

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING ACQUIRED THROUGH EXPERIENCE

FAM 873.1

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Purpose and Scope

This policy provides campus-wide guidelines for the recognition of prior learning experiences for credit at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), in compliance with [EO 1036](#). The policy, in alignment with EO 1036, promotes access for fair and equitable recognition of prior learning, helps support student retention and persistence, reduces time to graduation and assures quality and equity across various academic experiences.

This policy applies to CSUSB students seeking credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience through the evaluation procedures described in this policy. The Office of the Registrar and the Office of Admissions and Student Recruitment have separate policies for awarding credit for prior learning that can be accessed using the links below.

CSUSB Policy on Credit for Standardized Testing:

<https://www.csusb.edu/registrar/articulation/test-credit>

CSUSB Policy on Credit for Military Service: <https://www.csusb.edu/admissions/apply-csusb/military-veterans>

Definition

Credit for prior learning acquired through experience refers to a process by which the University evaluates a student's non-traditional learning experiences, such as work experience, volunteer experience, certifications, personal experiences, or self-directed learning, and grants academic credit towards a degree or credential. This recognition of prior learning allows students to accelerate their academic progress, save time, and reduce the cost of their education by demonstrating that they have already acquired the knowledge, skills, and competencies equivalent to those taught in specific courses. Some examples of student experiences that can be applied to credit for prior learning according to the policy and procedures herein include:

- **Work experience:** A student may be able to receive credit for relevant work experience in a field related to the content of the course for which the student is requesting credit. This may include work done in a paid job or volunteer work. Departments and programs may use this policy to award credit for apprenticeships or internships if the relevant work experience is complete at the time the request for credit is evaluated. Departments and programs may use this policy to award credit for work experience related to military service if the student has not already received credit for that experience through another CSUSB policy or procedure.
- **Certifications and licenses:** A student may be able to receive credit if they hold relevant certifications or licenses related to the content of the course for which the student is requesting credit. For example, a student requesting credit for a computer science course may receive credit for holding specialized certifications or licenses relevant to computer science.
- **Professional development:** A student may be able to receive credit for attending workshops, conferences, or other professional development opportunities related to the content of the course for which the student is requesting credit. For example, a student requesting credit for an education course may receive credit for completing professional conference presentations or completing a professional development workshop on classroom management.
- **Personal experiences:** A student may be able to receive credit if they can demonstrate that they have gained relevant knowledge or skills through personal experiences that are related to the content of the course for which the student is requesting credit. For example, a student who has traveled extensively and learned a language may be able to receive credit for language courses.

- Autodidacts: A student may be able to receive credit if they are a self-directed learner, or autodidact, who has gained knowledge and skills through independent study or self-learning related to the content of the course for which the student is requesting credit. For example, a student requesting credit for a business course may receive credit for their self-taught entrepreneurial skills demonstrated through a portfolio of successful business ventures or consulting projects.

Policy Statement

1. CSUSB recognizes the value of prior learning experiences and encourages students to pursue credit for prior learning acquired through life experience in compliance with EO 1036.
2. Conditions of award of credit for prior learning according to this policy:
 - a. The student seeking credit for experiential learning shall be matriculated as a student completing a degree at the CSUSB campus awarding credit.
 - b. The assessment of experiential learning shall be appropriate to the degree objectives and/or general education requirements for the student seeking credit for prior learning based on life experience.
 - c. Academic credit for such experiential learning shall be awarded only when it is academically creditable and verifiable through a prior learning assessment methodology.
 - d. Before academic credit earned for experiential learning becomes a part of the student's academic record, the student shall complete 15 units at CSUSB to establish evidence of a satisfactory learning pattern. Graduate students shall complete three units in residence before academic credit can be earned for experiential learning.
3. Credit for prior learning may be awarded in the form of course credit.
4. Credit for prior learning will be awarded based on a demonstration of college-level learning and alignment with CSUSB course objectives.
5. Credit for prior learning will be evaluated by the appropriate academic department.
6. Students may not receive credit for prior learning for courses in which they have already earned a grade of "C-" or higher.
7. Credit for prior learning, rewarded through this policy and/or any other policy or procedure, may not exceed 25% of the units for the degree.
8. For those programs that are externally accredited, departments should contact their accrediting agencies to ascertain if they allow credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience. If their accrediting agency does not allow such credit, departments should communicate this information to the student.

9. Department faculty are responsible for evaluating the appropriateness of student requests for credit for prior learning for life experience. No instructor or department is obligated to offer credit for prior learning based on prior life experience in accordance with this policy.

Procedure and Process

10. Students interested in seeking credit for prior learning through demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience must first meet with the department chair and instructor for the course for which they are seeking credit to determine if their prior learning experiences align with CSUSB course objectives and degree requirements. The department chair and instructor for the course for which the student is seeking credit, in consultation with the Registrar's office, shall determine if the student is eligible for credit for prior learning, including consideration of the 25% eligibility limit according to this policy.
11. Students must then submit a prior learning portfolio or other appropriate documentation for evaluation by the appropriate academic department. The portfolio should include a detailed description of the student's prior learning experiences, how it aligns with the course objectives, and evidence of the college-level learning achieved.
12. When appropriate, departments should codify in writing the procedures used by the department to assist students in applying for credit for prior learning for life experience and evaluating those requests for eligibility in order to ensure the policy is implemented consistently. Department procedures must be aligned with this policy, including the procedural steps described above (sections 10 and 11).
13. The evaluation process may include an interview, exam, or other assessment to determine the student's level of learning. Departments have the discretion to choose the appropriate assessment methodologies for experiential learning course credit. These may include, but are not limited to, written examinations, portfolios, personal interviews, demonstrations and/or other means of assessment. Faculty and/or subject matter experts may create and evaluate assessments in accordance with department academic standards for credit for experiential learning. In some cases, as deemed appropriate by the department, supporting documentation may be obtained from a field supervisor and/or employer. Departments should also document and keep records of the evaluation procedures that are used in individual cases of credit for prior learning sought by students in the department.
14. CSUSB's policy on academic dishonesty ([FAM 803.5](#)) applies to the policy and procedures herein.

15. The academic department will make a recommendation for credit to the Office of the Registrar in compliance with EO 1036.
16. The Office of the Registrar will record the credit on the student's transcript and apply it towards the student's degree requirements.
17. Credit for prior learning will be recorded on the student's transcript and applied towards the student's degree requirements. The student's academic record shall identify the specific course or category of degree requirement for which the student has received credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience.

Approvals

Approved by the Faculty Senate on April 11, 2023

Approved by the Provost on _____

Approved by the President on _____

History

First created: _____ [Date] by _____

Revised: _____ [Date] by _____

Renumbered: _____ [Date] from _____ to _____

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Approved by the CSUSB Faculty Senate on April 11, 2023

Signed and dated by

Claudia Davis (Senate Chair)

Date

Tomás Morales (President)

Date

[This is the last page of a FAM document and shall be kept in the senate office. The dates on this page must match dates on the corresponding lines of the previous page.]