

## CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING REPORT:

### Oregon Revised Statute 350.110 2024 Report to the Legislature



Photo Credit: Central Oregon Community College

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING IN OREGON</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>EXPANSION AND STUDENT OUTCOMES</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>FUNDING TO SUPPORT EXPANSION</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: 2024 OREGON CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING STANDARDS</b>	<b>18</b>

December 12, 2024  
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Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee  
Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development  
Higher Education Coordinating Commission

# CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING IN OREGON

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## INTRODUCTION

In Oregon, Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is specified by ORS 350.110 as the “knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience, through military training and experience, and through formal and informal education and training from institutions of higher education in the United States and in other nations.”<sup>1</sup> The legislation also outlines several goals to increase and improve the use of CPL in higher education institutions across the state. Beyond those goals, CPL is also a strategy and tool that can help individuals obtain credit for learning that occurs outside of traditional college-level coursework. CPL, along with other strategies such as competency based education and short-term certificates, are essential strategies that can be used individually or in alignment to support students in achieving their higher education goals. These strategies also support the state in meeting the Adult Education and Training Goal. This goal, adopted in 2018, is also known as the adult attainment goal. It seeks to have at least 300,000 adults (aged 25 and older) attain a new postsecondary degree, certificate, or valuable credential by 2030. The adult attainment goal also includes an equity focus to address and reduce educational disparities in the state. This focus was highlighted in the capacity-building work supported by Future Ready Oregon funding in 2022-23.

The goals of ORS 350.110 specify that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission will work with the state’s public, independent nonprofit, and for-profit higher education institutions to increase the number of students receiving credit for prior learning (CPL), increase the number and type of academic credits accepted for prior learning, develop transparent policies and practices for awarding CPL, improve CPL assessment practices in higher education, create tools to develop faculty and staff knowledge and expertise in awarding CPL, share best practices across institutions, develop articulation agreements for particular programs and pathways, and develop outcome measures to track progress. In the past 10+ years, significant progress has been made in achieving these goals.<sup>2</sup> This report provides an update on the progress over the past year and the continued impact of the capacity building supported by Future Ready Oregon (ORS 660.300),<sup>3</sup> as well as policy recommendations to further support the adoption and expansion of CPL.

## ADDRESSING THE GOALS OF ORS 350.110

Over the past 12 years, Oregon's public and private higher education institutions have been working to implement strategies that support the state’s progress in achieving the goals of ORS 350.110. Progress in the past year is detailed below.

### How are Students Accessing CPL?

This year's report highlights several students from community colleges, public universities, and private universities who have been awarded CPL in pursuing their certificate or degree. These examples highlight the engagement with students and the importance of valuing their experiences as they work toward their educational goals.

**Central Oregon Community College (COCC):** One of COCC’s CPL success stories involved a student preparing to receive a degree in Manufacturing. Manufacturing faculty inquired about the feasibility of mapping the student’s prior work experience at Ponderosa Forge & Ironworks to learning outcomes in existing COCC courses. After reviewing the job duties performed and skills applied, the best option was a proposal to map the

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon Revised Statute 350.110 [ORS 350.110 - Coordination between Higher Education Coordinating Commission, public universities, community college districts and independent for-profit and not-for-profit institutions of higher education](#)

<sup>2</sup> HB 4059 (2012) Report to the Oregon Legislature (2020) [HECC-Credit-for-Prior-Learning-Report-2020.pdf \(oregon.gov\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> Oregon Revised Statute 660.300 - Future Ready Oregon [0028SS \(oregonlegislature.gov\)](#)

outcomes to MFG 280, Cooperative Work Experience (CWE), allowing the student to finish degree requirements one term early. After the crosswalk was approved, a student-facing form was created so that future Manufacturing students could access this opportunity using similar work experience and demonstration of college-level learning. This approach represents a large time and money savings for the students and carries positive financial implications. The final phase of this success story involved a deep dive into the 39 different CWE courses at COCC. Realizing that these CWE courses represent an ambiguous space and were also the subject of a recent state audit, documentation and reflection requirements were identified and standardized to support CWE as CPL across varied programs.

**Clackamas Community College:** Hello, my name is Wendy Olga Blanchard. I came to the United States 16 years ago. I did not know very much English, and one of my dreams was to study as a pre-school educator. I had the opportunity to study in this wonderful field when Clackamas Community College opened its doors to me with scholarships that gave me the opportunity to earn credits toward a degree. In all these years I have studied and earned my credits and studied wherever where I worked. I feel confident that all those credits that I earned are helping me to achieve my dream. I have a great job, and now I am the Assistant Director at the preschool where I work. I feel so blessed that Clackamas Community College gave me the opportunity to be a student there and helped me to study to earn credits toward my degree.

Esperanza Tellez , estudiante de Early Childhood Education (Spanish).

Ser estudiante de Clackamas Community College me a cambiado la vida , gracias a todo el conocimiento adquirido durante el transcurso de este año , los recursos y las becas que me han ofrecido sin duda alguna han sido un gran apoyo económico , gracias a eso no tengo que estar preocupándome por tener trabajos extras o trabajar mas horas para poder pagar mis clases , si no que gracias al apoyo financiero me e enfocado principalmente en estudiar y cumplir mis metas .

El apoyo y crédito que me dieron por el CDA fueron de gran ayuda , porque de esa manera voy a poder terminar mi asociado en dos años, yo como mamá, esposa , trabajadora se me complica estudiar tiempo completo o tomar más de 3 clases por trimestre , de no ser por el crédito que recibí , no me podría graduar en el 2025 , sin contar con la beca. Tambien la ayuda financiera que recibí para eso fue de mucha ayuda , ya que en ese momento nos encontrábamos en una crisis económica difícil.

Me enorgullece ser estudiante del colegio , gracias por su apoyo .

*Translation:*

*Being a student at Clackamas Community College has changed my life, thanks to all the knowledge acquired during the course of this year. The resources and scholarships that have been offered to me have undoubtedly been a great financial support, thanks to that I do not have to worry about having extra jobs or working more hours to be able to pay for my classes, but thanks to the financial support I have focused mainly on studying and achieving my goals.*

*The support and credit they gave me through the CDA were of great help, because that way I will be able to finish my associate's degree in two years. As a mother, wife, and worker, it is difficult for me to study full time or take more than 3 classes per quarter. If it weren't for the credit I received, I wouldn't be able to graduate in 2025, without the scholarship. Also the financial help I received for that was very helpful, since at that time we were in a difficult economic crisis.*

*I am proud to be a student at the school, thank you for your support.*

**Columbia Gorge Community College:** We would like to highlight a student, Bridgette, who graduated with one Early Childhood Education (ECE) certificate at the end of spring 2024. What is remarkable about Bridgette is her ability to advocate for herself. She doesn't qualify for federal or state financial aid, so Bridgette has been leveraging scholarships to pay for college over the past year. She requested college credit through the Credit for Prior (CPL) process, and when she ran into challenges, she reached out for support. Her request was reviewed and approved by the requisite instructors and Student Services staff, allowing her to complete her certificate on time. Bridgette plans to continue in the ECE program to earn additional certificates and eventually complete the degree requirements. The College learned from a real-case opportunity to improve its review process!

**Mt Hood Community College:** Patricia, one of our Early Childhood Education (ECE) Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) students who didn't qualify for Financial Aid, was able to earn six college credits for

free and obtain her Career Pathway Certificate of completion (with a tuition waiver and Career Pathways funds). She continues to take classes toward her AA degree and will earn an additional six credits during her second year. The CPL accelerated her learning and lightened the financial burden of paying for classes without financial aid.

**Portland Community College:** Levi Hauck reached out to PCC's Math Dean about doing a course challenge for MTH 251 in August 2023. They do not offer course challenge for MTH 251, but taking the CLEP test is an option for Credit for Prior Learning. Levi did successfully use the CLEP test (prior to the Fall 2023 term), and has since successfully completed MTH 253 and MTH 261 at PCC, as well as many other science courses requiring MTH 251. This was the first step in a "rockstar" academic success in higher-level math and science courses.

