

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS



Prior Learning Assessment (Pla)

Undergraduate Academic Affairs Procedure #215

Section 1. Purpose of Procedure

Metropolitan State University establishes this procedure to provide information on available opportunities for Prior Learning Assessment in all our colleges, departments and programs, and guidance on/parameters for conducting effective and efficient evaluations.

Section 2. Authority

This procedure is issued pursuant to the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) System Policy 3.35 (Credit for Prior Learning Policy) and Procedure 3.35.1 (Credit for Prior Learning Procedure).

Section 3. Effective Date

This university procedure shall become effective upon signature of the President, and shall remain in effect until modified or expressly revoked.

Section 4. Responsibility

The responsibility for the implementation of this university procedure is assigned to the respective faculty, dean and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Section 5. Student-Directed Learning (SDL) and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Core Principle: Metropolitan State University encourages a variety of learning strategies, within the context of Student Directed Learning (SDL), based on the principle that the university “recognizes a student’s educational progress toward a degree in terms of competence achieved.” Prior learning assessment (PLA) is one of many learning strategies for competence-based, student-directed learning and evaluation at the university, including student-designed independent study (SDIS), theory seminars, internships, and related methods or strategies.

Section 6. Methods of Prior Learning Assessment

Metropolitan State University recognizes that students are assessed for prior learning using nationally and locally recognized examinations as well as competence demonstrations and/or portfolio reviews consistent with MnSCU policy 3.35 and MnSCU Procedure 3.35.1.

- A. **Nationally recognized examinations and Evaluations:** In accordance with MnSCU Policy 3.35 and Procedure 3.35.1, students will be given opportunities to demonstrate college-level learning through nationally recognized examinations and evaluations including, but not limited to the following:
- Advanced Placement (AP) examinations;
 - International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations;
 - College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations;
 - Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP);
 - Excelsior examinations;
 - New York University Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP);
 - National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI);
 - DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST);
 - American Council on Education (ACE).
- B. **Competence demonstration.** Colleges and departments will offer a student the opportunity to earn college credit through competence.
- C. **Portfolio Assessment:** Colleges and departments may offer students the opportunity to earn college credits through portfolio reviews.
- D. **Course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty.** Colleges and departments may provide opportunities for an admitted student to demonstrate college-level learning through course-specific examinations designed by college or department faculty. The college or department shall specify which courses are available to an admitted student for credit by faculty-designed examination.

Section 7. Related Procedures

- A. **Recording of credit granted.** Metropolitan State University shall record any credit earned through prior learning assessment on the official student transcript consistent with University Policy 2000.
- B. **Resident credit.** Metropolitan State University shall grant credit for prior learning to fulfill its residency and graduation requirements consistent with University Policy 2020.
- C. **General Education and Liberal Studies Requirements:** As a Creative Learning Strategy, prior learning can be used to meet General Education and Liberal Studies requirements consistent with University Policy 2010.
- D. **Transfer of credit.** Credit for prior learning shall be accepted in transfer by Metropolitan State University consistent with University Policy 2120.

Section 8. Criteria for Assessing Prior Learning

- A. Prior learning assessment may be focused on the individual student's learning outcomes or competence and does not need to match courses or disciplines available at Metropolitan State University.
- B. Prior learning assessment may be for lower- or upper-division credits as approved by the department or college.
- C. Prior learning assessment may be registered for credit amounts approved by the department.
- D. Prior learning assessment will include evaluation of the theoretical and practical components of the student's competence.
- E. To be eligible for prior learning assessment, the student's learning must meet the following criteria, consistent with CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) standards.
 - 1. Prior learning must be related to students' educational goals.
 - 2. Prior learning must have a subject area in which theoretical and practical elements can be identified and verified.
 - 3. Recognition for prior learning encompasses learning and not experience alone.
 - 4. Prior learning outcomes must be current.
 - 5. Prior learning must have a general applicability outside the specific situation in which it was acquired.
 - 6. Prior learning must be publicly verifiable.
 - 7. Prior learning must be independent from credits previously recorded in transcripts at other institutions of higher education.
 - 8. Prior learning should be college level.

Section 9. Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

- A. Prior learning shall be assessed by resident or community faculty in the academic discipline appropriate to the student's assessment request.
- B. Faculty evaluators will use evaluation techniques that address the theoretical and practical components of the student's registered competence.
- C. Faculty evaluators may participate in professional development opportunities on prior learning assessment and may include such learning in their professional development plans.

