

# CREDIT FOR PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL AND NONCREDIT LEARNING

## I. POLICY

All credit awarded by Salt Lake Community College for experiential and noncredit learning shall be awarded in accordance with prescribed procedures. These procedures are based upon policies and standards of the Utah State Board of Regents and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

## II. REFERENCES

- A. Credit for Military Service and Training, Utah Code Ann. § 53B-16-107.
- B. Configuration of the Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Missions and Roles, Utah State Bd. of Regents r. 312.
- C. General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower-Division Pre-Major Requirements, Transfer of Credits, and Credit by Examination, Utah State Bd. of Regents r. 470.
- D. Standards for Granting Academic Credit for CTE Course Work Completed in Non-Credit Instructional Formats, Utah State Bd. of Regents r. 473.
- E. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, *Standards for Accreditation*.

## III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Graded Course Credit: Credit that carries a grade and has an impact on student GPA. Graded course credit also fulfills program requirements, the total credit requirement for academic degrees, and (if the grade meets a prescribed level) prerequisites in which a grade is specified.
- B. Noncredit Learning: Knowledge and skills acquired through completion of noncredit instructional programs, including but not limited to those offered by continuing education divisions in colleges and universities, those offered as formal workplace training programs, and those offered in the Utah colleges of applied technology.
- C. Prior Experiential Learning: Knowledge and skills acquired through life experience, work experience, and structured or unstructured study which occurred in extra-institutional settings, such as technical skills gained through training in the workplace or in military service, foreign language skills, and academic knowledge and skills gained in informal study.

- D. Ungraded Course Credit: Credit that carries no grade and has no impact on student GPA. Ungraded course credit does, however, fulfill program requirements, the total credit requirement for academic degrees, and prerequisites in which a grade is not specified.

#### IV. PROCEDURE

##### A. Process for Awarding Credit for Prior Experiential and Noncredit Learning

1. Currently enrolled students pursuing an SLCC credential may apply to have their prior experiential or noncredit learning evaluated for credit through Transfer Evaluation beginning the fourth week of the term in which they are enrolled at SLCC.
2. Transfer Evaluation will forward the Request for Evaluation of Prior Experiential Learning Form and supporting evidence (see IV.B.4) to the appropriate department or division for evaluation.
3. The associate dean will work with faculty with relevant content expertise to evaluate the request for credit according to pre-established criteria.
4. If evidence of learning outcomes meets these criteria, the associate dean will recommend in writing to Transfer Evaluation that credit be awarded. Otherwise, the associate dean will recommend in writing that credit not be awarded.
5. The evaluating department or division shall respond to all requests within 10 business days. The evaluating department or division will keep a copy of all evaluated materials for seven calendar years.
6. The associate dean of General Education will review all recommendations for awarding general education credit prior to Transfer Evaluation notifying applicants of awarded credit and may recommend that the department or division reevaluate their determination.
7. Transfer Evaluation will notify the applicant of the evaluation decision and record the awarded credit on the SLCC transcript.

##### B. General Guidelines:

1. Consistency with SLCC's Mission and Role
  - a. Credit awarded for experiential and noncredit learning shall be consistent with SLCC's educational mission and goals.
  - b. SLCC will only award credit for approved, non-developmental, lower-division courses and programs that are offered by SLCC and lie within the

scope of its mission and role, as described in Utah State Board of Regents policies.

## 2. Authority to Award Credit

- a. Credit for experiential and noncredit learning shall be granted only upon the recommendation of an associate dean and teaching faculty who are appropriately qualified.
- b. Individuals participating in the recommendation shall be named therein.

## 3. Methods for Awarding Credit

Credit for experiential and noncredit learning shall be awarded in accordance with consistent methods established by the awarding department/division and school and based upon documented learning (see sections IV.B.4 and IV.C).

## 4. Evidence of Extra-Institutional Learning

- a. Credit for experiential and noncredit learning shall be granted only for documented learning which ties the prior experience to the theories and data of the relevant academic fields (see section IV.C).
- b. Such evidence may take the form of noncredit program documents (syllabi, competency descriptions, textbooks, etc.), competency examinations, skill demonstrations, learning portfolios, and/or other mechanisms approved beforehand by qualified faculty.
- c. No credit shall be granted without reliable evidence.

## 5. Comparability

- a. Credit for experiential and noncredit learning shall be granted only for demonstrated learning outcomes and/or competencies comparable in nature, content, and extent to those that successful students achieve by participation in SLCC's approved non-developmental courses and programs.
- b. Comparability shall be based on the officially approved learning outcomes and competencies articulated in course curriculum outcomes (CCOs).

## 6. Timeliness

- a. Credit shall not be awarded for prior learning that is not current in nature and content.

- b. Because currency differs by field, the reviewing associate dean and teaching faculty shall determine whether the prior learning adequately satisfies current course learning outcomes and competencies.

7. Appropriateness of Amount of Credit

The amount of credit granted shall be consistent with standards articulated by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

8. Overall Proportion

Credit awarded for extra-institutional experiential and noncredit learning shall not constitute more than 25 percent of the credits needed for a degree or certificate at SLCC except when credit is awarded for noncredit programs conducted by institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education.

9. Transcript Integrity

To ensure transcript integrity, student transcripts at SLCC will identify the source of awarded credit.

10. Grading of Awarded Credit

Credit awarded shall be ungraded course credit unless an adequate basis exists for assigning a grade.

11. Credit for Audited Courses

SLCC shall not grant credit for courses taken on an audit basis at any institution.