**Rogue Community College:** Austin, a Fire Science major at RCC for the past two years, was initially unable to complete the college fire academy and several other courses. Instead, he pursued local industry training to meet credential requirements. Additionally, Austin aimed to become a paramedic, which required a degree to enter the paramedic education program. Through credit for prior learning (CPL) crosswalks, his industry credentials were evaluated and equated to college courses, enabling him to earn his Fire Science degree. This achievement granted him eligibility to enter the paramedic certificate program, advancing him toward his career goals.

Preston, a university graduate, rediscovered his passion for paramedic care after transitioning into the trades. However, because he already held a degree, he was ineligible for financial aid. Although he completed EMT training, the additional courses and college costs presented a significant barrier to advancing in paramedic school. Fortunately, through credit for prior learning (CPL), Preston's industry credentials earned him college credit, reducing both his educational costs and time to completion. He successfully finished his paramedic education, obtained an Emergency Services Degree, and received a job offer as a firefighter paramedic in October 2024.

**Southern Oregon University:** Erin Malanche, who serves as a co-chair on the HECC's CPL Advisory Committee, just graduated from SOU with a degree in Innovation and Leadership, and she was able to complete her degree a full term early because of the Credit for Prior Learning portfolios that she submitted and passed.

**George Fox University** (media links): Notable stories include [Portland Police Chief Bob Day](#) and former [Hillsboro Police Detective Kary Gregson](#). These graduates of George Fox were able to apply their prior learning to courses in their degree pathways, accelerating their progress.

## How are institutions expanding or creating new CPL opportunities?

This year, institutions across the state have continued the work of expanding CPL opportunities for students. This involved the following activities:

- Building capacity by expanding to new programs and preparing to engage students.
- Reviewing the revised CPL Standards to determine policy and procedure changes.
- Creating crosswalks from industry-recognized credentials to applicable credits in specific disciplines and creating a process for those crosswalks to go through the internal curriculum approval process.
- Changing student eligibility thresholds to increase access to CPL.
- Creating tools to assess portfolios and document challenge exams.
- Revising assessments to improve accessibility and equitable instructional practices.
- Expanding CPL offerings in non-credit training certificates.
- Updating websites to improve internal and external communication.

- Six community colleges collaborated in a consortium to develop CPL assessments and crosswalks for a new degree pathway.
- Focusing on strategies to engage adult learners, including CPL.
- Creating or expanding committees or workgroups to address CPL policy, procedure, and student access.
- Creating designated CPL coordinator positions to support the expansion and implementation of CPL.

## **How are institutions improving assessment practices or creating new assessments?**

Several institutions focused on improving their assessment practices or creating new assessments in their efforts to expand or create more capacity for CPL. Those efforts are summarized here:

- Incorporating the infrastructure for CPL assessments into Learning Management Systems.
- Reviewing industry-recognized credentials to determine additional assessment opportunities.
- Creating a portfolio review process and determining faculty pay implications for that work.
- Reviewing current assessments to determine activities for this academic year.
- Updating challenge exam options to include more courses and align with “Z” common course numbering courses.
- CPL coordinators are leading efforts to review assessment practices and outline faculty professional development strategies and tools for assessment development.
- Reviewing student costs for CPL assessments and creating consistency and transparency about the process and cost.
- Several institutions have purchased and implemented CAEL’s Credit Predictor Pro software tool to streamline workflow associated with CPL requests. This tool supports student recruitment and CPL transparency.

## **How are institutions supporting or expanding faculty and staff capacity to offer CPL?**

Professional development and capacity building are critical to this work. In the past year, institutions have identified strategies to engage faculty and staff; details are summarized here:

- Provided compensation to specific faculty groups to support assessment development.
- Hired institutional CPL Coordinators to convene faculty and staff and coordinate professional development activities.
- Realigned testing center coordination and provided training to test proctors in support of expanding credit by exam capacity.
- Trained key staff and administrators to expand student engagement, assessment capacity, and data reporting.
- Offered small group training and workshops for faculty and staff to increase awareness of CPL.
- Provided faculty and staff with a Deskside CPL Reference Guide outlining the types of CPL offered and the steps for advising students.
- Teams from institutions participated in the CAEL conference this year.

## What new articulation agreements have been developed for CPL in the past year?

A few institutions have been working on articulation agreements specific to CPL. Others have expressed concerns about the transferability of CPL and are choosing to focus on other areas.

- Some institutions have been working on reviewing and updating their articulation processes.
- Others have initiated conversations between community colleges and public university partners about the transferability of CPL in specific programs.
- One institution comprehensively looks at articulation annually and includes AP/IB articulations. CLEP articulation is reviewed annually with the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations. New articulations may include assessing military credit not already mapped by entities such as ACE.

## EXPANSION AND STUDENT OUTCOMES

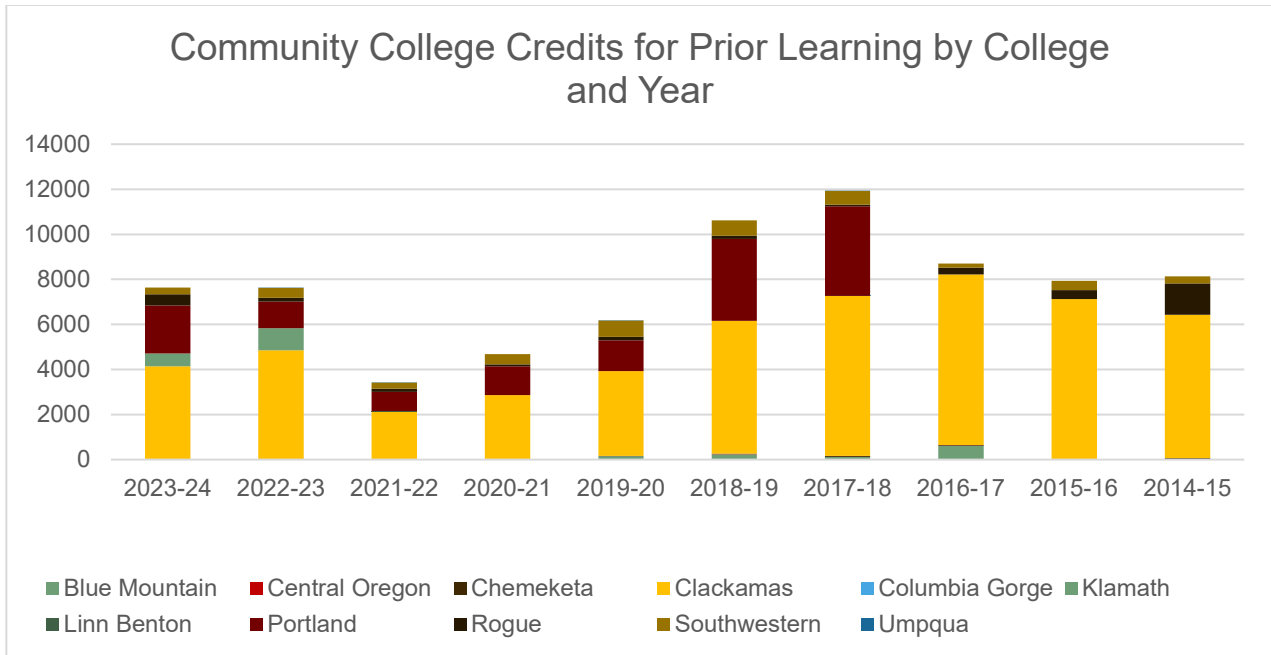
### COMMUNITY COLLEGE DATA

The community college data on credit for prior learning continues to be limited by the number of colleges (nine) submitting data. Table 1 shows the reporting for the past 10 years. Of the reporting colleges, some have missing data for some years. This likely indicates challenges with data coding and collection rather than the absence of any CPL credits earned. The difference in the number of reported credits illustrates consistency within each college’s system but inconsistency across colleges. Of the colleges that have not reported data or have limited data, seven received capacity-building funds under Future Ready Oregon in 2022. While some work has been done since then, challenges persist and are being addressed through the work of the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee’s Community College Data Workgroup.

