



Prior Learning Credit

1. PURPOSE

This policy statement establishes guidelines for awarding academic credit for prior learning at Northern Pennsylvania Regional College (“NPRC” or the “College”).

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all academic students, referenced as students throughout this policy, academic faculty, and staff with associated logistical or student support responsibilities at NPRC.

3. REFERENCES

- 3.1 INDX-1110-01: Master Policy Index
- 3.2 CLDR-1110: Policy Review Schedule
- 3.3 INDX-1110-02: Document Naming Key
- 3.4 NPRC-1805: Records Retention
- 3.5 NPRC-9345: Assignment and Use of Grades
- 3.6 FORM-9515-01: Challenge Examination Request, Payment, Administration, and Reporting
- 3.7 FORM-9515-02: Prior Learning Credit by Challenge Portfolio
- 3.8 FORM-9515-03: Prior Learning Credit Challenge Portfolio Administration and Reporting
- 3.9 PROC-9515-01: Challenge Exam
- 3.10 PROC-9515-02: Prior Learning Credit by Challenge Portfolio

4. DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Academic Catalog of Record is the academic catalog in effect during a student’s first term of enrollment. Students must enroll in at least one academic course each academic year after their initial academic term of enrollment to maintain their assigned catalog of record. Students may request reassignment of their catalog of record to any more recent catalog at any time.

- 4.2 Prior Learning Credit (PLC) is the assignment of academic credit hours based on a verified record of learning or credential that meets or exceeds the student learning outcomes of an academic course.
- 4.3 DSST are credit-by-examination tests originated by the United States Department of Defense's Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support program. The program is an extensive series of 33 examinations in college subject areas that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate college courses.
- 4.4 The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) are standardized tests created and administered by College Board. These tests assess knowledge in 36 subject areas and provide a mechanism for earning college credits without taking college courses.
- 4.5 Advanced Placement is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations.
- 4.6 Cambridge International AS & A Levels are benchmarked, in-depth exams in 55 subject areas.
- 4.7 The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is a rigorous standardized international education curriculum and pedagogy with exams in the areas of Mathematics, Language, World History, and Biology.
- 4.8 An Industry-Recognized Credential is a verification of an individual's qualification or competence issued by a third party with the relevant authority to issue such credentials.
- 4.9 A Career and Technical Education program offers high school students the opportunity to develop critical skills through a combination of classes and hands-on learning experiences, which allow them to apply academics to real-world problems.
- 4.10 A Challenge Exam is an assessment that comprehensively evaluates a student's mastery of course content developed by NPRC faculty and approved for institutional use only.
- 4.11 A Challenge Portfolio is a collection of documented and verified academic learning and applicable work history aligned to course-specific learning outcomes and program goals in academic program of study.

5. POLICY

- 5.1 Degree-seeking students are eligible to apply for Prior Learning Credit (PLC).
- 5.2 A minimum of 70% alignment between academic course content and the identified prior learning credit opportunities is required for awarding PLC.

- 5.3 The maximum number of academic credit hours considered for PLC corresponds to the number of credit hours assigned to the course(s) for which application was made.
- 5.4 The number of academic credit hours awarded for PLC is limited by graduation residency requirements as outlined in NPRC-3250: Academic Program Completion Requirements for Students.
- 5.5 Academic credit for prior learning may be awarded for the following:
- 5.5.1 PLC may be awarded for completion of a nationally recognized exam with attainment of the cutoff score or higher established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as listed on the Pennsylvania Transfer and Articulation Center (PA TRAC) and whose content aligns with an equivalent course offered by the College in accordance with the following criteria:
 - 5.5.1.1 Eligibility requires submission of official scores from the testing agency or appropriate official transcript(s).
 - 5.5.1.2 Scores from exams taken more than five years prior to the date of student request are not eligible for consideration.
 - 5.5.1.3 Exams eligible for PLC awards are determined based upon the student's academic college catalog of record.
 - 5.5.2 PLC may be awarded for completion of industry-recognized credentials listed in the Academic College Catalog in accordance with the following criteria:
 - 5.5.2.1 The industry-recognized credential is an earned and maintained industry credential or licensure which corresponds to the knowledge, skills, and abilities achieved through successful completion of course(s) within a program of study.
 - 5.5.2.2 The credential must be active at the time the PLC is requested.
 - 5.5.2.3 Industry-recognized credentials eligible for PLC awards are determined based upon the student's academic college catalog of record.
 - 5.5.3 PLC may be awarded up to 9 credit hours for completion of an approved career and technical education program whose content aligns with an equivalent course offered by the College in accordance with the following criteria:
 - 5.5.3.1 The student completed the career and technical education program within 3 years prior to enrollment at NPRC as a degree-seeking student;
 - 5.5.3.2 An official score of advanced on the appropriate National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) exam;
 - 5.5.3.3 Applicable industry-recognized credentials must be earned during the student's enrollment in the career and technical education program; and

