

Academic Credit for Prior Learning

A handbook for faculty and staff

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CONTENTS

Purpose and Context	1
Assessing Learning Outcomes	3
Reporting Progress	7
Appendix A: Legislation	8
APPENDIX B: Accreditation	10
APPENDIX C: Crosswalks.....	10
APPENDIX D: Sample Policies.....	12
APPENDIX E: Community and Technical College Guidelines	17
APPENDIX F: Community and Technical College Coding Policy	20
APPENDIX G: Community and Technical College Reciprocity Policy	25
APPENDIX H: Washington State Institutions' Policies on Academic Credit for Prior Learning.....	27

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

This guide is designed to help colleges develop policies and implement practices to meet the goals established in [RCW 28B.77.230.^a](#)

1. Increase the number of students earning academic credit for prior learning that counts toward major, degree, certificates, or credentials.
2. Increase the number and type of academic credits accepted as academic credit for prior learning.
3. Develop transparent policies and practices in awarding academic credit for prior learning.
4. Improve practices across institutions.
5. Create tools to develop faculty and staff knowledge and expertise in awarding academic credit for prior learning; share best practices
6. Develop articulation agreements for programs and pathways.
7. Develop outcome measures to track progress on the goals listed above.

This guide also offers:

- Background information on the importance of credit for prior learning in Washington.
- An introduction to the basic elements of assessing and awarding academic credit for prior learning.
- Examples of current policies, processes and practices.

For more detailed information and references, see the Washington Student Achievement Council [webpage¹](#) on academic credit for prior learning, which includes links to the annual reports to the Legislature.

BACKGROUND

For many years, community colleges in Washington State have attempted to provide adults with opportunities to earn credit for what they already know and can do. Across the system, individual colleges have a variety of practices, policies and procedures in place. To provide equitable access to students across the state, institutions must develop consistent and transparent policies and guidelines on assessing and awarding academic credit for prior learning.

DEFINING PRIOR LEARNING

^a Related legislation may be found in Appendix A.

In 2011, the Washington State Legislature defined prior learning 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 in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions.²”

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING

Assessment of prior learning allows people to earn credit and recognition for the skills and knowledge they have already acquired. Generally, an assessment of prior learning occurs after the student has enrolled in an institution. If the assessment is provided without accompanying instruction in the subject area, mastery of the subject matter is understood to be a result of prior learning. This assessment of prior learning should not be confused with assessments provided within a course of instruction, to provide opportunities for accelerated advancement through a course, as is possible in competency-based courses.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

Students in the community and technical colleges represent a large, diverse group of individuals. They bring with them a wealth of previous learning acquired through life experiences including work, training and independent study. Students need coursework which builds upon their existing knowledge, without duplicating what they already know and can do. Many students are voicing their desire for assessment of prior learning before they take college courses.

Employers and organizations outside of the college system—such as private businesses, apprenticeship programs, the military services, and the Washington State Legislature—have also identified the need to increase assessment and awards of academic credit for prior learning. Assessing and awarding academic credit for prior learning can help colleges be more responsive to the needs of both students and employers.

STUDENT RETENTION AND COMPLETION

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), with support from the Lumina Foundation for Education, conducted a multi-institutional study on academic credit for prior learning and adult student outcomes. They used the records of 62,475 students at 48 colleges and universities. The data from CAEL’s 2010 study, [*Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success*](#),³ show that students who earned academic credit for prior learning had better academic outcomes, particularly in terms of graduation rates and persistence, than other adult students. Many students with prior learning credit also took less time to earn a degree, depending on the number of credits earned. Students with credit for prior learning also had much higher degree-earning rates than students without credit for prior learning. More than half of the students with academic credit for prior learning—56 percent—earned a postsecondary degree within seven years. However, only 21 percent of those without prior learning credit earned a degree during this time period.

ACCREDITATION CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to note that the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, the regional accrediting body for Washington State public institutions of higher education, has set a cap on credit for prior experiential learning. No more than 25 percent of the credits needed for a specific certificate or degree may be credits awarded for prior experiential learning.⁴ The chart below shows the categories of assessment and related accreditation standards.⁵

Category	Examples	Standards
Credit by testing	Standardized exams such as CLEP, DSST	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Extra-institutional learning	ACE recommendations for military training; industry crosswalks; industry certifications	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Course challenges	Written, oral, or demonstration assessments, generally developed by faculty.	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Prior experiential learning	A portfolio compilation of evidence identifying learning outcomes mastered through a variety of experiences.	2.C.7

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The assessment of prior learning, although long associated with portfolio development and assessment, can also be accomplished by using a variety of other methods. These include course challenge and oral examinations; standardized tests; credits earned through the American Council of Education's College Equivalency Program (military education and training); the systematic observation of skill demonstrations, including role plays and simulations; and the evaluation of case studies or other assignments.

Mastery of learning outcomes can be measured in a variety of ways. The categories of assessment described below are those most commonly used to assess whether or not students have met the learning outcomes for a specific course or program. These same categories are used in data collection for the annual progress report to the Washington State Legislature.

CREDIT BY TESTING

Examples of standardized exams which fall under this category include DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), College Level Exam Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Cambridge International (CI) exams. DSST exams are available to assess learning outcomes for course content in business, humanities, math, physical science, social sciences and technology. CLEP exams are available to assess learning outcomes for course content in composition and literature, world languages, history and social sciences, science and mathematics, and business.

High schools administer AP, IB, and CI to assess mastery of specific subject learning outcomes. Higher scores on the exams show evidence of mastering college-level learning outcomes. In general, public baccalaureate institutions in Washington will award college credit to a student with an AP score of 3 or higher in a specific subject area. Policies on acceptance of specific exams and scores, by institution, may be accessed through an [online dual credit search tool](#).⁶

EXTRA-INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

Examples include American Council of Education (ACE) recommendations for military training and education, and occupational crosswalks matching on-the-job learning outcomes and industry certifications such as NCLEX-RN to college course outcomes.

