



October 11, 2019

Prior Learning Assessment Priorities and Timeline

The Utah Legislature passed House Bill 45 during the 2019 General Session. One of the directives from this bill is for USHE to establish policies by November of 2019 that provide minimum standards for all institutions regarding:

- Accepted forms of prior learning assessments;
- Awarding credit for prior learning;
- Transferability of credit for prior learning between institutions;
- Institutional procedures for maintaining transparency and consistency in awarding credit for prior learning;
- Communication to faculty, advisors, current and prospective students regarding standards and costs related to credit for prior learning and prior learning assessments;
- Required training of faculty and advisors on prior learning assessment standards and process;
- Portfolio-specific prior learning assessments (53B-16-110).

These standards are outlined in the attached draft of policy R472.

USHE will provide an update on progress in meeting these requirements to the Interim Higher Education Committee in November 2019.

Commissioner's Recommendations

The Commissioner recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee approve Policy R472 to meet the requirements of the new state law.

Attachments: R472, Credit for Prior Learning

R472 Credit for Prior Learning:

R472-1. Purpose. To establish the policy and process by which students attending USHE institutions may earn academic credit through assessment of their prior learning.

R472-2. References

2.1. Utah Code §53B-16-105, Common Course Numbering—Credit by Examination Transferability of Credits—Agreement with Competency-Based General Education Provider

2.2. Utah Code §53B-16-107, Credit for Military Service and Training – Transferability – Reporting

2.3. Utah Code §53B-16-110, Credit for prior learning—Board plan and policies—Reporting

2.4. Regent Policy, R470, General Education, Common Course Numbering, Lower Division, Pre-Major Requirements

2.5. Regent Policy, R471, Transfer and Articulation of Credit (pending approval)

2.6. Regent Policy, R473, Standards for Granting Academic Credit for CTE Course Work Completed in Non-Credit Instructional Formats)

R472-3. Definitions

3.1 Prior Learning. Knowledge, competencies, and skills acquired through formal or informal education outside a traditional academic environment or at the initiative of the individual learner, including through participation in employer training programs, military service, and independent study.

3.2. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). A proven, validated process through which faculty subject matter experts evaluate a student’s previously learned competencies in a particular field and grant college credit when appropriate.

3.3. System Transfer Guide. A USHE-licensed, online tool that enables students to assess easily and accurately credit transferability between USHE institutions

R472-4. System Responsibilities:

4.1 Prior Learning Committee: The Commissioner of Higher Education shall appoint a Prior Learning Committee to establish and maintain a quality standards and best practices guidebook for USHE institutions. The committee will review methods of PLA through which institutions provide credit and the total amount of credit for prior learning the institution provides to determine

trends, student academic outcomes, and policy efficacy. The committee will also ensure information technology systems will consistently record and track data collected related to prior learning, as well as enable accurate reports.

4.2 All prior learning assessment policies, services, and procedures will comply with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) standards, as well as any specialized or program accreditation guidelines.

4.3. The System Transfer Guide will provide system-wide and institutional information on prior learning assessments and credit for prior learning.

R472-5. Institution Responsibilities:

5.1. Institution PLA Policy: Institutions shall establish policies on credits earned in extra-institutional settings (structured and non-structured) through prior learning assessment that expand the range of educational opportunities, incorporate them into the credit award system, and in remove unnecessary restrictions to access.

5.2. Implementation: USHE institutions are responsible to implement credit for prior learning within the context of its mission, role, student needs, and academic programs. Each institution's chief academic officer or designee is responsible to oversee of credit earned through prior learning. Institutions shall comply with this policy and provide students with prior learning assessment opportunities as deemed appropriate by its faculty. Institutions will work with the Board to support all prior learning assessment efforts.

5.3. Communication to students: Institutions shall inform students of opportunities to earn college credit through PLA through advising, institutional websites, and the Utah Transfer Guide. Institutions shall provide students at minimum the following information:

5.3.1. Accepted forms of prior learning assessments;

5.3.2. How credit is awarded for prior learning;

5.3.3. Potential impacts on financial aid;

5.3.4. Transferability of credit for prior learning between institutions;

5.3.5. How prior learning is transcribed; and

5.3.6. Costs associated with PLA and earned credit.

5.4. Communication to faculty and staff: Institutions' chief academic officers shall communicate to faculty and advisors PLA methods, standards and all related costs.

5.5. Training: Institutions shall train faculty and advisors on PLA and processes as well as portfolio-specific prior learning assessments.

R472-6 Reporting:

6.1 Institutions shall annually report to the Board each form of prior learning assessment through which they provide credit, and the total amount of PLA credit the institution awarded students.

R472-7. Accepted Forms of PLA: Institutions shall grant credit for prior learning from the following sources:

7.1 Credits earned through extra-institutional settings, including military service, religious service, and career experience.

