

# PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT, OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARNING PENN STATE CREDIT

In addition to taking Penn State course work, students with prior college-level learning—at another college or university, in the military, in the workplace, through self-study, or in high school—may earn credits that may be applicable to their degree requirements.

Credits are awarded on the semester-hour basis. The distribution of time between class activities and outside preparation varies from course to course; for the average student, however, at least 45 hours of work per semester planned and arranged by the University faculty are required to gain 1 credit.

The Faculty Senate's Policies and Rules for Undergraduate Students (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/>) explains the various ways students may earn course credits. Those methods are as follows:

- Instruction, as defined in Policy 42-23 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-23>)
- Examination, as defined in Policy 42-50 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-50>) and discussed below
- Portfolio Assessment, as defined in Policy 42-97 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-97>) and discussed below
- Transfer from other regionally accredited colleges and universities as defined in Policy 42-82 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-82>) and as discussed under the heading Admission with Advanced Standing
- Transfer from colleges and universities outside the United States as defined in Policy 42-84 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-84>)
- Validation from colleges and universities that are not regionally accredited but award associate degrees or higher as defined in Policy 42-86 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-86>)
- Educational experiences in the Armed Services as defined in Policy 42-98 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-98>)
- Educational credit for Training Programs in Non-collegiate Organizations as defined in Policy 42-99 (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/#42-99>)

Additional information about earning credit can be obtained at Undergraduate Admissions Office (<https://admissions.psu.edu/>) or Prior Learning Assessment (<https://priorlearning.psu.edu/>).

## Credit by Examination

If students have acquired substantial knowledge in a specific subject area, in some circumstances credits may be earned through successful

completion of comprehensive examinations made available by the Penn State academic units that offer particular courses.

When such an examination serves as a substitute for completing all the usual requirements of a Penn State course, the credits received are described as "Credit by Examination" and are accepted as fulfilling degree requirements. Students may initiate a request for Credit by Examination for a course, although the academic department or program offering the course determines whether it will make Credit by Examination available. A grade of "C" or higher must be earned in the examination for such credit to be awarded and to appear on the student's transcript. Credit by Examination does not result in a quality grade (A, A-, etc.) and is not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average. Any credits earned in this manner will appear on the student transcript with the notation CRX and without a reported grade. A fee may be assessed to cover the costs of the procedure.

Current information about credit by examination credit awarded by Penn State can be obtained at [earning test credit \(https://priorlearning.psu.edu/earn-credit/testing/\)](https://priorlearning.psu.edu/earn-credit/testing/).

## Credit by Portfolio Assessment

A currently enrolled student who can document college-level learning acquired in a non-collegiate setting may be able to petition for undergraduate credit through portfolio assessment. Not all academic units offer portfolio assessment for credit. Students interested in determining whether to pursue credit by portfolio assessment opportunities should contact the academic department responsible for the relevant course.

Criteria for earning credit via portfolio include the following:

1. Credit is granted for the demonstration of college-level learning obtained during work or other experience, but not for the experience itself. Learning must be documented and must represent college-level achievement. Advisers will provide guidance on the steps necessary to construct a portfolio providing evidence of prior learning that meets academic quality expectations.
2. Credit by portfolio assessment does not carry a grade.
3. Credit by portfolio assessment may be awarded to enrolled students at the undergraduate level only.
4. Credit may not duplicate other course work that the student has already completed. A student may not enroll in and earn credit for a course for which credit already has been granted via portfolio assessment.
5. Credit may be awarded following an evaluation of the portfolio by an individual faculty member or committee who represent the academic unit in which the subject matter is to be evaluated.
6. Credit earned via portfolio is designated on the transcript in the same manner as transfer credit.
7. Credit(s) will be posted to the student's record but will not appear on the student's official transcript until the student has completed a credit-bearing course at Penn State.
8. A fee is assessed to recover portfolio evaluation costs.
9. A maximum of 6 credits may be earned for a single portfolio (course). Associate degree candidates may be awarded a maximum of 16 credits. Baccalaureate degree candidates are limited to a maximum of 30 credits earned by portfolio assessment.

Current information about credit by examination credit awarded by Penn State can be obtained at earning portfolio credit (<https://priorlearning.psu.edu/earn-credit/portfolio/>).

READ SENATE POLICY 42-00: ACQUISITION OF CREDIT (<https://senate.psu.edu/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/42-00-acquisition-of-credit/>)

## Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board

A student who does advanced work in a secondary school may take Advanced Placement Examinations, which are based on college-level studies. Penn State cooperates with the College Board in this program.

Credit may be awarded for Advanced Placement Examinations depending upon the grades earned on the examination. For some examinations, the amount of credit awarded varies with an earned grade of three, four, or five. The schedule of credit awarded for Advanced Placement Examinations may be revised annually upon review by the faculty.

Limitations on credits earned through the Advanced Placement Examinations are as follows:

1. The Student's academic program determines how credits earned apply to degree requirements.
2. A student who has earned credit for a particular course through AP examinations may elect to take the same course at Penn State (unless restricted by placement policies of the unit offering the course), but the duplicate credit cannot be used to meet any additional degree requirements. However, the grade earned in the Penn State course will count towards the student's grade point average.

