



Memorandum to Presidents

Vol. 25 No. 3

Date: October 6, 2025

To: Presidents, State-operated Campuses
Presidents, Community Colleges
Statutory College Contacts

From: Ram Ramasubramanian, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost

Subject: Guidance: Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation

Copy: President, University Faculty Senate; President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges; President, Student Assembly; Chief Academic Officers; Registrars; Institutional Research; and Information Technology at All Campuses

This memorandum provides additional guidance on the [State University of New York \(SUNY\) Board of Trustees' Resolution 2023-08 Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation Policy](#). The original guidance was distributed on March 11, 2024 in [Memorandum to Presidents \(MTP\) Vol. 24, No. 1 – Policy and Guidance: Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation](#). The 2023 policy and subsequent 2024 guidance remain applicable. The guidance provided herein is an addendum to the 2024 MTP to reflect the evolving status of credit for prior learning across the State University of New York. For questions about this memorandum, please contact the Office of the Provost at provost@suny.edu.

This guidance, along with additional information and resources, is also available on the SUNY Academic Affairs website (<https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/aace/>)

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT BY EVALUATION**

According to Board of Trustees’ Resolution 2023-08 *State University of New York Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation Policy*, all campuses are expected to maximize opportunities for students to receive credit for prior learning and to view credit for prior learning as a strategy for recruitment of new students. The March 2024 guidance required that by December 31, 2024, campuses would “review and update existing campus-level policies and procedures or develop new campus-level policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, and identify an action plan for implementation that will maximize opportunities for students in order to further access, enrollment, retention, completion, economic mobility, and other measures of student success, which are consistent with SUNY’s policy for Award of Academic Credit by Academic Evaluation.”

I. Addendum to Original Guidance

1. Updated Reporting for 2025

By December 31, 2025, each campus is required to submit a status report on the plan previously submitted in 2024, to support and monitor ongoing progress in achieving the goal of maximizing opportunities for students. This report will include the following:

- a. An update on the status of campus-level policies and procedures concerning the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation.
- b. Description of progress toward previously stated campus goals for expanding credit for prior learning, including 1) a brief summary of specific steps taken over the last year in each of the following areas: marketing, faculty engagement in mapping of credentials/certifications/licenses/military training to the campus’s academic coursework, and student outreach, and 2) a brief analysis exploring how awarded credits have increased or decreased, by category.
- c. Updated campus plans for the 2025–2026 academic year and beyond. Updated plans should include, but are not limited to, expanded recognition of military education and training, professional and industry certifications and licenses, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate credit awards, and other relevant credentials.

2. Annual Reporting

Each year, campuses will report an inventory of credit for prior learning awarded by the campus throughout the prior academic year. System Administration will use the updated data to support the System-wide inventory of recognized credit for prior learning posted on the SUNY website. Each year, System Administration will convey to campuses the mechanism for reporting. The 2024-2025 report is due on December 31, 2025; the format will be consistent with the report for 2023-2024 and will be available at <https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/aace/>.

3. ACE Military Guide Institutional Account

To advance the evaluation and award of credit for military training and education, by December 31, 2025, all campuses are expected to create an American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide Institutional Account that is configured to publicly share all awards and equivalencies on the ACE platform. Campuses must consider ACE credit recommendations when assessing prior learning for military training and occupations. Campuses are expected to map their ACE credit recommendations for military training and experiences to their institutional course catalog and record any awards and established equivalencies in the ACE Military Guide portal.

4. Presidential Attestation

Each campus report will also include a presidential attestation of the following:

- a. Fees have been established and approved² according to [SUNY's policies, 2023-8 - Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation](#) and [SUNY Policy 7804 - Fees, Rentals, and Other Charges](#).
- b. New or revised campus policy adheres to the principles of the [SUNY policy 2012-089 on Seamless Transfer Requirements](#), as described in [Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 13, No. 3](#).
- c. The campus has created an ACE Military Guide Institutional Account that is set up to publicly share all awards and equivalencies and will complete the work of mapping the ACE credit recommendations for military training and experiences to the campus course catalog no later than June 30, 2026.

