

**TITLE 133
PROCEDURAL RULE
WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

**SERIES 59
AWARDING UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING, ADVANCED
PLACEMENT CREDIT, COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM, AND NURSING
CAREER PATHWAYS, AND MICRO-CREDENTIALS**

§133-59-1. General.

1.1. Scope. -- This rule establishes guidelines for West Virginia public ~~colleges and~~ universities for the awarding of college credit for prior college-level learning through ~~prior learning assessment~~ Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), for acceptance of advanced placement credit, ~~awarding of credit~~ for the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), ~~and awarding of credit~~ for completion of the Nursing Career Pathway, and for recognizing skill sets earned through micro-credentials.

1.2. Authority.-- W. Va. Code §§ ~~18B-1-1A, 18B-1-6 and 18B-1B-4(a)(20), 18B-2A-4, 18-2E-11A.~~

1.3. Filing Date. -- ~~October 5, 2021.~~

1.4. Effective Date. -- ~~November 5, 2021.~~

1.5. ~~Repeal of Former Rule.~~ -- ~~Repeals and replaces~~ Amends Title 133, Series 59, dated ~~September 28, 2018~~ November 5, 2021.

§133-59-2. Purpose ~~for~~ of Prior Learning Credit.

2.1. ~~Legislative goals established for West Virginia state colleges and universities provide that higher education in West Virginia should contribute fully to the growth, development, and quality of life of the state and its citizens. This policy~~ procedural rule details the responsibilities of the state ~~higher education institutions~~ universities regarding the awarding of college credit for prior college-level learning gained outside the higher education academic environment.

2.2. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission)~~West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council)~~ recognizes that some students, particularly adults and non-traditional students, may have acquired prior college-level learning through the development of skills or knowledge that closely parallel those outcomes taught in college-level courses. It is important that ~~colleges and the State's~~ universities ~~have the opportunity to~~ evaluate learning that has taken place outside the higher education academic environment and ~~to~~ award academic credit when appropriate.

2.3. The purpose of this rule is to ~~outline~~ set out the terms and conditions under which West Virginia public ~~colleges and~~ universities award and/or transfer credits toward a degree or certificate based upon ~~Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)~~ CPL and to provide consistent and accessible methods for students to earn these credits.

2.4. It is the intent of the Commission/~~Council~~ to permit the universities to awarding of undergraduate academic credit for prior learning through a variety of assessment methodologies that will ensure the academic credibility of such credit. Under these guidelines, in accordance with institutional policies and procedures, each institution shall award academic credit for prior learning that is equivalent to coursework which satisfies the requirements for the degree program in which the student is enrolled.

2.5. The ~~Board of Governors Associate of Applied Science degree program and the~~ Regents Bachelor of Arts degree program maintains specific guidelines and requirements for the use of credit for prior learning. This ~~policy rule~~ does not replace those existing guidelines.

§133-59-3. Definitions.

3.1. ~~Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)~~ “Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)” is defined as the assessment of college-level learning for college credit gained outside the higher education academic environment. For example, individuals may acquire college-level knowledge or skills through work, employee training programs, military service, independent study, non-credit courses, or community service. Only documented and demonstrated college-level learning will be awarded college credit.

~~3.2. In support of providing opportunities for students to earn college level credit for college level learning that has been acquired outside the higher education academic environment,~~ The universities may assessment of prior college-level learning ~~can be accomplished~~ through a variety of assessment methods including, but not limited to the following:

- 3.21.1. Advanced Placement Exams
- 3.21.2. American Council on Education (ACE) Guides
- 3.21.3. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams
- 3.21.4. DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST)
- 3.21.5. Excelsior College Examination Program (ECE)
- 3.21.6. Institutional Course Challenge Examination Credit
- 3.21.7. International Baccalaureate Program (IB)
- 3.21.8. Institutional Evaluation of Industry and Workforce Training such as apprenticeships, certifications, and licensure
- 3.21.9. Portfolio Assessment/Review Credit
- 3.21.10. Prior Military Training Credit
- 3.21.11. Nursing Career Pathway
- 3.1.12. Micro-Credential

3.2. “Chancellor” means the Chancellor for Higher Education as defined in W. Va. Code § 18B-1-2 or his or her designee.