General credits may be awarded for an AP Exam that covers material that is not the substantial equivalent of material covered in a specific University course. General credits may be used to fulfill degree requirements in any area; such use is not necessarily limited to General Education or elective requirements. General credits are applied to a student's program of study in accordance with the procedures established by the college of enrollment. Information on the use of general credits or specific course credits earned by AP Exams in individual programs of study may be obtained from a student's academic adviser or from the office of the dean of a student's college.

Undergraduate students interested in receiving credit for AP Exams should arrange for their official grade reports to be sent directly from the College Board (<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/sending-scores/>) to the Undergraduate Admissions office. If credit is awarded, a student's University record will carry notation of credit, but no grade will be recorded. Credit awarded will not affect a student's grade-point average at Penn State.

The evaluation of the credits awarded for Advanced Placement Exams is subject to change and may be reviewed and revised periodically by Penn State faculty.

Current information about AP credit awarded by Penn State can be obtained from the Undergraduate Admissions office (<https://admissions.psu.edu/>), advanced placement opportunities (<https://admissions.psu.edu/academics/credit/ap/>), and test credit for prior learning (<https://priorlearning.psu.edu/first-year-students/>).

## The College-Level Examination Program of the College Board

A student, before or after admission to degree candidacy, may participate in the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). Penn State cooperates with the College Board in this program.

Credit may be awarded for the CLEP Examinations depending upon the score earned on the examination. A student who has earned a score equivalent to the fiftieth percentile or higher for performance on the CLEP Examination may receive credit as indicated in the schedule of credits. The schedule of credit awarded for CLEP Examinations may be revised annually upon review by the faculty.

Limitations on credits earned through the CLEP Examinations are as follows:

1. The student's academic program determines how credits earned apply to degree requirements.
2. A student who has earned credit for a particular course through CLEP examinations may elect to take the same course at Penn State (unless restricted by placement policies of the unit offering the course), but the duplicate credit cannot be used to meet any additional degree requirements. However, the grade earned in the Penn State course will count towards the student's grade point average.
3. Students must meet residency requirements as outlined in Senate Policy 83-80.

General credits may be awarded for a CLEP exam that covers material that is not the substantial equivalent of material covered in a specific University course. General credits may be used to fulfill degree requirements in any area; such use is not necessarily limited to General Education or elective requirements. General credits are applied to a student's program of study in accordance with the procedures established by the college of enrollment. Information on the use of general credits or specific course credits earned by CLEP exams in individual programs of study may be obtained from a student's academic adviser or from the office of the dean of a student's college.

Undergraduate students interested in receiving credit for CLEP exams should arrange to have their official grade reports sent to Undergraduate Admissions office directly from CLEP (<https://clep.collegeboard.org/for-colleges/clep-scores/>). If credit is awarded, a student's University record will carry notation of credit, but no grade will be recorded. Credit awarded will not affect a student's grade-point average at Penn State.

The evaluation of the credits awarded for College-Level Examination Program examinations is subject to change and may be reviewed and revised periodically by Penn State faculty.

Current information about CLEP credit awarded by Penn State can be obtained from the Undergraduate Admissions Office (<https://admissions.psu.edu/>). The schedule of credit awarded for CLEP examinations also can be obtained from College-Level Examination Placement (<https://admissions.psu.edu/academics/credit/clep/>) and test credit for prior learning (<https://priorlearning.psu.edu/earn-credit/testing/>).

## International Secondary Schooling and International Baccalaureate Program

A student who has enrolled in foreign secondary schools or in the International Baccalaureate Program and who has taken course work that is equivalent to college-level studies may receive credit for such work if they meet the following criteria:

1. **Foreign Secondary Schooling.** A person who does advanced work in a secondary school in another country may receive consideration for transfer credit when the examinations taken are based on college-level studies. Credit may be awarded for advanced work in foreign secondary schools. The number of credits awarded will reflect the introductory sequence in that subject at Penn State. The schedule of credit awarded for examinations may be revised annually upon review by the faculty.
2. **International Baccalaureate.** A person who does work based on college-level studies in an International Baccalaureate (IB) program in a secondary school may take the higher level examinations. Credit may be awarded for higher level examinations of the international baccalaureate depending upon the grades earned on the examination. Subjects examined at the higher level with an earned grade of 5 or higher will be considered for transfer credit. The number of credits awarded will reflect the introductory sequence in that subject at Penn State. The schedule of credit awarded for IB Examinations may be revised annually upon review by the faculty.

Limitations on credits earned through advanced-level foreign secondary schooling and the International Baccalaureate examinations are as follows:

1. The student's academic program determines how credits earned apply to degree requirements.
2. A student who has earned credit for a particular course through IB examinations or advanced-level foreign secondary schooling may elect to take the same course at Penn State (unless restricted by placement policies of the unit offering the course), but the duplicate credit cannot be used to meet any additional degree requirements. However, the grade earned in the Penn State course will count towards the student's grade point average.

A student interested in receiving credit for the Higher Level examinations of the International Baccalaureate program should arrange for an official grade report to be sent directly from the secondary school to the Undergraduate Admissions office. The Undergraduate Admissions office is responsible for evaluating such reports and awarding credit.

Current information about Advanced-Level exam credit or International Baccalaureate credit awarded by Penn State can be obtained from the Undergraduate Admissions Office (<https://admissions.psu.edu/>), credit awarded by A-Level exam (<https://admissions.psu.edu/academics/credit/a-levels/>), credit awarded by IB exam (<https://admissions.psu.edu/academics/credit/ib/>), and test credit for prior learning (<https://priorlearning.psu.edu/first-year-students/>).