II. Original Guidance Issued in March 2024

Campus Expectations

It is the policy of the State University of New York that all campuses are expected to maximize opportunities for students to receive credit for prior learning. As described in SUNY Board of Trustees policy, shared governance and faculty oversight are vital to the success of prior learning assessment implementation. Moreover, campuses are encouraged to view credit for prior learning as a potential strategy for recruitment of new students (including conversion of non-credit workforce development enrollees to for-credit degree programs) and enrollment growth. A robust approach to credit for prior learning incorporates:

1. military education and training;
2. industry certifications, apprenticeships (including in partnership with labor unions), and related employer-recognized credentials that lead to upward mobility;
3. standardized published exams including but not limited to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations; and
4. portfolio review and challenge exams.

To achieve these objectives, each campus is expected to review and update existing campus-level policies and procedures or develop new campus-level policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, and identify an action plan for implementation that will maximize opportunities for students in order to further access, enrollment, retention, completion, economic mobility, and other measures of student success, which are consistent with SUNY's policy for Award of Academic Credit by Academic Evaluation (the policy is included within this document, immediately following the guidance).

1. When reviewing/updating or developing campus-level policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, campuses should review associated policies and procedures to ensure there are no unnecessary barriers for student opportunities for award of credit. Measures that reduce barriers for students may include but are not limited to clear and accessible policies and procedures, reasonable fee structures with provisions for waivers whenever applicable, inclusion of Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation in recruitment, admissions, and advising processes, and effective communication and marketing of opportunities.
2. Campus policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation should be established so that individual faculty approval is not required for cases that meet established criteria and guidelines approved through shared governance. However, the policies and procedures should also include clear ways that faculty are included in the evaluation of cases and

materials that fall outside of existing guidelines. Campuses could consider, for example, establishing local policies and procedures that allow for faculty representation when faculty are not under obligation.

3. Acknowledging that operational costs may be associated with the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, each campus will propose Assessment Fees to be forwarded to the Office of Finance and Business for approval^[1]. Assessment Fees are to reflect the costs incurred and be based on the services performed. When developing Assessment Fees, campus should be cognizant that there are types of the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation that do not incur new costs or require the performance of more than nominal service; therefore, Assessment Fees are not warranted in all instances. For example, the results of published examinations (e.g., Advanced Placement, CLEP, International Baccalaureate) shall be treated in the same administrative manner as transfer credit and campuses will charge no additional fees to students for the awarding of credit based on performance on such examinations. Similarly, credits evaluated administratively through nationally recognized credit-equivalency sources (e.g., ACE Military Guide, ACE National Guide, and National College Credit Recommendation Services) shall be treated in the same administrative manner as transfer credit and campuses will charge no additional fees to students for the awarding of credit based on demonstrated prior learning for which credit equivalency has previously been established through nationally recognized credit-equivalency sources that have been approved through the campus policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation. Additionally, in cases where a student is awarded credit based on demonstrated prior learning through completion of non-credit courses within the campus at which they are awarded credit (i.e., non-credit to credit pathways), the campus should charge no additional fees to students for the award of such credit.
4. The principles of the [SUNY policy \(#2012-089\)](#) on Seamless Transfer Requirements, as described in Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 13, No. 3, serve as the framework for the transfer of credits earned through credit by evaluation. Receiving campuses may not reject credit solely because it was obtained through credit by evaluation. However, they may set limitations in line with program requirements that apply equally to both native and transfer students. Transcript entries for credit awarded shall clearly indicate credit was awarded via evaluation of prior learning. Campuses must adhere to Seamless Transfer requirements by documenting their criteria for course equivalency determinations. This documentation should also include a comprehensive list of acceptable forms of verification, such as transcripts and official score reports. In cases where the sending campus awards credit for content areas not available at the receiving campus, the articulation must undergo review and approval by a relevant academic committee or a designated representative appointed by the receiving campus. This process should align with the campus governance procedures.
5. Campus implementation action plans are expected to build on existing efforts and allow for the award of credit according to criteria and guidelines approved by the faculty. Each implementation action plan must: 1) identify the highest priority areas for campus expansion of credit for prior learning (including but not limited to military education and training; professional and industry certifications and licenses or other credentials); 2) include a timeline for scaling credit for prior learning opportunities; and 3) describe how the campus will market credit for prior learning