MILITARY TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The [ACE Military Guide](#)⁷ bridges the gap between learning outcomes identified in military terms and learning outcomes described in terms associated with higher education. The guide provides recommendations for granting credit based on the ACE review of the type and extent of military training and the corresponding college courses.

OCCUPATIONAL CROSSWALKS

Crosswalks describe how training programs, including apprenticeships, other standardized training, and industry certificates, compare to a college's current course offerings. Faculty evaluate the curriculum and learning outcomes of the prior training program to determine how well it matches the learning outcomes in their own courses. This creates a clearly articulated connection—a crosswalk—between the two sets of learning outcomes. Once a crosswalk is created, it can be used to grant students credits for their experience without additional assessments, and without re-assessing a common prior learning program.

COURSE CHALLENGES

Course challenge exams can be written, verbal, or demonstration assessments through which a student demonstrates achievement of specific course objectives. Course challenge exams are generally created by faculty. Examples include comprehensive final exams for college courses, administered to determine mastery of course content. This method is simple to implement, as comprehensive exams are commonly used to assess mastery of course objectives in regular college courses, and are already in use.

Considerations

1. Budget for faculty compensation to proctor and, if needed, to develop the exams.
2. Consult with faculty to identify entry level courses to which students tend to bring relevant prior experience.
3. Contract with faculty to develop challenge exams or use existing comprehensive final exams.
4. Communicate with your college registrars, advisors, faculty, students and others on your campus, that challenge exams are available.

PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

A variety of learning experiences can be assessed through a portfolio review. The student creates a portfolio of prior experiences, articulating how the prior learning led the student to mastery of specific course learning outcomes. This portfolio is a compilation of evidence identifying learning outcomes mastered through a variety of experiences. The evidence may be in the form of certificates, pictures of projects, affidavits from employers, writing to prove understanding and application, video, and so forth.

Students often need help translating their life experience into learning objectives, and identifying evidence to demonstrate their mastery of the objectives. Colleges may offer a portfolio class to guide students through the portfolio development process. This is a way to facilitate students' reflection on their learning preferences and challenges. A portfolio class can also teach the skills required to articulate how prior learning meets the outcomes of specific college credit courses. Some colleges offer a technical writing credit for the portfolio development course, itself, with students submitting their portfolios for additional credit. The portfolio method of assessing prior learning usually involves more time on both the part of the student and the part of the faculty/assessor, than other methods of assessment.

Considerations

1. Determine, with faculty, if a need for a portfolio class exists
 - a. Are students coming into class with lots of previous experience? Can evidence be provided that the course objectives have been met?
2. Check to see if your college has current curriculum for a portfolio development course.
3. If current portfolio development curriculum doesn't already exist, do one of the following:
 - a. Adapt or adopt portfolio development curriculum from other colleges in the Washington community and technical college system.
 - b. Develop curriculum.
 - c. Look online for other open resources in portfolio development.

4. Communicate with all appropriate campus staff and faculty about the portfolio development process and course, if one is offered.

ALIGNING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

[RCW 28B.77.230](#) requires public and independent institutions and private career schools to collaborate through a WSAC-convened work group and develop transparent policies and practices to award academic credit for prior learning. In addition, [RCW 28B.10.057](#) requires that each institution of higher education adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training applicable to the student’s certificate or degree requirements.

Accordingly, the Academic Credit for Prior Learning work group created sample policies^b based on national research and effective practices, and offers them for adaption and adoption by institutions. All institutions— public, private and proprietary—are encouraged to consider adoption of these policies so that standards relating to assessing and awarding credit for prior learning may be comparable for students at all institutions of higher education in the state, increasing transferability and portability.

It is important to note is that, although there may be variations across the state, all policies, processes and practices should align with [NWCCU standards](#), [WACTC-adopted guidelines](#), other system-level guidelines, and institutional policies^c.

CODING AND COLLECTING DATA

Coding is critical to tracking and assessing progress toward the legislatively-mandated goals. Consistent and accurate coding will allow for clear documentation of progress in increasing the number of students and the number of academic credits being awarded for prior learning. The Legislature requires WSAC to provide this information in its annual progress report.

Process

Each summer, the Washington Student Achievement Council requests data on the number of students and number of credits awarded through prior learning assessment. This request is sent to each of the 34 community and technical colleges, the 6 public baccalaureate institutions, and the 10 independent colleges of Washington. Public post-secondary institutions are required to submit their policies regarding academic credit for prior learning for military training and education to the state workgroup. WSAC includes credit data and links to institutional policies in the annual progress report to the Legislature.

^b Sample policies may be found in Appendix D.

^c Additional community and technical college system guidelines and policies may be found in Appendices E, F, and G.

Requested data

1. Name of the campus.
2. Name of the person submitting the data.
3. Contact email.
4. Link to the institution's policies on academic credit for prior learning.
5. Link to the institution's policy on awarding academic credit for military training and education.
6. Data for each quarter, including:
 - a. Number of students (unduplicated) awarded academic credit for prior learning.
 - b. Number of semester or quarter credits awarded.
 - c. Totals of each for the year.

REPORTING PROGRESS

Based on the data collected, the Washington Student Achievement Council, in collaboration with partners represented in the Academic Credit for Prior Learning Workgroup, prepares an annual report outlining the progress made toward the state goals. WSAC sends this report to the Legislature by December 31 of each year.

APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION

2010 – [SB 6357](#), ACADEMIC CREDIT POLICIES – PRIOR LEARNING

SB 6357, passed by the 2010 Legislature, found that “Washington institutions of higher education [need to] develop valued, reliable, and transparent policies regarding the academic recognition of prior significant life and learning experiences to be consistently applied at all Washington institutions of higher education.”

