

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

UNH College of Professional Studies (CPS) Online Students

In addition to previous college courses, prior learning acquired through workplace training and/or other life experiences is acknowledged and recognized as the foundation on which to build a degree program. The College provides options to demonstrate how prior learning may satisfy degree requirements.

Preapproved PLA Options

National Training Programs

The American Council on Education (ACE) and the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) have evaluated and made recommendations regarding college credit for many formal training programs from business and industry, government, and nonprofit agencies. Credit will be awarded based on the recommendations of the [ACE National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs](#) and the [College Credit Recommendations Directory of the National College Credit Recommendation Service](#). Students must request an official transcript from ACE or documentation of successful completion from the training sponsor. Official transcripts are sent directly to the College Undergraduate Admissions Office.

Workplace Training Programs Evaluated by CPS

CPS awards credit for college-equivalent learning gained through training. Training that the College has evaluated includes the NH Police Standards and Training Academy, the State of NH Division of Personnel Management, NH Fire Standards and Training, Primex, as well as other training programs. The student must provide official documentation of successful completion of the training program; documentation must be sent directly from the training sponsor to the college.

To pursue credit for preapproved prior learning, see [detailed information and FAQs](#) for preapproved prior learning options accepted by the College of Professional Studies-Online Division.

Note: Students must be accepted and enrolled in an undergraduate online degree program with UNH College of Professional Studies-Online Division for prior learning credit to be awarded and transcribed.

Non-Collegiate Course Providers

Credit may also be earned for courses taken with non-collegiate course providers, such as Saylor Academy, Sophia.org, and StraighterLine, which have been evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE) or the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) and recommended for college credit. In order for credit to be awarded, the ACE or NCCRS-recommended score must be achieved on the proctored exam.

Examination Programs

ACE and the NCCRS have also evaluated certain tests to demonstrate college-level knowledge and earn credit. The College recognizes competency demonstrated through Advanced Placement (AP), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency testing, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), DSST, NOCTI

Business Solutions, and UExcel. Students are responsible for any fees associated with testing options.

The College will award the number of credits and the subject area recommended by ACE or NCCRS. For credit to be awarded, the content of the exam must meet an outstanding degree requirement. Credits acquired through testing cannot duplicate credits earned from other sources. The College limits on credit awarded for examination programs are for all of the sources listed combined.

Contact a CPS Academic Advisor prior to taking any standardized examination to ensure that the examination selected is not duplicative of course work completed or projected, or of other tests.

CLEP (College Level Examination Program)

Students who take a CLEP exam and do not receive a passing score must wait 90 days before retaking the exam. Detailed information about exams, and list of available subjects is available on the [CLEP website](#).

DSST Exams (Defense Subject Standardized Test)

Students who take a DSST exam and do not receive a passing score must wait 90 days before retaking the exam. List of [DSST exams and related fees](#), College Code: 8478.

Excelsior College Examinations (UEXCEL)

UEXCEL exams must be taken with [Pearson VUE](#). There are limitations to the total number of times an exam can be retaken, as well as a waiting period between attempts. Cost varies depending on exam. Credit will be awarded based on the recommendation of the American Council on Education at the time the exam was taken. Upper level credit may be awarded for some exams. List of [Excelsior College Exams](#).

Portfolio Assessment Options

Portfolio options are available to demonstrate college-level learning acquired through training and/or life experiences. Credit can be requested for specific College courses, or based on courses from other regionally-accredited institutions, or developed by the student with college-level learning outcomes. The following degree requirements are not eligible for portfolio assessment: Integrative Capstones; CRIT 602 Advanced Critical Analysis and Strategic Thinking and IDIS 601 Interdisciplinary Seminar; culminating teaching experiences; and field-based courses.

Experiential learning portfolios are developed in CRIT 603 Critical Inquiry in Prior Learning Assessment. In the course, students will work closely with their instructor to develop a portfolio that demonstrates prior learning usually based on the learning outcomes of a specific course needed for a student's degree completion. The portfolio will then be assessed by a trained evaluator and they will determine if the student has displayed evidence of prior learning and if credit may be awarded. After successful completion of the course, students may submit additional credit requests for evaluation. If submitted within one year of completion of the course, no portfolio evaluation fees will apply. If submitted after one year of completion of the course, an evaluation fee of \$350 per course equivalent credit request will apply. All credit requests must be submitted within three years of successful completion of the course. CRIT 603 Critical Inquiry in Prior Learning Assessment can be repeated no more than once after withdrawal or failure. Portfolio assessment of prior learning is not available to students who are within 16 credits of degree completion.

If students have completed a prior learning portfolio and received credit at a regionally accredited college or university that isn't a member of

the Consortium for the Assessment of College Equivalence (CACE), they may submit their portfolio to the College for assessment. Students choosing this option will be given information about the required portfolio components, evidence validity criteria, and the standards for college-level equivalence. Once the portfolio has been submitted to the College, the Director of Liberal Arts will provide an initial assessment of whether the portfolio meets the minimum requirements to be sent to a faculty evaluator. The student will assume responsibility for any further development of the portfolio based on this initial review prior to sending the portfolio for faculty assessment. The prior learning assessment fee will be charged at the point the student notifies the college that they want the portfolio to be sent for evaluation.

Prior Learning Credit Limits

CPS will apply a maximum of 30 prior learning credits towards an Associate Degree and 60 credits towards a Bachelor's Degree for any combination of the prior learning credit options. These credits do not count in the residency requirement for degree programs. Prior learning credit requests should be made within six months of acceptance to maximize potential credit awarded.

Fees

No fee is charged to award credit for standardized exams, training evaluated by the American Council on Education, or the National College Credit Recommendation Service or the Consortium on the Assessment of College Equivalents (CACE). A PLA fee of \$350 is charged for credit awarded for workplace training and occupational credentials that the College has previously evaluated and preapproved for credit. For up to one calendar year after admission to the College, the PLA fee covers multiple submissions of documentation. After one calendar year, a fee of \$350 per training experience or credential submitted will be charged.

Financial Aid may be used to pay the PLA fee if the student has financial aid eligibility, submits an Award Revision Request Form indicating their intent to use financial aid for this purpose, and completes the Federal Title IV Financial Aid Payment Authorization Form.