^[1] Approval of proposed Assessment Fees lies with the Chief Financial Officer of the State University of New York System. Proposed Assessment Fees must adhere to SUNY's policies, [2023-8 - Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation](#) and [7804 - Fees, Rentals, and Other Charges](#), and will be reviewed based on the guidelines and timelines provided therein.

opportunities as part of a strategy for enrollment growth, including in the highest priority areas and for enrollees in non-credit workforce development and non-credit microcredential programs who already positively connected to the campus.

6. Campus implementation action plans must include a strategy for data tracking that will enable annual campus reporting to System Administration through regular Institutional Research mechanisms, which will include baseline data and track growth of the award of credit on campus. SUNY System Administration is currently developing new processes, tools, and collection methods to capture campus level data for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation within the broader context of Seamless Transfer. Additional specific procedural guidance will be shared as development progresses. Data tracking will employ data standards established by SUNY System Administration's Office of the Provost and will be effective for the 2024-25 academic year (data definitions are appended to this MTP).
7. Campus implementation action plans must include a strategy for a coordinated effort across applicable campus units including but not limited to enrollment management, financial aid, communications/marketing, veterans/military coordinators, faculty, workforce development leads, and academic advising units, and with regional employer and local government partners, and must describe how professional development will be provided.
8. Campus policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation must be documented and ensure academic integrity through adherence to campus shared governance protocol, New York State Education Department regulation^[1] and guidance^[2], the expectations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education^[3], and programmatic accreditors as applicable. Additionally, campus policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation are expected to incorporate established assessment practices to evaluate campus standards for assessing prior learning. As part of this, campuses are expected to evaluate outcomes for students who have been awarded credit to inform future adjustments to campus policies and procedures.
9. Periodic reports of campus metrics of the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation will be regularly assessed and provided to the public and to the SUNY Board of Trustees.
10. Campus policies and implementation action plans must be submitted to the System Administration Office of the Provost by December 31, 2024. The submission must include an inventory of recognized credit for prior learning, which shall be updated annually, and which

^[1] Credit toward an undergraduate degree shall be earned only for college level work. Credit toward a graduate degree shall be earned only through work designed expressly for graduate students. The institution shall assure that credit is granted only to students who have achieved the stated objectives of each credit-bearing learning activity. As of the date of this MTP, applicable NYSED regulation is accessible at [https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/Ieca63dd8c22111dd97adcd755bda2840?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/Ieca63dd8c22111dd97adcd755bda2840?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)).

^[2] Credit is only granted for prior learning that is demonstrated to be equivalent to that in the institution's registered curricula and component courses. As of the date of this MTP, applicable NYSED guidance is accessible at <https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/departments-expectations-admissions-academic-support-services-credit>.

^[3] As of the date of this MTP, applicable MSCHE policy is accessible at <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/iy7dxzso6x0pgk36yldowhzea2bk1481.pdf>; guidance is accessible at <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/n8vxjzsnegv0rzh0gfckdrmg6ut38lh.pdf>; and, procedures are accessible at <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/jawn9nkxgi5fvj66cathv9ualww94nv8.pdf>.

System Administration will use to create a System-wide inventory of recognized credit for prior learning and post such inventory on the SUNY website.

System Administration Support

SUNY System Administration will provide support to campuses to realize the Board of Trustees' goal of becoming a leader in Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation. The Provost or designee will:

1. Serve as a resource for campuses as they review/update or develop campus-level policies and procedures and identify implementation plans to expand the award of credit.
2. Work with campuses to ensure that faculty and staff have access to the training necessary to support effective implementation of the award of credit that goes beyond performance on standardized published exams and that prioritizes opportunities for collaboration and consistency.
3. Provide campuses with a working set of data definitions and standards that will enable implementation of data collection, reporting, assessment, and use of data to inform future decisions.
4. Publish and regularly update an inventory of all recognized credit for prior learning at each campus.
5. Establish a Community of Practice (CoP) across SUNY campuses including but not limited to faculty, chief academic officers, registrars, admissions, academic advisors, communications, military/veterans coordinators, and information technology.
6. Facilitate a campus advisory group to System Administration's Office of the Provost.
7. Coordinate the various workstreams involved in Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation at System Administration, including but not limited to a technology platform, academic evaluation, training, communications, and assessment.

