

## **Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission Credit for Prior Learning Standards**

### **Introduction:**

House Bill 4059, passed by the 2012 Oregon Legislature, directed the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to work with the State Board of Education, State Board of Higher Education, community college districts, independent not-for-profit institutions of higher education and the for-profit private career colleges to carry out specific goals for expanding and improving access to Credit for Prior Learning (CPL). One of the goals for the bill was to “increase the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning...., while ensuring that credit is awarded only for high quality course-level competencies.” The CPL Advisory Committee, under the auspices of the Commission, identified a set of implementation strategies in response to legislative goals outlined in the bill. One of strategies was to develop policies and state standards in collaboration with the higher education institutions to ensure colleges and universities develop and maintain high quality CPL opportunities for students.

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) directs Oregon postsecondary institutions that award CPL to adopt a set of standards. CPL These standards shall build on the recognition and acknowledgement that credit awarded for prior learning is granted only for evidence of learning and not solely on the basis of experience. Foundational to these standards is faculty involvement and use of their expertise to assess credit awarded to students. Credit may be awarded through these types of assessments:

#### Several Credit by Assessment @ Postsecondary Level:

- Portfolio
- Institutional Challenge Exams and other forms of assessment
- Credit – By-Exam (CLEP, DAN TES, etc.)
- ACE Credit Recommendation Service
- Industry Certifications

#### Credit by Agreement from Secondary Level:

- International Baccalaureate
- Advanced Placement

The HECC has identified eight standards that must be addressed by all Oregon postsecondary institutions. These areas include:

- Standard 1: Credit for Prior Learning
- Standard 2: Evidence-Based Assessment
- Standard 3: Cost/Tuition and Fee Structure
- Standard 4: Transferability and Transcription
- Standard 5: Data Collection and Reporting
- Standard 6: Faculty and Staff Development
- Standard 7: Oversight
- Standard 8: Transparency/Access

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**Standard 1: Credit for Prior Learning**

For those areas in which CPL is awarded, Oregon's postsecondary institutions shall develop institutional policies and procedures for awarding credit in response to the CPL Standards. The procedures must ensure credit is awarded only for high quality college-level competencies. The policies and procedures must be transparent to all students, faculty, staff and stakeholders.

**Resources:**

Oregon's Statewide International Baccalaureate Alignment Policy for the 2013-14 Academic Year:  
[http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/IBCourseCredit2013\\_14\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/IBCourseCredit2013_14_Final.pdf)

Oregon's Advanced Placement Course Credit for the 2013-14 Academic Year:  
[http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/APCourseCredit2013\\_14\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/APCourseCredit2013_14_Final.pdf)

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**Standard 2: Evidence-Based Assessment**

- 2.1 For those Oregon postsecondary institutions which award CPL, all credit must be based on sufficient evidence provided by the student and/or the institution. All evidence must be reviewed by the institution to document the credit awarded. The primary purpose of the review should be to have the student articulate and document the connection between what they have learned in another setting to the theoretical foundation, knowledge, and skills of the credit to be awarded.
- 2.2 Evidence provided by the institution must be based on nationally recognized assessment methods for each type of credit awarded for prior learning. Multiple assessment processes/tools may be used to determine the amount of credit awarded, including, but not limited to, institutionally developed tests or final examinations, performance-based assessments, demonstrations, presentations, portfolios, and industry certifications.
- 2.3 Credit awarded shall be evaluated by appropriately qualified faculty to determine the amount of credit to be awarded.
- 2.4 Institutions shall provide a guided process to assist students with organizing their documents for evaluation.