7.2 Nationally recognized, standardized exams, including:

7.2.1. Advanced Placement (AP);

7.2.2. College-Level Examination Program (CLEP);

7.2.3. DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST); and

7.2.4. International Baccalaureate (IB)

7.3. Nationally recognized organizations, including:

7.3.1. American Council of Education (ACE);

7.3.2. National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS); and

7.3.3. Board-approved postsecondary associations.

7.4. Faculty-determined assessments for each institution, including:

7.4.1. Challenge Exams;

7.4.2. Portfolio Assessments;

7.4.3. Individual Performance Assessments; and

7.4.4. Program evaluations, completed by an institution, of non-collegiate programs or training courses to recognize proficiencies; and

7.4.5. Locally evaluated industry and workplace Credit.

7.4.6. To earn credit from the forms of prior learning listed in this subsection, students must demonstrate college-level learning and competence as determined by faculty/subject matter experts.

R472-8 Awarding Credit:

8.1 If the student successfully demonstrates college-level learning, institutions shall award credit and transcript the credit as credit for prior learning.

8.2. Credit earned through prior learning will apply toward appropriate degree or certificate requirements.

8.3. Credit earned by passing a standardized examination shall be awarded credit unless the award of credit duplicates credit already awarded.

8.4. Institutions shall establish a process for students to appeal PLA credit determinations.

8.5. Credit for Current and Former Military Personnel: Pursuant to Utah Code 53B-16-107, all USHE institutions shall provide written notification to each student applying for admission that the student is required to meet with a college advisor in order to receive credit for military service and training. Upon student request, USHE institutions will provide credit based on a review of recommendations from a Regent-approved postsecondary association to include the American Council on Education and other sources as may be deemed appropriate by the institution. To receive credit under this provision, current and former military personnel must meet with an academic advisor to discuss applicability of credit to program requirements, possible financial aid implications, and other factors that may impact attainment of the student's educational goals, such as competencies that are transferable to a course of study. Upon transfer within the USHE, a student may present a transcript from a USHE institution to a receiving USHE institution to determine the applicability of credit to the student's chosen major. The receiving institution shall evaluate the credit to be transferred pursuant to this policy. To receive credit under this provision, current and former military personnel must meet with an academic advisor to discuss chosen major. The receiving institution shall evaluate the credit to be transferred pursuant to this policy.

8.5.1. Processes for Evaluation of Credit for Current and Former Military Personnel: Representatives from USHE institutions who have responsibility for veterans' services shall meet at least annually to review institutional policies and practices relative to awarding credit for current and former military personnel with the goal of maintaining consistent system-wide practices for evaluating and awarding credit pursuant to Section 8.5.

8.5.2. Reporting Credits Awarded to Current and Former Military Personnel: USHE Institutions shall report annually to the Board of Regents the number of credits awarded under Section 8.5.

8.6. Advanced Placement Examinations: The following guideline for the awarding of credit for Advanced Placement (AP) has been reviewed and recognized by the Utah Transfer and Articulation Committee with representatives from all USHE institutions:

8.6.1. Scores of 3, 4, or 5 may receive a maximum of 10 semester hours of credit for a foreign language exam, up to 8 semester hours of credit for a full-year course, or up to 4 semester hours of credit for a half-year course.

8.7. College Level Examination Program (CLEP): Based on the recommendations of the Utah Transfer and Articulation Committee and CLEP Examination Guidelines. A minimum score of 50 is required to award credit with 10 semester hours per test being the maximum number of credits allowed. The following guidelines are for awarding General Education credit through the CLEP process.

8.7.1. Composition: The College Composition or College Composition Modular examination will satisfy the Introduction to Writing requirement.

8.7.2. Quantitative Literacy: College Algebra Subject examination or the Pre-Calculus Subject examination will satisfy the Quantitative Literacy requirement.

8.7.3. American Institutions: The American Government Subject examination or the American History Subject examination will satisfy the American Institutions requirement.

8.7.4. Life Science: The Biology Subject examination will satisfy the Life Science requirement.

8.7.5. Physical Science: The Chemistry Subject examination will satisfy the Physical Science requirement.

8.7.6. Humanities: The Analyzing and Interpreting Literature with Essay examination will satisfy the Humanities requirement.

8.7.7. Social and Behavioral Sciences: The Introductory Psychology or Introductory Sociology examinations will satisfy the Social and Behavioral Sciences requirement.

8.7.8. Other General Education: CLEP-verified General Education credit other than that for which specific guidelines are provided in this policy may be awarded as determined by each institution.

R472-9 Eligibility

9.1. Undergraduate students must be admitted and enrolled at a USHE institution to be eligible to earn PLA credits.

9.2. The number of credits earned through prior learning awarded by institutions may be limited only by the residency requirements of the regional and other accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the student degree plan.

R472-10 Transferability

10.1. Once recorded on a Utah System of Higher Education transcript, credit earned for prior learning is transferable on the same basis as if the credit had been earned through regular study at the awarding institution.

R472-11 Cost

11.1. Prior learning assessment fees must be transparent and reflect only the operational cost of administering a PLA program. Fees may not be based on the number of credits awarded.