The System Administration Provost shall be responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy, including distributing additional guidance and resource materials to campuses, assessing progress, and reporting back to the SUNY Board of Trustees, and shall provide an annual updated data brief on Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation.

SUNY DEFINITIONS FOR DATA TRACKING OF CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING (CPL)
(adapted from PLA Data Tracking, Klein-Collins, 2016)

| Prior Learning Category | Source/Method | Definition |
|--|----------------------|--|
| AP | | College credit awarded based on scores earned on the Advanced Placement Program. |
| CLEP | | College credit awarded based on scores earned on the College Level Exam Program (CLEP). |
| DSST | | College credit awarded based on scores earned on the DSST Examination Program or its predecessor, the DANTES Examination Program. |
| UExcel | | College credit awarded based on scores earned on Excelsior College Examination or UExcel exams, and their predecessors, the Regents College Examination, and the ACT Proficiency Exam Program. |
| International Baccalaureate Exam (IB) | | College credit obtained under International Baccalaureate Credit. |
| Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP) | | College credit awarded based on scores earned on the Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP). |
| Additional methods added as needed | | Possible options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Cambridge International Exam • ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview • NYU Foreign Language Proficiency Exam • Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination Program • Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) (British ASLevel and A-Level) |

SUNY DEFINITIONS FOR DATA TRACKING OF CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING (CPL)
(adapted from PLA Data Tracking, Klein-Collins, 2016)

| Prior Learning Category | Source/Method | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Challenge Exam | | College credit awarded based on challenge exam (or departmental exam), defined as an institutional exam designed to assess learning outcomes related to a specific course and which is developed by faculty who teach the course. (Existing final exams or comprehensive exams may provide the basis for developing a challenge exam but are not appropriate for use as challenge exams without evaluation and revision to ensure that they accurately and fairly assess all course learning outcomes.) |
| Portfolio Assessment | Portfolio type (if needed) | College credit awarded based on a student portfolio (based on an interview, a performance assessment, a product assessment and/or a written narrative, along with related documentation) which has been evaluated by the institution or an external portfolio evaluation service for college level credit. |
| Skill Simulation or Demonstration | Performance/demonstration type (if needed) | College credit awarded based on a student's performance or demonstration of a specific skill or competency. |
| Interview-based Assessment | Interview type (if needed) | College credit awarded based upon evaluation of responses given during a structured interview on the subject matter. |
| NCCRS Assessed Credit Workplace and Volunteer Training | Organization/Evaluated Learning Experience | College credit awarded based on recommendations by the NCCRS -Workplace and Volunteer Training as well as on recommendations for all other credits that have been recommended by NCCRS. |
| ACE Military Training & Occupations | Military training or occupation | College credit awarded based on recommendations by ACE-Military Credit. Includes all military training, military occupations and experiences evaluated by ACE for college credit utilizing the ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces . |

SUNY DEFINITIONS FOR DATA TRACKING OF CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING (CPL)
(adapted from PLA Data Tracking, Klein-Collins, 2016)

