

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

POLICY

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) is to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate competence at the college and university level from learning gained through learning experiences outside of a college or university credit-bearing course and to establish consistent practices among colleges and universities for evaluating and awarding undergraduate or graduate credit for prior learning.

Ridgewater College acknowledges and adheres to the definitions and processes described in:

- [Minnesota State Policy 3.35](#) – “Credit for Prior Learning”
- [Minnesota State Procedure 3.35.1](#) – “Credit for Prior Learning – External Assessments”
- [Minnesota State Procedure 3.35.2](#) – “Credit for Prior Learning – Internal Assessments”
- [Minnesota State Procedure 3.35.3](#) – “Credit for Prior Learning – Military Course and Military Occupations”

CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING – EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

Assessment methods and processes at the colleges or universities of Minnesota State that could result in credit for prior learning achieved and assessed through a nationally recognized third-party assessment agency or organization, regionally or nationally accredited postsecondary institution, or noncredit instruction. Students demonstrate a level of proficiency that is recognized through curriculum, instruction, program, or a standardized exam. CPL external assessment types may include, but are not limited to, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and other national standardized assessments; world languages seals and certificates; industry recognized credentials, licenses, and certifications; and noncredit instruction in programs such as registered apprenticeships, continuing education, and customized training. Ridgewater College recognizes that some students will have had life, occupational or vocational experiences which have given them knowledge in subject field areas sufficient to warrant college credit. The following govern credit by examination/prior learning experience at Ridgewater College:

- Per Minnesota State system policy, Ridgewater will not limit the total number of credits students may be awarded for CPL, but there are graduation requirements that will limit the number of CPL credits that can be awarded towards a particular degree, diploma or certificate.
- Credit for prior learning – external assessments may not be included in residence requirements.
- CPL credit must be applicable to programs or degrees offered by Ridgewater.
- While Ridgewater College accepts credits for prior learning, other colleges to which the student may subsequently transfer may not accept them. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain communication with the receiving institution.
- Financial aid is not available for Credit for Prior Learning credits.

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Ridgewater College permits students to receive credit for prior learning in the following ways:

External Assessments

- Credit by Examination
 - College Level Examination Program (CLEP) – Students of all ages may take a college-level examination in a specific subject area and receive college credit for knowledge and skills they have obtained both inside and outside the classroom.
 - Advanced Placement (AP) – The Advanced Placement (AP) Program of the College Board allows high school students the opportunity to earn college course credit by providing examinations in introductory courses.
 - International Baccalaureate (IB) – An internationally recognized program through which secondary students complete a comprehensive curriculum of rigorous student and demonstrate performance on culminating examinations.
 - World Language Seals and Certificates (ACTFL)
 - Other Evaluations - Students may also demonstrate college level learning through other nationally recognized examinations, such as:
 - Dantes Subject Standardized Test (DSST)
 - Project Lead the Way (PLTW)
 - Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Examinations
- Articulated credit earned through a high school that has been articulated to a credit course.
- Credits awarded for external assessments will be given a P grade.
- American Council of Education (ACE) credit recommendations for college-level learning achieved through third-party study/exam programs, professional and certification trainings and assessments, and military training and assessments.
- Other national standardized assessments, industry recognized credentials, license, certifications and non-credit instruction in continuing education and customized training not mentioned above.
- Military Courses and Military Occupations – Credit will be awarded for courses and occupations that were part of military training or service and that meet the standards of ACE for awarding academic credit.

Internal Assessments

College assessment methods and processes used by Minnesota State faculty members to assess students' demonstrated learning. Such assessments determine competence-to-credit comparability, course-equivalency, individualized subject status, and application to degree requirements or electives. CPL internal assessments may include, but are not limited to, research paper/project, credit by exam, course-equivalency assessment, individualized-subject assessment, portfolio assessment, group or seminar assessment, competency-based assessment, skills demonstration, interview, and hybrid methods.

Ridgewater College recognizes that some students will have had life, occupational or vocational experiences which have given them knowledge in subject field areas sufficient to warrant college credit. The following govern credit for prior learning at Ridgewater College:

- There is no credit limit for internal assessments.

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- Internal assessments will apply toward residency credit requirements.
- Faculty awarding credit for internal assessments may assign a grade of A, B, C, or a P (which reflects a grade of “C” or better). Internal assessments will be recorded in the body of the transcript in the term it was granted.
- There is a per credit fee for internal assessments.
- Students may not repeat examinations, enroll, or receive credit in a lower sequential course.
- Learning must meet standards as set by the learning outcomes on the Ridgewater College course outline. Faculty evaluate internally assessed CPL with respect to course learning outcomes.
- Students must demonstrate that their college level learning is up-to-date and fulfills course outcomes. In most cases, life/work experiences will have taken place within five years prior to the request date.

Ridgewater College permits students to receive credit for prior learning – internal assessment in the following ways:

Internal Assessments

- Course Test Out. Credit awarded through assessment based on examination developed by the faculty or college, such as a credit by exam, competency-based assessment, skills demonstration, interview and hybrid methods.
- Portfolio Review. Documented work experience, professional development, continuing education, and personal study where materials demonstrate evidence of learning outcomes, such as a research paper/project, course-equivalency assessment, individualized-subject assessment, group and seminar assessment.

History:

01.29.2001 Adopted

05.19.2009 Revised

02.13.2017 Proposed

03.13.2017 Adopted

08.24.2021 Proposed – Reviewed and Revised for Equity Compliance

11.17.2021 Revised

03.12.2025 Proposed; 12.15.2025 Revised

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PROCEDURE

This procedure articulates the process for the assessment and awarding of credit for prior learning (CPL) at Ridgewater College.

