

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT
University Senate

Resolution on the Credit for Prior Policy

03-23/24-APC – December 12, 2023 – Second Reading

RESOLVED: That the University Senate of Cal Poly Humboldt recommends to the president that the attached Credit for Prior Learning Policy be approved; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the policy be implemented beginning AY 24/25; and be it further

RESOLVED: That departments should work towards identifying courses that cannot be challenged for credit for prior learning by the end of AY 23/24; and be if further

RESOLVED: That the Office Of Academic Programs, in consultation with the University Registrar, faculty and appropriate campus offices, shall oversee the development and implementation of mechanisms to support and compensate faculty for campus-based prior learning assessments; and be it further that

RESOLVED: That an implementation oversight working group with the stakeholders above be established for the 2024-25 academic year to ensure all courses are appropriately identified in the university catalog, as well as addressing the procedures of equitable access to credit for prior learning, balanced with issues around resources and compensation of faculty evaluators, etc.

RESOLVED: That the policy be revisited by the APC in AY 25/26 to evaluate its efficacy.

RATIONALE: The purpose of this policy is to define the ways in which students may earn academic credit at Cal Poly Humboldt, toward admission eligibility and/or academic program, for prior learning. This policy is in compliance with the revised CSU Policy on Credit for Prior Learning (formerly Executive Order 1036) released 10/2021 and revised 3/4/2023.



Credit for Prior Learning Policy
Policy Number
Academic Policies Committee

Applies to: Faculty, students

Supersedes: Articulation with Certain Standardized [Exams 10-06/07-EP; Resolution on Articulation of International Baccalaureate Exams \[APPROVED NOV 2006\]](#); [#25-06/07-EP Resolution on Articulation of International Baccalaureate Exams \[APPROVED APRIL 2007\]](#)

Purpose of the policy

The [California State University \(CSU\) Policy on Credit for Prior Learning](#) (formerly Executive Order 1036) had significant revisions in October 2021, with minor clarifications released March 4, 2023 and August 22, 2023. Credit for prior learning includes academic credit earned from (1) examinations (standardized and Cal Poly Humboldt faculty-developed); (2) learning, skills, and knowledge acquired through experience; (3) learning acquired outside formal higher education; and/or (4) education, training, and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States (i.e. military credit).

This comprehensive credit for prior learning policy establishes the Cal Poly Humboldt principles that govern procedures related to credit for prior learning, including types of credit awarded; student, faculty, and administrative responsibilities; limitations; and oversight. This policy is in compliance with the revised [CSU Policy on Credit for Prior Learning](#) (08/22/2023) and with the [WSCUC Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#) (11/2015).

Credit for prior learning only pertains to the granting of credit (units)—it does not include situations in which credit is not earned, such as waiving a prerequisite/requirement or establishing achievement/readiness via a placement exam.

I. Guiding Principles

- A.** Cal Poly Humboldt is committed to providing students with opportunities to validate and recognize what they already know and can do via credit for prior learning. Many students arrive with diverse experiences, including prior learning that takes place in formal and/or informal settings, which may be equivalent to college-level learning. Awarding academic credit for prior learning promotes access for fair and equitable

recognition of prior learning, helps support student retention and persistence, reduces time to graduation and assures quality and equity across various academic experiences.

- B. Credit for prior learning shall be awarded **based on evidence of learning**, not solely on the basis of experience or time spent in a particular field. Prior learning must be demonstrable and measurable, in accordance with reputable criteria.
- C. Faculty/staff with appropriate subject matter expertise will create and evaluate assessments and determine the amount and application of credits for prior learning.
- D. Credit for prior learning shall be awarded for a specific university course or a specific requirement such as a major/minor/certificate program area, a General Education and All-University Requirement (GEAR) area, or general elective units, if appropriate. Every effort should be made to apply credit for specific courses, as this is generally in the best interest of the student. Additionally, excess elective credits may cause future challenges with financial aid unit limits or if the student changes their chosen course of study. Approval of general electives must be used sparingly.
- E. Students shall be allowed to appeal decisions through existing campus grade appeal procedures.

II. General Limitations

- A. Credit for prior learning shall not be used to fulfill:
 - a. Any of the required number of units in residence at Cal Poly Humboldt pursuant to Title 5 and CSU policy.
 - b. The minimum of 50 units towards the bachelor's degree that must be from Cal Poly Humboldt or another accredited 4-year degree-granting institution.
- B. In compliance with the [WSCUC Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#), no more than 25 percent of the total credits required for the degree/certificate may be credit awarded for prior learning, which means that:
 - 1. For the bachelor's degree, no more than 30 semester units may be fulfilled by credit for prior learning.
 - a. Within this limit, Cal Poly Humboldt further specifies that no more than 25 percent of requirements specific to the major program of study may be fulfilled by credit for prior learning.
 - 2. For the graduate degree, no more than 7.5 semester units may be fulfilled by credit for prior learning.
 - 3. For the certificate of study, no more than 25 percent of the minimum required units may be fulfilled by credit for prior learning.