**Resources:**

Oregon's Statewide International Baccalaureate Alignment Policy for the 2013-14 Academic Year:

[http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/IBCourseCredit2013\\_14\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/IBCourseCredit2013_14_Final.pdf)

Oregon's Advanced Placement Course Credit for the 2013-14 Academic Year:

[http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/APCourseCredit2013\\_14\\_Final.pdf](http://www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/partner/k12/APCourseCredit2013_14_Final.pdf)

Marylhurst University Prior Learning Assessment:

<http://www.marylhurst.edu/academics/prior-learning-assessment/>

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### Standard 3: Cost/Tuition and Fee Structure

Oregon's postsecondary institutions that award CPL shall develop a cost/tuition fee structure. This structure must be transparent and accessible to all students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. Institutions should consider the following factors to identify direct and indirect costs related to assessing and awarding credit:

- Costs for student services to guide the student and to support the assessment process;
- Costs associated with faculty workload for the evaluation of CPL;
- Costs associated with recognizing and supporting faculty and staff who are involved in the assessment process including any costs related to training and staff development;
- Costs related to transcribing credit;
- Costs for developing portfolio infrastructure and conducting portfolio assessments; and
- Other costs associated with developing and assessing CPL such as challenge exams, review of ACE Credit Recommendations, etc.

#### **Resources:**

“Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.” (CAEL Ten Standards for Assessing Learning)

The **Washington** State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Guidelines for Assessment of Prior Learning state the following:

- “The fees for assessment will be based on actual costs plus reasonable. The fees will be based on the amount of credit requested, not the amount of credit awarded.
- Fees should be published and consistently applied.
- Fees should be consistent to the extent possible across the system”

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**Standard 4: Transferability and Transcription**

- 4.1 Oregon's postsecondary institutions that award CPL shall work with partnering institutions to promote transferability of CPL to ensure academic credit is awarded for only evidence based assessment of learning.
- 4.2 For institutions awarding CPL, processes must be in place for a student to request CPL for a course offered by the college in which the student is enrolled or will be enrolled. The institution must be able to determine the applicability of CPL towards a degree, certificate or elective credit and to determine how credits for prior learning are transferred from other institutions.
- 4.3 Academic credit will be awarded and transcribed only for those courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements at the college/university of enrollment and to the student's declared certificate or degree program as outlined in college publications. Institutions are encouraged to accept transfer of credit whenever possible.
- 4.4 All documentation and files regarding a student's prior learning credit will be maintained by the registrars' office.
- 4.5 All academic credit that is awarded must be transcribed to comply with state, federal regulations and accreditation policies and standards. Institutions granting CPL shall identify the type of credit granted on the students' transcripts. Notations on the transcript shall clearly identify the type of CPL Awarded. Types of CPL include:

Credit by Assessment @ Postsecondary Level:

- Portfolio
- Institutional Challenge Exams and other forms of assessment
- Credit – By-Exam (CLEP, DANTES, etc.)
- ACE Credit Recommendation Service
- Industry Certifications

Credit by Agreement @ Secondary Level:

- International Baccalaureate
- Advanced Placement

**Resources:**

- CAEL Assessment Standards
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Standards:

- 2.C.7 Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.
- 2.C.8 The final judgment in accepting transfer credit is the responsibility of the receiving institution. Transfer credit is accepted according to procedures which provide adequate safeguards to ensure high academic quality, relevance to the students' programs, and integrity of the receiving institution's degrees. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that the credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic quality, and level to credit it offers. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements between the institutions.

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**Standard 5: Data Collection & Reporting**

Institutions granting CPL shall collect and report data on the types of credit award. Data to be collected include the number of credits granted for and the number of students who receive credit thru CPL on the following types:

- Portfolio
- Challenge Exams
- Military CPL
- International Baccalaureate
- Advanced Placement
- Credit granted for other Prior Learning

**Resources:**

<b>Areas to be collected:</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Portfolio	Credit granted for the preparation and defense of a collection of evidence by a student to demonstrate and validate college-level credit for learning acquired outside of the classroom.
Challenge Exams	Credit granted thru the assessment of course student learning offered by the institution.  Credit granted for tests of learning – including DSST / DAN TES, CLEP, Excelsior, NYU Foreign Language, etc.,
Military Credit	Credit granted through evaluation of ACE published credit recommendations for formal instructional programs offered by non-collegiate agencies, both civilian employers and the military.  Or credit awarded through the evaluation of military experiential learning.
International Baccalaureate	Credit granted for International Baccalaureate
Advanced Placement Exams	Credit awarded thru the evaluation of Advanced Placement Exam scores
Other Credit for Prior Learning	Credit granted for other prior learning experiences Not listed in other areas.  Such as credit granted for industry certifications for proof of applied knowledge and skills in an industry-identified area.