Credit for Prior Learning – External Assessments**1. Credit by Examination****a. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

- i. Acceptable subject areas with CLEP exams and their equivalents are available from the College Board.
- ii. Students take CLEP exam(s) at an approved testing center. A fee is charged for a CLEP examination.
- iii. Students must request to have their official test scores from College Board be sent to the Admissions Office.
- iv. For examinations completed July 2001 or later, the minimum CLEP score for acceptance of credit is 50, with higher scores required in level 2 foreign language examinations.
- v. Credit equivalencies and credits awarded are available in the Registrar's office and in [Transferology](#).
- vi. Courses will be recorded in the transfer section of the transcript.

b. Advanced Placement (AP)

- i. Students must request to have their AP scores from College Board sent to the Admissions Office.
- ii. Students who earn a score of 3 or higher on the examinations are awarded credit.
- iii. Credit equivalencies and credits awarded are available in the Registrar's office and in [Transferology](#).
- iv. Courses will be recorded in the transfer section of the transcript.

c. International Baccalaureate (IB)

- i. Students must present a full IB diploma or a certificate recognizing specific subject examinations.
- ii. Ridgewater College shall grant credit for scores of 4 or higher on individual IB examinations or successful completion of the IB diploma according to Procedures 3.35.1 Credit for Prior Learning – External Assessments
 1. IB Diploma – Students who attain an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma shall be granted six (6) lower division course credits for scores of 4 or higher on each Higher Level IB examinations and two (2) lower division course credits for scores of 4 or higher on each Standard Level IB examination.

iii. Individual IB Examinations

1. Higher Level Examinations – A student shall receive three (3) or more course credits for scores of 4 or higher on individual Higher Level IB examinations.

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2. Standard Level Examinations – A student shall receive two (2) or more credits for scores of 4 or higher on individual Standard Level IB examinations.

iv. Courses will be recorded in the transfer section of the transcript.

d. World Language Seals and Certificates (ACTFL)

i. Students shall submit world languages seals and certificates to the college or university within three academic years after graduating from high school.

ii. The following table identifies the credit equivalencies for seals and certificates and the corresponding proficiency levels set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Seal or Certificate	ACTFL Proficiency Level	Credits to be Awarded
World Language Proficiency Certificate	Intermediate-Low	2 semester per language course sequence
Bilingual or Multilingual Gold Seal	Intermediate-High	3 semester per language course sequence
Bilingual or Multilingual Platinum Seal	Advanced-Low	4 semester per language course sequence

e. Other Evaluations – Students may also demonstrate college level learning through other nationally recognized examinations such as:

i. Dantes Subject Standardized Test (DSST)

ii. Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Examinations.

2. Minnesota Articulated College Credit

a. Students must present their Articulated College Credit certificate to the Registrar.

b. The articulated course must be required in the major/program the student is pursuing. Credit is not granted for elective courses.

c. The agreement is valid for two years following high school graduation.

3. American Council of Education (ACE)

a. Students must submit an official ACE transcript to be considered for credit.

4. Other national standardized assessments, industry recognized credentials, licenses, certifications and non-credit instruction in continuing education and customized training not mentioned above.

a. Students must present the original credential, transcript or other like evidence for considerations to the Registrar.

b. The credential must be current.

5. Military Courses and Military Occupations

a. Credit shall be granted for veteran's military training and service in compliance with Subd. 2 of Minnesota Statute 197.775 – "Higher Education Fairness" according to the standards and equivalencies of the American Council on Education.

b. A student must present an official Joint Military Transcript (JST) or an official Air Force transcript to the Registrar.

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CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING – INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS**1. Course Test Out**

- a. To attempt to course test out, a student must be degree seeking at Ridgewater.
- b. A student may attempt a test-out of a particular course only once.
- c. The credits awarded are entered on the student's transcript with a pass (P) grade. The test-out option is not available to a student who wants to test-out of a course they have failed, received an NC or in which they wish to improve their course grade.
- d. Students may not test out of a course in which they are enrolled past the fifth day of the semester.
- e. The test-out option is not available in all courses.
- f. Tests are course-specific examinations (oral or written) designed by the appropriate college faculty member and reflect the objectives of the course. A grade of A, B, C or P (which reflects a grade of "C" or better) may be recorded for successful test outs.
- g. Students must complete the Credit for Prior Learning form and pay the fee before attempting the exam.
- h. The course will be recorded on the transcript within the term the student completed the exam.
- i. A non-refundable fee will be charged for each credit.

2. Prior Learning Experience Portfolio Review

- a. Students may demonstrate the achievement of course outcomes through a portfolio review process. Faculty determine what materials are necessary to demonstrate achievement of course learning outcomes.
- b. To attempt a portfolio review, students must be degree seeking at Ridgewater.
- c. A student may attempt portfolio review for the same course only once and may not do so if they are currently enrolled in the course or previously attempted the course.
- d. The portfolio review option is not available for all courses.
- e. A grade of A, B, C or P (which reflects a grade of "C" or better) may be recorded for courses that are approved.
- f. The course will be recorded on the transcript within the term the portfolio was approved.
- g. Students must complete the Credit for Prior Learning form and pay the fee before presenting the portfolio for review.
- h. A non-refundable fee will be charged for each credit.

History:

08.24.2021 Proposed – New Procedure - Created with Equity Compliance in Mind

11.17.2021 Revised

03.12.2025 Proposed; 12.15.2025 Revised