Credit for Prior Learning Policy

**Custodian of Policy:** Registrar

**Relevant Minnesota State System Policy:** Board Policy 3.35

**Relevant Procedures:** Minnesota State System Procedure 3.21.1, 3.35.1, 3.35.2, 3.35.3

**Effective Date**: Fall 2020

**Last Review:** Spring 2015

**Next Review:** Fall 2025

Policy

Credit for prior learning is undergraduate or graduate level academic credit awarded for demonstrated university-level learning gained through learning experiences outside Minnesota State University Moorhead credit-bearing courses. External credit is assessed through outside entities. Internal credit is assessed by MSUM faculty using academically sound and rigorous methods and processes.

MSUM shall provide current, comprehensive, and accessible information on opportunities to obtain credit for prior learning to prospective and admitted students as part of degree planning and advising. MSUM shall provide opportunities for enrolled students to demonstrate university-level learning achieved through prior learning experiences outside of the MSUM credit-bearing course. This credit will be applicable to courses, programs, and degree requirements.

MSUM shall determine the credit award for students who demonstrate prior learning consistent with system procedures. Credit awarded for prior learning may fulfill LASC, program/major/minor, and/or elective courses. Credit may be awarded at the lower-division, upper-division, and graduate level.

Credit awarded for prior learning by a college or university must be accepted in transfer by MSUM in accordance with System Procedure 3.21.1 Undergraduate Course Credit Transfer.

There is no limit to the amount of credit that may be awarded for prior learning assessments.

An academic appeal may be used by students who are denied credit requested for prior learning.

External Assessments

External assessments include methods and processes that could result in credit for prior learning achieved and assessed through a nationally recognized third-party assessment agency or organization, regionally or nationally accredited postsecondary institution, or noncredit instruction. Students demonstrate a level of proficiency recognized through curriculum, instruction, program, or a standardized exam. CPL external assessment types may include, but are not limited to, AP, IB, CLEP, and other national standardized assessments, world languages seals and certificates, industry recognized credentials, licenses, and certifications, and noncredit instruction in programs such as registered apprenticeships, continuing education, and customized training.

External assessment is graded with a P grade and does not count toward residency credit.

MSUM will not charge tuition for credit awarded for external assessments and will not charge students fees for CPL external documentation processing services.

Internal Assessments

CPL internal university assessments must be conducted by MSUM faculty with related subject-area expertise. Such assessments determine competence-to-credit comparability, course-equivalency or individualized subject status, and application to degree requirements or electives. CPL internal assessment types may include, but are not limited to, credit by exam, prior learning portfolio assessment, individualized subject-area assessment, group or seminar assessment, and competency-based assessment. MSUM may assess prior learning in a single-subject process, or a process that reviews multiple subjects in one documentation and assessment process.

Examples of internal CPL include learning gained in life, community and/or work-based settings, and through experiences outside of the MSUM credit-bearing course, including but not limited to independent study, life experience and reflection, non-credit study programs, career education, continuing education, online learning or instruction, and training or certificate programs. The learning occurs “prior to” the student’s request for assessment.

Credit awarded for internal prior learning will count toward MSUM residency requirements. MSUM will designate the credit awarded on the official transcript as a credit-bearing courses with no reference to credit for prior learning. A letter or P grade will be awarded in accordance with the normal grading method in the course. MSUM will clearly publish all tuition and fees associated with awarding credit for internal prior learning. These tuition and fees are independent of the results of the assessment.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate competence at the university-level from learning gained through learning experiences outside of a university credit-bearing course and to establish consistent practices among faculty for evaluating and awarding undergraduate or graduate credit for prior learning.