| Prior Learning Category | Source/Method | Definition |
|---|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">ACE Non-military - Education, Workplace and Training</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Organization/Evaluated Learning Experience</p> | <p>College credit awarded based on recommendations by ACE-Education, Workplace and Training. Includes non-accredited general education, corporate, workplace and (non-military) training evaluated by ACE for college credit. The resource for these credit recommendations is the ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Other Credit for Locally Assessed Training (Internally Assessed, Not by External Party)</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Organization/Evaluated Learning Experience</p> | <p>College credit based on local evaluations of training programs. Includes credit for local business, nonprofit, volunteer, government, or other such training that has been evaluated by institutional faculty for college level credit, but which is not as comprehensive as an apprenticeship, certification, or licensure program.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Technical or Professional Certification or Badges</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Platform/Badge or certification</p> | <p>College credit awarded based on review of technical or professional certifications or badges.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Technical or Professional Apprenticeship</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Apprenticeship Program</p> | <p>College credit awarded based on review of apprenticeship programs. Includes credit for combination of comprehensive on-the-job training and related instruction of theoretical and practical aspects for highly skilled occupations.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Technical or Professional Licensure</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Licensure program/licensing body</p> | <p>College credit awarded based on review of technical or professional licensure programs.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Other</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Additional Methods Added as Needed</p> | <p>Other nontraditional course credit for the assessment of prior learning that does not fit within other categories.</p> |



MEMORANDUM

February 7, 2023

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Dr. John B. King, Jr., Chancellor

**SUBJECT: State University of New York Award of Academic Credit by
Evaluation Policy**

Action Requested

The proposed resolution regulates the award of academic credit by evaluation within the State University of New York, superseding existing policy and guidance. This revised policy assists campuses in amending or developing local policy and practice.

Resolution

I recommend that the Board of Trustees adopt the following resolution:

Whereas the State University of New York was an early adopter of the concept that learning outside of the traditional classroom could be evaluated for the award of academic credit; and

Whereas SUNY's 1976 policy, Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, communicated via Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 76, No. 11, focused largely on the award of credit by examination and addressed related operational and administrative issues including transfer and fees; and

Whereas since the implementation of SUNY's 1976 policy, SUNY campuses have, to varying degrees, instituted local award of academic credit policies to address standardized exams, faculty developed exams, and to a lesser extent other types of evaluation; and

Whereas over time, this evaluation process has become a frequent practice among public and private institutions of higher education nationally, more commonly known as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) or Credit for Prior Learning (CPL); and the methods of evaluation commonly recognized have grown to include the following general categories: nationally recognized or faculty developed examinations; military education, training and service as recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE) via the enhanced Military Guide and via the Joint Military Services Transcript and with appropriate student advising; faculty, national organization or content expert review; and portfolio review; and

Whereas research by leading organizations such as CAEL (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) and WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education), have consistently shown the benefits of awarding credit by evaluation to include improved persistence, higher rates of completion, shorter time-to-degree, and cost savings, and further, that such benefits, when there is a high level of awareness of the program, are shown across individuals of all races and income levels; and

Whereas Recommendation A3. of SUNY's 2021 SUNY Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan calls for a robust policy to expand college credit for life and work experience; and

Whereas ongoing efforts to update SUNY's award of credit by evaluation policy concluding most recently with a work-group convened by the Office of the Provost to review the latest recommendations in collaboration with the respective Presidents of the University Faculty Senate and Faculty Council of Community College, representatives of the SUNY Registrars, SUNY Veterans Coordinators, and others, including feedback from two System-wide calls for comment which served to strengthen the proposed policy revision; and

Whereas the proposed policy revision further expands the types of verifiable college-level learning that may be evaluated in the general categories identified above, including, but not limited to: military education, training and experience, performance on standardized published exams, professional and industry certifications and

licenses or other credentials, non-credit and continuing education study, on-the-job training/education and work experience (portfolio review); and

Whereas the proposed policy revision adds flexibility around fee structure with appropriate approvals, emphasizes the importance of marketing and communication efforts to raise awareness of the availability of such evaluation, continues to recognize faculty oversight as a core tenet, and supports an implementation plan that will include training and education; and

Whereas the SUNY Trustees support increased use of the award of academic credit by evaluation in support of SUNY's commitments to access and student success; now, therefore be it

Resolved that the Chancellor or designee be, and hereby is, directed to implement the revised policy on Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation as detailed in Attachment A and provide related guidance; and, be it further

Resolved that Provost or designee will work with campuses to ensure that faculty and staff have the training necessary to support effective implementation of the award of academic credit by evaluation that go beyond performance on standardized published exams and that prioritize opportunities for collaboration and consistency; and, be it further

Resolved that this policy on the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation will be regularly assessed and that periodic reports of such activity are provided to the SUNY Trustees; and be it further.