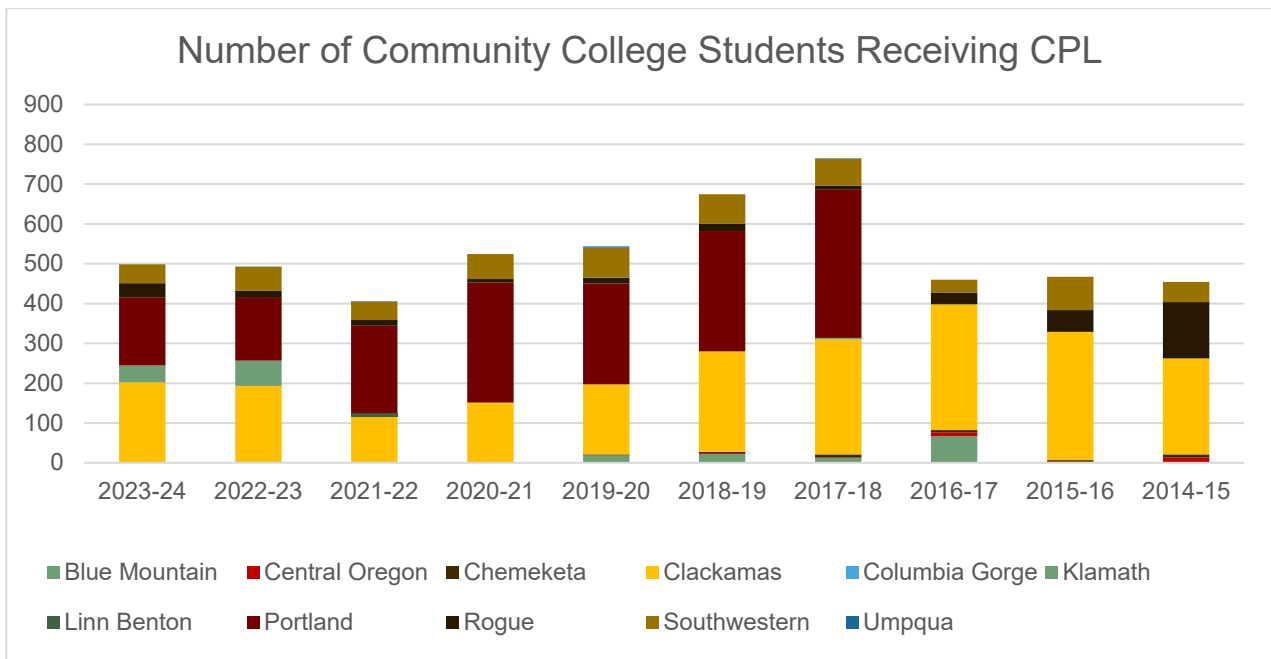
Table 1: Community College Number of Total Credits for Prior Learning, Reported by Year

Community College	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	Grand Total
Blue Mountain					153	240	126	602			1,121
Central Oregon	2	7	3	3		6	1	15	5	13	55
Chemeketa		8	8	4	8	20	40	24	20	56	188
Clackamas	4,134	4,839	2,127	2,857	3,766	5,892	7,096	7,579	7,093	6,364	51,746
Columbia Gorge							1				1
Klamath	576	977									1,553
Linn Benton			18								18
Portland	2,123	1,175	848	1,275	1,363	3,639	3,984				14,406
Rogue	507	180	141	91	157	148	68	292	404	1,389	3,377
Southwestern	301	437	271	458	722	678	610	190	419	314	4,399
Umpqua		4	4		8		9				25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,643</b>	<b>7,627</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>4,688</b>	<b>6,177</b>	<b>10,622</b>	<b>11,935</b>	<b>8,702</b>	<b>7,941</b>	<b>8,136</b>	<b>76,888</b>

Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission – D4A



**Figure 1: Community College Credits for Prior Learning by Year and College**  
 Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission – D4A



**Figure 2: Community College Students Earning CPL Credit**  
 Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission – D4A

The number of community college credits awarded for CPL (Figure 1) and the number of community college students earning CPL (Figure 2) remained mostly unchanged over the past two years, likely reflective of ongoing challenges with data reporting. Anecdotally, colleges report that these numbers are higher. The CPL Advisory Committee’s Community College Data and Reporting Workgroup is meeting to identify and address these issues to improve reporting.

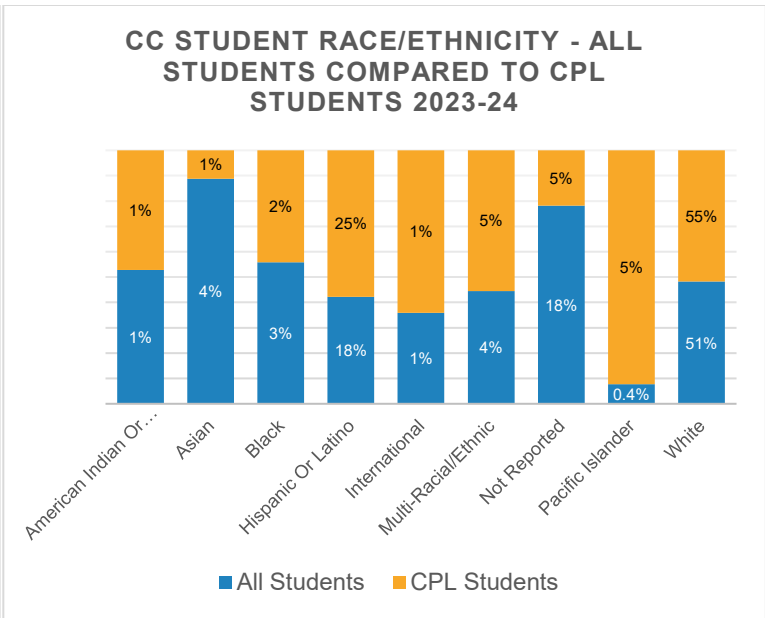
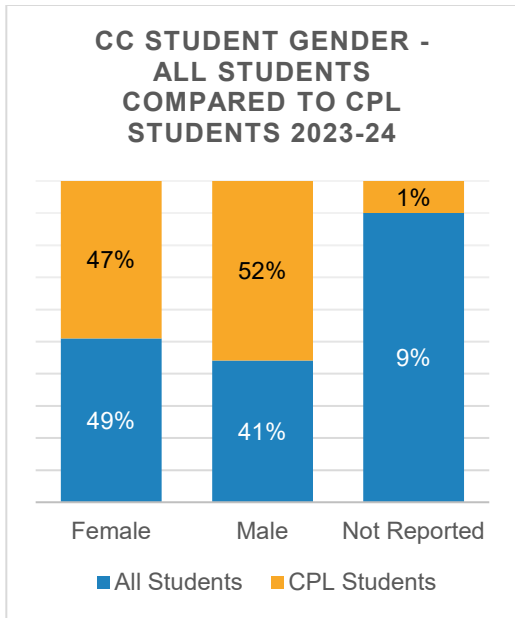


Figure 3: CC Student Gender

Figure 4: CC Student Race/Ethnicity

Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission – D4A

Figure 3 compares the gender of all community college students to those awarded CPL credit in 2023-24. A higher percentage of males were awarded CPL credit than females, which differs from the overall community college student population, with a higher percentage of females enrolled than males. Figure 4 shows the differences between all community college students and CPL students regarding race/ethnicity in 2023-24. There is a lower percentage of students receiving CPL credit who identify as Asian, Black, and not reported, with a higher percentage of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino, Multi-Racial/Ethnic, Pacific Islander, and White receiving CPL credit.