Section 10. Student Roles and Responsibilities

- A. Students have the right and the responsibility to identify, describe and document their prior learning to be assessed for college-level credit.
- B. Students will make use of university materials, resources and courses to understand policies, procedures, concepts and practices of prior learning assessment at the university.

- C. Students will submit proposals, registration and evaluation materials and documentation for prior learning assessment in a timely manner, consistent with published deadlines, guidelines, and instructional materials.
- D. Students seeking prior learning assessment will address university, department, and evaluator expectations and criteria.

Section 11. Administrative Roles and Responsibilities

- A. Administrative support shall include timely and readily accessible information about opportunities for credit for prior learning in official publications, such as the catalog, web sites, and advising materials, and providing a timely decision regarding the evaluation process.
- B. The University provides resources to support faculty preparation and continuing development in the assessment of prior learning through First College and the Center for Teaching and Learning.
- C. Academic oversight for implementation of the Prior Learning Assessment policy and procedure is provided by a University Prior Learning Assessment Advisory Group who will send regular reports to the Faculty Council for consultation.

Section 12. Exceptions

Any exception to this procedure requires approval from the dean of the college in which the prior learning credit is recorded.

Section 13. Review

This policy will be reviewed and modified as appropriate through the Meet and Confer process.

Section 14. Signatures

Issued on this 10th day of December, 2010.



Gary Seiler, Ph.D.
Interim, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs



Sue K. Hammersmith, Ph.D.
President

Appendix I

Glossary

American Council on Education (ACE) endorsed examinations – provides recommendations for granting credit for college-level learning obtained in non-college settings.

Advanced Placement (AP) examinations – is a program that offers college level courses at high schools across the United States and Canada.

American Council on Education (ACE) - Coordinating body for the nation's higher education institutions.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) – the outcome of a prior learning assessment by which a student earns credit for college-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings.

College-level Learning – College-level is learning that meets college-level standards and results in credits which can be applied toward the requirements of a certificate, diploma, or degree.

College-level Examination Program (CLEP) – is a series of examinations that test an individual's college level knowledge gained through course work, independent study, cultural pursuits, travel, special interests, military service schools, and professional development. CLEP also offers international and home-schooled students the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency in subject areas and bypass undergraduate coursework.

College or University Responsibility – Opportunities for credit for prior learning in official publications, such as the college catalog, Web sites, and advising materials and a timely decision regarding the evaluation process.

Course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty – each system college and university may provide opportunities for a student to demonstrate college-level learning through course-specific examinations designed by college or university faculty.

Credit by Examination – A method of prior learning assessment that includes standardized examinations.

Credit for Military Training or Service – recognizes courses and awards credit for a veteran's military training or service if the courses meet the standards of the American Council on Education or the equivalent.

DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) – is an extensive series of 37 examinations in college subject areas that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate courses.

International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations – is an educational program examined in one of three languages (English, French or Spanish) and is a leading university entrance course. It is taught in 2,075 schools, often in international schools, in 125 countries all around the world (as of 2007). More than half of the schools offering the Diploma Program are state funded schools.

New York University Foreign Language Proficiency (NYUFLP) examinations – tests three skills – listening, reading and writing – that are necessary for everyday communicative tasks. In most exams, students are required to answer questions about a listening comprehension passage, to translate into English and into the test language, and to write a short essay in response to a selection of general topics.

Portfolio Review and Competence Demonstration – are methods of prior learning assessment that include, but are not limited to, documentation review, candidate interview, performance assessment, product review, a combination of these methods, or related means.

Student-Directed Learning (SDL) may be assessed along a continuum of competence, from all “prior to enrollment” and ready for evaluation, to all “new” learning begun at the university, or any combination of prior and new student-directed learning. While often referred to as “experiential” learning, student-directed learning may include non-credit training or course-work at the college level, independent study, tutoring or mentoring, non-credit internships, and so on, in addition to learning from experiences and practice in workplaces, the community, travel, family and relationships, volunteer service, etc. The focus for evaluation in all cases is the learning outcomes or competence achieved.

Student Responsibility – A student seeking credit for prior learning shall provide requested supporting information for the prior learning assessment as specified by the college or university’s policy and procedure.

The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) assessments – delivers a battery of assessments or standardized tests for students studying career and technical programs in high schools and technical colleges in the United States.

Thomas Edison College Examination Program (TECEP) – was designed especially with the adult learner in mind, and has enabled students to earn college credit without taking formal courses for over 30 years.