Resolved that campuses are strongly encouraged to maximize opportunities for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation under this policy in order to further completion, economic mobility, and other measures of student success, and SUNY will promote outreach, communication, and data collection and transparency aligned to achieving this objective.

Background

SUNY first issued the *Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation* policy in 1976, one of the first university systems in the country to formally adopt this type of assessment. This proposed policy revision supersedes the original policy and expands the types of verifiable college-level learning to be recognized, including, but not limited to: performance on standardized published exams; military education and training; professional and industry certifications and licenses or other credentials; non-credit and continuing education study; on-the-job training/education; and work experience.

This policy revision is informed by research demonstrating that the award of credit by evaluation can increase access to, and success in, higher education by decreasing time to degree completion that results in cost savings. Credit received for prior learning can also help faculty advisors properly place students in their programs of study and can contribute to institutional goals for student retention and graduation success if learners are aware of its availability and avail themselves of the opportunity. Many students, particularly those who self-identify as low income or under-represented minority, have reported not being aware of opportunities to have their prior learning assessed or of the related benefits such a review can provide; this revision addresses related outreach and communication.





Summary

This policy broadly regulates within the State University of New York (SUNY) the award of academic credit by evaluation of demonstrable learning that takes place outside of courses that are part of registered credit-bearing academic programs offered by institutions of higher education. As of this writing, this work is also referred to as 'prior learning assessment or PLA,' 'credit for prior learning or CPL,' or 'learning recognition.' It is important to note that though 'prior learning' is a widely used term, the award of academic credit by evaluation can be applied to learning concurrent to one's program of study.

Background and History

SUNY initially issued the *Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation* policy in 1976, one of the first university systems in the country to formally adopt this type of assessment. This policy revision supersedes the original and expands the types of verifiable college-level learning to be recognized, including, but not limited to: performance on standardized published exams; military education and training; professional and industry certifications and licenses or other credentials; non-credit and continuing education study; on-the-job training/education; and work experience. This policy revision is informed by research demonstrating that the award of credit by evaluation can increase access to, and success in, higher education by decreasing time to degree completion that results in cost savings. Credit received for prior learning can also help faculty advisors properly place students in their programs of study and can contribute to institutional goals for student retention and graduation success if learners are aware of its availability and avail themselves of the opportunity. Many students, particularly those who self-identify as low income or under-represented minority, have reported not being aware of opportunities to have their prior learning assessed or of the related benefits such a review can provide; this revision addresses related outreach and communication.¹

Policy

I. Core Tenets

- A. The awarding of credit by evaluation is based on the same criteria used to evaluate credit awarded in courses in registered degree and certificate programs:
 1. Shared Governance: Campus-level policies and procedures developed to implement this policy must meet all applicable campus administrative and shared governance procedures for consultation and must undergo a campus governance process equivalent to that for any local academic policy.
 2. Faculty Oversight: The evaluation of student learning for the award of academic credit must be conducted by faculty or approved by faculty in the case of evaluation by a subject matter expert or established third-party validation.

¹ 2018-2020 studies and reports funded by the Lumina Foundation and the Strada Network and prepared by The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Retrieved online at: <https://www.wiche.edu/key-initiatives/recognition-of-learning/>

3. Accreditation and Regulation: This policy reflects any related standards by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and the New York State Department of Education (NYSED) as of its writing. Campus policies must reflect the same, as well as related standards of programmatic-level accrediting bodies, and be updated accordingly should standards be revised.²
 4. Award Level: The evaluation of student learning for the award of academic credit can be applied to both undergraduate and graduate programs as well as microcredentials.
 5. Transparency and Communication: Campus policies and procedures, and the availability generally, of award of academic credit by evaluation must be clearly delineated and disseminated.
 6. Accountability: Campus policies and procedures related to the award of academic credit fall under the purview of the President, Chief Academic Officer, or their designee as described below.
- B. Campus Responsibility: Award of academic credit by evaluation is strongly encouraged and is consistent with SUNY's commitment to access and student success. Per I.A.1. above, campuses are responsible to develop local policies and procedures. A given campus may allow the award of credit hours up to the limit specified by the residency requirement as described later in this document.