### PUBLIC UNIVERSITY DATA

Similar to community colleges, Oregon’s public universities also report on CPL credit awarded. Overall, the universities report more CPL credit than the community colleges and award credit for various CPL categories. This is likely attributed to differences in reporting systems as well as the community college and university support funds and regional mission nuances. Table 2 shows that there has been a slight overall increase in the amount of CPL awarded at public universities in the past year. While this increase is an overall trend, CPL credits awarded have decreased slightly at Oregon Institute of Technology, Portland State, Southern Oregon, and Western Oregon. At the same time, there have been increases at Eastern Oregon, Oregon State, Oregon State Cascades, and the University of Oregon.

Table 2: Public University Number of Total Credits for Prior Learning, Reported by Year

University	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	Grand Total
Eastern Oregon University	8,740	7,676	8,170	7,963	7,479	7,549	6,826	5,941	5,052	4,640	70,034
Oregon Institute of Technology	30,085	34,172	41,169	42,514	44,833	45,874	43,639	45,140	41,243	35,555	404,221
Oregon State University	162,441	147,015	131,561	124,584	118,762	113,973	109,570	103,728	94,785	86,230	1,192,647
Oregon State University, Cascades	4,559	4,510	4,091	4,723	3,812	2,681	2,380	2,625	2,142	1,380	32,901
Portland State University	37,176	38,931	41,837	45,980	45,596	36,663	34,860	32,177	29,534	27,879	370,631
Southern Oregon University	47,969	52,906	47,454	45,212	42,606	44,516	44,704	40,505	38,260	36,601	440,732
University of Oregon	164,896	158,985	142,868	129,994	118,943	106,806	107,446	111,708	110,589	107,988	1,260,221
Western Oregon University	8,784	9,551	9,220	9,867	10,450	11,107	10,672	9,034	7,990	7,269	93,942
Grand Total	464,648	453,746	426,367	410,835	392,478	369,167	360,095	350,857	329,594	307,541	3,865,328

Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission Research and Data

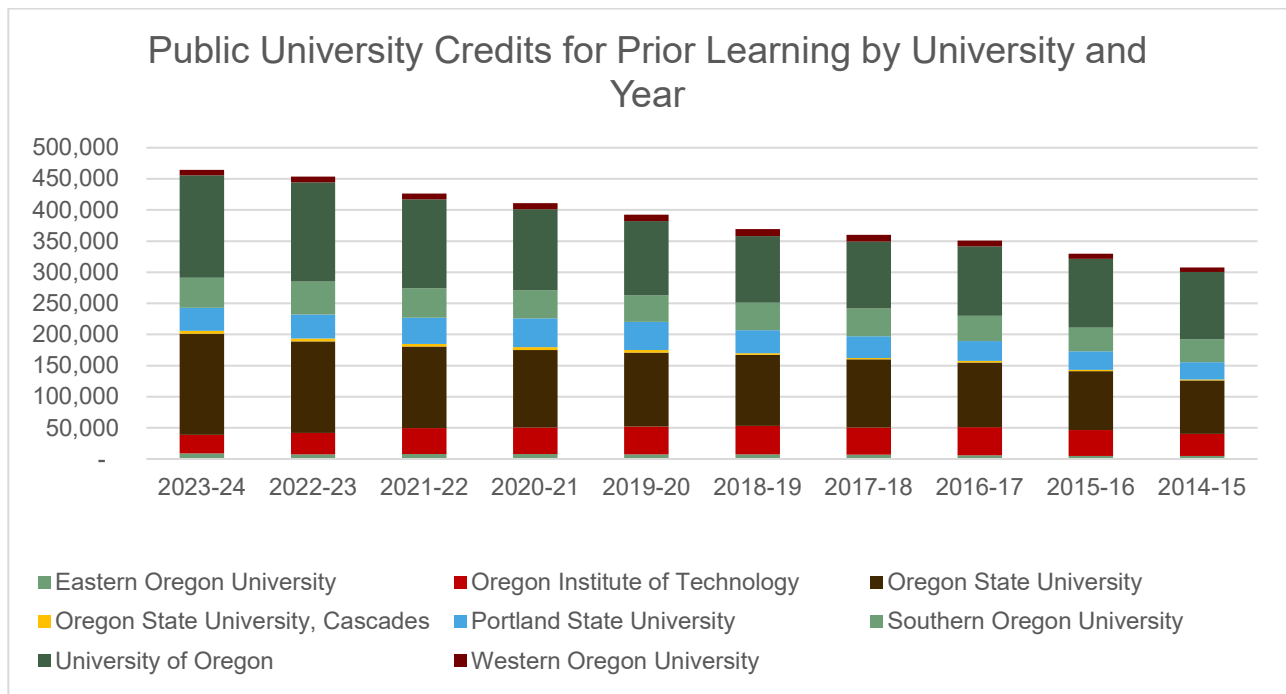
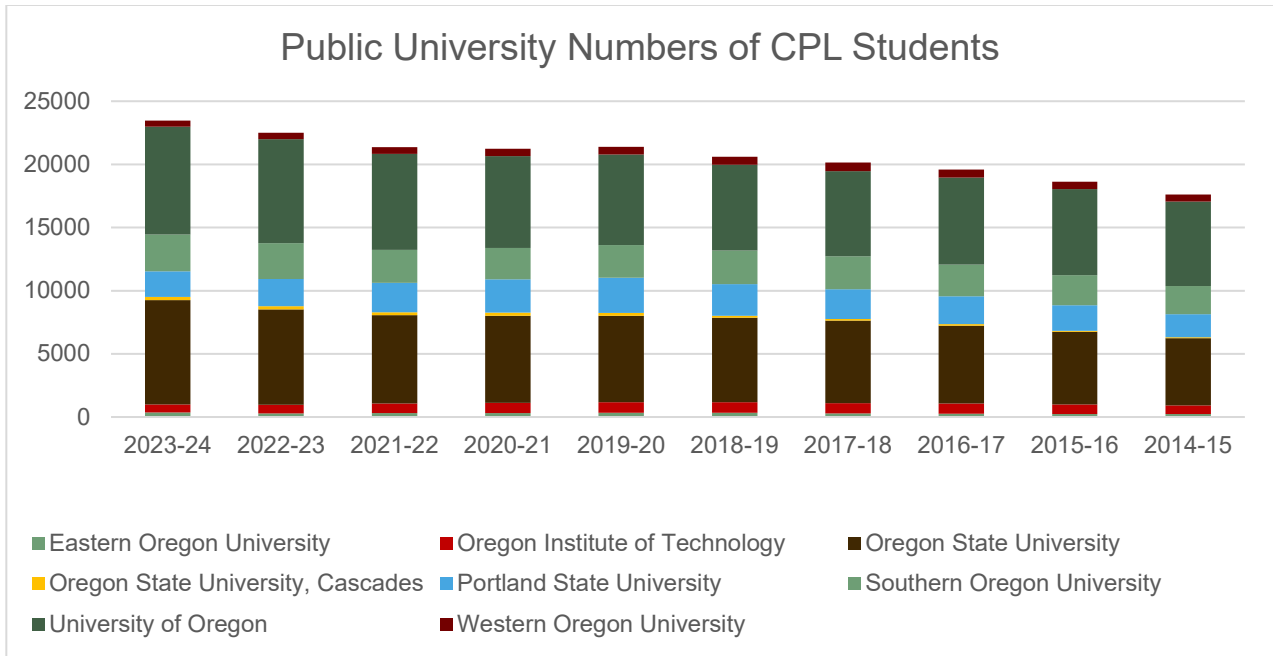
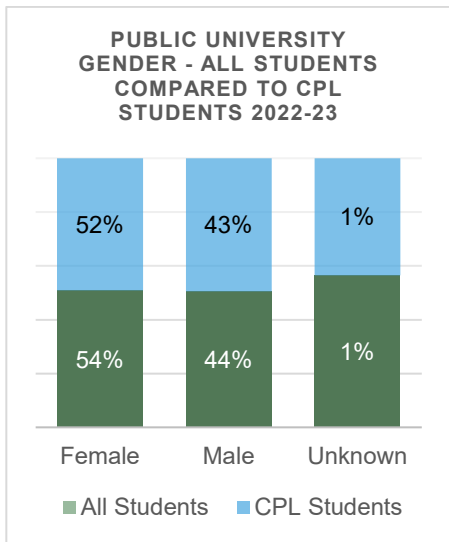


