

Approved by the Board of Regents on May 13, 2024

POLICY ON CREDIT FOR COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION AND PRIOR LEARNING

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Morgan State University (the “University”) may provide students with opportunities to obtain academic credit for prior learning, including military prior learning (training, coursework, and education), work experience, and volunteerism, (hereinafter referred to as Prior Learning (PL). This Policy meets the requirements of §§ 15-113 and 15-134 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and any guidelines and/or regulations promulgated by the Maryland Higher Education Commission by offering students the chance to obtain academic credit for Prior Learning. Pursuant to a student’s successful satisfaction of Prior Learning Assessment (“PLA”) tools designed to permit the student to demonstrate relevant competencies, the demonstrated Prior Learning may be applied toward academic credit which may assist in the completion of a course, certificate, or degree. The University recognizes that Prior Learning may occur in a variety of ways, including but not limited to, classroom instruction, military service, work experience, and volunteerism. As a result, the University acknowledges that Prior Learning may be an essential component of the overall educational experience.

Assessment of Prior Learning is a formal process that verifies and documents what students have previously learned and retained, and the competencies they can demonstrate, in relation to the learning outcomes of a particular area of study, course or program. The University has established criteria and standards for the assessment of Prior Learning, which require that the learning outcomes and demonstrated competencies derived from a Prior Learning experience may be equivalent to those achieved through formal collegiate instruction. The University may accept approved third parties to conduct prior learning assessments, including but not limited to, national organizations that specialize in prior learning assessment.

II. PRIOR AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT AT MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

- A. The University will provide students the opportunity to earn credit for Competency-Based Education (“CBE”) through approved evaluation methods. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (“CAEL”) recognizes CBE as a flexible way for students to earn academic credit at the University. By demonstrating mastery of learning and competencies acquired through work experience, professional training, military training, or prior learning, students are able to earn academic credit hours awarded by the University.
- B. Prior and Experiential Learning Assessment credits are academic credits awarded on the basis of the student's performance on designated evaluation methods, including but not limited to, portfolios, exams, workplace learning from industry certification and professional training, and non-collegiate credit learning.
 1. Portfolio Assessment: The process of Portfolio Assessment allows students to showcase their proficiency in college-level learning outcomes related to University courses, based on their prior experience. University courses provide guidance for students to complete their portfolios, and faculty members evaluate them to decide the appropriate amount of credit to be granted.
 2. Exams: The University offers prior-learning comprehensive exams to students as an alternative way to earn academic credit for their competencies, without having to participate in traditional classroom study. The comprehensive exam process evaluates a student's proficiency and knowledge of course objectives and outcomes in order to award academic credit for specific courses.
 3. Industry Certification and Professional Training: The University offers academic credit for industry certification and professional training. These credits are granted for recognized certifications and professional training obtained through accepted business, industry, and

government agencies. Certifications and trainings are typically registered with state or federal agencies and confer certification within a specific industry or field. University faculty evaluators will assess these industry-recognized credentials and determine the corresponding recommended college credits.

- C. Non-Collegiate Credit Learning: The University conducts reviews of external organizational and entities courses, assessments, certifications, training, and apprenticeships, which have not been previously assessed through collaborations and articulation agreements. University faculty members analyze the syllabi, course content, learning outcomes, and other pertinent training materials to ascertain course equivalencies and credit placement based on the relevance to a student's program of study.
- D. Eligible Students: To earn credit from Prior and Experiential Learning Assessments, students must have been accepted into and are actively pursuing a degree program at the University.

III. EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT METHODS

- A. Approval by the academic department offering the course material is necessary for the awarding of credits for AP, IB, A-Level/AS-Level, and CLEP exams. Furthermore, these credits are subject to periodic reevaluation by the academic department.
- B. The external assessment methods accepted for credit at the University include:
 1. College Level Examination Program (“CLEP”) – minimum score of 50;
 2. DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (“DSST”) Program – minimum score of 400;
 3. Advanced Placement (“AP”) Program of the College Board – minimum score of 3;
 4. International Baccalaureate (“IB”) Examinations – minimum score of 4;
 5. Cambridge International Examinations – minimum grade of E;
 6. Excelsior College Examinations (formerly ACT/PEP and Regents) – minimum grade of C;
 7. Accelerated online courses offered by providers approved by the University – minimum grade of C; and
 8. Credit recommendations issued by the American Council on Education (“ACE”) or the National College Credit Recommendation Service (“NCCRS”) from their evaluation of assessments, courses, experiences, or trainings.
- C. The University will maintain a catalog of qualifying scores and credit equivalencies for these external assessment methods.
- D. The assessments for awarding prior learning credits recognized by ACE include, but are not limited to, the following recognized college-credit services: www.acenet.edu.
 1. Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript Service (“AARTS”);
 2. Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (“SMART”);
 3. Coast Guard Transcript;
 4. Defense Activities for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) DSST Program;
 5. Excelsior College Examination Program-offered by Excelsior College, NY;
 6. Joint Services Transcripts (“JST”);
 7. Accelerated online courses offered by providers approved by the University;
 8. National College Credit Recommendation Service; and
 9. Excelsior College Examinations (“UEXCEL”) Credit by Exam Program.

IV. PRIOR LEARNING TRANSFER CREDIT

- A. The transfer of credit for prior learning follows the University's established policies related to transfer credits. The University strives to accept transfer credit for prior learning that has been awarded by other Maryland public two-year and four-year institutions, as well as other accredited colleges and universities approved by the University.
- B. This Policy is specifically for the evaluation of transfer credits that pertain to prior learning, and it does not extend to the evaluation of other types of transfer credits.

V. RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE AND OFFICES

The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (“Provost”) shall have the responsibility for monitoring the assessments used to award credit for prior learning as well as for demonstrating mastery of competencies in prior learning assessments and external assessment methods. The Provost may designate

the responsibility of monitoring the quality of the assessment instruments to the College of Interdisciplinary and Continuing studies or other appropriate designees.

- A. Responsible Executive: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- B. Responsible Office: College of Interdisciplinary and Continuing Studies
- C. Responsible Office: Enrollment Management and Student Success

VI. APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to students who have both matriculated at the University and are seeking a degree at the University.

VII. PROCEDURES

- A. Assessment and Awarding of Credits for Prior Learning Assessments and External Assessment Methods
 - 1. Assessment: The assessment of prior learning credit shall be determined by the faculty in the discipline of the specific subject matter with support from the College of Interdisciplinary and Continuing Studies. The assessments will adhere to the established prior learning assessment methods and the accreditation guidelines for academic programs at the University.
 - 2. Awarding of Credit: Provided that there is no duplication of academic credit, the University will grant credits for demonstrated competencies through the assessment methods outlined in Sections II through III of this Policy. Credits will only be awarded if the presented scores and assessments meet the standards approved by this and any other applicable University policy at the time of application.
 - 3. After an official review of the approved score or assessment, the source of each credit will be indicated on the student's transcript. Course equivalencies will be incorporated into the student's program of study, including general education, major, minor, or elective courses, as applicable. The University strives to maximize the recognition of previously acquired knowledge by granting credits accordingly.
 - 4. Up to fifty percent (50%) of a student's degree may be earned with credits from prior learning assessments and external assessment methods.
- B. Appeals
 - 1. Students may appeal, in writing, a decision on the award of credit for prior learning through the University's Academic Appeal Process as outlined in the University's Undergraduate Catalog.

***This policy was updated on November 21, 2024 for technical amendments.**