

**SOUTHWEST TENNESSEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE****SUBJECT: Credit for Prior Learning and US Military Experience****(Merged Alternative Credit/Prior Learning Assessment & Credit for Military Experience)****EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2000; Revised February 9, 2023****Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth procedures for the recognition of equivalent extra-institutional learning processes that include the awarding of credit or advanced placement, including credit for U.S. Military Experience for Southwest Tennessee Community College (“Southwest” or “the College”) students.

**Policy**

The maximum number of alternative or transfer credits that can be earned is equivalent to 75% of the program credit hour requirement. Credit is only awarded in areas offered within the College’s curriculum.

**I. Clock Hours**

Clock hour equivalencies are determined by reviewing details about students’ prior learning experiences and comparing them to Southwest’s curriculum. Documentation of a student’s prior learning and work experiences will be reviewed by faculty subject matter experts to determine applicability and rigor. If the reviewers and approvers find that prior learning can be articulated, it will be converted into semester credits. The number of semester credits will be based on the specific equivalency decisions made by faculty and department chairs.

**II. Extra-Institutional or Life-long Learning**

- A. The process for the awarding of credits through “Extra-Institutional or Life-long Learning” shall be in compliance with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools’ (“SACSCOC”) Principles of Accreditation on Programs (reference 3.4), the Commission’s Position Statement on the “Transfer of Academic Credit,” and its policy on “The Transfer or Transcribing of Academic Credit.”

\* Spring of 2023, two policies were combined to create this policy. The two policies were: Credit for U.S. Military Service Experience, 2:03:00:00/9 and Alternate Credit/Prior Learning Assessment, 2:00:00:00/16. Policy number 2:00:00:00/16 was retained for the combined policy.

- B. Southwest's process for awarding credits through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) by shall follow the *Recommended Standards in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy and Practice of Tennessee Public Colleges and Universities* (August 7, 2012).
1. These Standards ensure that Southwest will utilize best practices and provide quality services to students.
  2. The Standards ensure transferability of PLA credit, include identification of types of PLA credits available, instruct campuses on the transcription of PLA credit, and establish common standards for portfolio review.
- C. When awarding credit under this provision, Southwest will use a recognized guide or procedure for awarding the credit for extra-institutional or life-long learning. The recognized guides or procedures may include, but are not limited to:
1. American Council on Education (ACE) National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs.
  2. Guide to Credit by Examination.
  3. College Board Advanced Placement Program.
  4. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
  5. Defense Subject Standardized Test (DSST) formerly DAN TES.
  6. Credit by Departmental Examination.
  7. Subject matter experts who are not members of the Southwest faculty but who evaluate extra-institutional learning at the College's request.
  8. Individual portfolios using the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) or other standardized guidelines authorized, in advance, by permission of Southwest.
- D. When awarding credit to students who are veterans or United States (US) military service members, the institution will reference the Joint Services Transcript (JST), DD-214 and/or transcripts from the Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS), Community College of Air Force (CCAF), Coast Guard Institute (CGI), United States Armed Forces Instruction (USAFI), and Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES). The institution Southwest will use the American Council of Education (ACE) for awarding credit for US military experience, educations, and/or training obtained during US military experience. The recognized procedures include:
1. If US military experience, education, and/or training are equivalent to a course that fulfills a general education or degree program requirement, the course credit will count towards graduation. Otherwise, appropriate course credit will be granted for elective credit.
  2. Should credit not be captured through ACE recommendations, Southwest will offer veterans and service members an opportunity for prior learning assessment via another recognized mechanism (refer to Section C, above).

3. The College will provide veteran and US military service members relevant information on awarding college credit for US military education, experience, and/or training.
  4. Southwest will maintain a set of institutional policies on the awarding of academic credit for US military experience within their undergraduate catalog. The policies will include a description of the procedure for removing excessive hours applied to transcripts, which may affect student eligibility for financial aid.
- E. When utilizing published guides for extra-institutional learning, the information provided should include:
1. course title;
  2. location of all sites where the course is offered;
  3. length in hours, days, or weeks;
  4. period during which the credit recommendation applies;
  5. purpose for which the credit was designed;
  6. learning outcomes;
  7. teaching methods, materials, and major subject areas covered; and
  8. college credit recommendations offered by categories (by level of degrees) and expressed in semester hours and subject area(s) in which credit is applicable.

### **III. 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.

#### **IV. 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.
- B. A student who has earned an acceptable score on either the general or subject examinations may be awarded equivalent college credit.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

#### **V. United States Military Service**

Southwest is designated by the U. S. Department of Defense (DOD) as a Serviceman's Opportunity College, and as such, grants academic credit to US military personnel through nontraditional modes of learning. The College uses recognized guides such as the American Council on Education Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces or the USAFI/Dantes Subject Standardization Test to evaluate and award credit for these non-traditional learning experiences.

Credit may be granted for any US military service school or for any USAFI/Dantes Subject Standardized Test that has been satisfactorily completed and determined to have an equivalent at Southwest, appropriately related to a student's academic program of study. Test results may be submitted to the Admissions, Records and Recruitment office for evaluation and possible application to the student's program of study. Students desiring to take the above-mentioned tests should contact the Navy College Program at Millington.

- A. The American Council on Education collaborates with the DOD to review US 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 US 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.

## **VI. 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.

## **VII. 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 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.