- Directed SBCTC to bring stakeholder groups together and “develop policies for awarding academic credit for learning from work and military experience, military and law enforcement training, career college training, internships and externships, and apprenticeships”
- Policies that should “provide for consistent application by all institutions of higher education and a basis for accurate and complete academic counseling.”
- Report to the Legislature December 2010 with recommendations.

2011 – [RCW 28B.77.230](#), ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING – GOALS – WORK GROUP – REPORTS

- Purpose of workgroup: to coordinate and implement the goals from 6357 and report progress on goals and outcome measures by December 31st of each year.
- Definition: For the purposes of this section, "prior learning" means the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience; through military training and experience; and through formal and informal education and training from in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions.
- Established goals:
 - Increase number of students earning academic credit for prior learning, and number of students receiving academic credit for prior learning that counts toward major, degree, certificates, credentials (high quality, course-level competencies).
 - Increase number and type of academic credit accepted as academic credit for prior learning.
 - Develop transparent policies and practices.
 - Improve practices across institutions.
 - Create tools to develop faculty and staff knowledge and expertise in awarding academic credit for prior learning; share best practices.
 - Develop articulation agreements for programs and pathways.
 - Develop outcome measures for above.

2014 – [RCW 28B.10.057](#), ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING

- Each institution must adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training. The policy applies to military training that is:
 - Recommended for credit by ACE.
 - Included in a military transcript.
 - Other documented military training or experience.
- Each institution must develop a procedure for receiving documentation to verify military training.
- Each institution must submit its policy for credit for military training to the academic credit for prior learning work group.

APPENDIX B: ACCREDITATION

NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES⁸

Relevant sections of Standard Two^d

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; 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.

2.D.10

The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates a systematic and effective program of academic advisement to support student development and success. Personnel responsible for advising students are knowledgeable of the curriculum, program requirements, and graduation requirements and are adequately prepared to successfully fulfill their responsibilities. Advising requirements and responsibilities are defined, published, and made available to students.

^d Standard Two includes resources and capacity standards.

APPENDIX C: CROSSWALKS

Crosswalks compare college course outcomes with industry training. This example compares outcomes of *Administration of Justice, Criminal Law* with outcomes of the Washington State Basic Law Enforcement Academy.

AJ Class: Criminal Law (CJ&110) (5)		Basic Law Enforcement Academy	
I.A. (1)	Understand the statutory measures in combating organized crime	I.A. (1)	Know the groups and activities associated with terrorism and extremism in the United States , and indicators of such activities
I.A. (2)	Understand the availability and applicability of affirmative defenses to criminal charges	I.A. (2)	Identify the gambling offenses in RCW 9.46
I.B. (1)	Understand the functions of criminal law and the constitutional limitations of it	I.B. (1)	Given a variety of scenarios, determine if a crime has occurred
I.B. (2)	Know the elements of homicide, rape, burglary, theft and other selected crimes	I.B. (1)	Apply the four criteria of the Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) to determine when a person should be taken into custody
I.B. (3)	Distinguish felony from misdemeanor	I.B. (1)	Explain the Uniform Alcoholism Treatment Act
I.B. (4)	Explain the scheme of the Uniform Controlled Substances Act	I.B. (1)	Explain the legislative intent of domestic violence (DV) laws, and articulate the law enforcement goals therein
		I.B. (2)	Recognize the elements of robbery, kidnapping and related crimes, and determine probable cause for arrest for these crimes
		I.B. (2)	Identify the appropriate offense involving crimes against children
		I.B. (2)	Identify common forms of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and recognize key elements of pertinent criminal statutes relating thereto
		I.B. (2)	Differentiate between the different types of fraud and provide examples of each
		I.B. (2)	Differentiate between the crimes of theft and identity theft
		I.B. (2)	Identify offenses relating to noise disturbances, identify elements, and apply rules of interpretation to key words therein
		I.B. (2)	Identify what constitutes failing to obey a police officer and eluding a police vehicle
		I.B. (2)	Explain the key elements of RCW9A.76.200 – Harming a Police Dog
		I.B. (2)	Apply DV laws, criminal laws, and criminal procedures to DV calls
		I.B. (3)	Differentiate between the classes of crimes
		I.B.(3)	Explain the four mental states of culpability
		I.B.(3)	Differentiate between a dangerous and deadly weapon as per RCW
		I.B. (3)	Demonstrate an understanding of laws pertaining to firearms by choosing an appropriate course of enforcement action when confronted with persons in possession of firearms
		I.B. (3)	Compare and contrast the different charging documents used in Washington State
		I.B. (3)	Given various scenarios, identify the appropriate offense and identify the elements and key words of each
		I.B. (4)	Explain and apply sections of RCW Title 69, Chapter 50

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE POLICIES FOR INSTITUTIONS

[RCW 28B.77.230](#) requires public and independent institutions and private career schools to collaborate (through a WSAC-convened work group) to develop transparent policies and practices in awarding academic credit for prior learning. In addition, [RCW 28B.10.057](#) requires that each institution of higher education adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training applicable to the student's certificate or degree requirements.

Accordingly, the Academic Credit for Prior Learning work group creates policies based on national research and effective practices, and offers them for adaption and adoption by institutions. All institutions - public, private and proprietary - are encouraged to consider adoption of these policies so that standards relating to assessing and awarding credit for prior learning may be comparable for students at all institutions of higher education in the state, enabling greater transferability and portability.

SAMPLE POLICY 1: ASSESSING AND AWARDING ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Purpose of Policy

This policy is intended to facilitate the assessment, award and transcription of academic credit for prior learning.

Washington State is committed to fostering an educated and skilled workforce, which is essential for economic prosperity and meaningful work for its citizens. Increased enrollment in – and successful completion of – postsecondary learning programs is critical to achieving that goal. Academic credit for prior learning can help more students complete their training and degree programs sooner.