Figure 5: Public University Credits for Prior Learning by Year and College  
 Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission Research and Data

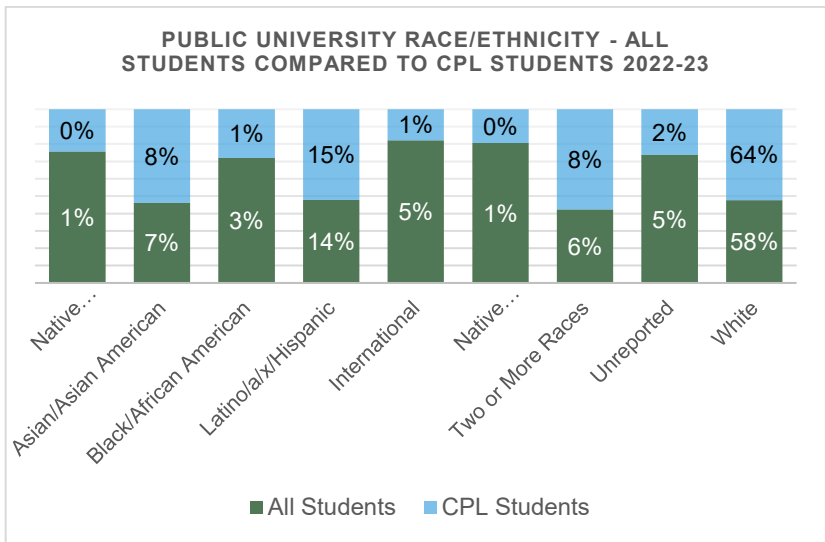


**Figure 6: Community College Students Earning CPL Credit**  
 Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission Research and Data

In 2023-24, the number of CPL credits awarded (Figure 5) and number of students awarded CPL credit (Figure 6) at Oregon’s public universities increased overall. However, only Eastern Oregon, one of the five institutions that received funding from Future Ready Oregon in 2022-23, had an increase in the number of credits, and only two of those institutions, Eastern Oregon and Southern Oregon, had an increase in the number of students receiving CPL credit.



**Figure 7: Public University Student Gender**  
 Source: Higher Education Coordinating Commission



**Figure 8: Public University Student Race/Ethnicity**

Figure 7 compares the gender of all public university students to those awarded CPL credit in 2022-23 (the latest available for all students). The gender the percentage of male and female students awarded CPL credit mirrors the percentages in the overall student population. Figure 8 shows the differences between all public university students and CPL students regarding race/ethnicity in 2022-23 (the latest available for all students). For most race/ethnicity categories, the percentages are similar between all students and students awarded CPL credit except International students with a lower CPL percentage, two or more races with a higher CPL percentage, and white students with a higher CPL percentage.

## FUNDING TO SUPPORT EXPANSION

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### US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY COLLEGES GRANT ROUND 1 – 2021-2024

In 2021, Mt. Hood Community College, as the lead for a consortium of nine Oregon Community Colleges, was awarded \$5 million for a US Department of Labor Strengthening Community Colleges Grant.<sup>4</sup> The goal of this consortium project is to accelerate learning pathways focusing on systemic changes to allow members to collaborate around their shared program areas and strengthen the career pathways of Advanced Manufacturing and Cyber Security. One of the acceleration strategies is the expansion of CPL. Specifically, the consortium is working to increase the number of Advanced Manufacturing programs offering CPL, encouraging colleges to enhance CPL offerings and align credit transfer policies to increase the number of students who attain credential and entry-level employment. The consortium's work will wrap up in early 2025, and outcomes will be summarized in this report next year.

### FUTURE READY OREGON

In the 2022 legislative session, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 1545, codified in Oregon Revised Statute 660.300<sup>5</sup>, also known as Future Ready Oregon. The legislation allocated \$10 million in one-time funding for the purpose of “Increasing opportunities for students from priority populations to receive academic credit for prior experience or skills gained outside of traditional higher education institutions, with such academic credit counting toward a certificate or credential that provides a pathway to employment or career advancement.” In 2022-23, Future Ready Oregon supported existing and emerging credit for prior learning (CPL) programs at 19 of Oregon’s public higher education institutions (14 community colleges and five universities). The \$10 million in grant funding was spent to improve or increase assessment capacity for CPL, provide training for faculty and staff to increase capacity for offering CPL, and create strategies and mechanisms to recruit people from priority populations to participate in CPL. This work is detailed in the 2023 ORS 350.110 Report to the Legislature.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> US Department of Labor Strengthening Community Colleges Round 1 Grants (2021)  
<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/skillstraining/SCC-Overview-and-Abstracts-rev.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Oregon Revised Statute 660.300 - Future Ready Oregon 0028SS ([oregonlegislature.gov](https://oregonlegislature.gov))

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/strategy-research/Documents/Reports/2023-Credit-for-Prior-Learning-Annual-Report-ORS-350.110.pdf>

These activities supported the goals of ORS 350.110 by building capacity to increase CPL and reduce barriers to Oregonians seeking and receiving CPL. This year, several participating institutions provided updates on the capacity-building activities that have supported CPL expansion over the past several years. Those updates are summarized here:

- Support from CAEL - Several institutions have employed professional development and training from CAEL to help increase awareness of CPL and support the expansion of assessment capacity. Some have also purchased and implemented the Credit Predictor Pro Tool to support students in understanding and identifying CPL opportunities and streamline the awarding process.
- Some institutions have created or continued CPL Coordinator positions, but others have not been able to sustain those positions without additional funding.
- Ongoing work raising awareness of CPL opportunities through social media, updated websites, and print materials in multiple languages.
- Continued focus on increasing staff and faculty capacity through ongoing professional development. Some institutions use videos and other training materials created with Future Ready Oregon funds.
- CPL is being included as a strategy in other grants to leverage funding for ongoing support.
- Institutions are continuing policy discussions in light of revisions to the CPL Standards.
- Institutions and students continue to benefit from streamlined processes, transparency, and increased access created during the Future Ready Oregon grant period.
- Data and reporting capacity has been improved at several institutions due to investments from Future Ready Oregon.

Additional impacts of the Future Ready Oregon investment in CPL are summarized in the 2024 Future Ready Oregon Report.

## CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

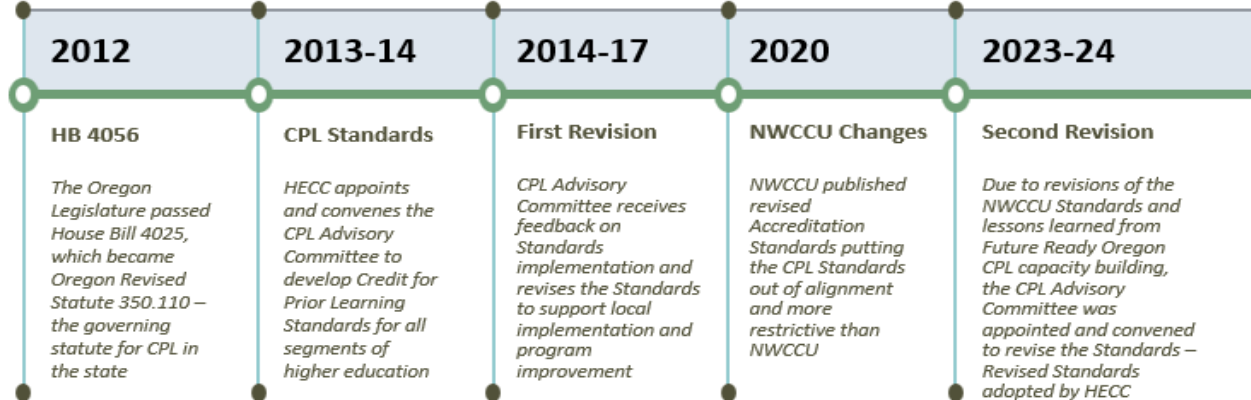
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As specified in ORS 350.110, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission appointed the current Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee in early 2023. Their primary objective was to revise the 2017 Credit for Prior Learning Standards to align with current best practices, incorporate lessons learned from Future Ready Oregon, and align with the 2020 Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation standards. The Standards were revised and presented to the Commission for approval in April 2024 (changes are summarized below). Going forward, the Advisory Committee will meet at least twice yearly to address any issues identified with implementing the Standards, review and provide feedback on this report, and support institutions with CPL implementation and expansion policy issues.

