



Procedure 3.35.1 Credit for Prior Learning – External Assessments

Part 1. Purpose

To establish consistent practices and procedures among colleges and universities regarding credit for prior learning external assessments, evaluations, and the award of undergraduate or graduate credit to students admitted to a college or university.

Part 2. Authority

Minn. Stat. § 120B.022 Elective Standards requires the colleges and universities of Minnesota State to establish criteria to translate world language certifications and seals into college credits based on the world language course equivalencies. Minn. Stat. § 120B.13 Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programs requires the colleges and universities of the Minnesota State to award college credit to high school students who receive a score of three or higher on an advanced placement examination, or a score of four or higher on the international baccalaureate program examination. Minn. Stat. § 120B.131 College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) requires the colleges and universities of the Minnesota State to award college credit to high school students who receive a satisfactory score on a CLEP examination.

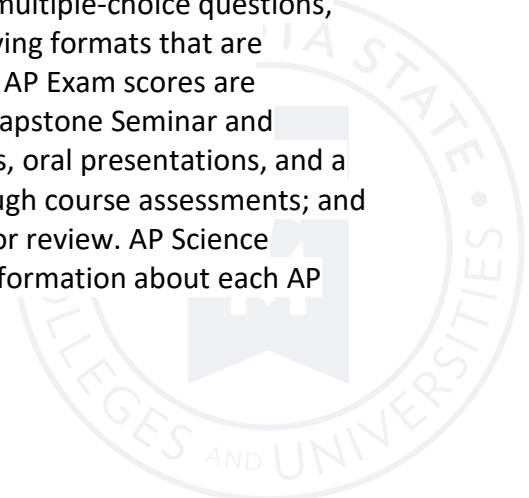
Part 3. Definitions

Advanced Placement (AP)

A program created by The College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. Colleges and universities use the examination scores to determine course placement and award course credit to students.

Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations

AP Exams are administered annually every May. The AP Exams are designed to measure how well high school students can demonstrate college level proficiency of the content and skills related to specific subject areas. Most AP Exams combine multiple-choice questions, with a free-response section that includes essay or problem-solving formats that are externally scored by expert teachers and college faculty in June. AP Exam scores are available in early July. New AP Redesigned subjects such as AP Capstone Seminar and Research require through-course and end of course assessments, oral presentations, and a final research paper; Computer Science Principles requires through course assessments; and Studio Art and Design requires students to develop a portfolio for review. AP Science subjects require students to develop a lab manual for review. Information about each AP course and exam is available online at AP Central.



American Council on Education (ACE)

ACE is a major coordinating body for colleges and universities and provides leadership and a unifying voice on key higher education issues. ACE influences public policy through advocacy, research, and program initiatives.

American Council of Education (ACE) credit recommendation

ACE offers a nationally recognized assessment service providing standardized reviews and credit recommendations for college-level learning achieved through third-party study/exam programs, professional and certification trainings and assessments, and military training and assessments.

The College Board

A non-profit organization that prepares and administers standardized exams used by colleges and universities for student admissions, placement, and the award of credit for prior learning. The organization also helps students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations

CLEP examinations, prepared and administered by The College Board, are designed to assess student knowledge of lower division college and university course material in specific subject areas.

Continuing education

Open-enrollment education and training opportunities offered by colleges or universities or other education providers that are not for degree credit. Job-related or professional development continuing education and training refers to all organized, systematic education and training activities to enhance knowledge and/or learn new skills for a current or a future job, to increase earnings, to improve job and/or career opportunities in a current or another field.

Credit for prior learning (CPL)

Academic credit awarded for demonstrated college- and university-level learning gained through learning experiences outside college or university credit-bearing courses and assessed by academically sound and rigorous methods and processes.

Credit for prior learning (CPL) - external assessments

Assessment methods and processes at the colleges or universities of Minnesota State that could result in credit for prior learning achieved and assessed through a nationally recognized third-party assessment agency or organization, regionally or nationally accredited postsecondary institution, or noncredit instruction. Students demonstrate a level of proficiency that is recognized through curriculum, instruction, program, or a standardized exam. CPL external assessment types may include, but are not limited to, AP, IB, CLEP, and other national standardized assessments; world languages seals and certificates; industry recognized credentials, licenses, and certifications; and noncredit instruction in programs such as registered apprenticeships, continuing education, and customized training.