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**Standard 6: Faculty and Staff Development**

Institutions shall develop a policy and strategic plan for Faculty and Staff Development for granting CPL. Widespread, overarching knowledge of the institutional opportunities for developing, assessing and recommending CPL should be foundational to this plan.

**Resources:**

All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform. (CAEL Ten Standards for Assessing Learning).

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities Standards:

- 2.C.7 it for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: a) guided by approved policies and procedures; b) awarded only at the undergraduate level to enrolled students; c) limited to a maximum of 25% of the credits needed for a degree; d) awarded only for documented student achievement equivalent to expected learning achievement for courses within the institution's regular curricular offerings; and e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Credit granted for prior experiential learning is so identified on students' transcripts and may not duplicate other credit awarded to the student in fulfillment of degree requirements. The institution makes no assurances regarding the number of credits to be awarded prior to the completion of the institution's review process.



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**Standard 7: Oversight**

Institutions granting CPL shall organize a cross-functional (student services, instruction, registrar, etc.) CPL Leadership Teams. The team shall be responsible for to conducting ongoing evaluations of institutional CPL policies, standards, procedures, and practices. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall review the accomplishments of each team through a periodic audit process to ensure credit is being awarded for high quality assessment activities.

**Resources:**

Tennessee Prior Learning Assessment Task Force made recommendations for “the Periodic review of PLA policies”. These recommendations can be found on page 13 of the 2012 Recommended Standards Report:

[http://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server\\_files/files/Recommendations%20for%20Standards%20in%20PLA%20-%20Final%20Version%201-1.pdf](http://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Recommendations%20for%20Standards%20in%20PLA%20-%20Final%20Version%201-1.pdf)

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**Standard 8: Transparency/Access**

Institutions granting CPL shall develop a communication plan for students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. This plan shall be developed by including faculty, and student services with a goal to build a widespread, overarching knowledge of the institutional opportunities for CPL. Information should be made electronically at all institutions and be searchable using the term “CPL”. Information on how to access the following shall be included:

- Institutional CPL Contacts;
- Cost/Tuition and Fee Structure(s); and
- Available CPL opportunities and the learning outcomes assessed.

**Resources:**

Tennessee Prior Learning Assessment Task Force made recommendations for “Maintaining Transparency and Consistency” These recommendations can be found on pages 13-14 of the 2012 Recommended Standards Report:

[http://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server\\_files/files/Recommendations%20for%20Standards%20in%20PLA%20-%20Final%20Version%201-1.pdf](http://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Recommendations%20for%20Standards%20in%20PLA%20-%20Final%20Version%201-1.pdf)

## Glossary of Terms

**Advanced Placement (AP) Exams:** A series of tests developed by the College Board initially for AP High School courses. This is also a type of early postsecondary educational opportunity.

**American Council on Education (ACE) Guidelines:** Published credit recommendations for formal instructional programs and examinations offered by non-collegiate agencies (including civilian employers, the military, professional associations, and other workplace related-training).

**Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL):** National nonprofit organization that works at all levels within the higher education, public, and private sectors. Responsible for the development of 10 standards related to Credit for Prior Learning.

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams:** Tests of college material offered by the College Board.

**Credit for Prior Learning (CPL):** Granting of college-level credit for prior learning. Per HB 4059, “prior learning” is defined as the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience, through military training and experience and through formal and informal education and training from institutions of higher education in the United States and in other nations.

**Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs):** DSSTs are examinations administered by Prometric. While originally being restricted to active and retired military personnel, these tests are now available to civilians.

**Evidence-Based Assessment:** The process of documenting student knowledge, skills and abilities to demonstrate achievement of identified course outcomes.

**International Baccalaureate Programs (IB):** An internationally accepted qualification for entry into institutes of higher education, much like the AP program. Designed for students ages 16 to 19, it is a two-year curriculum that leads up to a final examination. To receive a diploma, students must achieve a minimum score and have completed satisfactory participation in the creativity, action, service requirement.

**Portfolio:** Credit granted for the preparation and defense of a collection of evidence by a student to demonstrate and validate college-level credit for learning acquired outside of the classroom.