Definitions

- ***Prior Learning*** as defined by the Washington State Legislature in RCW 28B.77.230, is the “knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience; through military training and experience; and through formal and informal education and training from in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions.”
- ***Prior Experiential Learning*** includes the skills, knowledge and attitudes gained through non-formal (mainly work-based) and informal (life-experience) means.
- ***Assessment of Prior Learning*** is primarily accomplished through standardized tests, course challenge examinations, portfolio evaluation, and crosswalks between work-based learning and college courses.

- *Award of Credit for Prior Learning* occurs when a student's prior learning outcomes are assessed and determined to be the equivalent of the learning outcomes attained upon completion of a college course, and if the award of credit aligns with the student's education pathway.

Faculty

The faculty role in assessing student learning outcomes is clearly defined in the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities accreditation standards. Standard 2.C.5 states, "... Faculty with teaching responsibilities take collective responsibility for fostering and assessing student achievement of clearly identified learning outcomes" and, 2.C.7 states, "Credit for prior experiential learning, if granted, is: ... e) granted only upon the recommendation of appropriately qualified teaching faculty."

Eligibility

Students eligible to receive credit for prior learning must be enrolled at the awarding institution.

Applicability

Assessing and awarding academic credit for prior learning is appropriate for courses which are currently offered by the institution which will award the credit, and for courses which will contribute to the completion of the student's certificate or degree pathway.

Number of Credits

The number of credits for prior learning accepted by institutions should be limited only by the residency requirements of the institution, requirements of the regional and other accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and consistent with the student degree plan or career goals.

Assessment and Validation

Institutions may award credit for learning which is determined to match a significant percentage (as stated in policy of the awarding institution) of the stated learning outcomes for the course for which the credit will be awarded. The following guidelines and methods are acceptable for use by faculty assessing or validating prior learning for awarding credit:

1. Credit recommendations listed in the American Council on Education (ACE) National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training and the ACE Military Guide.
2. Credit recommendations listed by National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS).
3. Credit demonstrated by successfully passing national for-credit examination programs.

4. Degree-relevant prior learning credit awarded and transcribed by other similarly accredited institutions.
5. Individual portfolios using standardized portfolio guidelines or portfolio assessment standards developed by the institution.
6. Industry-recognized certifications.
7. Institutionally-prepared examinations. Institutional validation procedures should be objective to the extent that external evaluators would reach the same conclusion given the material reviewed.
8. Crosswalks (program evaluations of non-collegiate instructional programs) adopted by institutions as evaluation of non-transcribed learning equivalent to college courses.

Application of Credits

Academic credit for prior learning may be applied to degree or program requirements in the same manner as credits earned through course completion at the awarding institution.

Transferability

Once recorded at a Washington State public institution of higher education, prior learning credit is transferable to any other institution on the same basis as if the credit had been earned through regular study at the awarding institution.

Fees

Administration, assessment and transcription fees should be transparent and consistent across the institution. Fees should reflect actual costs, irrespective of the number of credits awarded.

Considerations for creating fee schedules

1. Fees may vary depending on the (a) type of assessment administered; (b) staff time necessary to administer and evaluate assessment and transcribe credit; (c) and salary for faculty and staff responsible for assessment, administration and transcription.
2. Award of academic credit for prior learning is expected to decrease both time to degree and cost of completion of a certificate or degree.

Tracking

The number of students receiving credit for prior learning, number of credits awarded for prior learning, and type of assessment methods administered should be accurately and consistently coded and tracked. This information is required for inclusion in an annual report to the Washington State Legislature.

Information and Dissemination

Policies and general information about the availability of academic credit for prior learning will be made widely available to current and prospective students. Processes and fees will be clearly defined and available on institution websites or published in other publications, and information about academic credit for prior learning will be available during student orientations.

Faculty, administrative staff, and student advisors will receive information about policies regarding academic credit for prior learning, on an annual basis.

Review

This policy should be reviewed on an annual basis by the appropriate committee(s) of the institution adopting it.

SAMPLE POLICY 2: AWARDING ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR PRIOR MILITARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Purpose

This sample policy is provided to assist institutions with meeting the requirement of [RCW 28B.10.057](#). Each institution must adopt a policy on awarding academic credit for military training applicable to the student's certificate or degree requirements. Each institution must also provide a copy of the policy to the academic credit for prior learning workgroup.

In addition to the general policy on awarding academic credit for prior learning, the following apply to all students with prior military education and training.

Validation of Military Learning

Military service provides opportunities for a learning in a wide range of areas of study. Credit may be granted for satisfactory completion of the following (or other means as described in the general policy):

1. Military service, including basic training, as determined through established crosswalks of learning outcomes comparison to specific college courses.
2. Military service schools and specific training as recommended by the American Council of Education (ACE). See ACE publication, "Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces."
3. United States Armed Forces Institute courses.
4. DANTES subject standard tests (DSSTs) using the minimum score and credit amount based on ACE credit recommendations.

5. Portfolio assessment.

Information and Dissemination

Policies and general information about the availability of academic credit for prior military training and education will be made widely available to current and prospective students. Processes and fees will be clearly defined and available on institution websites or published in other publications, and information about academic credit for prior learning will be available during student orientations.

Also, faculty, administrative staff and student advisors will receive information about policies regarding assessing and awarding academic credit for prior learning, including evaluation of military transcripts and use of ACE guides, on an annual basis.

Review

This policy should be reviewed on an annual basis by the appropriate committee(s) of the institution adopting it.

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE GUIDELINES

Assessment⁹

Prior learning assessment methods include portfolio development; course challenge and oral examinations; standardized tests; credits earned through the American Council of Education's Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services (ACE Guide); the systematic observation of skill demonstrations, including role plays and simulations; and the evaluation of case studies or other assignments.)

