

## **CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING**

### **Procedures for Awarding Credit for Prior Learning from NCTA**

University of Nebraska - Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) students may acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies they need in several ways other than participation in educational programming. Formal education or training programs, either at another postsecondary institution or through an employer or military service, provide one avenue for prior learning. Informal education and training experiences provided by employment, community service, or other life experiences provides yet another.

In providing credit for prior learning that has occurred through any of these experiences, NCTA seeks to provide students with opportunities to obtain credit toward the completion of their college educational programming that:

- Recognizes the validity of a variety of prior learning experiences;
- Recognizes the inherent mobility of students, both geographically and between and among postsecondary educational institutions;
- Accelerates the achievement of educational goals while maintaining the integrity of NCTA academic programs;
- Provides flexibility for students by providing multiple ways of gaining credentials needed to move ahead in their careers;
- Leverages prior learning experiences to lessen the cost of duplicative postsecondary education to students, parents and taxpayers; and
- Responds to local economic needs to validate and expedite the training of skilled workers in a variety of technical agriculture fields.

### **Categories of Credit for Prior Learning**

A student enrolled in a NCTA may obtain credit for prior learning under the following three categories:

- 1) postsecondary credits earned at other colleges;
- 2) credit by exam - subject area competency demonstrated by passing a national examination, other semester assessment protocol;
- 3) Military credit; or
- 3) Portfolio or Experiential Learning - previous work experience, education or training, or other prior learning demonstrated as comparable in content and rigor to a specific college course or courses.

#### **1) Post-secondary Credits Earned at other Colleges**

NCTA shall award credit for prior learning to students who present appropriate documentation of credits earned while attending college. Dual credits, which are defined as college courses, qualify for credit for prior learning under this category. College guidelines shall affirm the full transferability of similar courses and those courses.

NCTA shall honor as fulfilling general education requirements those credits awarded as fulfilling general education requirements. Colleges shall reevaluate credits awarded as fulfilling program course requirements to determine their applicability to new program requirements for students who enroll in a different program within a college.

## 2) Credit by Exam

NCTA shall award credit for prior learning to students who demonstrate subject-area competency through oral, written, performance or practical exam, or by a combination of these methods. National exams include nationally recognized exams in specific occupational areas.

## 3) Military Credit

NCTA Policy on Military Credit:

Veteran Student attending Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture may receive military credit through three possible means.

- 1) A maximum of four credit hours for their active military service. This credit is based on one credit hour for each three months of active duty military service. Applicability of the military service credit toward degree requirements will be made by the Associate Dean's office. To receive this credit (1-4 credits) students should request a copy of their DD-214 form be sent to:

NCTA  
c/o Vicky Luke  
Registration and Records  
404 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Curtis, NE 69025-9525

- 2) Additional credit may be granted for certain schooling completed in the service.

To have additional military credit considered, students are asked to submit official transcripts to the University of Nebraska-Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture

- Soldiers, reservists, veterans, and members of the Army National Guard should order the Army/ACE Registry Transcribing System (AARTS) transcript from <https://aarts.army.mil>.
- Sailors, Marines, and veterans should order the Sailor/Marine/ACE Registry Transcript (SMART) from <https://smart.navy.mil> or call toll-free (877) 253-7122
- Air Force Active Duty, Guard and Reservists or retired or separated Air Force Members may obtain transcripts from the Community College of the Air Force at <http://www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/>

This review (2) is to determine if prior education may be used in meeting course to course equivalency and a student's NCTA degree requirements.

- 3) Also, further credit may be granted, from evaluation of the above transcripts, for general degree requirements. An example of this may be electives.

In addition, evaluations must be initiated by the student and each will be made on an individual basis. Inquiries on credit transfer are to be made to the incoming student's advisor. Only credit hours, not grades are transferred. Therefore, transferred credit has no effect on a student's NCTA grade point average. There must be a minimum of 15 credits taken from NCTA for a degree.

#### **4) Portfolio/Experiential Learning**

NCTA shall award credit for prior learning based on previous work experience, business and industry training, or other prior learning which college personnel judge as comparable in content and level of rigor to the specific college course or courses. One proven assessment method for this type credit is through the compilation of a portfolio.

A paper or electronic portfolio is one of the four approved Credit for Prior learning methods for a student to demonstrate learning acquired outside of the traditional classroom. It is a collection of information gathered by the student and presented in a systematic format that validates the experiential learning has occurred. Each course for which portfolio credit is requested must be in the college curriculum and must be part of the student's certificate or degree requirements.

