



## **Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Summary of Revisions for the Standards**

### **Introduction**

The Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards (CPL) were originally developed in the fall of 2013 by the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee. A subcommittee of practitioners was organized to write the standards. The standards were reviewed and approved by the advisory committee and sent out to higher education institutions for review and comment. The committee received a large volume of information from the institutions; their input was invaluable to the process. These comments were incorporated into the final document that was submitted to the Higher Education Coordinating Committee (HECC). The standards were formally revised on June 8, 2017.

One of the major goals for the institutional review process was to ensure the Oregon CPL standards were aligned with standards from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the accrediting body for most of the higher education institutions, both public and private, in Oregon.

However, the CPL committee continued to receive questions about how many CPL credits could be used toward the completion of a degree or certificate as stated in the Commission's Standard 2.C.7. In response to these questions, the co-chairs of the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee, Dr. Craig Kolins and Dr. Marilyn Davis, met with senior staff from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities via telephone conference calls in August and October 2016 to clarify what types of CPL (refer to list below) are included in NWCCU Standard 2.C.7. This standard limits the number of CPL credits that can be awarded to 25% of the total credits needed to fulfill degree requirements. As a result of these discussions, the following changes will be incorporated into the Oregon CPL Revised Standards.

## Revised Types of CPL

The revised list of CPL types is identified below. These changes are based on the discussions with NWCCU staff.

Oregon CPL Type	Aligned with NWCCU Standard
Credit – By-Exam (CLEP, DANTES, etc.)	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Industry Certifications	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Institutional Challenge Exams and other exams	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Military Credit (ACE Credit Recommendation Service)	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Prior Experiential Learning/Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) e.g., portfolios	2.C.7
Professional Licensure	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Other forms of authentic assessment to award CPL credit that may or may not come under the 25% limitation.	2.C.7 or 2.C.8 or 2.D.10

## Major Changes

1. The only type of CPL that will be included in the 25% limitation as noted in Standard 2.C.7 is Prior Experiential Learning/Prior Learning Assessments which are usually assessed by evaluating a portfolio the student submits. The portfolio must be reviewed by qualified faculty at an institution. Credit is awarded based on the faculty review of the portfolio.
2. All other types of CPL (e.g. institutional challenge exams, ACE credit recommendations, etc.) will be under Standard 2.C.8 or 2.D.10 which means that more than 25% of the total credits needed for a degree can be from CPL awarded credits.
3. Institutional policies and procedures must be in place and followed for awarding credit in response to Standard 2.C.7, Standard 2.C.8 and Standard 2.D.10 and to maintain the integrity of the degree or certificate.
4. Institutional policies must clearly identify the number of CPL credits that can be used toward degree or certificate completion and the required number of residency credits must be defined. All institutional programs must adhere to these policies and procedures.
5. All types of CPL must be notated on the transcript and must state where the credit originated (ACE, institutional challenge exam, etc.).
6. There must be institutional faculty oversight for awarding CPL credit and the evidence used to award CPL credit must be evaluated by appropriately qualified teaching faculty.

## Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards

**Adopted June 8, 2017**  
**January 2017 Revisions approved by the CPL Advisory Committee February 21, 2017**

The HECC directed Oregon postsecondary institutions from all four higher education sectors (public universities, community colleges, independent not-for-profit colleges and universities and for-profit private degree granting colleges) to adopt a set of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) standards and to use these standards to implement assessment processes for awarding CPL. These standards were developed to recognize and acknowledge 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.

The decision to *offer or not to offer* CPL to students is solely determined by the institution. If the institution decides to award CPL, one or more types of CPL may be offered as identified in Standard 1. The decision to offer CPL must be communicated to students, faculty and staff through the printed college catalog, the institution's electronic publications and website. The institution must formally adopt and use the standards to award CPL if the institution decides to offer one or more types of CPL.

