

# A-050.1 CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING PROCEDURE

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Approved: Ronald A. Wood

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Approved: Connie J. Gores

## Southwest Minnesota State University Procedure

### Credit For Prior Learning

#### Section 1. Purpose of Procedure

Southwest Minnesota State University establishes this procedure to provide information on available opportunities for Prior Learning Assessment in all our colleges, departments and programs, and guidance or parameters for conducting effective and efficient evaluations.

#### Section 2. Authority

This procedure is issued pursuant to the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) System Policy 3.35 (Credit for Prior Learning Policy) and Procedure 3.35.1 (Credit for Prior Learning Procedure).

#### Section 3. Effective Date

This university procedure shall become effective upon signature of the President, and shall remain in effect until modified or expressly revoked.

#### Section 4. Responsibility

The responsibility for the implementation of this university procedure is assigned to the respective Faculty, Dean and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

#### Section 5. Methods of Prior Learning Assessment

Southwest Minnesota State University recognizes that students are assessed for prior learning using nationally and locally recognized examinations as well as competence demonstrations and/or portfolio reviews consistent with MnSCU policy 3.35 and MnSCU Procedure 3.35.1.

1. **Nationally recognized examinations and Evaluations:** In accordance with MnSCU Policy 3.35 and Procedure 3.35.1, students will be given opportunities to demonstrate university-level learning through nationally recognized examinations and evaluations including, but not limited to the following:
  - Advanced Placement (AP) examinations
  - International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations
  - College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations
  - DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
  - American Council on Education (ACE)
  - VETS (Veterans Education Transfer System)
2. **Portfolio Assessment:**  
Departments may offer students the opportunity to earn college credits through portfolio reviews.
3. **Test out examinations designed by university faculty:**  
Departments may provide opportunities for a matriculated student to demonstrate university-level learning through course-specific examinations designed by department faculty. The department shall

specify which courses are available to a matriculated student for credit by faculty-designed examination. See Section 2 d and f of the Credit for Prior Learning Policy for additional clarification.

- Credits earned by examination must be awarded by the 40th instructional day of the semester. If not, they will be awarded the following semester.
- The instructor must use the Credit/No Credit grading system in awarding a grade for credit by examination. There is a 20 credit limitation on the number of credits earned by examination outside the major which a student may apply towards graduation.
- Students will contact the department Chairperson and the instructor in the program area where they wish to take the examination to determine if that particular course can be offered by examination.
- Students will obtain the Credit by Examination Form from the Registration and Records Office and follow the instructions on the form.

#### Section 6. Related Procedures

1. **Recording of credit granted.** Southwest Minnesota State University shall record any credit earned through prior learning assessment on the official student transcript.
2. **Resident credit.** Southwest Minnesota State University shall grant credit for course-specific portfolio assessment and test out to fulfill its residency and graduation requirements.
3. **General Education and Liberal Studies Requirements:** Prior learning can be used to meet Liberal Education Plan requirements.
4. **Transfer of credit.** Credit for prior learning shall be accepted in transfer by Southwest Minnesota State University consistent with University Transfer Credit Policy.

#### Section 7. Criteria for Assessing Prior Learning

1. Prior learning assessment may be focused on the individual student's learning outcomes or competence.
2. Prior learning assessment may be for lower- or upper-division credits as approved by the department.
3. Prior learning assessment may be registered for credit amounts approved by the department.
4. Prior learning assessment will include evaluation of the theoretical and practical components of the course learning outcomes.
5. To be eligible for prior learning assessment, the student's learning must meet the following criteria, consistent with CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) standards.
  - a. Prior learning must be related to students' educational goals.
  - b. Prior learning must have a subject area in which theoretical and practical elements can be identified and verified.
  - c. Recognition for prior learning encompasses learning and not experience alone.
  - d. Prior learning outcomes must be current.
  - e. Prior learning must have a general applicability outside the specific situation in which it was acquired.
  - f. Prior learning must be publicly verifiable.
  - g. Prior learning must be independent from credits previously recorded in transcripts at other institutions of higher education.
  - h. Prior learning should be university level.

## Section 8. Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

1. Prior learning shall be assessed by faculty in the academic discipline appropriate to the student's assessment request.
2. Faculty evaluators will use evaluation techniques that address the theoretical and practical components of the course learning outcomes.
3. Faculty evaluators may participate in professional development opportunities on prior learning assessment and may include such learning in their professional development plans.

## Section 9. Student Roles and Responsibilities

1. Students have the right and the responsibility to identify, describe and document their prior learning to be assessed for university-level credit.
2. Under no circumstances will a student be allowed credit by examination if he/she is currently enrolled in that course and has gone on record as having paid tuition for the course. The examination must be completed before the student has enrolled in the course.
3. Students will make use of university materials, resources and courses to understand policies, procedures, concepts and practices of prior learning assessment at the university.
4. Students will submit proposals, registration and evaluation materials and documentation for prior learning assessment in a timely manner, consistent with published deadlines, guidelines, and instructional materials.
5. Students seeking prior learning assessment will address university, department, and evaluator expectations and criteria.
6. Students are responsible for any fees associated with assessment of prior learning.

## Section 10. Administrative Roles and Responsibilities

1. Administrative support shall include timely and readily accessible information about opportunities for credit for prior learning in official publications, such as the catalog, web sites, and advising materials, and providing a timely decision regarding the evaluation process.

The University provides resources to support faculty preparation and continuing development in the assessment of prior learning. Academic oversight for implementation of the Prior Learning Assessment policy and procedure is provided by the Registrar, Business Services, Academic Deans, and Academic Chairpersons participating in Prior Learning Assessment.

2. Faculty compensation shall be in alignment with the IFO/MNSCU Master Agreement, Article 10, Section A, Subdivision 5.

## Section 11. Exceptions

Any exception to this procedure requires approval from the Dean of the College in which the prior learning credit is recorded.