



AOP 12.26: UNDERGRADUATE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to describe how students can receive undergraduate credit for prior learning (CPL).

POLICY

Mississippi State University accepts three forms of credit for prior learning (CPL) to fulfill undergraduate academic course requirements, as defined in AOP 12.08, *Requirements for Academic Programs and Academic Consortial/Contractual Agreements*.

There are three categories of Credit for Prior Learning:

- a. Credit by Examination is an external, standardized test used to demonstrate the level of knowledge a student has in a particular subject.
- b. Credit for Portfolio-Based or Individual Assessment is a method where students prepare evidence that demonstrates their competency of course content based on their experiences or other non-credit activities.
- c. Credit for Non-College Training Programs are instructional programs completed as part of the students' employment or military training that offer comparable course content (e.g., American Council on Education (ACE) or military credits).

Guidelines

- CPL applies to current Mississippi State University students for undergraduate courses approved by the University Committee on Courses and Curricula (UCCC).
- CPL may be awarded at any time after the student is admitted to the university.
- CPL may not apply toward residency requirements.
- The combination of all forms of CPL must be less than 25% of the credit hours required for the academic credentials for which the student is enrolled.
- Coursework fulfilled by CPL receives an "S" grade and therefore is not calculated in the grade point average.
- Students may apply for CPL up to the last day to withdraw in the semester prior to degree completion.
- The decision to grant credit for prior learning rests exclusively with the Department offering the course.

Credit by Examination

1. **Advanced Placement Examinations.** Students entering Mississippi State University for the first time are allowed credit on the advanced placement examination administered by

the College Board. A list of specific courses approved for Advanced Placement credit may be found in the university catalog at <http://catalog.msstate.edu>.

2. **College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).** Mississippi State University serves as an open testing center for both the General and Subject Examinations. Academic credit on the Subject Examinations is awarded to students who are enrolled at the University and who make a scaled score as indicated in the university catalog. A list of courses for which credit may be obtained can be found in the university catalog at <http://catalog.msstate.edu>. If you have any questions concerning CLEP credit, contact the Registrar's Office.
3. **The International Baccalaureate (IB):** Mississippi State University recognizes the IB Program. Advance standing credit will be considered for the higher level subject examinations with scores of 5, 6, or 7 pending approval of department head or equivalent in consultation with program faculty of the academic unit where the course is housed and the appropriate academic dean. Students must request a final official IB transcript from the International Baccalaureate North America (IBNA) regional office following the grade awarding.
4. **Cambridge International:** Students entering Mississippi State University for the first time may be granted credit for examinations administered by Cambridge International. Courses taken as part of the AS level or A-level curricula will be considered. Contact the Office of the Registrar for details on how credit is assigned in the various subject areas.
5. **Other forms of credit by standardized exam:** Academic departments may determine that certain scores on standardized examinations not already specified in this policy may fulfill credit toward courses. Faculty in the department offering the course are responsible for determining which examinations are acceptable for such credit. The department will provide a justification letter that includes an explanation of how the examination was vetted, what course(s) it fulfills, and what scores are accepted. A letter of support from the department's undergraduate committee (or program faculty if the department does not have an undergraduate committee) is also required. The justification and support letters require approval from the department head or equivalent, academic dean, and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President. Departments must notify the Office of the Registrar of such approvals so these examination opportunities may be publicized to prospective students. The Office of the Registrar will keep a record of such approvals. Students may not take an examination for credit in a course previously taken for credit.

Credit by Portfolio, Individual Assessment, and Non-College Training Programs

Credit by Portfolio or Individual Assessment. Students may earn undergraduate academic credit through the demonstration of prior learning documented in a portfolio or assessed through individual evaluation. This option applies to prior work or military experience, which may also be considered toward internship requirements within a particular major. Students must demonstrate that their knowledge and experience are equivalent to the learning outcomes of the selected course.

Credit by Non-College Training Programs. Students may also earn undergraduate academic credit for structured training received outside of accredited colleges or universities (e.g., employer-sponsored training, professional certifications, or military training). To receive credit, students must provide sufficient documentation to demonstrate how the training aligns with the learning outcomes of the selected course.

Procedure

Prior learning for Credit by Portfolio or Individual Assessment and Credit by Non-College Training Programs will be denoted on the transcript with the select course. These credits may not necessarily transfer outside of Mississippi State University. Credit is awarded based on the student's demonstration of competency in the course learning outcomes, as opposed to experience in the field.

Assessment of student learning for CPL is equivalent to the assessment of student learning in the course and may use the same rubrics or checklists for evaluation. Demonstration of learning outcomes may include but are not limited to the following:

- Report, paper, brief, or other form of written document
- Presentation, poster, podcast, or other form of multi-media scholarship
- Peer-reviewed or juried scholarship (journal article, conference presentation, exhibition, recital)
- Comprehensive examination (written, oral, or combination)
- Assessment of student learning is completed in accordance with AOP 13.09 by academically qualified faculty members who are from the department that offers the course.
- Students will be notified in writing by the department who offers the course about the determination of the assessment.
- If approved for credit, faculty from the student's academic program will communicate with the student how credit earned through CPL will be applied to the student's program of study.
- If denied for credit after the first attempt, students may submit evidence of learning at most two times for a given course. There is a minimum 30 day waiting period between receiving written notification of the determination of the assessment (first attempt) and submission of the second attempt. Prior learning will be denoted on the transcript with the select course (see example).

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XX-1103: Prior Learning Assessment						

- Experiences completed prior to enrollment at Mississippi State University will be denoted on the transcript in the same manner as transfer credits, and experiences while enrolled at Mississippi State University will be denoted in the semester the credit is issued.

Implementation

A Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Committee will be formed with membership that must include (but not limited to) faculty and staff from participating departments and programs, along with representatives from the Registrar's Office, the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness, and the College of Professional and Continuing Studies. This committee will address the following topics:

- Uniform fee structure
- Uniform CPL appeal process
- Guidance for departments to develop internal assessment tools
- For-credit course to help students build portfolios
- Process through the Office of University Registrar to uniformly record CPL experiences on students' transcripts

This policy may be implemented for credit by portfolio, individual assessment, and non-college training programs as soon as the CPL Committee has finalized its process and the University Registrar is prepared to transcript the credits.

REVIEW

This AOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

REVIEWED BY:

/s/ Peter Ryan
Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

9/24/2025
Date

/s/ David Shaw
Provost and Executive Vice President

10/20/2025
Date

/s/ Stacy Haynes
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate

9/12/2025
Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham
Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness

10/23/2025
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas
General Counsel

10/23/2025
Date

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mark E. Keenum
President

1/30/2026
Date