

**POLICY ON COLLEGE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING  
AND INSTRUCTION IN NON-COLLEGIATE SETTINGS**

(This policy statement was recommended by the CSULB Academic Senate on March 9, 2023, and approved by the President on April 3, 2023.)

**Introduction**

The California State University Chancellor's Office [Policy on Credit for Prior Learning](#) (formerly Executive Order EO 1036) pertaining to credit for experiential learning and credit for instruction acquired outside formal higher education settings authorizes California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) to establish and determine whether or not enrolled students may earn credit for prior learning experiences and apply those credits toward a baccalaureate degree or a graduate degree. Those credits may also be applied to credentials and certificates, as long as those same credits are also articulated as part of a degree, in which case the rules listed below, including for the maximum units allowed, also apply.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) concerns knowledge and/or skills acquired through prior assessment (i.e., external standardized examinations), military training, work/life experience, or education outside of formal higher educational settings.

Awarding academic credit for experiential learning (that concerns either experience acquired through practice or acquired outside formal higher educational settings, such as the military) promotes access for fair and equitable recognition of prior learning, helps to support student retention and persistence, reduces time to graduation, and assures quality and equity across various academic experiences.

Students should be aware, however, that policies for earning credit for prior learning assessment and learning acquired outside formal higher education instruction may vary from campus to campus within the CSU system. CSULB shall honor certifications that apply credits earned by passing standardized examinations for students who enter with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) and full or partial certification in CSU General Education (GE) Breadth.

For an undergraduate degree, CSULB may award up to 20% of total units of a program (24 units for a 120-unit undergraduate degree). Credit for certificates or credentials may be awarded through prior learning assessment according to WSCUC institutional accreditors. Units may be earned and shall be applied towards a degree as general education, major, and/or elective credit outside the major. These units may be CR/NC or a letter grade.

For a graduate degree, a maximum of 6 units through prior learning experiences may be earned and shall be applied towards a graduate program. These units must be letter grade only.

Students shall be allowed to appeal decisions regarding credit for experiential learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience. Undergraduate students shall appeal to the

University's Academic Appeals Committee (AAC), and graduate students shall appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The objectives, policies, procedures, and bases for awarding credit for documented prior learning shall be fully described in the CSULB catalog and web site.

The sections below are organized following the order presented in Chancellor's Office Policy on Credit for Prior Learning.

## **Section 1: Academic Credit for CPL that has already been evaluated**

### **A. Standardized Examinations**

1. CSULB shall award credit to be applied toward the degree and/or admission eligibility for students who pass a standardized examination such as Advanced Placement (AP) Tests, International Baccalaureate (IB), and College Level Entrance Program (CLEP).
2. Conditions of Award of Credit for Standardized Examinations
  - a. For standardized examinations, the passing score and the minimum amount of credit awarded for the calculation of admission eligibility and toward the degree shall be uniform throughout the California State University and determined according to procedures set forth in Section 1.B.4 of the Chancellor's Office Policy on Credit for Prior Learning.
    - A. Please see the current information on "[Transfer Credit for Incoming Students](#)," and the [University Catalog](#) for more information
  - b. Credit for passage of standardized examinations shall not be awarded if:
    - A. it has previously been awarded.
    - B. equivalent degree credit has been previously earned through regular coursework, prior learning assessment, or other instructional processes.
    - C. credit has been granted at a level more advanced than the content level in the examination.
  - c. Credit shall not be duplicated because of overlapping tests, college-level courses, or both. Where there is partial overlap, the amount of examination credit shall be reduced accordingly as determined by the CSU campus at which the student matriculates.
3. Application of Credits for Standardized Examinations
  - a. CSULB shall follow CSU Systemwide policies specifying whether the credits earned by passing standardized examinations shall be applicable as general education, major, or elective credits. The current list can be found at [CSU Systemwide Credit for External Examinations](#). This list includes passing scores, minimum credits toward admission eligibility, minimum credits toward the degree, and, for transfer students seeking general education certification before matriculation, placement in CSU GE-Breadth area.
  - b. CSULB will not allow the granting of additional credits earned by standardized examination upon matriculation beyond those outlined in the [catalog](#).
  - c. No more than 20% of total program units (e.g., 24 semester units for a 120-unit undergraduate degree) of credit shall be applied to the calculation of

admission eligibility or to the degree or certificate/credential on the basis of passing standardized exams. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate are excluded from this limit. CSULB may award up to 20% of total program units through prior learning assessment, within the 25% limit set by the WSCUC institutional accreditor