**Standard 1 - Credit for Prior Learning Requisites**

- 1.1 For those areas in which CPL is awarded, each institution shall develop institutional policies and procedures for awarding credit in response to the CPL Standards, which have have been aligned with the the NWCCU accreditation standards. Institutional policies and procedures must be designed to maintain the integrity of the degree including residency requirements and the number of CPL credits that can be used toward a degree. These policies and procedures must be transparent to all students, faculty, staff and business and industry stakeholders.
- 1.2 Institutional policies and procedures ensure credit is granted for documented learning and awarded only for high quality college-level competencies. To ensure quality, each institution shall organize a cross-functional CPL Leadership Team with suggested members to include student services, instruction, faculty, the registrar's office, financial aid and other personnel associated with awarding or processing CPL credit.
- 1.3 Academic credit will be awarded and notated on the transcript~~d~~ only for those courses formally approved by the institution's curriculum approval process(es). Coursework or prior learning evaluated for CPL credit that does not correspond to courses offered by the institution must be transcribed as elective credit and the source of credit (DANTES, challenge exam, etc.) must be notated as CPL credit on the transcript. Institutional policies need to address equity among programs to achieve commonality in the amount of elective credit awarded among programs within an institution.
- 1.4 Credit awarded through CPL must be directly applicable to meet requirements for general education, a certificate, a degree or electives as outlined in college publications. Credit may be awarded through these types of CPL in response to accreditation standards 2.C.7, 2.C.8 and 2.D.10 as noted below:

<b>Oregon CPL Type</b>	<b>Aligned NWCCU Standard</b>
Credit – By-Exam (CLEP, DANTES, etc.)	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Industry Certifications	2.C.8 or 2.D.10

Institutional Challenge Exams and other exams. Challenge exams must be driven by institutional policy with the expectation of involving faculty with awarding credit and developing exams for their respective areas of expertise. These exams should be based on valid and reliable instruments. The tests must be available to ALL interested students	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Military Credit (ACE Credit Recommendation Service)	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
<del>Portfolio</del> Prior Experiential Learning/Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) e.g., portfolios. This is the only type of CPL that is subject to the 25% limitation in 2.C.7. Assessment methods are designed to identify what a student has learned through one's life and work experience outside the classroom that is equivalent to learning gained through formal collegiate instruction. These prior learning assessments are separate from third party testing such as ACE or institutional challenge examinations. Portfolios must be reviewed by qualified faculty at the institution. Credit is awarded based on the faculty review of the portfolio	2.C.7
Professional Licensure	2.C.8 or 2.D.10
Other forms of authentic assessment to award CPL credit that may or may not come under the 25% limitation.	2.C.7. or 2.C.8 or 2.D.10

## Resources

### NWCCU Standard 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.

### NWCCU Standard 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.

### NWCCU Standard 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.

## Standard 2 - Evidence-Based Assessment

- 2.1 Each institution shall provide a guided process to assess student learning and to provide the required evidence for awarding credit. The student must document the connection between what they have learned in another setting and the theoretical foundation, knowledge and skills as defined by the course-specific learner outcomes of the credit to be awarded.
- 2.2 There must be institutional faculty oversight for awarding CPL credit and evidence shall be evaluated by appropriately qualified teaching faculty. Faculty must have content expertise and be teaching in the field associated with credit to be assessed and awarded. However, non-faculty content experts can be used as evaluators as long as there is institutional faculty oversight in the field associated with the credit to be awarded.
- 2.3 All CPL credit must be based on sufficient evidence provided by the student, the institution, and/or an outside entity such as CLEP, CAEL, ACE, etc. Evidence required by the institution must be based on academically sound CPL assessment methods, including, but not limited to, institutionally developed tests, final examinations, performance-based assessments, demonstrations, presentations, portfolios, or industry certifications.

## Resources

Marylhurst's Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program and Credit by Exam  
<https://www.marylhurst.edu/degrees-and-programs/credit-for-prior-learning/>

## Standard 3 - Tuition and Fee Structure

Each institution shall develop a tuition and fee structure for CPL that is transparent and accessible to all students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. The basis for determining direct and indirect costs may include but are not limited to the following.