### REVISIONS TO THE CPL STANDARDS

Figure 9 summarizes the timeline of the Credit for Prior Learning Work under ORS 350.110 since 2012, specifically the development and revision of the CPL Standards.

## *Evolution of the Credit for Prior Learning Standards*



**Figure 9: Credit for Prior Learning Timeline**

As they worked to revise the CPL standards in 2023-24, the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee was guided by the following principles:

- **Access:** The Credit for Prior Learning opportunity is accessible to all students without restriction on minimum age, work experience, or student background, such as (but not limited to) race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** We are committed to providing equal opportunities to all learners, irrespective of their learning journey, background, or educational history.
- **Rigorous Assessment:** Credit for Prior Learning processes uphold the academic integrity, rigor, and student achievements, ensuring that credits awarded are based on thoughtful and consistent evaluation and alignment with established learning outcomes.
- **Transparency:** We promote transparent communications, policies, procedures, and decision-making throughout the Credit for Prior Learning process.

### **2024 CPL Standards<sup>7</sup> – Adopted by HECC 4/11/24**

This section summarizes the revisions to the 2024 CPL Standards, the complete document is included in Appendix A and available on the [HECC website](#).

#### **Standard 1: Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Requisites**

- Updated language on institutional policies, transparency, and oversight process.
- Recommended alignment across institutions for the CPL notation on transcripts.
- Specified that CPL should only be awarded for courses approved by the institution’s curriculum approval process.
- Added support for institutions to determine limits on the amount of CPL that can be used to satisfy degree requirements.

<sup>7</sup> 2024 Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards - <https://www.oregon.gov/highered/about/community-colleges-workforce-development/Documents/CPL/2024-Final-2024-Oregon-Credit-for-Prior-Learning-Standards%20.pdf>

## Types of CPL

- Removed references to the 25% cap from portfolio credit.

### **Standard 2: Evidence-Based Assessment**

- Updated to expand content experts beyond faculty as consultants in this work.
- Added recommendation that 70% of demonstrated outcomes should match between CPL source and college-level learning outcomes or equivalent.
- Added recommendations specific to portfolio assessment.
- Added that non-faculty members may be engaged as evaluators with faculty oversight.

### **Standard 3: Tuition and Fee Structure**

- Revised to note fees charged should be based on the services performed in the process rather than credit awarded.
- Added recommendations to identify resources to waive the assessment fee for students who are unable to pay the fees.
- Removed specific cost examples.

### **Standard 4: Transferability and Transcription**

- Expanded 4.2 to provide guidance on accepting or rejecting CPL based on the course rather than the type of credit awarded and guidance for accepting transfer of credit based on assessment by third-party agencies.
- Added 4.5 related to accepting CPL as elective credit for transfer if it is based on third-party assessment but does not match one of the receiving institution's approved fields of study (moved from Standard 1).

### **Standard 5: Data Collection and Reporting**

- Added guidance that CPL should be defined, easily accessible, and ensure comparable quality to ensure accurate data collection.

### **Standard 6: Faculty and Staff Development**

- Revised to add language encouraging transparency for processes related to faculty and staff development of CPL.
- Recommends all faculty and staff have knowledge of institutional opportunities for CPL, with training provided relevant to their function.

### **Standard 7: Quality Assurance in Response to ORS 350.110 (HB 4059)**

- Revised Standard 7.1 to recommend that each institution assess their processes for CPL and revised the language from "Cross-Functional Team" (Standard 1.2) to "appropriate partners".
- Removed language in Standard 7.2 related to HECC review of CPL Leadership Team accomplishments. Added language about monitoring and evaluating CPL assessments and services to support revision and ensure academic integrity.
- Added Standard 7.3 to clarify that credit is awarded for college-level learning that students have obtained due to their prior learning experiences.

### **Standard 8: Transparency/Access**

- Removed tuition from bullet 3.
- Added resources, grants, and scholarships to bullet 4.
- Added bullet 7 – Information regarding transferability.
- Added bullet 8 – Risk of credit overload for non-program-related credit.
- Added bullet 9 – Appeals process information.
- Added Standard 8.2, which recommends providing information in other languages.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **IMPROVE COMMUNITY COLLEGE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING DATA AND REPORTING**

In addition to revising the CPL Standards, the CPL Advisory Committee identified a need for a workgroup to discuss community college CPL data and reporting. This need arose from identifying several barriers, including capacity for this work at colleges, lack of clarity about awarding procedures, and lack of technical resources to implement this data submission into regular data submission processes. The workgroup was formed and started meeting in late spring of 2024. Their charge is to work with HECC staff to identify the issues and develop proposed solutions. Members include community college faculty, staff, and administrators. This work will continue into 2025 with recommendations developed in collaboration with HECC staff and presented to the Directors of the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development and the Office of Research and Data to determine the resources needed and the next steps.

### **SEEK SUSTAINABLE FUNDING**

A challenge identified by Future Ready Oregon Grantees was the lack of ongoing or sustainable funding for implementing CPL. While Future Ready Oregon funding supported significant capacity building, there are ongoing funding challenges to ensure assessments remain current, ensure capacity to create new assessments, and that students can access and pay for CPL as it is not financial aid eligible. For each award of CPL, faculty and/or staff must administer and evaluate whether the student, in fact, already possesses the learning outcomes as identified in the course they are challenging—even with CPL assessment strategies and criteria developed for the course. Sometimes, the costs (not price) of assessment to the institution per person, per course are comparable to the tuition costs to the students to enroll in the same course, depending on how the assessment of prior learning is set up as well as how the student-service is organized to administer the process. Ongoing funding is critical to support the capacity built with support from Future Ready Oregon and to continue expanding these opportunities for students.



### **2024 Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards Preamble**

In early 2022, a need was identified to revise the 2017 Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards to align with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) 2020 Accreditation Standards. In 2023, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) solicited nominations for membership on the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee.

From those nominations, members were appointed to represent all four sectors of higher education, higher education students, business and industry, labor, and other interested parties. The Advisory Committee convened in early 2023, and members worked collaboratively to revise the Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards for adoption by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in 2024.

In pursuit of academic excellence and a commitment to fostering inclusive and accessible education, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission adopted these revised Credit for Prior Learning Standards. Acknowledging the diverse pathways through which individuals acquire knowledge and skills, these Standards aim to provide a systematic framework for recognizing, assessing, and granting credit for prior learning experiences. Equitable education and training are fundamental to sustaining the ability of Oregon communities to thrive. We believe that one of our most critical responsibilities is to implement a set of guidelines to deliver a learner-centric education and training system that improves outcomes and opportunities for Oregonians statewide. Credit for Prior Learning is a strategy that supports learner-centric education and values the experiences and learning Oregonians bring with them to higher education.

At the heart of these standards is the conviction that learning is a lifelong journey, often undertaken through formal and informal avenues. By formalizing a process for the evaluation of prior learning, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission seeks to empower learners from all walks of life, embracing the richness of their experiences and expertise. This commitment reflects our dedication to creating an inclusive educational environment that values and respects the diverse ways in which individuals gain mastery over subject matter.