Customized training

Specially designed noncredit curriculum and instruction tailored to meet the specific needs, goals, and interests of an employer offered in a closed-enrollment, contracted service between an employer and college or university.

Industry-recognized credentials, licenses, and certifications

Industry developed and endorsed specific criterion-referenced assessments that provide mechanisms to demonstrate a level of mastery of competencies, typically in a technical field. When “industry recognized” is used with respect to a credential, the credential is sought or accepted by employers within the industry or sector involved as a recognized, preferred, or required credential for recruitment, screening, hiring, retention, or advancement purposes; and, where appropriate, is endorsed by a nationally recognized trade association or organization representing a significant part of the industry or sector.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Program

The International Baccalaureate Foundation, a non-profit organization, offers the internationally recognized IB program through which a secondary student completes a comprehensive curriculum of rigorous study and demonstrates performance on IB examinations. A student may present a full IB diploma or a certificate recognizing specific higher level or standard level examination scores.

A. International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma

The IB diploma covers six subjects and is awarded to students who achieve specified scores on three higher level and three standard level examinations or four higher level and two standard level examinations.

B. Higher Level International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations

Higher level IB examinations assess work for higher level courses which generally involve significant breadth and depth of learning and represent 240 high school instructional hours.

C. Standard Level International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations

Standard level IB examinations assess work completed at a narrower or less rigorous level than the higher level examinations and represents 150 high school instructional hours.

National standardized exams

Standardized proficiency examinations administered and scored by nationally recognized third-party assessment organizations and include, but are not limited to: Advanced Placement (AP) examinations; International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations; College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations; Cambridge International examinations; DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST); Excelsior College UExcel examinations; The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessments; New York University

Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP) examinations; and Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP).

Registered apprenticeship program

A formal system of employee training that combines structured on-the-job training with related technical instruction. Upon successful completion, participants are fully competent in all aspects of an occupation, including knowledge, skill, and proficiency on the job. With apprenticeship training, there is a written contract between the apprentice and the sponsor, approved by and registered with the state of Minnesota that specifies the length of the training, school hours, an outline of the skills of the trade to be learned, and the wages the apprentice will receive.

Part 4. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) - External Assessments

Colleges and universities shall offer students the opportunity to demonstrate college-level learning through CPL external assessment options that include the components listed below.

Subpart A. Types of CPL external assessments

CPL external assessments may include, but are not limited to: AP, IB, CLEP, and other national standardized assessments; world languages seals and certificates; industry recognized credentials, licenses, and certifications; and noncredit instruction in programs such as registered apprenticeships, continuing education, and customized training.

Subpart B. Credit award for CPL external assessment

College or university faculty evaluate an instrument, examination, curriculum, program, credential, license, or certification and determine a credit award based on learning outcomes comparable to college- or university- level learning outcomes.

Subpart C. Credit awarded

Once a credit award has been determined, students who provide documentation that they meet the CPL external assessment requirements must be awarded the credit(s). Credit awarded must be based on documented results, not on the basis of participation alone. Colleges and universities shall award credit for CPL external assessments as a course-equivalency or as an individualized subject area. Credits awarded for prior learning may fulfill general, technical, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC), program/major/minor and/or elective courses.

Subpart D. Residency credit for CPL external assessments

Colleges and universities shall award credit for CPL external assessments consistent with the residency and graduation requirements in Board Policy 3.36 and System Procedure 3.36.1 Academic Programs. Credit awarded through CPL external assessment does not apply toward residency credit requirements.

Subpart E. Recording of CPL external assessment credit awarded

See System Procedure 3.29.1 College and University Transcripts, Part 5.

Subpart F. Credit limit for CPL external assessments

Colleges and universities shall not limit the total number of credits students may be awarded for CPL external assessments.

Subpart G. Tuition and fees for CPL external assessments

Colleges and universities shall not charge students tuition for credit awarded for CPL external assessments and shall not charge students fees for CPL external documentation processing services.

Part 5. CPL External Assessments Assessed through National Standardized Exam Scores

Colleges and universities shall award credit for learning demonstrated by scores attained on national standardized exams as indicated in the following subparts.

