements for specific degree or certificate programs should be reviewed. Determine the courses for which you feel you have relevant, equivalent, college-level experience.
- B. Students should complete a “Credit for Prior Learning Self-Assessment.” A sample can be found in Part IX of this handbook (p.7-8). Self-Assessment documents may vary by college.
- C. Students should meet with an academic advisor or designated faculty/staff member to discuss the different methods and steps for requesting CPL and for transfer information at the awarding institution.

## VII. Military Educational and Training Credit

- A. *Introduction* – Military educational and training credit can be transcribed through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS) and the Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART). How colleges interpret and articulate credit is based on the nature of the credits transcription, credit recommendations for military training schools, or ACE occupational credit recommendations for job performance.
- B. *What is the purpose of SMART and AARTS?* – To provide recommended college credit for military occupational experience and training. The recommendations are made by the American Council on Education (ACE), which publishes a reference entitled Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services, used by colleges and universities around the country. The ACE Guide is available on-line at <http://bv.v.w.militaryguides.ace.net.edu>.
- C. *Will colleges accept CLEP, EXCELSIOR, and DSST scores from the SMART and AARTS Transcript?* – Yes, colleges will review and evaluate the CLEP, EXCELSIOR, and DSST scores from a transcript and evaluate in accordance with guidelines that each college will have available in their college policy.
- D. *How are the ACE service school course descriptions and recommendations evaluated?* – Colleges will compare the training school course description and ACE credit recommendation against their own college course descriptions for equivalencies. If the courses are found to be equivalent and directly applicable to curriculum requirements to the student’s declared certificate or degree program as outlined in college publications on each college’s website, credit could be applied to a student’s transcript.
- E. *How is occupational credit evaluated?* –Colleges may choose to allow a student to submit the occupational material for credit through the portfolio process outlined in this guide. ACE recommendations do not apply for occupational/job performance credit. If the courses are found to be equivalent and directly applicable to curriculum requirements to the student’s declared certificate or degree program as outlined in college publications on each college’s website, credit could be applied to a student’s transcript.

- F. *How is credit transferred from CCAF?* – Colleges evaluate credit from CCAF like they would for any other accredited college. Academic credit may be awarded only for those courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements at the college of enrollment and to the student’s declared certificate or degree program as outlined in college publications.

## VIII. Prior Learning Educational Guidelines

- A. *Introduction* – A portfolio is one assessment method where a student demonstrates learning acquired outside of the traditional classroom. It is a collection of information gathered by the student and presented in a systematic format that validates the experiential learning that has occurred. Each course for which portfolio credit is requested must be in the college curriculum and must be part of the student’s certificate or degree requirements.
- B. *Faculty and Student roles in the portfolio process at a minimum* – Preparation and content of the portfolio are the responsibility of the student. Each college advisor, designated faculty/staff member, or subject matter expert may assist the student in their respective established portfolio procedures. Some institutions may provide a credit or non-credit course designed to assist the student in the development of a quality portfolio. Once a portfolio has been prepared, it may be assessed for the awarding of credit. A college advisor, designated faculty/staff member, or a subject matter expert may evaluate and determine if the student has provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate attainment of the learning outcomes and/or met the competencies of the course.
- C. *Documentation* – Supporting documentation may be presented in a portfolio to support the student’s request for awarding credit. The supporting documentation will be of sufficient breadth and depth to validate the student’s stated learning and provide the evaluator with qualitative evidence for evaluation. Any documentation provided will be kept on file at the college of enrollment, according to each colleges Record Retention policy. Types of documentation are as follows:
- *Certificates of Training:* Students who have received training through alternative methods should provide a copy of a certificate of completed training, a lesson plan or training content (if available), dates of attendance, and/or other information showing what was taught. Evidence of evaluation may also be required (e.g., proficiency exam scores). Alternative time limitations may apply, specific to each college’s programs of study.
  - *Portfolio of Work:* Students requesting awarded credit in some fields may use a portfolio of their work, which will support their request.
  - *Self-attestation:* Students requesting self-attestation will be evaluated on an individual basis at each participating college.
  - *Demonstration of Competency:* Some students may request credit in courses that can only be evaluated after a performance assessment or exam of their skills.
  - *Oral Interview:* The evaluator may contact the student for a verbal discussion of his/her portfolio as a supplement to the written information provided.
  - *Awards and Honors:* The student may provide copies of any awards and honors directly related to the competencies.
  - *Job Descriptions, Performance Evaluations, and Letters from Employers/Supervisors:* These documents may be included to verify attainment of the competencies and/or learning outcomes for which the student is seeking credit.



**IX. Credit for Prior Learning Self-Assessment - \* SAMPLE DOCUMENTS**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home): \_\_\_\_\_ (work): \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

College of Enrollment: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree / Certification Program: \_\_\_\_\_

List courses for which you are requesting prior learning credit:

	Prefix	Number	Title	Credits
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

**EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES:** (This section should be as detailed as possible. Feel free to attached additional sheets to this form.)

**TRAINING:** May include correspondence, seminars, conferences, workshops, continuing education, formal military training, clinics, television/radio courses, etc.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**JOB/WORK EXPERIENCE:** Include position or title, length of time in position, acquired skills.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:** Church, Community, Politics, and Schools, include length of time and duties/skills acquired.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**INDEPENDENT LEARNING:** Independent research, projects (e.g. self-taught computer skills, extensive reading, public writing and/or speaking, foreign languages, business owner/operator) include length of time and skills acquired.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:** (e.g. acting, theater production, music performance, travel/tours including acquired knowledge.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**RELATED LICENSES OR CERTIFICATES:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP IN RELATED ORGANIZATIONS:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**\*College forms may vary with each Self-Assessment Policy**