12. Partial-Course Credit

SLCC shall not award partial-course credit for noncredit and experiential learning. Only full course credit will be awarded for qualifying experiential or noncredit learning.

13. Enrollment Status

Students must be currently enrolled at SLCC and pursuing a SLCC credential at the time that they seek credit for experiential or noncredit learning. Students are eligible to apply for awarded credit beginning the fourth week of the term they were enrolled at SLCC.

#### 14. Financial Aid Eligibility

- a. Credit granted for experiential or noncredit learning is not eligible for financial aid or veterans' education assistance, and such credits will not be counted toward full-time status for scholarship purposes.
- b. However, awarded credit will count toward the maximum time frame to graduation (150 percent of the credits necessary for graduation) for financial aid purposes.

#### 15. Fees

Reasonable recording fees may be assessed by the Office of the Registrar and Academic Records and/or the evaluating department/division to offset the cost of evaluating prior experiential or noncredit learning for credit.

#### 16. Posting of Procedures

Instructions for students wishing to apply for awarded credit and fees to be assessed will be published and kept current by the Office of the Registrar and Academic Records.

#### 17. Prior Earned Credit

This policy only applies to prior activities for which academic credit has not been awarded.

### C. Guidelines for Assessing Mastery of Program Learning Objectives and Competencies

The associate dean and faculty in credit-granting programs may use a variety of methods to assess students' mastery of program learning objectives and competencies including:

1. nationally accepted evaluation strategies and instruments such as those developed by the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council for Adult and Experiential Education (CAEL), the Modern Language Association (MLA), etc. should be used whenever applicable to ensure transferability of awarded credits;
2. analysis of noncredit program documents, including program brochures, catalogs, syllabi, textbooks, competency descriptions, etc.;
3. learning portfolios that describe learning experiences and include representative artifacts or samples of the students' learning;

4. competency examinations that require students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills;
5. challenge tests or the final exam of a credit-bearing course. If a student passes such an exam at a level preselected by program faculty, the faculty may approve granting of credit for the course;
6. vertical credit or a passing grade in a course that is offered in a structured curricular sequence of courses. If a student receives a passing grade in a course for which other courses are prerequisites or foundational, the appropriate associate dean and faculty may recommend awarding credit for the prerequisite or foundational courses; and
7. special topics courses that are designed to allow a student to consolidate and demonstrate noncredit or experiential learning. Based on a student's performance in such a course, the faculty may approve granting of credit for noncredit or experiential learning.

D. Guidelines for Granting Credit for Learning in Noncredit Programs or Institutions:

1. For full-program completers

- a. Credit shall be granted in accordance with established articulation agreements.
- b. If articulation agreements do not already exist, faculty in the credit-granting program under the direction of the appropriate associate dean and dean shall establish such agreements prior to granting credit by evaluating the scope and content of the learning activities as described in program documents to ensure quality, comparability, and level of intended learning.
- c. Faculty may request syllabi, catalogs, curriculum descriptions, and other materials to be used in the evaluation.
- d. Based on this evaluation, the associate dean and dean shall prepare and approve an articulation agreement that specifies the SLCC courses for which students shall receive credit.

2. For partial-program completers

To grant credit to a student who has completed part, but not all, of a formal noncredit program, faculty in the credit-granting program under the direction of the appropriate associate dean and dean shall devise suitable methods to assess the student's achievement of course and program learning objectives

and competencies and grant ungraded course credit that correspond to the learning objectives and competencies the student has achieved.

E. Reviewing Program Processes for Awarding Credit for Prior Experiential and Noncredit Learning

1. At the time of a cyclical program review, all programs shall report :
  - a. specific procedures, methods, and instruments employed by program faculty for assessing prior experiential and noncredit learning and awarding credit for such; and
  - b. the amount and types of credit granted since the previous program review.
2. The program's dean is responsible to monitor the program to ensure that it complies with the principles and procedures of this policy.
3. If a program does not comply, the provost may require that the awarding of credit be discontinued until the program's procedures for awarding credit have been acceptably revised.

F. Appeal Procedures

1. A student who wishes to appeal the determination of credit to be awarded may appeal through the following process:
  - a. The student will submit a written appeal request to Transfer Evaluation with any additional supporting materials.
  - b. Transfer Evaluation will store the appeal and supporting materials electronically and forward them to the original reviewing associate dean.
  - c. The associate dean of the reviewing department or division will schedule a meeting with the student and reviewing faculty.
  - d. After reviewing the additional supporting materials and meeting with the student, the reviewing faculty and associate dean will notify Transfer Evaluation and the student of their decision to award (or deny) credit for specific SLCC courses in writing.
  - e. The reviewing department/division will retain copies (electronically or otherwise) of all appeal requests and supporting documentation for a minimum of seven years.
  - f. If the student wishes to appeal the determination of the associate dean and reviewing faculty, Transfer Evaluation will forward the appeal and application materials to the appropriate dean.

- g. After reviewing the application and supporting materials, meeting with the associate dean, and meeting with the student (if desired), the dean will notify Transfer Evaluation of his or her decision in writing.
  - h. The decision of the dean is binding and cannot be appealed unless irregularities which occurred during the appeal process warrant additional review by the provost and/or legal counsel.
2. A student may request a copy of the approved departmental procedures for evaluating and awarding credit at any time.

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Date of last cabinet review: April 29, 2014

The originator of this policy & procedure is the director of Curriculum, Articulation, and Governance Support. Questions regarding this policy may be directed to the originator by calling 801-957-4563