- Assessment of the learning should be the responsibility of faculty who are content specialists from the awarding institution, and the names and qualifications of those making an assessment should be recorded.
- Practices used in assessing prior learning should be consistent with good contemporary assessment methodology.
- Learning assessed for post-secondary credit should be:
 - Linked to established learning outcomes or other criteria consistent with institutional standards for a given course. It should not be linked to time spent;
 - Transferable to contexts other than the one in which it was learned;
 - Current and relevant;
 - At a level of achievement equivalent to that of other learners engaged in studies at that level in that program or subject area;
 - Assessed using a range of strategies consistent with institutional standards for a given course.

Credit

- Faculty, as the content specialists, will assess and recognize prior learning and will make the determination of credit awards, with external advice as necessary. Credit may be granted only upon the recommendation of faculty who are appropriately qualified and who are on a regular appointment with the college on a continuing basis.
- Learners may be awarded recognition for demonstrating college-level learning that combines theory and practice, not for experience alone.
- The number of credits to be granted should be determined by the institution, based on their identified learning outcomes or other criteria.

- Credit will be awarded for demonstrated learning outcomes that are appropriate to the subject, course or program offered at the awarding institution.

Learner Orientation/Preparation

- Learners should have access to adequate information about and orientation to all academic credit for prior learning processes. Information could be available in quarterly schedules and in other marketing materials from a single point of contact.
- Institutions should offer a variety of opportunities to support learners' progress through the assessment process; for example, single point of contact, advisors, one-stop access, and portfolio templates.

Administration and Support

General

- Institutions will regularly monitor, review, evaluate and revise prior learning assessment policies and practices to maintain and improve institutional standards.
- Policies and information about prior learning assessment processes, including provision for appeal, will be readily available.
- Nationally administered examinations, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dantes and CLEP could be brought into a course in the college catalog or can be handled separately based on local college decisions.
- The Instruction Commission recommends that academic credit for prior learning must be tied to catalogue offerings.

Fees/Enrollment

- The fees for assessment will be based on actual costs plus reasonable administration. 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.

Transcripts/Transfer

- Grades or credits will be assigned to academic credit for prior learning awards and will be entered accordingly on the learner's transcript.

- Credits earned through academic credit for prior learning at Washington Community and Technical Colleges will be accepted toward the appropriate course or program at any other Washington Community and Technical College.

APPENDIX F: COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE CODING POLICY

AWARDING CREDIT FOR NON-TRADITIONAL LEARNING¹⁰

March 5, 2015

Background

Credit for non-traditional learning encompasses many different methods of learning and has significant impacts for students and institutions. Classifying and awarding credit for areas that fall outside of traditional college courses has been a highly discussed topic throughout the Washington Community and Technical College system (CTC), on the state level and on a federal level.

Because coding practices varied greatly, the college presidents assigned the task of establishing standardized coding to the Instruction Commission. A workgroup of the Admissions and Registration Council drafted a framework that provided standardization while allowing for flexibility. The Data Governance Committee routed the proposal to the commissions and approved the final procedures in May 2014. The High School 21+ (HS21+) prior learning assessment coding was added to the document in October 2014.

This document outlines the coding procedures for a systematic approach that will create clarity and standardization while complying with accreditation, national practices, and our existing student management systems. These procedures are based upon information taken from the CTC Articulation and Transfer Council, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, existing legislation and the statewide Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup to establish a set process for transcription.

Considerations

Common topics of discussion were as follows:

1. FTE generation: Eligibility for FTE generation should be pursuant to the SBCTC policy manual.
2. Fees: The fees associated with the evaluation and awarding credit for non-traditional learning are at the discretion of each college. There are no additional fees associated to awarding credit below college level for HS21+.
3. Compliance: The below procedures are in compliance with legislative mandates and accreditation standards. They also create a uniform system for reporting credit awarded to assist with meeting legislative requirements.

4. Grading: If graded, the transcribed passing grade will reflect the grading policies of the college. Unsuccessful attempts/evaluations will not result in transcription.
5. Transcript Notation: Classifications will be noted on transcripts for experiential learning only as described in this document.
6. Implementation timeline: The target implementation date is fall quarter 2014. Colleges may implement these procedures at an earlier time.
7. Financial Aid: Awarding of credits for non-traditional learning may impact financial aid eligibility. In accordance with accreditation standards, Prior Experiential Learning is limited to 25% of a credential. This does not include HS21+ because accreditation has no authority over this category. The other categories have no limitations.
8. Modifications: Modifications to this document will be under the direction of the Data Governance Committee.

Procedure Overview

Credit awarded for non-traditional learning will be transcribed in the year quarter (YRQ/STRM) that it was assessed. Unique codes will be used to assist in tracking and reporting credits awarded for non-traditional learning. In accordance with accreditation standards, credits awarded for prior experiential learning will be differentiated as such on the transcript.

There will be situations where credit may be awarded even though the awarding institution does not have a course which is a direct correlation. In these instances, courses will be transcribed under the general category for which they fulfill (ex. Social Science or Psychology).

The CTC system will recognize four categories of Credit for Non-Traditional Learning, as follows:

1. Credit by Testing – Commonly accepted higher education equivalency exams that are documented via a transcript or other official record.

This category will NOT be noted on transcripts as awarded for prior learning and includes:

- a. Advanced Placement (AP)
 - b. International Baccalaureate (IB)
 - c. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - d. DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
 - e. Cambridge “A” Level Exam
2. Prior Experiential Learning – Knowledge and skills acquired through experience alone, evaluated (subjectively) by faculty via evaluation of a compilation of work. All prior learning assessment HS21+ credits are awarded through prior experiential learning portfolio review.

This category WILL be noted on transcripts as awarded for prior learning in accordance with accreditation standards and includes:

- a. Portfolio Review
 - b. HS21+ Portfolio Review
3. Extra-Institutional Learning – Knowledge and skills acquired outside the institution and objectively verified through third-party certifications, industry-recognized testing/training, crosswalks.