3.3. “Commission” means the Higher Education Policy Commission established by W. Va. Code § 18B-1.

3.4. “Secondary school” or “high school” includes traditional public or private high school, charter school, home school, learning pod, microschool, or other educational program authorized by the Legislature that encompasses education commonly received in grades 9 through 12.

3.5. “Micro-credential” is a short, focused credential designed to provide in-demand skills, knowledge, and experience. Micro-credentials may be earned through a course or short series of courses that culminate in a “digital badge,” which offers verified proof of competency and documentation of specific skills gained through the coursework, which is assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria.

§133-59-4. Principles.

~~4.1. West Virginia public colleges and universities value the diversity of their students. This diversity includes the~~ Students have unique experiences, interests, and intellectual pursuits that may lead to the acquisition of college-level learning. The acquisition of college-level learning is validated by assessment methods that are academically sound and rigorous.

4.2. West Virginia public colleges and universities shall employ ~~prior learning assessment~~ credit for prior learning (CPL) aligned with their respective missions, the principles of academic integrity, resources, and student educational attainment and success.

4.3. West Virginia public universities may offer credentialing through micro-credentials that allow for career advancement without full stops for additional degrees; however, credentials may be credit or non-credit.

§133-59-5. Institutional Policies Regarding Awarding Credit for Prior Learning.

5.1. State colleges and universities shall develop institutional policies for evaluating prior learning and for awarding credit consistent with this ~~policy~~ rule.

5.1.1. Each institution shall develop appropriate policies and procedures for awarding credit for a student’s prior college-level learning in accordance with this ~~policy~~ rule, accrediting bodies’ guidelines for prior learning assessment, and principles of good educational practice.

5.1.2. Institutional policy ~~will~~ shall apply to all academic programs.

~~5.1.3. The institutional policy on Credit for Prior Learning must be filed with the Council for Community and Technical College Education and the Higher Education Policy Commission.~~

5.2. Institutions shall identify the forms of ~~PLA~~ CPL credits that the institution will award, the processes for acquiring such credit, and make that information publicly available to students, faculty, and other stakeholders.

5.3. Institutions ~~shall have discretionary authority to~~ may award academic credit for prior learning that is equivalent to coursework which meets the requirements for the degree program in which the student is enrolled.

5.4. Credit for prior learning ~~can~~ may apply toward majors, minors, general education requirements, and electives that count toward the student's chosen degree or certificate. ~~Prior Learning Assessment credit~~ Credit for Prior Learning may also satisfy prerequisite requirements. College credit awarded through ~~PLA~~ CPL shall not be treated differently in its application and use than its course equivalencies or appropriate block credit.

5.5. Universities shall award credit for prior learning ~~shall only be awarded~~ only to students who are admitted to the institution ~~and have declared a major field of study.~~

5.6. Credit awarded through ~~PLA~~ CPL shall not count toward institutional residency requirements.

5.7. ~~The evaluation of institution's faculty with appropriate professional credentials shall evaluate a student's portfolio must be completed by faculty with appropriate professional credentials and course-specific examinations to determine whether it meets the standards to award academic credit. Course-specific examinations must be designed and evaluated by faculty with appropriate professional credentials. The faculty member shall make a recommendation for credit shall be made to the appropriate academic officer at the institution and in accordance with the institution's PLA CPL guidelines.~~

5.8. Institutions must accept ~~PLA~~ CPL credit up to ~~30~~ 60 credits for bachelor's degrees, up to ~~45~~ 30 credits for associate's degrees, if authorized to award associate degrees, and up to ~~6~~ 9 credits for certificate programs.

5.8.1. Institutions may set a higher limit not to exceed ~~60~~ 90 credits for bachelor's degrees, ~~not to exceed~~ 30 45 credits for associate's degrees, if authorized to award associate degrees, and not to exceed 15 credits for certificate programs.

5.8.2. If a program accrediting body has a specific maximum for ~~PLA~~ CPL credit, then the institution shall honor that maximum ~~should be honored by~~ for that particular program.

