

## CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION AND POLICY

White Mountains Community College (WMCC) is committed to providing affordable, accessible, high-quality education to help students achieve their educational and professional goals. Because we believe our learners bring with them a unique body of knowledge and skills developed over time, we provide students the opportunity to demonstrate their acquisition of college-level learning gained outside of the traditional classroom setting.

In accordance with the guidelines established by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the recommendations made by the American Council on Education (ACE), White Mountains Community College provides options for students to progress more quickly toward program or degree completion through earning credit for prior learning, including transfer credit, credit by examination, and credit for experiential learning through prior learning portfolio assessment.

Following are important considerations prior to pursuing credit for prior learning (CPL):

- ⊘ Students are responsible for submitting a completed [CPL Request Form](#) and must provide the College with timely official documentation, score reports, and/or transcripts before any credits will be evaluated or awarded.
- ⊘ In order to be eligible to earn credit for prior learning, students must be enrolled at White Mountains Community College, and the credit must be applicable to students' declared certificate or degree program.
- ⊘ Credits earned will not apply to students' Grade Point Average (GPA), nor will they satisfy WMCC's residency requirements. All students must earn a minimum of 25% of all credits required for any degree or certificate through successful completion of WMCC courses.
- ⊘ A reduction in course load could potentially impact financial aid if lessening the number of courses taken in a single semester results in a change of full-time student status.
- ⊘ Credits earned for prior learning granted by our College are not guaranteed to be recognized by other colleges students may want to transfer to for four-year degree

completion. Students are advised to contact those institutions directly to determine eligibility for transfer.

## **TRANSFER CREDIT**

Credits earned through other regionally accredited institutions may be transferred to WMCC if students earned a grade of C or better and if the credits are equivalent to WMCC courses in the students' degree or certificate program. For Nursing/Health Science required lab courses, students must have earned a C+ or better to receive credit. In order to apply for transfer credit, students must contact their former college to arrange for official transcripts and course descriptions to be sent to the Admissions Office for review. Upon receipt of all documentation, the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee will coordinate with appropriate department chairs to determine eligibility and acceptability of transfer credits. If transfer credit is granted, it is important to note that grades received for courses completed at any institution other than WMCC will not be utilized for calculating students' Grade Point Average (GPA).

## **CREDIT BY CREDENTIAL**

### **Military Education And Training**

Students who are active duty or retired military may earn credit hours applied to their degree or certificate program for their military training and experience. Credit may be awarded in accordance with the American Council on Education (ACE)'s recommendations, which can be found in the online ACE Military Guide at <https://bit.ly/3NQFRIIs>. Students who are interested in having their military training and experience evaluated for credit should submit the [CPL Request Form](#) to Admissions and must log in to the Joint Services Transcript website (<https://jst.doded.mil/jst>) to request an official Joint Services Transcript to be sent directly to Admissions for credential review.

Active-duty military personnel are also eligible for free CLEP and DSST subject area exams (described in detail in the Credit By Examination sections below). To take advantage of these free pathways toward college credit, you can find more information at <https://bit.ly/3OMB9Nk>.

### **Professional Licensure or Certification**

Students who possess professional licensures or industry certifications may be awarded credit for prior learning through department and College approved credit equivalencies outlined in our Credit By Credential Crosswalk. Students who are interested in earning credit for a

professional licensure or certification listed on the [Credit By Credential Crosswalk](#) should submit the [CPL Request Form](#) and official records of professional licensure or industry certification to Admissions.

## CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

Students may earn credit for prior learning through successful completion of nationally recognized standardized examinations, such as Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Protocol (CLEP), and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST). For courses where there is no nationally recognized assessment available, students may request to complete a locally developed Challenge Exam prepared and administered by faculty. Below is our Credit By Examination Quick Guide, followed by detailed instructions for each type of credit by examination opportunity.

### CREDIT BY EXAMINATION QUICK GUIDE

Examination & Link to Credit Crosswalk	Cost to Student	Score Eligibility
<a href="#">Advanced Placement (AP)</a>	No WMCC Fee	3 or Higher
<a href="#">College Level Examination Protocol (CLEP)</a>	No WMCC Fee	Varies
<a href="#">DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)</a>	No WMCC Fee	Varies

#### Advanced Placement (AP)

Students may be awarded credit for prior learning demonstrated through a score of 3 or higher on Advanced Placement (AP) exams that are considered part of a student's degree program. Students should carefully review our [WMCC AP Exams Crosswalk](#), which provides a comprehensive list of AP Exams and the White Mountains Community College courses with which they align. Students who wish to obtain credit for AP exam scores must submit the [CPL Request Form](#) to the Admissions Office and request official AP score reports from the College Board to be sent directly to the White Mountains Community College Admissions Office. The official score reports should be ordered during the summer prior to enrollment. More information about how to order an official score report can be found online at <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/sending-scores>, by phone at (609) 771-7300, and by mail at College Board, Advanced Placement Examinations, CN6671, Princeton, NJ 08541-6671.

## **College Level Examination Protocol (CLEP)**

Students may earn credits toward a degree by passing College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams in a wide variety of subjects, including English, math, biology, chemistry, psychology, sociology, macroeconomics, accounting, marketing, business law, and other areas. If interested in registering for a CLEP exam, students can view all exam topics, exam content descriptions, and free study resources for each exam at College Board's CLEP exam website: <https://clep.collegeboard.org/clep-exams>. At the time of the publication of this guide, each exam costs \$89.00, and when registering for an exam through the website provided above, students can also elect to purchase study guides with practice exams at an additional cost of \$10.00 to \$24.99.

Prior to registering for a CLEP exam, students should carefully review the [WMCC CLEP Exams Crosswalk](#) to determine the course credit that may be granted for scores of 50 or higher. Credit granted for CLEP exams does not count toward GPA, and no credit will be granted until WMCC receives a completed [CPL Request Form](#) and an official score report sent directly to the White Mountains Community College Admissions Office from the College Board. More information about how to send score reports can be found on College Board's Send Scores and Transcripts website.

To ensure timely credit, students should take the exam at least one semester prior to needing the course to advance in any degree path and send the score report to WMCC as soon as it is available. If a student elects to take a CLEP exam for a course already registered for at WMCC, the course must be dropped during the add/drop period in order for the student to receive a full refund of course fees.

Active-duty members of the military and some military spouses are eligible for free CLEP exams, paid for through the Defense Activity for Non-traditional Education Support (DANTES) program. To view eligibility requirements, visit <https://bit.ly/3uwpE4s>. Additional information, including how to access free CLEP exam preparation online courses, materials, and free score reports, can be found at the DANTES website <https://bit.ly/3OMB9Nk>.

## **DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)**

Students may earn credits toward a degree by passing DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) exams. DANTES, short for Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support, originally provided these subject-area exams to military personnel only. At the time of the

publication of this guide, these exams are available to anyone in the general public for a fee of \$100.00 per test.

DSST exams cover a broad range of subject areas, and each exam can be taken in paper-based or digital format at an authorized testing center. You also have the option to take most DSST exams online via a Remote Proctor. To register for an exam at a nearby testing center, visit <https://getcollegecredit.com/search>. To register for an online exam, visit <https://www.prometric.com/test-takers/search/dantes>. Students who wish to take an online DSST exam at White Mountains Community College should contact the Student Success Center to coordinate the date and time and should register through the Prometric website listed above.

Prior to registering for a DSST exam, students should carefully review the [WMCC DSST Exams Crosswalk](#) to determine the course credit that may be granted for acceptable scores. To view a list of all DSST exams available, their exam content outlines, and sample questions and answers, visit the DSST website <https://bit.ly/3yOo6FB>.

Active-duty members of the military and some military spouses are eligible for free DSST exams, paid for through the DANTES program. For additional information, including eligibility requirements and how to access free online preparation courses, materials, and free score reports, can be found at the DANTES website <https://bit.ly/3OMB9Nk>.

Credit granted for DSST exams does not count toward GPA, and no credit will be granted until WMCC receives a completed [CPL Request Form](#) and an official score report sent directly to the White Mountains Community College Admissions Office. More information about how to send score reports can be found online at <https://bit.ly/3am4qPX>.

### **Challenge Exam**

Students who wish to earn credit for prior learning in a course **for which there is no other available CLEP or DSST exam** may have the opportunity to complete a Challenge Exam created and administered by WMCC faculty. The availability of a Challenge Exam varies across programs and courses, and students who are interested should complete the [CPL Request Form](#) and submit it to the Admissions Office. If an exam is available, a fee of \$25.00 per credit hour will be assessed prior to the scheduling of the exam. Any additional direct costs for a laboratory exam will also be incurred by the student. Students earning a grade of C or better on the exam will receive the corresponding credits for the course they challenged. Only students currently

enrolled in a certificate or degree program may request a Challenge Exam, and students may not request an exam for a course in which they were previously or are currently enrolled.

Students should examine the [WMCC CBE Direct Equivalencies](#) chart to determine if a CLEP or DSST exam is available prior to requesting a Challenge Exam.

## **CREDIT THROUGH A PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) PORTFOLIO**

Students may earn credit through a formal portfolio assessment of the knowledge, skills, and experience gained through work, life experiences, and lifelong learning. The Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Portfolio is a formal academic framework for students to demonstrate direct alignment between their prior learning and the learning outcomes of a WMCC course in their degree or certificate program. The PLA Portfolio framework requires students to demonstrate their prior acquisition of each of the learning outcomes for a course with a detailed narrative and supporting documentation. The completed PLA Portfolio is then evaluated by the course program area department chair and the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee(s). It is important to note that credit is not awarded for experience; it is awarded for clearly aligned demonstration of prior learning gained through career and life experiences. No portfolios will be accepted for courses that have a Credit by Examination (CBE) equivalency.

### **Guide for Determining PLA Portfolio Feasibility**

- 1.) Utilizing the courses outlined in your certificate or degree plan in Navigate, identify the courses you believe align with the knowledge, skills, and experience you have acquired through prior learning.
- 2.) Examine the [WMCC CBE Direct Equivalencies](#) to determine if there are credit by exam equivalencies for the courses you have identified.
  - a.) If there is a CLEP or DSST examination that aligns with the courses you have selected, follow the guidance in the Credit By Examination section of this guide to register for and to take the exams. If you meet the score requirements for credit, follow the instructions in the Credit By Examination section to order your score reports and have them sent directly to the Admissions Office. It is important to note that if a CLEP or DSST exam exists for the course you are requesting credit, you must pass the exam to be granted credit. **No portfolio assessments will be completed for courses that have a CLEP OR DSST Examination direct equivalency.**
- 3.) If the courses you have identified as a potential match for your knowledge, skills, and experience are NOT listed on the [WMCC CBE Direct Equivalencies list with a CLEP and/or DSST option](#), then you may choose to request a Challenge Exam (described in the

Credit By Examination section), or you may choose to develop a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) portfolio.

### **Quick Guide for Developing a PLA Portfolio**

- 1.) Review the [PLA Framework](#) outline of required contents for the PLA Portfolio.
- 2.) Complete the [CPL Request Form](#) and meet with your faculty advisor to discuss your desire to submit a Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio.
- 3.) When the start date of your portfolio compilation has been set with your faculty advisor, you will be added to the Credit for Prior Learning course in Canvas and must complete every module of the PLA Portfolio course, the contents of which are considered your Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Portfolio.
- 4.) When your Canvas course is complete, the contents of your portfolio will be made available to Academic Affairs for evaluation.

### **Submission and Assessment of the PLA Portfolio**

All completed PLA Portfolios submitted via the PLA Portfolio Canvas course are routed to the Academic Affairs Office. The program area department chair and the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee(s) will assess the portfolio and evaluate the number of credits that may be awarded. If the evaluation process results in credit for prior learning, the student's transcript will note TR (Course Transfer) for the credits awarded. Students may be awarded a maximum of 24 credits for the sum total of all portfolio submissions, and fees may apply.

**[All forms linked in this guide can be accessed from the [wmcc.edu/current-students](http://wmcc.edu/current-students) site.]**