This category will NOT be noted on transcripts as awarded for prior learning and includes:

- c. Individual industry certifications (e.g., NCLEX-RN)
 - d. Occupational Crosswalks (Police, Fire, AmeriCorps, Military, etc.)
 - e. American Council on Education (ACE)
4. Course Challenges – Challenge examinations are sufficiently comprehensive to determine that the student has the same knowledge and skills as those students who enroll in, and successfully complete, the course. A student should have previous training, private study, work experience, or other bona fide qualifications indicating the student has knowledge or abilities equivalent to course completers.

Some course challenges occur prior to enrollment in the course and others are assessed after registration. If the assessment occurs prior to enrollment, the student should not be registered in the course, but be charged a fee and the credit awarded through direct transcription with the corresponding section code as shown below. This category will NOT be noted on transcripts as awarded for prior learning.

Legacy Direct Transcription Procedure

When awarding credit for prior learning in the legacy system, use the direct transcription procedure and designated Section code as described below.

Credit by Testing

- A#P – Advanced Placement (AP)
- I#B – International Baccalaureate (IB)
- C#P – College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- DST – DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
- CLE – Cambridge “A” Level Exam

Prior Experiential Learning

- PEL - Portfolio Review (college level credits)
- HSP – HS21+ Portfolio Review (less than college level credits)

Extra-Institutional Learning

- CRT - Individual industry certifications
- OCW - Occupational Crosswalks
- ACE – American Council on Education (ACE)

Course Challenges

- CBE – Credit by Exam

If equivalent course exists

1. Instruction approves the awarding of credit.
2. Course information is directly transcribed in screen SM6013.
 - a. Utilize unique section codes, as previously defined (i.e. “A#P”, “PEL”, “OCW”).
 - b. Utilize a valid item number associated to the course in which credits are being granted. (This is for PeopleSoft conversion purposes.)
 - c. If graded, the transcribed PASSING grade will reflect the grading policies of the college. Unsuccessful attempts/evaluations will not result in transcription.
 - d. YRQ awarded is YRQ posted. A specific YRQ is used, *not* a universal YRQ (Z999).
3. For experiential learning only, notation is made in the transcript comments screen (SM6012)
 - a. Use a specific YRQ, not a universal YRQ (Z999).
 - b. Specific course and source are noted with consistent language (abbreviations will be used as needed)

Examples

- a. “ENGL&101 awarded from Exp Learning”
 - b. “CMST&210 awarded for Exp Learning”
 - c. “ENGL 95 awarded from HS21+ Exp Learning”
4. For course challenges when the student is registered and tuition is charged:

- a. Create a new section of the class using section code “CBE”
- b. Enroll the student into this section.
- c. Grade the student per college grading policy.

For course challenges when the student is not registered into the class and a fee is charged, use the above noted direct transcription procedure with a section code of “CBE”.

If equivalent course does not exist

1. Noted as a comment on the transcript.
2. Instruction approves the awarding of credit.
3. Notation is made in the transcript comments (SM6012)
 - a. Specific YRQ is used, not Z999.
 - b. No grade is awarded because it is not an available field.
 - c. Category, credits and source are noted with consistent language.
 - i. Examples
 1. “10 credits Soc Science awarded from AP”
 2. “10 credits Soc Science awarded from IB”
 3. “10 credits Soc Science awarded from CLEP”
 4. “10 credits Soc Science awarded from Cambridge”
 5. “10 credits Soc Science awarded from Exp Learning”
 6. “5 credits Soc Science awarded from HS21+”

APPENDIX G: COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE RECIPROCITY POLICY

INTER-COLLEGE RECIPROCITY POLICY¹¹

Approved by Instruction Commission, February 2005

Residency Requirement Updated by the Articulation & Transfer Council, April 2005

Diversity Requirement added by Instruction Commission, May 2011

Added statement that includes reciprocity of Prior Learning Credit, May 2012

Background

It is healthy and desirable to promote diversity among the transfer curricula at various community and technical colleges. This diversity allows colleges to meet specific community needs and interests, to develop innovations and best practices, and to capitalize on unique faculty and institutional resources, campus to campus.

However, as students, of necessity, transfer among colleges, it is equally important to ensure that they are not penalized by the differences in the specific requirements imposed by individual campuses within the general guidelines of the Transfer degrees (DTA and AS-T) as approved by the Instruction Commission.

In the spirit of compromise between these competing interests, colleges of the Washington State CTC system have developed and adopted guidelines, as follows, for reciprocity of transfer coursework among colleges.

Reciprocity of Individual Courses

If a student transfers an individual course that meets a Communication Skills, Quantitative Skills or Distribution Requirement at the sending college for a specific transfer degree, that course is considered to have met that requirement at the receiving college for a similar transfer degree, even if this course does not have an exact equivalent and even if the course credit is awarded through prior learning credit.

If a student transfers an individual course that meets a Diversity Requirement at the sending college for a specific transfer degree, that course is considered to have met that requirement at the receiving college for a similar transfer degree, even if this course does not have an exact equivalent and even if the course credit is awarded through prior learning credit.

Reciprocity of Distribution Areas/Specific Requirements

The receiving institution will accept an entire Distribution, Communication Skills, Quantitative Skills, or other requirement for a transfer degree as met if that student:

- A. Has met the sending institution's residency credit and meets the receiving institution's policy on continuous enrollment (enrollment pattern needed to complete under the catalog at entrance1)
- B. Has met the entire Communication Skills, Quantitative Skills or Distribution Requirement of a transfer degree, according to the sending institution's degree criteria*

The receiving institution will accept an entire Diversity Requirement for a transfer degree as being met if that student has met the entire Diversity Requirement of a transfer degree, according to the sending institution's degree criteria.

*Note: Example criteria include number of disciplines, allowable disciplines, credits, sequence requirements (or lack thereof). In all these instances, the sending institution's requirements govern for that particular Communication Skills, Quantitative Skills or Distribution Requirement component.

