

# SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

## Policy Manual

**SUBJECT:** Credit for Prior Learning

**NUMBER:** 2.2.2.5

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### **A. PURPOSE**

The Board of Regents supports credit for prior learning by encouraging institutions to employ effective and efficient practices rooted in nationally recognized best practice standards to maximize awarding degree-relevant, college-level coursework to students. Recognizing the assets and capabilities of students through acceptance of credit for prior learning promotes access for South Dakotans. Therefore, institutions shall apply toward admission eligibility, course prerequisites, and/or degree requirements, academic credit earned outside of a traditional higher education setting.

### **B. DEFINITIONS**

- 1. ACE:** The American Council on Education (ACE) is a non-profit member organization that serves as a coordinating body for higher education regarding key issues.
- 2. JST:** The Joint Services Transcript (JST) is a synchronized transcript of professional United States military education, training and occupation experiences achieved by service members and veterans.
- 3. Industry and Professional Training and Certification:** Training that aligns with professional position requirements, and credentials recognized by industry related to specific knowledge and/or skillsets.
- 4. Institutional Challenge Exam:** A subject-matter exam created by faculty at an institution with appropriate expertise in the subject/discipline.
- 5. Portfolio:** The process of reviewing a compilation of artifacts, narratives and demonstrations and comparing them against the competencies of a course(s) for the purpose of awarding college-level credit.
- 6. Published Guides:** Nationally recognized guides that utilize established methods and processes to evaluate a variety of learning opportunities outside a traditional education classroom (experience, training, examinations, etc.) and translate them into credit recommendations.
- 7. Standardized Exam:** A nationally recognized exam that tests subject-matter knowledge. Standardized exams can be stand-alone exams, or an exam connected to a learning experience.

## **C. POLICY STATEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

1. Credit for prior learning shall be awarded for college-level learning which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained because of their prior learning experiences.
2. Credit for prior learning shall be reviewed for students who have been admitted to one of the six Regental institutions and have a declared major or when a system exception is approved because of external state or federal grant dollars.
3. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning must apply to the student's declared program (major, degree, certificate) at the institution where the student is admitted.
4. Credit for prior learning shall not be awarded for a course that is already on the student's academic record by any of the six Regental institutions.
5. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning will be transcribed as transfer credits, with a grade of "CR".
6. Credit earned and awarded through Credit for Prior Learning will not have any quality points awarded and will not be calculated in the grade point average or completion rate.
7. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning are transcribed in the current semester for which they were approved and awarded (not the term they worked, experienced, or participated in the activity).
8. Credits earned will not be counted in the student's semester enrollment calculation, nor are they eligible for financial aid.
9. Regental institutions shall abide by the established minimum scores for standardized exams, as documented in published guides.
10. Regental institutions shall utilize the established minimum credit recommendations documented in published guides.
11. Regental institutions shall ensure graduate-level institutional policies allow for acceptance of credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning as part of existing transfer credit policies.
12. Credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning are considered transfer credits. Undergraduate credit requirements for graduation are identified in BOR Policy 2.6.1 and BOR Policy 2.2.2.1; no additional or separate limitation beyond the limit identified in that policy, is placed on credits earned through Credit for Prior Learning.

## **D. PRIOR LEARNING TRANSFER OF CREDIT**

As with the assessment of classroom learning, the objective of prior learning assessment is to identify student competency related to a specific set of learning outcomes. This policy applies to transfer students and currently enrolled students.

The Regental universities should provide transfer students with the same opportunities as continuing students to demonstrate their competence using internally and/or externally standardized processes.

## **1. General Requirements**

- 1.1. There are five (5) accepted practices approved by the Board of Regents on credit for prior learning.
  - 1.1.1. **Industry/Professional Certification or Training:** Includes, but is not limited to any non-collegiate training programs that result in industry certification, professional licensure, skill development, apprenticeship completion, and other work-based learning programs, etc.
  - 1.1.2. **Joint Services Transcript:** Includes, but is not limited to rank, occupation, military education, training, military occupation, etc. as documented on the JST.
  - 1.1.3. **Portfolio:** Conducted through a designated third party, unless it is for graduate-level course credit, or a subject/discipline that the third party does not offer.
  - 1.1.4. **Published Guides:** Includes but is not limited to the ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workplace Training, the ACE Military Guide, and the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS).
  - 1.1.5. **Credit by Examination:** Includes standardized exams and institutional challenge exams.
    - AP – Advanced Placement (CollegeBoard)
    - CLEP – College Level Examination Program (CollegeBoard)
    - DLPT – Defense Language Proficiency Test (Defense Language Institute)
    - DSST – DANTES Subject Standardized Test (Prometric)
    - GED – General Education Development Test (GED Testing Service)
    - Institutional Challenge Exam – Institutionally-developed exam (Regental Institution or Non-Regental Institution)
    - IB – International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (International Baccalaureate)
    - UExcel – Excelsior University
- 1.2. The Discipline Councils will provide consultation to the Academic Affairs Council and system academic affairs staff as it relates to competencies, course equivalencies, and other requirements.
- 1.3. Fees will be assessed for awarded credit through the fee schedule.

## **E. APPLICATION OF POLICY**

To facilitate Regental institutions being responsive to the rapidly evolving nature of Credit for Prior Learning, guidance to Regental institutions about the application of policy requirements shall be done through Academic Affairs Guidelines. The standards and procedures shall be accepted by all institutions and operationalized for the Information System.

**FORMS / APPENDICES:**

None

**SOURCE:**

BOR August 2022; October 2023 (Clerical); BOR December 2023; BOR December 2025.