[Oregon Revised Statute 350.110](#) establishes the goals for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and higher education institutions related to Credit for Prior Learning:

- (a) Increase the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning and the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning that counts toward their major or toward earning their degree, certificate, or credential, while ensuring that credit is awarded only for high-quality course-level competencies;
- (b) Increase the number and type of academic credits accepted for prior learning in institutions of higher education, while ensuring that credit is awarded only for high-quality course-level competencies;
- (c) Develop transparent policies and practices in awarding academic credit for prior learning to be adopted by the governing boards of public universities, community colleges, and independent institutions of higher education;
- (d) Improve prior learning assessment practices across all institutions of higher education;
- (e) Create tools to develop faculty and staff knowledge and expertise in awarding academic credit for prior learning and to share exemplary policies and practices among institutions of higher education;
- (f) Develop articulation agreements when patterns of academic credit for prior learning are identified for particular programs and pathways; and
- (g) Develop outcome measures to track progress on the goals outlined in this section.

**The 2024 Credit for Prior Learning Standards are guided by the following principles:**

**Access:** Credit for Prior Learning opportunity is accessible to all students without restriction on minimum age, work experience, and student background such as (but not limited to) race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.

**Equity and Inclusion:** We are committed to providing equal opportunities to all learners, irrespective of their learning journey, background, or educational history.

**Rigorous Assessment:** Credit for Prior Learning processes uphold the academic integrity, rigor, and student achievements ensuring that credits awarded are based on thoughtful and consistent evaluation and alignment with established learning outcomes.

**Transparency:** We promote transparent communications, policies, procedures, and decision-making throughout the Credit for Prior Learning process.

A driving force behind the revision of these standards was the alignment to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities 2020 Accreditation Standards regarding Credit for Prior Learning.

**Adoption and Implementation**

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission invites all academic institutions in Oregon and their community partners to adopt the Credit for Prior Learning Standards recommended here and actively participate in the implementation and evolution of this framework. We recognize that Credit for Prior Learning work is an ongoing process of continuous improvement and that each institution will accomplish this work to its distinct mission and internal processes. While these Standards are not required, we know that Oregon students are best served when we work together to promote Credit for Prior Learning through standards that are equitable, transparent, and accessible to our students and in support of our partners in the workforce, our communities, and other institutions of higher education, without limitations. Together, we aspire to build a learning community that celebrates the diverse paths to knowledge and success and advances the opportunities for all Oregonians.

**2023 Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Advisory Committee Members**

The Higher Education Coordinating Commission would like to acknowledge the work of the Credit for Prior Learning Advisory Committee. This group of higher education practitioners, students, industry, and labor representatives dedicated their time and expertise to ensure these revised Standards are inclusive of partner voices, support the needs of students, and are meaningful guidelines that create a framework ongoing Credit for Prior Learning implementation and expansion. The list of members is included here.

*ORS 350.110 requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to appoint members to the Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Advisory Committee representing the sectors below.*

ORS 350.110 Requirement	Name	Affiliation
A member recommended for appointment by the State Board of Higher Education representing public universities in this state.	Cindy Baccar	Portland State University
A member recommended for appointment by the State Board of Education representing community colleges in this state.	Cindy Lenhart	Central Oregon Community College

ORS 350.110 Requirement	Name	Affiliation
A member representing independent not-for-profit institutions of higher education located in this state.	Richard Weber	Corban University
A member representing for-profit institutions of higher education offering degree programs to students in this state.	Ravinder Dayal	Carrington College
A member representing the business community.	Debbie Radie	Boardman Foods
A member representing the labor community.	Josh Hall	Oregon AFL-CIO
A member who is a student at a two-year or four-year institution of higher education located in this state.	Erin Malanchee*	Southern Oregon University
Other members appointed by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission based upon a demonstrated interest in and knowledge of prior learning programs.	Laurie Michaels	Umpqua Community College
	Jennifer Hills	Blue Mountain Community College
	Amy Burbee	Linn Benton Community College
	Linda Samek	George Fox University
	Bonnie Gutierrez	University of Oregon
	Rebecca Schwartz*	Blue Mountain Community College
	Wendy Ivie	Oregon Tech
	Moneeka Settles	Southern Oregon University
	Emily Sharratt	Eastern Oregon University
	Judith Sylva	Western Oregon University
	Rebecca Mathern	Oregon State University
Higher Education Coordinating Commission Staff	Shalee Hodgson	Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development
	Jennifer Markey	

\* Advisory Committee Co-Chairs

# 2024 Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards

## Standard 1 - Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Requisites

- 1.1 For those areas in which CPL is awarded, each institution should develop institutional policies and procedures for awarding credit in response to the CPL Standards. Institutional policies and procedures should be designed to maintain the integrity of the academic credential. These policies and procedures should be transparent to all students, faculty, staff, and external partners.
- 1.2 Institutional policies and procedures should ensure credit is granted for documented learning and awarded only for demonstrated college-level learning outcomes. To ensure consistent quality, each institution should create an oversight process to monitor a CPL policy and process informed by a cross-functional set of relevant administrators and faculty.
- 1.3 CPL credit recorded on the official institutional transcript should be notated as CPL. The notation should be aligned amongst schools in Oregon. CPL credit should be awarded only for those courses formally approved by the institution's curriculum approval process within the approved academic disciplines of the institution.
- 1.4 Institutional policies may address any overarching limits on how much CPL programs can use toward degree requirements. Any institutional limits on CPL credit accumulation set by an institution or program should be made explicit and transparent to students. Such limits should be carefully considered and based on institutional, and program needs and requirements, connected closely to student academic success outcomes. Institutions should maintain the goal of maximizing appropriate CPL credit awards to support student credential attainment through lower costs and time-to-degree/credential.
- 1.5 Credit awarded through CPL should be directly applicable to meet requirements for academic credentials (general education, major, minor, electives, etc.) as outlined in college publications. Awarding excessive credit, unrelated to the academic pathway, may negatively impact student progress.

### **Credit may be awarded through these types of CPL as noted below.**

Credit based on third-party assessment.

- Credit by Exam (CLEP, DANTES, AP, IB, etc.)
- Industry Certifications
- Professional Licensure
- Military Credit (ACE Credit Recommendation Service)
- Other forms of transfer

Credit based on institutional faculty and/or subject matter expert assessment.

- Institutional Challenge Exams – Challenge exams must be driven by institutional policy with the expectation of involving faculty in awarding credit and developing exams for their respective areas of expertise. These exams should be based on valid and reliable instruments.
- Prior Experiential Learning/Prior Learning Assessments (PLA) e.g., portfolios – 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 content experts. Credit is awarded based on the faculty/content expert review of the portfolio at the institution.
- Other forms of authentic assessment to award CPL credit.

**Resources:** Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) [2020 Standards](#)

### **NWCCU 2.C.1**

The institution’s transfer-of-credit policy maintains the integrity of its programs and facilitates the efficient mobility of students desirous of the completion of their educational credits, credentials, or degrees in furtherance of their academic goals<sup>1</sup>.

### **NWCCU 1.C.8**

Transfer credit and credit for prior learning is accepted according to clearly defined, widely published, and easily accessible policies that provide adequate safeguards to ensure academic quality. In accepting transfer credit, the receiving institution ensures that such credit accepted is appropriate for its programs and comparable in nature, content, academic rigor, and quality.

## **Standard 2 - Evidence-Based Assessment**

- 2.1 Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning. The institution should consult its content experts in determining such standards and criteria. Course learning outcomes are central to CPL assessments. Courses, programs, and other learning experiences will be judged on their learning outcomes, using valid evaluation measures, including third-party review by appropriately qualified reviewers and recommendations from organizations experienced with such evaluations (e.g., ACE, CAEL). Seventy percent of demonstrated

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<sup>1</sup> NWCCU 2020 Accreditation Standards do not impose caps on Credit for Prior Learning, individual institutions will need to determine caps, if any, that they will impose.

outcomes should match between CPL source and college-level course learning outcomes or its equivalent.