##### **FACULTY AND STUDENT ROLES IN THE PORTFOLIO PROCESS:**

Preparation and content of the portfolio is the responsibility of the student. The student's faculty advisor will assist the student in following the established procedures. Once a portfolio has been prepared, it will be assessed for the awarding of credit. A faculty and a subject matter expert will evaluate and determine if the student has provided sufficient documentation to demonstrate attainment of the learning outcomes and/or met the competencies of the course.

##### **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONTENT OF THE PORTFOLIO:**

There are certain items that must be included in a logical order before the portfolio can be considered for evaluation.

- A. Cover Page and Table of Contents:  
Each portfolio will have a cover page identifying the portfolio and the student who prepared it for credit. A table of contents listing the separate parts of the portfolio will also be included.
- B. Degree or Certificate Program Plan:  
The plan must include required and elective courses for the declared program of study.
- C. Request for Portfolio Credit:  
A short letter on which the student will indicate the course(s) she or he is requesting for the awarded credit.
- D. Narrative of Intent:  
This document should introduce the student to the evaluators. It is a relevant but brief autobiographical presentation that ties together why the portfolio is being submitted and why the credit should be awarded. It is a general overview of what will be discussed in detail later.

E. Relevance:

If general education courses are being requested for award, the student must show how his or her life experiences relate to the request. If occupational courses are being requested for award, the narrative will include the student's relevant work experiences and may include those life experiences relating to the request.

F. Resume:

A resume must be submitted when occupational courses are being requested for credit awards. The resume is optional when only general education courses are being requested.

G. Course Requests:

This portion of the portfolio will have a separate section for each course for which credit is being requested. Course competency statements and/or learning outcomes (provided to the student by the faculty advisor) should be the starting point for the development of this section. The student then will describe how his or her learning relates to this specific course and how he or she has accomplished the competencies/learning outcomes expected of a person who successfully completed the course.

Documentation:

Supporting documentation will be presented in the portfolio to support the student's request for awarding credit. The supporting documents will be of sufficient breadth and depth to validate the student's stated learning and provide the evaluator with qualitative evidence for evaluation. Types of documentation are as follows:

- Certificates of Training:

Students who have received training through non-traditional methods should provide a copy of a certificate of completed training, a lesson plan or training content, dates of attendance, and/or other information showing what was taught. Evidence of evaluation may also be required (e.g., proficiency exam scores).

- Portfolio of Works:

Students requesting awarded credit in some fields may have a portfolio of their work, which will support their request.

- Demonstration of Competency:

Some students may request credit in courses that can only be evaluated after a performance of their skills.

- Oral Interview:

The evaluator may contact the student for a verbal discussion of his/her portfolio as a supplement to the written information provided.

- Awards and Honors:

The student may provide copies of any awards and honors directly related to the competencies.

- Job Descriptions, Performance Evaluations, and Letters from employers/supervisors:

These documents may be included to verify attainment of the competencies and/or learning outcomes for which the student is seeking credit.

Credit for prior learning policies and/or procedures shall address:

- A. **Minimum Grade Requirements**  
Postsecondary credits awarded a minimum 2.0 grade point on a 4.0 scale qualify for transfer as credits for prior learning from a nationally or regionally accredited institution of higher education.
- B. **Costs of Obtaining Credit for Prior Learning**  
Costs for prior learning credit will be charge the credit rate as approved by the BOR.
- C. **Maximum Credit for Prior Learning**  
NCTA requires that applied associate degree or associate degree students complete 15 credits, of the required studies, while enrolled as postsecondary student at NCTA

#### **Process for obtaining Credit for Prior Learning**

1. Review the current NCYA catalog, review course requirements and identify any courses that you feel would have relevant, equivalent college level experience.
2. Meet with your academic advisor to discuss the courses and steps for completing Credit for Prior Learning.
3. Determine which method you will use to satisfy the Credit for Prior Learning.
4. Work with faculty advisor determine how training program (including military training, apprentices, and other training) compare to the college's current course offering(s).
5. Once identified utilize the ACE or CLEP (General Education) system to have external evaluation completed regarding credit for prior learning – crosswalks<sup>1</sup> method.
  - a. ACE CREDIT course review steps can be found at:  
<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/ACE-CREDIT-Course-Review.aspx>
6. Once the process is complete, attach portfolio, graded standardized/industry test, CLEP or ACE transcript to “Blue Sheet” and submit to records for final approval.

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<sup>1</sup> A Crosswalk refers to a matrix used to compare industry-based learning outcomes with outcomes for specific courses in a college. (Example: Basic Law Enforcement Academy training compared to Criminal Justice coursework).