- 5.5.3.4 Industry-recognized credentials eligible for PLC awards are determined based upon fully executed agreements valid during the academic year of the student's academic college catalog of record.
- 5.5.4 PLC may be awarded for completion of a challenge exam whose content aligns with an equivalent course offered by the College in accordance with the following criteria:
 - 5.5.4.1 Students may not take a challenge exam for any course in which they are currently enrolled.
 - 5.5.4.2 Challenge exams are unavailable for some courses, including, but not limited to, courses which require laboratory work, field experience, or clinical experience.
 - 5.5.4.3 Challenge exams may be unavailable during the summer academic term.
 - 5.5.4.4 A minimum score of 70% is required for successful completion of a challenge exam and the awarding of prior learning credit.
 - 5.5.4.5 Challenge exam requests require a non-refundable processing fee.
 - 5.5.4.6 Challenge exam requests must be submitted in writing using FORM-9515-01: Challenge Examination Request.
 - 5.5.4.7 Challenge exams are administered following PROC-9515-01: Challenge Exam
- 5.5.5 PLC by challenge portfolio may be considered for the award of credit upon request from students with documented and verified academic learning and applicable work history aligned to course-specific learning outcomes and program goals as determined by the appropriate Academic Director or designee in accordance with the following criteria:
 - 5.5.5.1 Portfolio artifacts must include evidentiary artifacts presented to the appropriate Academic Director or designee for evaluation of proficiency at 70% or higher when assessed using an established rubric and:
 - 5.5.5.1.1 Documented experience of three or more consecutive years, that includes a date occurring within three or fewer years of the date of submission of FORM-9515-02: Prior Learning Credit by Portfolio Request Form in a workplace where the job activity corresponds to the knowledge, skills, and abilities achieved through successful completion of course(s) within a program of study as determined by the appropriate Academic Director or designee;
 - 5.5.5.1.2 Earned applicable industry-recognized credentials relevant to the program of study;
 - 5.5.5.1.3 Written documentation of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that aligns with the course(s) within the program of study that have

been obtained through appropriate and verifiable personal and professional development.

5.5.5.2 Requests for PLC by challenge portfolio must be submitted in writing using FORM-9515-02: Prior Learning Credit by Challenge Portfolio Request Form.

5.5.5.3 Requests for PLC by challenge portfolio are administered following PROC-9515-02: Prior Learning Credit by Challenge Portfolio.

5.5.5.4 Challenge portfolio assessment may be unavailable during the summer academic term.

5.5.5.5 PLC by challenge portfolio requests require a non-refundable processing fee.

5.6 Awarding of credit and grade is in accordance with NPRC-9345: Assignment and Use of Grades.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIMELINES

6.1 The Office of the Registrar is responsible for maintaining records of PLC awarded, including awards for challenge exams and challenge portfolios and the list of eligible PLC equivalencies, required minimum scores, and other criteria.

6.2 Academic Directors are responsible for the following:

- 6.2.1 Annual review and update of the list of eligible PLC equivalencies, including PLC equivalencies and cutoff scores as aligned with Pennsylvania Department of Education determinations communicated through PA-TRAC, prior to the deadline for academic college catalog revision;
- 6.2.2 Determination of courses eligible for PLC by challenge exam, assignment and approval of developed exams, monitoring of exam administration processes, and approval of awards for credit hours resulting from successful completion of challenge exam(s);
- 6.2.3 Determination of courses eligible for PLC by challenge portfolio; assignment and approval of necessary evidentiary artifacts, evaluator rubrics, industry-recognized credentials; job activity relevance and duration; monitoring of challenge portfolio administrative and evaluation processes, and approval of awards for credit hours resulting from successful completion of challenge portfolio(s); and
- 6.2.4 Administrative oversight of student learning assessment and evaluation records related to challenge exams and challenge portfolios maintained within the learning management system in alignment with requirements of NPRC-9345: Assignment and Use of Grades and NPRC-1805: Records Retention.

6.3 The Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and Accreditation Liaison Officer (VPAA/ALO) is responsible for administration of this policy.

7. REVIEW STATEMENT

Review of this policy will occur in alignment with CLDR-1110: Policy Review Schedule.

8. SIGNATURES

Signature on File

| | |
|---|---------------|
| _____ Chairperson, Board of Trustees | _____ Date |
|---|---------------|

Signature on File

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| _____ President | _____ Date |
|--------------------|---------------|

Revision Notes: Policy in Revision