- C. Has maintained a cumulative college-level grade-point average (GPA) of 2.0 or better at the sending institution.

The receiving institution agrees to consider the requirement area met if these conditions, upon review, are met. (There is no limit to the number of requirement areas to be considered.)

In view of staff limitations for transcript review, the receiving institution cannot be expected to search every transfer-in transcript to see if the reciprocity provisions apply. It is, therefore, the student's responsibility to initiate the reciprocity process and to gather appropriate documentation as needed. However, all institutions agree to make transfer-in students aware of these provisions, to publish them in college catalogs and other transfer-related resources, and to provide transfer-in students with a clear contact point and process for pursuing reciprocity.

Local Provisos

The receiving college retains the right to impose unique, local prerequisite and graduation requirements. Such requirements might include learning communities/coordinated studies requirements, writing-intensive course requirements, and physical education/health requirements.

Transcript Notation

Transcripts will include notation of requirements met by reciprocity. Notations will include the name of the sending institution.

APPENDIX H: WASHINGTON STATE INSTITUTIONS' POLICIES ON ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

Links to policies were verified on December 8, 2016.

PUBLIC COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Institution Name	General policies	Military policies
Bates Technical College	http://www.bates.ctc.edu/student-resources/registration-office/transferring-to-bates	http://www.bates.ctc.edu/Documents/Student%20Services/Veterans%20Center/Veterans%20Transfer%20Credit%20Policy.pdf
Bellevue College	https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/transfer/awarding-non-traditional-credit/	http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/veterans/academic-credit-for-military-training-and-coursework/
Bellingham Technical College	http://www.btc.edu/FutureStudents/PriorLearning/indexPriorLearning.aspx	http://www.btc.edu/CurrentStudents/StudentResources/veterans.aspx
Big Bend Community College	http://bigbend.edu/admissions/	http://www.bigbend.edu/wp-content/uploads/admissions/financial-aid/Military-Transfer-Credit-Policy-Feb-16.pdf
Cascadia College	http://www.cascadia.edu/programs/pla.aspx	http://www.cascadia.edu/current/vets.aspx
Centralia College	https://www.centralia.edu/academics/pdf/cccatalog.pdf (See page 7, "Nontraditional credits")	Same
Clark College	http://www.clark.edu/enroll/credential-evaluation/nontraditional_programs.php	http://www.clark.edu/enroll/credential-evaluation/military.php
Clover Park Technical College	http://www.cptc.edu/policies/credit-for-non-traditional-learning	http://www.cptc.edu/policies/veterans-transfer-credit
Columbia Basin College	http://www.columbiabasin.edu/index.aspx?page=1472	https://www.columbiabasin.edu/index.aspx?page=1475
Edmonds Community College	http://catalog.edcc.edu/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=13726&hl=advanced+placement&returnto=search	http://www.edcc.edu/veterans/prior-learning-assessment.html
Everett Community College	http://everettcc.edu/transfercr_ditoptions/	https://www.everettcc.edu/enrollment/transfer/transfer-credit
Grays Harbor College	http://ghc.edu/content/credit-prior-learning	Same
Green River College	http://www.greenriver.edu/academics/alternative-options-for-earning-credit.htm	http://www.greenriver.edu/Documents/student-affairs/Veterans/JST-transcript-evaluation-procedures.pdf
Highline College	https://pla.highline.edu/Policies.for.students.php	http://catalog.highline.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=351#military-credit-acceptance
Lake Washington Institute of Technology	http://www.lwtech.edu/admissions/prior-learning/	http://www.lwtech.edu/admissions/veteran-services/military-training/
Lower Columbia College	http://lowercolumbia.edu/non-trad-credits/index.php	http://lowercolumbia.edu/non-trad-credits/alt-options/index.php

Institution Name	General policies	Military policies
North Seattle College	https://northseattle.edu/credentials/prior-learning?search_standing=1	https://northseattle.edu/credentials/options-evaluating-credits-credentials?search
Olympic College	http://www.olympic.edu/programs-classes/transfer-oc/transfer-credits-and-award-credit	Same
Peninsula College	http://pencol.edu/academic-resources/prior-learning-assessment	Same
Pierce College – Ft. Steilacoom	https://www.pierce.ctc.edu/pubs/catalog/ref/files/2016-17PierceCollegeCatalog.pdf (See pages 21-22, “Earning Credits”)	Same
Pierce College – Puyallup	https://www.pierce.ctc.edu/pubs/catalog/ref/files/2016-17PierceCollegeCatalog.pdf (See pages 21-22, “Earning Credits”)	Same
Renton Technical College	https://rtc.edu/sites/default/files/RTC-College-Catalog-2016-2017-web.pdf (See pages 57-58, “Transfer of Credits”)	http://rtc.edu/veteran-services
Seattle Central College	http://www.seattlecentral.edu/distance/cbe/index.php	Same.
Shoreline Community College	http://intranet.shoreline.edu/policies/documents/5000/5162.pdf	https://www.shoreline.edu/oss/veterans/military-credits-procedure.aspx
Skagit Valley College	http://www.skagit.edu/news.asp_Q_pagenumber_E_3126	Same
South Puget Sound Community College	https://spsc.edu/kb/transferring-credits/credit-non-traditional-learning	https://spsc.edu/veterans-benefits
South Seattle College	http://www.southseattle.edu/programs/proftech/prior-learning.aspx	http://www.southseattle.edu/veterans/training-credit-policy.aspx
Spokane College	http://catalog.spokane.edu/PriorLearning.aspx	http://catalog.spokane.edu/PriorLearning.aspx?page=PVS
Spokane Falls Community College	http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Admissions/PLA.aspx	http://www.spokanefalls.edu/Home-Military.aspx
Tacoma Community College	http://www.tacomacc.edu/catalog/15-16catalog/experiential-learning.htm	Same
Walla Walla Community College	www.wbcc.edu/pla	http://www.wbcc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/academic-credit-military-training-policy.pdf
Wenatchee Valley College	https://www.wvc.edu/directory/departments/catalog/catalog_20152016/Prior_Learning_Assessment.pdf	https://www.wvc.edu/directory/departments/registration/military_education.asp
Whatcom Community College	http://whatcom.edu/academics/learning-options/credit-for-learning	http://whatcom.edu/student-services/veterans-services
Yakima Valley College	http://www.yvcc.edu/registration/Pages/Prior-Learning-Assessment.aspx	http://www.yvcc.edu/admission/Pages/Transfer-Credits.aspx