II. Credit by Evaluation in Practice

Personnel involved in the assessment of prior learning must be adequately trained in assessment procedures and pursue continuing professional development for the functions they perform, e.g., portfolio assessment, use of the ACE Military Guide, assessment of industry certifications, etc.

Campuses are strongly encouraged to identify and assess prior learning through a variety of methods to determine if academic credit could be awarded. Common methods include, but are not limited to:

A. Standardized Published Examinations

The award of credit for published examination applies to the following published examinations (the following list is current as of the date of adoption of this policy; updates to this official list will be maintained by the SUNY System Provost's Office):

1. Advanced Placement (AP);
2. International Baccalaureate (IB);
3. Advanced International Certificate of Education Program (AICE);

² Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) Policy on Transfer Credit, Prior Learning, and Articulation. Retrieved online at: <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/iy7dxzso6x0pgk36yldowhzea2bkl48l.pdf>; Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Standards for Accreditation and Requirements for Affiliation, Standard IV.2. Retrieved online at: <https://www.msche.org/standards/>; New York State Education Department Program Registration and Guidance. Retrieved online at: <http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/department-expectations-admissions-academic-support-services-credit>.

4. A-Levels (Advanced Level Qualifications);
5. DSST exams - Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support, Defense Subjects (DANTES) Standardized Tests (DSST);
6. College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) Subject Examinations;
7. American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency assessments; and
8. UExcel® Credit by Exam (Excelsior College).

B. Military Education and Training

Credit for military training and education as recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE) via the enhanced *Military Guide* and via the Joint Military Services Transcript should be accepted and applied according to student need and as appropriate to local requirements in the same way as other transfer credits.

Credit from accredited military-affiliated institutions must be accepted and applied accordingly when they satisfy local program degree requirements, in the same way as other transfer credits.³

C. Other Forms of Learning

For credits earned through other experiences, such as professional and industry certifications and licenses or other credentials, non-credit and continuing education study, non-credit microcredentials,⁴ on-the-job training/education and work experience, the methods of evaluation shall be conducted or approved by faculty and may include third-party review by appropriately qualified reviewers:

1. Faculty/department developed challenge exams;
2. Assessments by a nationally recognized external body such as the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS); and/or
3. Portfolio review.

III. Transfer

The goal of the [SUNY policy \(#2012-089\)](#) on Seamless Transfer Requirements, as described in Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 13, No. 3, is to enable students to complete their intended program of study on time, without unnecessary cost and/or duplication of effort. The principles of this policy serve as the framework for the transfer of credits earned through credit by evaluation.

- A. Save for programmatic restrictions, as referenced herein in III.B. and IV., credit earned

³ The Community College of the Air Force, US Naval Academy, US Coast Guard Academy, US Air Force Academy, and US Military Academy are institutionally accredited higher education institutions. Credit from related transcripts should be regarded according to transfer policies, not by *Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation*.

⁴ Credit-bearing microcredentials should be reviewed by the receiving campus according to transfer policies, not by award of Academic Credit by Evaluation.

through credit by evaluation shall be guaranteed to transfer between SUNY campuses.

- B. Receiving campuses cannot deny credit solely because it was earned through credit by evaluation but may establish restrictions consistent with programmatic requirements that treat native and transfer students the same.
- C. Transcript entries for credit awarded shall clearly indicate credit was awarded via evaluation of prior learning.
- D. Campuses shall document their standards for course equivalency determinations in accord with the Seamless Transfer requirements and include a list of acceptable forms of verification (e.g., transcripts, official score reports).
- E. Where credit is awarded originally by the sending campus in content areas not offered by the receiving campus, the articulation must be reviewed and approved by an appropriate academic committee or designee assigned by the receiving campus, consistent with campus governance processes.

