SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUBJECT: Alternative Credit/Prior Learning Assessment

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2000; Revised March 1, 2004; November 25, 2013

In order for students to progress through the curriculum and meet program requirements expeditiously and with the least amount of redundancy, Southwest Tennessee Community College (Southwest) encourages students to demonstrate acquired learning and skills through alternative methods in order to earn academic credit. A student may earn a maximum number of alternative and or transfer credits equivalent to two-thirds of the program credit hour requirement. Credit is only awarded in areas offered within the curriculum of Southwest and must be related to the academic program in which the student is enrolled.

I. **Advanced Placement (AP) Examination**

A. Advanced Placement (AP) is a program offering college-level curriculum and examinations to high school students. Students who complete the Advanced Placement Examination with a score of 3 or higher may receive credit for required or elective courses in their programs of study at Southwest.

B. To apply for advanced placement credit, a student should have AP test scores sent to the Admissions and Records Office where a list of courses awarded for satisfactory scores on AP examinations is maintained.

C. Credit earned will be identified by a “P” on the student’s transcript and will not be calculated into the student’s GPA, but will be included in credits earned.

II. **College Level Examination Program (**CLEP)

A. Southwest grants credit for satisfactory scores on CLEP tests in accordance with American Council on Education's (ACE) recommendation for acceptable score and award of credit hours. A student who has earned an acceptable score on either the general or subject examinations may be awarded equivalent college credit.

B. The course equivalencies, number of semester credit hours to be awarded, and the minimum scores required for each subject and general CLEP examinations will be maintained in the Admissions and Records office. Southwest will transfer CLEP credit awarded from other institutions if the credit satisfies the minimum standards.

C. Credit earned will be identified by a “P” on the student’s transcript and will not be calculated into the student’s GPA but will be included in credits earned.

III. Military Service

A. The American Council on Education collaborates with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) to review military training and experiences and recommend appropriate college credit for members of the Armed Forces.

1. ACE’s credit recommendations appear in the Military Guide and on military transcript which is evaluated by the department chair or designee.

2. Credit is only awarded in areas offered within the curriculum of Southwest and must be related to the academic program in which the student is enrolled.

B. United States Air Force Instruction (USAFI)/Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)

1. Southwest grants credit for any USAFI/DANTES Subject Standardized Test (eDSST and eCLEP) in accordance with American Council on Education's (ACE) recommendation for acceptable score and award of credit hours. A student who has earned an acceptable score may be awarded college credit.

2. Credit is only awarded in areas offered within the curriculum of Southwest and must be related to the academic program in which the student is enrolled.

C. Credit earned will be identified by a “P” on the student’s transcript and will not be calculated into the student’s GPA but will be included in credits earned.

IV. Credit by Examination

Each academic department will determine which courses, if any, are appropriate for credit by examination. Exams will be given at the discretion of the department and/or instructor.

A. Departmental Exam

1. A student who has registered for a course and believes that he/she has appropriate knowledge and/or skill to successfully demonstrate competence may request that the instructor allow the option of testing out of the course.

2. If the course is appropriate for credit by examination, instructor will provide an examination which is equivalent in scope and content to the final examination for the course. Based on the exam, the student will receive a letter grade.

3. If the student is not satisfied with the grade or fails the exam, he/she may remain and complete the course.

B. Challenge Exam

1. Prior to enrolling in a course, an admitted student who is qualified to accelerate his/her studies may request a challenge examination which is equivalent in scope and content to the final examination for the selected subject.

2. The student will contact the appropriate department to determine if the challenge exam is available for that particular course.
3. The student will pay the required fee which is not refundable if a student fails to obtain credit. Financial aid and other forms of tuition waivers are not available to cover the cost of the exam.

4. The student will schedule the examination with the appropriate department.

5. If the student satisfactorily passes the exam with a C or better, the credit earned will be identified by a "P" on the student's transcript and will not be calculated into the student's GPA but will be included in credits earned.

6. An unsuccessful attempt will not be recorded on the student's transcripts. Students who fail the exam must take the course.

7. The challenge exam is not an option for students who desire to earn credit for courses previously failed or to improve grades for courses previously completed.

V. Experiential Learning

A. A student may receive credit for college-level learning that has taken place on the job or in other life situations unless a specific program-accrediting agency does not allow portfolio or experiential credit.

B. A student applying for experiential credit must have completed any required learning support courses and be registered during the semester in which he/she is applying for credit.

C. In consultation with the appropriate academic department, a portfolio for experiential credit must be submitted at least two semesters prior to graduation and the completed portfolio must be submitted at least one semester prior to applying for graduation.

D. The student will be required to document the accomplished learning in a portfolio as it relates to the learning outcomes of the college course for which the student is seeking experiential credit.

E. The student will submit the portfolio to the department chair who will have an appropriate faculty member review the portfolio and make a recommendation to approve/disapprove the portfolio for the requested credit.

F. If approved, the chair will forward the recommendation to the Dean for final approval. If experiential credit is approved, the Dean will notify the Admissions and Records Office.

G. Students who have failed courses cannot challenge them by portfolios nor can a course already taken be replaced with experiential credit.

VI. Credit/Advanced Placement for Licensure/Certification

A. Students who have completed training, passed a national or state registry examination for licensure, certification or equivalent, and hold a current license or certification may be eligible to earn credit or advanced placement by providing a copy of the current/active licensure, certification or its equivalent (licenses or certifications that have expired will not be considered).

B. The dean of the division or designee that supervises the program of study will review the student's eligibility and will determine the course credit to be awarded.

Source: Provost/Exe VP for Academic Affairs: 7-1-00; Rev. 3-1-04; 11-25-13