PUBLIC BACCALAUREATES

Institution Name	General policies	Military policies
Central Washington University	https://www.cwu.edu/admissions/other-forms-credit	https://www.cwu.edu/admissions/military-credits
Eastern Washington University	http://ewu.edu/css/programs/interdisciplinary-studies	Same
The Evergreen State College	http://www.evergreen.edu/admissions/priorlearning/assessment.htm	Same
University of Washington (Bothell)	https://www.uwb.edu/admissions/apply/firstyear/advance	https://www.uwb.edu/admissions/transfer/transfercredits/restrictions#Military%20Credit
University of Washington (Seattle)	https://admit.washington.edu/apply/transfer/policies/credit%23prior-learning%20assessment#prior-learning-assessment	https://admit.washington.edu/apply/transfer/policies/credit#military-credit
University of Washington (Tacoma)	https://admit.washington.edu/apply/transfer/policies/credit%23prior-learning%20assessment#prior-learning-assessment	https://admit.washington.edu/apply/transfer/policies/credit#military-credit
Washington State University (Pullman)	http://www.catalog.wsu.edu/General/AcademicRegulations/Search/both/pass	https://transfercredit.wsu.edu/types-of-credit/military-credit/
Washington State University (Tri-Cities)	http://www.catalog.wsu.edu/General/AcademicRegulations/Search/both/pass	https://transfercredit.wsu.edu/types-of-credit/military-credit/
Washington State University (Vancouver)	http://www.catalog.wsu.edu/General/AcademicRegulations/Search/both/pass	https://transfercredit.wsu.edu/types-of-credit/military-credit/
Western Washington University	https://admissions.wvu.edu/transfer/transfer-credit-policies	Same

PRIVATE BACCALAUREATES

Institution Name	General policies	Military policies
Gonzaga University	http://www.gonzaga.edu/Admissions/Undergraduate-Admissions/Apply/Running-Start-Credit-By-Exam/default.asp http://www.gonzaga.edu/catalogues/16-17-catalogue/undergraduate/degree-requirements/academic-policies.asp	http://www.gonzaga.edu/catalogues/16-17-catalogue/undergraduate/degree-requirements/academic-policies.asp
Heritage University	http://catalog.heritage.edu/preview_entity.php?catid=9&ent_oid=1584&hl=link&returnto=search	http://www.heritage.edu/Admissions/Veterans-Admissions/Military-Transcripts
Pacific Lutheran University	http://www.plu.edu/catalog-2016-2017/undergraduate-admission/evaluation-of-credits/	Same
Saint Martin's University	AP/IB/RS https://www.stmartin.edu/admissions-aid/how-to-apply/first-year-undergrad Prior Learning https://www.stmartin.edu/admissions-aid/how-to-apply/transfer-undergrad	https://www.stmartin.edu/admissions-aid/how-to-apply/transfer-undergrad
Seattle Pacific University	http://spu.edu/catalog/undergraduate/20167/admissions/transfer-students/transfer-of-credits	https://spu.edu/depts/sas/students/va.asp
Seattle University	https://www.seattleu.edu/undergraduate-admissions/apply/transfer/transfer-credit-policies/	https://www.seattleu.edu/media/redhawk-axis/registrar/registrar-policies/Credit-for-Military-75-26.pdf
University of Puget Sound	http://www.pugetsound.edu/academics/advising-registrar/transfer-credits/	http://www.pugetsound.edu/student-life/personal-safety/student-handbook/academic-handbook/veterans-policy/
Walla Walla University	http://bulletin.wallawalla.edu/en/2016-2017/2016-2017-Undergraduate-Bulletin/Academic-Information-and-Policies/Credit-by-Examination	https://wallawalla.edu/academics/student-academic-services/academic-records/veteran-benefit-info/
Western Governors University	https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Admission/Transfer-Credit-for-CLEP-DANTES-and-AP-Examinations/ta-p/28	https://cm.wgu.edu/t5/Admission/Transfer-Credit-for-Military-Experience-Training-in-Pre/ta-p/2371
Whitman College	https://www.whitman.edu/Documents/Offices/Registrar/Catalog/Academics.pdf	Same
Whitworth University	http://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/registrar/transfer-info/	http://catalog.whitworth.edu/academicinformation/

ENDNOTES

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⁴Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. Standard 2.C.7. Retrieved on April 6, 2017 from <http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Standard%202/Standard%20Two.htm>

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⁶Washington Student Achievement Council. Credit Search Tool. (n.d.). Retrieved April 07, 2017, from http://readyssetgrad.org/rsq_cred_wiz/form

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⁹State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. SBCTC Policy Manual, Chapter 4: Instructional Program and Course Development. (n.d.) Retrieved on April 6, 2017 from <http://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/policies-rules/policy-manual/chapter-4.aspx>

¹⁰State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2015). Awarding Credit for Non-Traditional Learning. Retrieved on April 7, 2017 from <http://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/colleges-staff/data-services/data-warehouse/credit-for-non-traditional-learning-or-pla-coding.pdf>

¹¹State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2005) Inter-College Reciprocity Policy. Retrieved on April 7, 2017 from <http://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/colleges-staff/programs-services/transfer/inter-college-reciprocity-policy-2012.pdf>