4. Exception: International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Tests standardized exams are NOT subject to this limit pursuant to CSU Credit for Prior Learning Policy, Article 1.3.d.
 5. Within the above limits, ACE recommended credits for learning outside of traditional higher education (Section III.C.3) shall count outright (without further assessment by internal means outlined Section IV) for:
 - a. No more than 9 semester units towards a bachelor's degree
 - b. No more than 3 semester units towards a graduate degree, certificate of study, or minor.
 - c. Exception: Students who enter Cal Poly Humboldt with an associate degree for transfer (ADT) will be able to count credits beyond the 9 and 3 unit maximums herein if the credits are transcribed on their ADT transcripts, subject to the maximum 25 percent limitations described above.
- C. Credit for prior learning shall not count toward full-time/part-time status at Cal Poly Humboldt (for scholarships, tuition, and other purposes) nor is this credit eligible for the award of financial aid at Cal Poly Humboldt. However, credit for prior learning will count toward the maximum time frame (i.e. attempted units) to graduation for federal financial aid purposes, and thus it may *reduce* overall aid awarded while pursuing the degree.
- D. Non-duplication of credit:
- a. Care shall be taken not to award duplicate credit because of overlapping tests, assessments, and/or college-level courses. Where there is partial overlap, the amount/distribution of credit shall be reduced accordingly as determined by Cal Poly Humboldt.
 - b. Credit for prior learning shall not be awarded if the student has received credit for a course at a level more advanced than the content level of the requested credit for prior learning. For example, credit cannot be earned for a language at level II when the student is enrolled in or has completed level III.
 - c. Credit for prior learning shall not be awarded if the student has taken the course and received any grade (including a passing grade or a different mark such as "I", "RP", "F", "WU", "NC") or academic renewal.

III. External Sources of Credit for Prior Learning

- A. Verified credit for prior learning from external sources included herein shall be applied toward the degree as well as to determinations of admission eligibility as described below.

- B.** In order to have external credits for prior learning recognized, students must submit official transcripts and/or official test scores to Cal Poly Humboldt. Students with military credit must submit a military Joint Services Transcript (JST) to the Veterans Enrollment Transition Services (VETS) Center.
- C.** Ways to earn credit:
- 1. Credit for standardized external examinations [CSU Article 1-B]**
 - a.** Cal Poly Humboldt shall award credit to students who pass a standardized examination, in accordance with minimums established in the [CSU Systemwide Credit for External Examinations](#) document (updated annually).
 - b.** Credit shall be applicable to General Education and All-University Requirements (GEAR), major, and elective credits at Cal Poly Humboldt in accordance with the systemwide list provided by the Office of the Chancellor and course articulations vetted through the articulation officer within the Office of the Registrar and through applicable department chairs and the dean of undergraduate studies.
 - 2. Learning acquired outside traditional higher education (ACE recommended credits) [CSU Article 3]**
 - a.** Students may earn academic credit based on recommendations provided by the American Council on Education (ACE), which conducts evaluations of trainings offered by employers or the military. Examples of industry-recognized credentials that are listed in the [ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training](#) include SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management), IBM Corporation, Google IT, and Fire and Rescue Training. Campuses shall accept and award course credit as recommended by the ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training, as appropriate for a student's academic objectives.
 - b.** Assignment of credit shall be vetted through the articulation officer within the Office of the Registrar and, as appropriate, through applicable department chairs and the dean of undergraduate and graduate studies.
 - c.** See ACE-specific limitations in Section II.
 - 3. Military credit for education, training, and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States [CSU Article 4]**
 - a.** Cal Poly Humboldt shall award students 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](#).

- i. When applicable, pursuant to federal law, Cal Poly Humboldt will maintain a written record of credit granted.
- ii. Basic Training: Completion of basic military training (boot camp) shall 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.
- iii. Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT): Cal Poly Humboldt shall award academic credit for the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) utilizing the ACE recommendations: three lower-division semester hours for language shall equate to three semester units in CSU GE Breadth Subarea C2.

