

Colorado Community College System

PLA Credit Policy

The PLA Credit Policy: BP 9-42

- **Definition:**

- The learning addressed in this policy is defined as college level knowledge or skills that have been attained outside a traditional academic environment and that have not been previously evaluated for or awarded college credit.

- **Educational Principles**

- Learning occurs both within formal educational settings and in the community at large.
- The criteria for evaluation of such learning should take into consideration the educational goals which are identified by the student, as well as institutional and State System requirements.
- Evaluation of prior learning should provide substantive information about the knowledge, competencies, attitudes, values, and other dimensions of personal development which the individual possesses.

- **Minimum Standards**

- The prior learning shall be assessed in accordance with national standards and best practices as outlined in The PLA Credit Manual.
- Prior learning shall be assessed and awarded through: Portfolio, Challenge Exam, and Standardized Testing, the use of Published Guide or through the use of the PLA Credit Matrix in the PLA Credit Manual.
- The prior learning shall be college level.
- The credits earned through accepted PLA credit methods shall be treated equally in their application and use in course equivalencies.
- The PLA Credit granted shall be accepted as transfer credit by all of the State System community colleges.
- The knowledge and skills being assessed shall be relevant to the student's program of study and meet current program requirements.

Military Credit

- Credit for learning gained in the U.S. Military is generally transferred based on the American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations found on a Joint Services Transcript (JST) for current or former Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, or Navy personnel
- Military learning experiences for which credit is awarded must be applicable to the student's declared degree or certificate program.
- Credit may be transferred from the JST for military training school, occupation/rank, and coursework as recommended in the ACE Military Guide. Always use the ACE Identifier (Course and/or Occupation) to describe the credit, being careful not to duplicate credit awards in the same subject area.
- Standardized test credit, which is current on the PLA Credit Matrix and meets cut score requirements, may be transferred directly from the JST as long as the JST lists the examination name, score earned on the exam, and the date it was taken.

- Military Training determined by ACE to be in the Vocational category is not considered to be at the college level and should not be considered independently for college credit. Students who wish to use military training determined to be in the Vocational category to challenge CCNS courses, may, as appropriate, use these recommendations as part of a Portfolio that demonstrates the full array of required skills/competencies.
- Staff should cross-reference the ACE Identifiers on the JST with the ACE Military Guide (<http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx>)
- The information needed to compare military training course curriculum and competencies, as well as military occupation (job performance) competencies with CCNS courses is contained in this ACE Guide. The ACE site can be searched by course and by occupation. Using either or both may help to find information related to curriculum and competencies which describe the service member's military learning and will aid in the transfer of appropriate credit for that learning.

- If the training, occupation or credential has not been previously cross-walked to a CCNS course, faculty subject matter experts or other qualified staff must evaluate the ACE recommendations to determine appropriate crosswalks to CCNS courses
- If there is no ACE credit recommendation made for an entry on the JST, credit should not be awarded and students should be advised about other PLA Credit options such as Challenge Tests and Portfolios.
- If a direct crosswalk to a CCNS course is not appropriate, colleges may award elective credit as it applies to the student's degree requirements. Students may also use ACE recommendations as part of a larger body of evidence in a Portfolio to capture CCNS credit.

Things to consider

- There needs to be a practice in place for this kind of evaluation that reduces duplication and minimizes the impact on faculty subject matter expert time
- Standards of practice are more important than functional steps developed for an individual institution
- Most coursework applied in this policy is foundational while the learning the student will engage in subsequent to enrollment will be iterative
- This is about learning, not teaching