2.2 For portfolio assessment, each institution should provide students with a clear, guided process to assess student learning. The student must document the connection between what they have learned in another setting and the theoretical foundation, knowledge, and/or skills as defined by the course-specific learner outcomes of the credit to be awarded.

2.3 Institutional faculty provides oversight for determining what qualifies as CPL credit. Faculty must have content expertise and be teaching in the field associated with credit to be assessed and awarded. 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.

### **Standard 3 - Tuition and Fee Structure**

3.1 Each institution should develop and consistently apply a fee structure for CPL that is transparent and accessible to all students, faculty, staff, and community partners.

3.2 Since CPL is not covered by federal Financial Aid, institutions should consider identifying other resources to waive the assessment fee for students who are unable to pay (based on Pell-eligibility status, for example).

3.3 Institutions should endeavor to charge fees for CPL assessments that are based on the services provided in the process, rather than the credit awarded. Service costs may include things related to supporting students through the assessment process, faculty workload around evaluation, training, and portfolio/exam infrastructure and assessments.

### **Standard 4 - Transferability and Transcription**

4.1 Institutions should work collaboratively to promote the transferability of courses/credits awarded through CPL.

4.2 Each receiving institution determines the transferability and applicability of credit granted from other institutions. Schools should not categorically discount a course awarded through CPL including all types under that umbrella. If the transferring CPL is based on an assessment by third-party agencies, then the receiving schools should require the original documentation from the agencies issuing the results. In these cases, the receiving institution will treat the award of credit following their internal standard policies.

4.3 Documentation used to support credits awarded should be maintained as part of the student's academic record in accordance with institutional records retention standards.

4.4 The expectation for all institutions is that CPL awarded by the institution on its official institutional transcript should be noted as such.

4.5 CPL credit accepted in transfer based on third-party assessment (CLEP, DANTES, AP, IB, MIL, Certifications, Licensure, etc.) may be transferred as the receiving institution's direct equivalent or general elective credit.

### **Standard 5 - Data Collection and Reporting**

Institutions should collect and report data on the types of CPL awarded. The HECC will provide direction on the data needed and how it will be reported, for HECC to summarize the number of credits granted by the institution and the number of unduplicated students who receive credit through each of the types of CPL identified in Standard 1. To ensure accurate data collection, credit for prior learning should be defined and easily accessible.

#### **Data and reporting codes**

**AP** – Credit for Prior Learning: Advanced Placement Exam

**CE** – Challenge Exam: Credit granted for courses passed through Challenge Exam

**CP** – Other Credit for Prior Learning: Credit granted for other prior learning experiences

**IB** – Credit for Prior Learning: International Baccalaureate

**MI** – Military Credit for Prior Learning: Credit granted for Military experience or ACE Transcripts

**PO** – Portfolio Credit for Prior Learning: Credit granted for portfolio evaluation

### **Standard 6 - Faculty and Staff Development**

Each institution shall be transparent in its processes/practices for faculty and staff development for CPL. All faculty and staff should have knowledge of institutional opportunities for developing, assessing, and recommending CPL, and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.

### **Standard 7 - Quality Assurance in Response to ORS 350.110 (HB 4059)**

7.1 Assessment should be conducted by the institution, reviewed periodically, and based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning. The institution should consult its appropriate partners in determining such standards and criteria. CPL assessments are driven by course student learning outcomes. Courses, programs, and other learning experiences will be judged on learning outcomes, using valid evaluation measures, such as third-party review by appropriately qualified reviewers and recommendations from organizations experienced with such evaluations (e.g., ACE, CAEL).

7.2 Institutions should regularly monitor, review, evaluate, and revise CPL assessments and services as needed to ensure academic integrity.

7.3 Credit is not awarded for experience but rather for college-level learning, which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained as a result of their prior learning. In the case of courses that have experiential learning as part of their course learning outcomes, CPL may be awarded. CPL is rooted in the notion that legitimate, college-level learning can be achieved outside the traditional classroom setting, such that the learning is equivalent to college-level courses.

## **Standard 8 - Transparency/Access**

8.1 Institutional CPL policies and expectations should be clearly communicated to students, faculty, staff, and community partners. CPL information should 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 should be included:

- Institutional CPL contacts
- Available CPL opportunities and preparation requirements
- Process for students or faculty to request additional or alternative CPL offerings
- Fee Structure(s)
- Risks to students and the cost of assessment where credit may not be awarded
- Information about financial aid, resources, grants, and scholarships
- 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.
- Information regarding transferability
- Risk of credit overload for non-program-related credit
- Appeals process information
- CPL applicability towards academic residency requirements
- Any other related CPL institutional information

8.2 All information about CPL should be made available in languages that are relevant to the local service area.

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## Glossary

This information is included to define the general usage of certain terms throughout the document and in recognition of the fact that these specific terms may vary from institution to institution.

**Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) (ORS 350.110)** – The knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience, through military training and experience, and through formal and informal education and training from institutions of higher education in the United States and other nations. Also, at times referred to as **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)**.

**Assessment** – A systematic process of evaluating and measuring the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other relevant characteristics of students or participants within an educational context.

**CPL by 3rd party assessment** – Certain types of CPL, such as standardized exams (CLEP, AP, IB) and Military Credit (awarded based on ACE recommendation), are awarded based on accepting third-party administered tests and evaluation/assessments rather than relying on direct institutional faculty assessment instruments. Also referred to as **Externally Conducted Assessment**.

**Crosswalk** – A systematic alignment or mapping process that establishes consistent equivalencies between the knowledge, skills, and competencies gained through prior learning experiences and the specific learning outcomes or requirements of academic courses or programs. The purpose of a crosswalk is to provide a clear connection between what an individual has learned through non-traditional means and what is expected in a formal educational setting. For example, being a licensed childcare provider in the state of Washington could crosswalk into specific ECE courses. The specific transferability should be established within the institution.

**Equivalency** – For CPL-related work, equivalency is defined as seventy percent of course learning outcomes matching between the CPL source and the college-level course learning outcomes.

**Externally Conducted Assessment** – Acknowledgement of accomplishments created, administered, and maintained by third-party entities outside of the accredited academic institution. Also referred to as **CPL by Third Party Assessment**

**External Partner** – CPL partners outside of the institution, including businesses, industry, labor, community-based organizations, workforce development, and others who support or partner with institutions on CPL.

**Institutional/Challenge Exams** – Institutionally developed and administered exams, sometimes called 'challenge' exams or 'institutional exam credit.

**Institutional Credit** – Credit that is issued directly by the institution, assessed by institutional faculty, and recorded on its official transcript, as opposed to credit an institution might accept in transfer from another institution.

**Policies and Procedures** – Standards by which schools implement the CPL guidelines, recognizing these are called different things at different institutions, such as standards, regulations, board policy, administrative rules, etc.

**Portfolio Assessment** – A method used to evaluate and document an individual's prior learning experiences, knowledge, and skills. Instead of relying solely on traditional exams or coursework, a portfolio serves as a comprehensive collection of evidence that demonstrates a person's proficiency in specific subject areas.

**Prior Experiential Learning (PEL)** – Credit granted toward the award of a certificate or degree for prior learning experiences that can be shown through various means of assessment to be the equivalent of learning gained through formal collegiate instruction. Also known as **Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)**.

### Acronym List

ACE	American Council on Education
AP	Advanced Placement
CAEL	Council for Adult and Experiential Learning
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
CPL	Credit for Prior Learning
DANTES	Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support
DSST	DANTES Subject Standardized Tests
HB	House Bill
IB	International Baccalaureate
JST	Joint Services Transcript
HECC	Higher Education Coordinating Commission
NWCCU	Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
OAR	Oregon Administrative Rule
ODE	Oregon Department of Education
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute
PLA	Prior Learning Assessment is synonymous with CPL
PEL	Prior Experiential Learning
SB	Senate Bill