IV. Application of Awarded Credits

Academic credits awarded by evaluation may apply to multiple established requirements, including courses in the major, SUNY General Education, Transfer Path courses, approved applied learning experiences, and credit-bearing microcredentials developed in accordance with SUNY Trustee policy. All disciplines may accept academic credit awarded through evaluation. Any restrictions otherwise compliant with SUNY policies will be determined at the campus level and transparently communicated.

V. Residency Requirement

Individual campuses may allow as many credits awarded to apply toward degree requirements as deemed appropriate and consistent with their local residency requirements. Consistent with seamless transfer requirements, campuses are encouraged to exercise flexibility to support student success and timely degree completion.

VI. Student Participation

All students will be allowed to apply for the use of credits earned by evaluation, as appropriate to the academic program.

Although an individual may request evaluation of their verifiable, college-level learning at any time, the awarding of academic credit should be considered early enough to ensure maximizing its benefits toward a desired degree.

VII. Campus Coordination

The Chief Academic Officer is responsible for the academic programs of the institution, including effective campus policies and practices to assure alignment with SUNY Board of Trustees' policies including the award of credit by evaluation. This individual or designee shall:

- A. Communicate clearly and accurately the campus practices concerning options, policies,

and procedures (including appeal) to students, faculty, and staff (see item VIII below for additional detail);

- B. Ensure processes and evaluation activities are expeditious and conducted with integrity to include consideration for the student's best interest and compliance with state and federal regulations.
- C. Provide professional development for faculty and professional staff who would perform the evaluation and other campus stakeholder groups responsible for implementing this and related policies and procedures (e.g., admissions, enrollment management, communications, continuing education, registrar, advisors, business office);
- D. Serve as an information channel between the campus and other units and agencies (e.g., System Administration, ACE); and
- E. Maintain accurate records of credit evaluation activities, including documentation on the student transcript.

Campuses must monitor, review, evaluate, and revise as needed their award of academic credit by evaluation policies and procedures.

VIII. Communication

The President, Chief Academic Officer or, for some areas, a designee will assure that campus-level policies and procedures related to the implementation of this policy are fully disclosed and prominently available to prospective and enrolled students, as well as faculty and staff. The award of academic credit as described herein should be regarded as an essential tool for promoting and supporting access to higher education. Information about award of credit of prior learning should be provided in relevant publications and media such as:

- A. Campus catalogs;
- B. Webpages (transfer students, prospective students, admissions, workforce development, continuing education, etc.); and
- C. Enrollment materials.

In addition, if the award of credit by evaluation is restricted in any way, communication methods must also include a statement regarding any credits that are:

- A. Not accepted for degree credit;
- B. Not appropriate for specialized requirements; or
- C. Not appropriate for prerequisites for advanced level courses.

IX. Fiscal Procedures

The award of academic credit by evaluation incurs an operational cost for the institution. Support for these costs – in the form of student fees⁵ - should reflect, as closely as possible, the costs incurred.

- A. Assessment Fees charged for evaluation shall be based on the services performed in the

⁵ Hereafter "Assessment Fee(s)"

process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded;

- B. In regard to the charge for this evaluation and assessment, only the Assessment Fee will be charged to the student;
- C. Campuses will determine the appropriate proposed Assessment Fee (based on the direct and indirect costs) necessary to provide evaluation services. Such costs would include, but not be limited to, supervision of the evaluation activities, assessment preparation or purchase, administration of the assessments, including correction, evaluation, recording, notification of participants, and associated employee benefits / pooled offset contribution / other costs incurred in providing support services;
- D. Assessment Fees may be re-examined and adjusted each academic year;
- E. Based on the financial circumstances of the participant, waiver of Assessment Fees may be authorized by the campus president or designee.
- F. Overall Assessment Fee levels should be established in such a way as to accommodate any loss in revenue as a result of waivers, operating within the principle that overall the evaluation program must reflect, as closely as possible, the costs incurred by the institution; and
- G. Proposed Assessment Fees for evaluation and assessment activities will be developed by each campus and forwarded to the SUNY System Administration Office of the SUNY Chief Financial Officer for approval.

X. Reporting

System Administration will request information from campuses concerning the award of credit by evaluation to assess the effectiveness of this policy.