Subpart A. AP Exams

A college or university shall award lower division course credits for achievement of scores of three (3) or higher on AP Exams. In most cases, the same number of credits must be awarded for scores of three (3), four (4), and five (5). For courses that are sequential in nature (for example, world languages and mathematics), colleges and universities may award more credit for a score of four (4) or five (5) when it represents greater proficiency level of the material.

Subpart B. IB diploma

Students who attain an IB diploma must be awarded six (6) lower division course credits for a score of four (4) or higher on each Higher Level IB examination and two (2) lower division course credits for a score of four (4) or higher on each Standard Level IB examination.

Subpart C. Individual IB examinations

For students who do not receive an IB diploma:

1. Students must receive three (3) or more lower division course credits for a score of four (4) or higher on each individual Higher Level IB examination.
2. Students must receive two (2) or more lower division credits for a score of four (4) or higher on each individual Standard Level IB examination.

Subpart D. CLEP examinations

Colleges and universities shall award course credits to students who earn a score of 50 or higher on CLEP examinations, with the exception of Level 2 foreign-language examinations, for which a minimum score of 60 for German language, 59 for French language, 63 for Spanish language, and 65 for Spanish Language with Writing is required. These scores conform to the recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE) and comply with Minn. Stat. § 120B.131 pertaining to eligible high school students.

Subpart E. Other national standardized examinations

Colleges or universities may award course credit to students who earn an institutionally determined score or higher on other national standardized exams, including but not limited to Cambridge International, DSST, UExcel, NOCTI, NYUFLP, and TECEP.

Subpart F. Equivalent course credit

Colleges and universities shall award equivalent course credit for a specific lower division college course for each AP Exam, Higher Level or Standard Level IB examination, and/or CLEP examination that covers substantially similar material.

Colleges and universities may award equivalent course credit for a college course for other national standardized exams that cover substantially similar material. Equivalent course credits may be applied to certificate, diploma, and/or degree programs as either required or elective courses.

Subpart G. Non-equivalent course credit

Colleges and universities shall award lower division elective course credits when a student presents scores on AP Exams, Higher Level or Standard Level IB examinations, and/or CLEP examinations that cover material that is not substantially similar or equivalent to an existing course offered by the college or university.

1. AP non-equivalent course credit

Colleges and universities shall award a minimum of three (3) lower division elective course credits when a student presents a score of three (3) or higher on an AP Exams that covers material that is not substantially similar or equivalent to an existing course offered by the college or university.

2. IB non-equivalent course credit

Colleges and universities shall award a minimum of three (3) lower division elective course credits when a student presents a score of four (4) or higher on a Higher Level IB examination or two (2) lower division elective course credits for a score of four (4) or higher on a Standard Level IB examination that covers material that is not substantially similar or equivalent to an existing lower division course offered by the college or university.

Colleges and universities may award lower division elective or individualized course credits when a student presents scores on other national standardized exams that cover material that is not substantially similar or equivalent to an existing course offered by the college or university, but are evaluated for college- or university-level credit. Non-equivalent course credits may be applied to certificate, diploma, and/or degree programs as elective courses.

MnTC goal areas may be designated for learning demonstrated by scores achieved from national standardized examinations when there are no equivalent general education courses at the college or university.

Part 6. CPL External Assessment Assessed through World Language Seals and Certifications

Colleges and universities shall award credit for K-12 world language proficiency as indicated in the following subparts. The assessment of proficiency levels and the award of seals and certificates is the responsibility of high schools.

Subpart A. Credit equivalencies

The following table identifies the credit equivalencies for seals and certificates and the corresponding proficiency levels set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Seal or Certificate	ACTFL Proficiency level	Credits to be Awarded
World Language Proficiency Certificate	Intermediate-Low	2 semester per language course sequence
Bilingual or Multilingual Gold Seal	Intermediate-High	3 semester per language course sequence
Bilingual or Multilingual Platinum Seal	Advanced-Low	4 semester per language course sequence

Subpart B. College or university responsibility

For a student who has earned bilingual or multilingual seals or world language proficiency certificates and is requesting academic credit, colleges and universities shall provide information on the extent to which the student has met the requirements in Minn. Stat. § 120B.022 Elective Standards:

“A student who demonstrated the requisite level of language proficiency in grade 10, 11, or 12 to receive a seal or certificate and is enrolled in a college or university of Minnesota State must request college credits for the student’s seal or proficiency certificate within three academic years after graduating from high school.” *Minn. Stat. § 120B.022.*

Additional findings, determinations, and recommendations, as required by the legislation, can be found within the February 15, 2015, legislative report, “Review of World Language Competencies and Determination of Credit Equivalencies.” These agreed-upon academic-credit equivalencies and other elements of the report should be communicated within the colleges and universities to ensure the appropriate award of college credit for world language certificates and seals.

Subpart C. Student responsibility

In order to receive proper credit, students shall submit world languages seals and certificates to the college or university within three academic years after graduating from high school.

Part 7. Industry Recognized Credentials, Licenses and Certifications, and Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Colleges and universities may recognize, and award credit for, industry recognized credentials, licenses and certifications, and registered apprenticeship programs that demonstrate college-level learning.

Part 8. Continuing Education and Customized Training

Colleges and universities may recognize and award credit for the successful completion of courses from continuing education and/or customized training programs that demonstrate college-level learning.

Part 9. Transfer of Credit Awarded for CPL External Assessments

A student who is awarded credits based on CPL external assessments and then transfers to another college or university within the Minnesota State system must have their transcript evaluated by the receiving college or university pursuant to System Procedure 3.21.1 Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer.

Part 10. Implementation

Subpart A. Student responsibility

1. A student must be admitted to the college or university to be eligible for the award of credit for prior learning through CPL external assessments.
2. In addition to the student responsibilities listed above, students seeking credit for prior learning through CPL external assessments are responsible for seeking information and advice on the use of that credit in college or university programs, including understanding processes, expectations, and assessment criteria; academic and financial aid implications; and any applicable pre-requisites or limitations based on degree program, major, minor, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum criteria, etc.
3. Students may choose to submit documentation for all, some, or none of their CPL external assessments.
4. A student seeking credit for prior learning through CPL external assessments shall provide official documents and/or supporting information as specified by the college or university policy and procedure.
5. Students shall adhere to the college or university policies and procedures for the award of credit through CPL external assessments.

Subpart B. College or university responsibility

In addition to the college or university responsibilities listed above, colleges and universities shall establish procedures for implementation that will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Each college or university shall publish opportunities for CPL external assessments in its print and electronic media catalog and related publications. Published information must include the following CPL:
 - CPL external assessments,

- CPL policies and procedures, and
 - CPL appeals.
2. Colleges and universities shall establish procedures for implementing the CPL external assessment options of AP, IB, and CLEP:
 - a list of courses determined to be equivalent to each AP, IB, and CLEP examination and the number of credits awarded for each examination; and
 - a list of courses determined to be equivalent to other national standardized exams where applicable and the number of credits awarded for each examination.
 3. Colleges and universities shall provide students with information about CPL external assessment processes, applicable policies, required documentations, appeals process, and transfer information and the impact that credit awarded for prior learning may have on financial aid eligibility.

Part 11. Appeals

Each college and university shall establish an appeals process that may be used by students who are denied credit requested for CPL external assessments. The appeals process may utilize current college or university established processes, such as the academic appeals process.

Date of Adoption: 10/08/08
Date of Implementation: 03/01/09
Date of Last Review: 12/06/19

Date and Subject of Amendments:

12/06/19 – Updated the AP Examination definition. Relocated CPL transcription language to System Procedure 3.29.1 College and University Transcripts. Replaced deleted CPL transcription language in Part 4, Subpart E with “See System Procedure 3.29.1 College and University Transcripts, Part 5”. Added language on the new CLEP test for Spanish Language with Writing, changed AP exams to AP Exams to be aligned with how the College Board has rebranded these exams.

10/10/18 – Language from Procedure 3.15.1 Advanced Placement Credit, Procedure 3.16 International Baccalaureate Credit, and Procedure 3.33 College-Level Examination Program Credit was rolled into Procedure 3.35 Credit for Prior Learning. Those three procedures were repealed as a part of this amendment. External Assessment was added to the procedure title and detailed information on external assessments and the award of credits based on them.

No Additional HISTORY.