**B. Credit for education, training and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States**

1. To be eligible to enroll students participating in the G.I. Bill, CSULB are required by federal law ([38 CFR § 21.4253 \(d\)\(3\)](#)) to evaluate prior learning, provide credit where appropriate, and shorten the time to academic objective accordingly. Accurate records that such credit has been awarded must be maintained for review by state and federal veterans' education compliance officials. NOTE: This section pertains to education, training and service completed during military service but not at one of the many U.S. Armed Forces institutions that are regionally accredited to offer associate, bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees. Education completed at one of those institutions should be evaluated in the same manner as other regionally accredited colleges and/or universities.
  - a. Students shall be granted undergraduate or graduate credit for learning acquired through education, training and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States as recommended by the [American Council on Education \(ACE\) Military Guide](#). Such credit shall be applied as appropriate towards the completion of students' academic programs.
  - b. CSULB shall allow the number of units recommended by ACE in The Military Guide.
  - c. Credit shall be awarded for a specific university course or a specific category of university degree credit. The CO's Executive Policy on Credit for Prior Learning states that each campus shall determine the extent to which units earned for education, training and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States shall be applied as major, general education, or elective credit according to established campus procedures.
    - a. At CSULB, credit for basic military training shall be applied towards elective credit.
    - b. Completion of basic military training (boot camp) may also be used to satisfy Area E in the university's general education requirements, [Title 5, Section 40405.1\(A\)\(5\)](#). Satisfaction of Area E in this manner does not exempt students from completing health courses required to earn a teacher credential.
  - d. Every effort shall be made to award credit for specific CSULB degree requirements, as opposed to elective credit.
2. Documentation of education, training and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States shall address:
  - a. Completed military courses that are documented on Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) transcripts or Joint Services Transcripts (JST) will be evaluated by the CSULB Office of the Registrar for credit.
3. Guidance for assigning academic credit for the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT):

- a. Utilizing the ACE recommendations, three lower division semester hours for language shall equate to three semester units (or their quarter equivalent) in CSU GE Breadth Subarea C2.
- b. When assigning academic credit using the DLPT, CSULB should refer to [the ACE National Guide](#). Acceptable documentation for awarding DLPT GE or Course Credit includes:
  - a. Official Defense Language Institute Foreign Language (DLIFLC) Transcripts
  - b. Official Joint Services Transcripts (JST)
  - c. Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) DLPT Examinee Results
  - d. DA Form 330 Language Proficiency Questionnaire

**Section 2: Credit for Prior Learning that Must be Evaluated, including Knowledge or Skills Acquired Through Experience or Outside of Traditional Higher Education**

- A. Only students already matriculated at CSULB may seek credit for prior learning.
- B. Students can earn credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience.
- C. Students can earn academic credit based for learning acquired outside of traditional higher education, such as extension courses, professional development courses, or courses taken while in custody - whether technical, vocational, or traditionally academic, provided that the student can submit evidence of course content and completion.
- D. Academic credit for learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience shall not be used in determining eligibility for admission, unless it was previously transcribed on the student's academic record.
- E. Experiential learning shall be appropriate to the applicant's degree objectives and/or general education requirements.
- F. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a process that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge and skill in a particular field or fields and have that learning evaluated for college credit. Such evidence of experiential learning shall be evaluated by one or more faculty members, designated case-by-case by the department chair, program director or school director, based on subject-matter expertise. The designated faculty subject matter expert(s) will evaluate the prior learning experience and determine the credit equivalency of the experience based on the evidence provided.
- G. CPL assessments shall be created and evaluated in accordance with academic standards by faculty subject matter expert(s) Supporting information may be requested by the faculty subject matter expert and supplied by the applicant or a field supervisor and/or employer. Information about challenge examinations shall be included in campus catalogs and web sites. Academic credit shall be evaluated through prior learning assessment methods such as:
  - 1. Each Department shall determine faculty designated and trained to evaluate specific subject content. A single faculty member can serve as the subject matter expert to evaluate and determine the credit equivalency of the prior learning experience.
  - 2. Departments shall make available to the student a challenge exam for appropriate courses for the evaluation of the prior learning experience. A portfolio evaluation may also be offered. Per Title 5, §40408, challenge examinations may be of knowledge or skills via written examination, comprehensive review of material in a

written paper, examination of laboratory skills, or other form of evaluation as determined by the faculty. Credit obtained through a challenge exam or portfolio evaluation shall be recorded as CR/NC or as a letter grade based on the catalog designation of grades allowed for that course. The assigned grade will be determined by the faculty subject matter expert.

3. Knowledge or Skills gained outside of higher education may be evaluated according to industry-recognized credentials [e.g., those that are listed in the ACE National Guide include SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management), IBM Corporation, Google IT and Fire and Rescue Training].
  4. Knowledge or Skills gained outside of higher education through extension learning may also be evaluated by faculty for CSULB credit. Faculty must review course syllabi for appropriateness of material, and there must be an evaluation of learning included in the extension course to grant credit. Articulation may be granted for appropriate courses if it is anticipated that CPL requests will be ongoing. If no evaluation was performed, then knowledge and skills should be assessed via challenge examination, portfolio, or other faculty-determined assessment.
- H. Before academic credit earned for experiential learning becomes a part of the student's academic record, the student shall complete 15 units at CSULB, or a sufficient number of units to establish evidence of satisfactory learning. Graduate students shall complete three units in residence at CSULB.

### **Section 3: Academic Records**

- A. The student's academic record shall identify the specific course or category of degree requirement for which the student has received credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experiential learning.
- B. For credit earned from Standardized Examination, the name of the examination, and credit earned shall be identified on the student's academic record.