IV. Internal (Cal Poly Humboldt) Sources of Credit for Prior Learning

- A. Cal Poly Humboldt may award credit for prior learning for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience.
- B. Credit shall not be used in determining eligibility for admission unless it was previously transcribed on the student's academic record.
- C. The student seeking credit shall be matriculated at Cal Poly Humboldt and must be enrolled in the semester the prior learning credit is requested.
- D. Credit shall be for a specific course or program area. Courses that are not appropriate for credit for prior learning shall be clearly communicated in the university catalog (see Section V).
- E. To request approval to attempt to earn credit, students shall submit a request through the Office of the Registrar before the add/drop deadline of the semester in which they request to pursue credit. The request shall be reviewed by the chair of the department that offers the course, or, if the request does not align with a particular Cal Poly Humboldt course or department, it shall be reviewed by the associate dean of the most aligned college and the dean of undergraduate and graduate studies. The request shall be approved and evaluation shall proceed if the request is found to be appropriate according to all three of the following guidelines:
 - 1. Learning outcomes associated with the particular course - or when not associated with a course, the competencies expected for a particular program area requirement - can be assessed via challenge exam or portfolio assessment.
 - 2. The department chair or associate dean identifies a subject matter expert (such as a faculty member in the department or college) who is available and willing to develop, conduct, and/or evaluate assessment methods appropriate to the

request. Department chairs and associate deans shall be cognizant of workload implications when seeking subject matter experts to oversee assessments — duties should typically fall to faculty with appropriate departmental assigned time, and chairs should communicate with colleges as appropriate to request support.

3. The student presents reasonable preparation for the assessment.

F. Ways to earn credit:

1. **Cal Poly Humboldt challenge examination (campus-originated challenge exam)**
[CSU Article 1-A]

- a. Students may challenge courses offered by Cal Poly Humboldt by taking examinations at Cal Poly Humboldt.
- b. For the purposes of this policy, a challenge exam is a test to assess whether a student meets the learning outcomes of a particular course. A challenge exam may include multiple components/formats (e.g., hard copy, electronic, written, activities, interviews, performative or practical requirements).

2. **Portfolio assessment of demonstrated experiential learning [CSU Article 2]**

- a. Students may submit a portfolio to demonstrate learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience.
- b. Credit may be awarded for a particular course or program requirement. However, credit shall not be applied toward General Education and All-University Requirements (GEAR) unless it either:
 - i. Is awarded as credit for a particular Cal Poly Humboldt course that is certified in the GEAR area; or
 - ii. Meets the outcomes/competencies associated with the GEAR area and is approved by associate deans of the colleges that offer courses in the applicable GEAR area and the dean of undergraduate studies.
- c. Preparation and content of the portfolio is the responsibility of the student. A portfolio should include at least the following: An essay describing how the student's prior learning meets the learning outcomes of the course or program requirement; examples of work that demonstrate skills/knowledge (e.g., written work, products, artwork, recorded performances); and, if applicable, documentation of completion of learning activities and supporting information supplied by a supervisor and/or employer.
- d. Faculty evaluators may offer students the opportunity to provide additional evidence of prior learning if the initially submitted portfolio is not sufficient for credit but evinces potential for credit.

G. Evaluation and documentation of credit for challenge exams and portfolios:

1. Once requests to attempt challenge exams or portfolio assessments are approved, students shall follow the timeline set by the faculty overseeing the exam/assessment. Faculty shall make every effort to set a timeline such that the student is made aware of the result prior to when registration opens for the subsequent term, but in all cases no later than the final week of the term.
2. Students shall earn credit for challenge exams and portfolio assessment if they demonstrate a performance equivalent to a score of 70 percent or higher.
3. For portfolios, credit may be awarded for fewer credits than requested.
4. Credit shall be documented as credit (CR) for the number of applicable units. The grade mode shall be mandatory (vs. optional) CR/NC, and thus CR may fulfill major requirements, if applicable.
5. Before earned credit becomes a part of the student's official academic record, the student must demonstrate a satisfactory pattern of learning in residence at Cal Poly Humboldt by completing 15 units in residence as an undergraduate or 3 units in residence as a graduate student. Once official, credit shall be posted on the Cal Poly Humboldt transcript in the semester in which it was attempted.

V. Oversight and Responsibilities

- A. Oversight for implementation of the policy is provided by the Office of the Registrar in coordination with the Office of Academic Programs.
- B. Programs should communicate to the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Academic Programs which courses are not appropriate for credit for prior learning (e.g., due to external accreditation, fieldwork components, necessary observation of student competence during potentially hazardous laboratory/applied situations).
 - a. Programs with external accreditation should contact their respective accrediting agencies to determine if they allow credit toward the program for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience.
- C. The Office of the Registrar shall be responsible for ensuring that courses and/or requirements that are not appropriate for credit for prior learning shall be identified in the university catalog.
- D. Annually, the Office of the Registrar shall report to deans and the Academic Policies Committee (APC) on the distribution of credit for prior learning awarded across programs, courses, and faculty. The deans and the APC shall review the report and recommend changes to policy if warranted.
- E. The Office of Academic Programs shall identify appropriate resources to support professional and continuing development for faculty and support staff as related to the assessment of prior learning.

Related Policies

[California State University \(CSU\) Policy on Credit for Prior Learning](#)

[WSCUC Credit for Prior Learning Policy](#)

Expiration Date

n/a

History

Academic Policies Committee: 10/30/2023

Reviewed: University Senate: 12/12/2023

Reviewed: Provost: