

EvCC4040: ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING (ACPL) Policy

Original Date: June 20, 2023

Policy Contact: Vice President of Student Services

Preamble: Everett Community College recognizes the evidence-based value of Academic Credit for Prior Learning in opening access to higher education, in closing opportunity gaps in degree pathways, and in promoting equitable credential completion. In keeping with Goal 2.2.2 of Charting a Path Forward to Equity: EvCC Strategic Plan 2022-2027, with RCW 28B.77.230, with NWCCU Standard 1.C.8, with SBCTC Policy 4.10.40 and with the Ten Standards of Assessing Learning published by the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), the following policy is designed to:

1. Expand and make equitable institutional recognition of the diverse formal and informal pathways through which students may acquire college-level learning.
2. Ensure that credit award decisions are applied equitably for all students, regardless of the particular department, program of study, mode of learning or ACPL category.
3. Ensure that academic credit is awarded on the basis of evidence of learning not on the basis of experience alone or on time spent.
4. Establish consistent processes for the assessment, award, and transcription of academic credit for prior learning at EvCC.
5. Clearly and transparently promote ACPL opportunities to new and continuing students across all divisions and programs.
6. Create equity-minded protocols to engage and support learners throughout the ACPL process.
7. Increase the number of students, especially BIPOC students and non-traditional learners, awarded ACPL credits for the diverse college-level learning they bring to the college.
8. Close opportunity gaps in retention and completion by honoring diverse pathways to degree attainment.

Policy:

1. Definition of Prior Learning:
 - a. In accordance with RCW 28B.77.230, this policy defines prior learning as “the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience; through military training and experience; and through formal and informal education and training from in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions.”
2. ACPL Assessment Methods: Per SBCTC Policy 4.1.40, EvCC will award Academic Credit for Prior Learning according to the following four methods:
 - a. **Credit by Testing:** Credit by examination is granted for minimum test results in the following nationally normed examination programs: College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), DSST (or DANTES), AP, Cambridge International and International Baccalaureate (IB). Minimum scores required to earn credit follow the guidelines as established by the state board and are posted on the college’s exam crosswalk in order to be easily accessible and available to students. Please note: Per state policy, students seeking to apply Credit by Testing credits to the Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) are limited to a maximum of 15 restricted elective credits.
 - b. **Prior Experiential Learning:** Students may request to have their prior learning assessed through completing and submitting a learning portfolio. The student creates a portfolio of prior experiences, articulating how the prior learning led the student to mastery of specific course learning outcomes. Because the Prior Learning portfolio requires a significant investment of time, permission from a faculty advisor is required before students can begin the process. The portfolio should include evidence of meeting learning outcomes, including certificates, employer testimony, detailed description of completed projects etc. Students may be encouraged to take an ACPL Portfolio course to support them through the process of articulating and documenting their learning.
 - c. **Extra-Institutional Learning:** Students may be awarded credit knowledge and skills acquired outside a higher education institution but objectively verified through third-party certifications. As designated and approved by appropriate faculty, this category may include military training, training assessed by the American Council on Education (ACE), and industry and/or professional certification (i.e. accredited trades training Police, Fire, AmeriCorps, Military, etc.). Relevant program faculty identify extra institutional learning, establish credit equivalencies, and document these in a public ACPL crosswalk in order to be accessible and available to students.
 - d. **Challenge Exams:** Students may demonstrate that they have met the learning objectives of EvCC courses through successfully completing a challenge exam. As determined by the appropriate faculty, course challenge exams can take multiple formats (including written exams, oral exams or interviews, practical skills demonstrations) through which a student demonstrates achievement of specific course objectives. Department faculty are encouraged to identify which courses in their purview are eligible for

challenge exams and to develop the examination format and minimum score which must be met to award credit. Students earning ACPL through Challenge Exams will be awarded a letter grade commensurate with their performance on the exam.

3. Equitable ACPL Opportunity:
 - a. The College must provide students with clear, accurate, up-to-date and equity-minded information about all ACPL options and offer options to assist students in accessing and navigating the assessment process.
 - b. Program Maps and Curriculum Checklists will explicitly include ACPL opportunities where these are available.
 - c. Entry advisors and program advisors will have sufficient understanding of the college's ACPL policies/procedures to be able to inform students of potential opportunities and refer them to the appropriate resources.
4. ACPL Eligibility
 - a. All enrolled students are eligible to apply for ACPL
5. Request for ACPL Assessment
 - a. A formal ACPL request for assessment application initiates the ACPL process. Students are responsible for completing ACPL application(s), providing any required materials for review, and paying the required fee(s). The college is responsible for providing students with informed, equity-minded guidance as they move through these steps.
6. Award of credit
 - a. ACPL is awarded based on assessed learning outcomes, not solely on experience or time spent in learning & professional environments.
 - b. ACPL credit is awarded on recommendations from the faculty with the expertise and experience to assess learning outcomes in the field or discipline for which ACP is sought. Faculty are encouraged to identify a comprehensive list of ACPL opportunities in their disciplinary areas/programs. For Credit by Testing and Extra-Institutional learning, faculty may delegate their recommendations to EvCC staff through a faculty-approved ACPL crosswalk; in these cases, faculty must review and re-approve the crosswalk every two years.
 - c. Per State Board of Technical and Community Colleges policy (4.10.40), with the exception of Challenge Exams, a successful ACPL credit requests result is awarded an S grade on the transcript; S grades are not calculated in students' GPAs. Challenge exams are awarded a letter grade appropriate to the student's performance on the exam; challenge exam grades are factored into students' GPAs.
7. Fees
 - a. ACPL fees support ACPL application, assessment and transcription processes. Neither the success of the application, nor the number of credits requested or awarded, has any bearing on EvCC's ACPL fee structure. Fees are charged when students submit their application.
 - b. All ACPL fees must be clearly posted on EvCC's public website, catalog and any ACPL informational or procedural documentation.
 - c. ACPL fees are non-refundable and must be paid prior to completing the assessment. Payment does not ensure approval of credit.
8. Limitations
 - a. No more than 50% of any professional or technical credential (certificate or degree) may be awarded through ACPL.
 - b. Students may not seek ACPL credit for a course in which they were previously enrolled.
 - c. ACPL credit must be applicable to students' academic or professional program of study. In some cases, up to a level of 15 credits maximum, students may receive elective credit for college level learning even when an equivalent course is not listed in the college catalog, but the credit so awarded must still fit within the student's program.
 - d. Many four-year institutions may or may not accept ACPL as transfer credit. Students are responsible for consulting with their advisor or other college resources to ensure they understand ACPL transfer policies for specific four-year institutions. Per SBCTC Policy 4.10.40, credit earned through Academic Credit for Prior Learning at one college will be accepted toward the appropriate course or program at any other community and technical college in the Washington State system.

9. Transcripts

- a. For all ACPL methods except Challenge Exams, a letter grade of S for the specific ACPL topic is added to the student transcript after a signed formal recommendation is submitted to the records office by the faculty member or designee. Challenge exams will be assigned a letter grade commensurate with the students' performance on the exam. All ACPL will be transcribed for the quarter in which the assessment is completed.
- b. In accordance with Washington state protocol, credits awarded for Extra Institutional Learning, Prior Experiential Learning or Challenge Exam will be designated as Other Credit on the transcript; credits awarded through Credit by Testing will be designated as Test Credit on the transcript. Unique codes will be used to assist in tracking and reporting credits awarded through ACPL.

10. Appeals

- a. Determinations of ACPL credit awards are subject to the same academic grievance process that governs all academic decisions at EvCC.

11. Faculty development

- a. All faculty and staff advising on or supporting students on ACPL will be provided with regular equity-minded ACPL training to ensure students receive accurate ACPL information. All faculty ACPL evaluators will receive equity-minded ACPL training to support their equity-minded evaluation of college level learning acquired outside the classroom.

12. ACPL records The College is responsible for accurately coding and tracking ACPL. EvCC's IR will collect the following data:

- a. Number of students who have applied for ACPL disaggregated by ACPL method and by demographic data of applicants (race, gender, age, PELL eligibility)
- b. Number of ACPL credits awarded disaggregated by ACPL method and by demographic data of applicants (race, gender, age, PELL eligibility)
- c. Number and outcome of ACPL appeals disaggregated by ACPL method and by demographic data of applicants (race, gender, age, PELL eligibility)
- d. Retention, completion and/or transfer rates for ACPL applicants, disaggregated by outcome, ACPL method and by demographic data of applicants (race, gender, age, PELL eligibility)

RELEVANT LAWS AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

[WAC 132E-161-010](#)

[WAC 250-61-100](#)

[RCW 28B.19.020](#)

[RCW 28B.50](#)

REVISION HISTORY

This policy revises and replaces:

- EvCC's Award of Non-Traditional Credit Procedure (EvCC6000P, Original 1983. Reviewed and revised by President's Staff and Board of Trustees, 2013) and
- Credit by Examination (Course Challenge) Procedure (EvCC6120P, Original, 1998. Revised in 2013 by President's Staff)

Original Date: April 11, 2023

Revision Date: June 20, 2023

APPROVED BY:

Instructional Council: April 11, 2023

Campus Council: June 12, 2023

Board of Trustees: Jun 20, 2023