- 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 related to scanning documents or archiving material
- Costs for developing a portfolio infrastructure and conducting portfolio assessments
- Other costs associated with assessments as identified by the institution

## Resources

CAEL Ten Standards for Assessing Learning Standard 8 - "Fees charged for assessment are based on the services performed in the process rather than the credit awarded."

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...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".

## Standard 4 - Transferability and Transcription

- 4.1 Institutions that award CPL shall work with receiving institutions to promote transferability of CPL.

- 4.2 Each receiving institution shall determine the transferability of CPL credit granted from other institutions.
- 4.3 Documentation used to support credits awarded will be maintained as part of the student's official institutional academic record to ensure compliance with standards set forth by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and state administrative rules.
- 4.4 All types of CPL awarded by an institution must be notated on the transcript to as such and notations must comply with state, and federal regulations and NWCCU accreditation policies and standards, as applicable.

**Resources**

CAEL Assessment Standards

<http://www.cael.org/pla.htm#Follow the Ten Standards for Assessing Learning>

**Standard 5 - Data Collection & Reporting**

Institutions shall collect and report data on the types of CPL awarded based on data points collaboratively developed and agreed upon by the state and the institutions. Data to be collected include the number of credits granted and the number of students who receive credit through the types of CPL identified in Standard 1.

Data to be Collected	Definition
Institutional Challenge Exams and other forms of assessment	Credit granted through the assessment of student learning using exams developed and scored by the institution.  Credit granted for external tests to document learning – including DSST / DANTES, CLEP, Excelsior, NYU Foreign Language, etc.,
Military Credit (ACE Credit Recommendation Service)	Credit granted through evaluation of ACE published credit recommendations for formal instructional programs offered by non-collegiate agencies, both civilian employers and the military.
Portfolio Prior Experiential Learning/Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs) e.g., portfolios	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. The demonstrated learning must be relevant to the student's degree program.
Other Credit for Prior Learning	Credit granted for other prior learning experiences not listed in above areas such as credit granted for industry certifications for proof of applied knowledge and skills in an industry-identified area.

**Standard 6 - Faculty and Staff Development**

Each institution shall have a policy and a strategic plan for faculty and staff development for CPL which includes professional development activities. Widespread, overarching knowledge of the institutional opportunities for developing, assessing and recommending CPL should be foundational to this plan.

## Resources

CAEL Ten Standards for Assessing Learning – Standard 9 – “All practitioners involved in the assessment process pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.” <http://www.cael.org/ten-standards-for-assessing-learning>

### Standard 7 - Quality Assurance in Response to HB 4059

- 7.1 The Cross Functional Team (refer to Standard 1.2) shall be responsible for conducting ongoing evaluations of institutional CPL policies, standards, procedures, and practices including an evaluation of student performance in subsequent classes within the same field for which CPL was awarded, as well as overall academic performance.
- 7.2 Institutions will submit evaluative data to the HECC. The HECC shall review the accomplishments of each CPL Leadership Team through a periodic audit process to ensure credit is awarded for high quality assessment activities.

### Standard 8 - Transparency/Access

- 8.1 Institutional CPL policies and expectations shall be clearly communicated to students, faculty, staff and business and industry stakeholders. CPL Information must be in the college catalog, be available electronically on the institution’s website and be searchable using the term “Credit for Prior Learning”. The following information shall be included:
  - Institutional CPL contacts
  - Available CPL opportunities and preparation requirements
  - Tuition and Fee Structure(s)
  - Risks to students and the cost of assessment where credit may not be awarded
  - Information about financial aid
  - Information regarding the applicability of CPL towards certificate or degree programs including the number of CPL credits that can be used for a certificate or degree and the number of required residency credits.
- 8.2 Processes must be in place for a student to request CPL based on processes established by institutional policies and for CPL designated courses.