5.9. Credit awarded through ~~Prior Learning Assessment~~ Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) ~~must~~ shall be clearly identified as such on a student's official transcript according to institutional ~~PLA~~ CPL guidelines, ~~but it should be evident that the credits are PLA CPL. The institution shall not use such credit shall not be used to determine a student's grade point average or used in the calculation of graduation honors. The institution shall record the credit should be recorded as "Credit" only.~~

5.10. Students shall submit requests for awards of academic credit for prior learning ~~shall be submitted~~ in accordance with the guidelines established by the institution. Institutions ~~must establish a written record~~ shall notify students in writing of their decisions to approve or deny such requests and the basis therefor ~~that decision in accepting or declining a Prior Learning Assessment (whether it is portfolio evaluation or other type of assessment) for academic credit. Institutional policies should ensure the transparency of the award or denial of PLA credit. Additionally, institutions must develop and communicate a process for appealing PLA decisions as well as the process by which students may appeal such decisions.~~

5.11. ~~Prior Learning Assessment~~ The universities may charge fees for assessment of Credit for Prior Learning requests, which fees may vary based upon the type of assessment performed. ~~Prior Learning Assessment~~ The institutions shall clearly publish and make available to students CPL credit and transcripting fees to students must be clearly published and made available to the student.

5.12. Institutions ~~will~~ shall regularly review their ~~PLA CPL~~ policies to ensure that they are consistent with accreditation ~~PLA CPL~~ guidelines and State, regional, and national practices.

§133-59-6. Transferability of ~~Prior Learning Assessment~~ Credit for Prior Learning Credits.

6.1. Credits earned through ~~PLA CPL~~ will shall be transferable in accordance with ~~Series 133 C.S.R. 17: Transferability of Credits and Grades at West Virginia Colleges and Universities.~~ Once on a student's transcript, credits earned through prior learning shall be treated no differently ~~that~~ than other credit coursework on a student's transcript.

6.2. ~~PLA CPL~~ awarded at one institution, which meets the West Virginia Core Coursework Transfer Agreement or other statewide articulation agreements ~~must~~ shall be accepted as transfer credit toward the degree if the student transfers to another West Virginia public college or university in accordance with the guidelines of that particular policy or agreement.

§133-59-7. Reporting the Awarding of ~~Prior Learning Assessment~~ Credit for Prior Learning Credits.

7.1. Each institution shall maintain records of the number of students awarded credit for prior learning, the number of credits for prior learning awarded, the type of assessment method(s) used, and other recipient data, which ~~will be~~ they shall reported to the Higher Education Policy Commission/~~Council for Community and Technical College Education~~ on an annual basis. ~~Commission/Council staff will~~ The Chancellor shall develop specific reporting guidelines and advise each institution of those guidelines.

§133-59-8. Policy for Acceptance of Advanced Placement Credit.

8.1. West Virginia ~~state colleges and~~ universities shall accept advanced placement credits according to the following guidelines:

8.1.1. High school students completing advanced placement examinations of the College Board with a minimum score of 3 ~~will~~ shall receive credit at any ~~state college or~~ university, as indicated in the list of advanced placement exams offered by the College Board. The ~~Central Office of the Higher Education Policy Commission~~ Chancellor maintains a list of all College Board advanced placement exams and the minimum number of credits that each institution shall grant. The university shall award credit is to be awarded solely on the basis of satisfactory performance of a score of 3 or higher on the advanced placement examinations.

8.1.2. When the examination is in the area of the student's major, the institution ~~will~~ shall award credit toward the major or the core curriculum.

8.1.3. An academic department within the institution may, upon approval of the institutional faculty, require a higher score than 3 on an advanced placement test if the credit is to be used toward meeting a course requirement for a major in the department.

8.1.4. Credits awarded by regionally or nationally accredited institutions of higher education in West Virginia for successful completion of advanced placement exams are transferable to West Virginia state colleges and universities in accordance with the advanced placement policy of the receiving institution.

§133-59-9. Institutional Responsibility.

9.1. Each institution shall develop guidelines for acceptance of advanced placement credits that are consistent with the provisions of this rule and publish the guidelines in the ~~college or~~ university bulletin and/or other appropriate institutional publications.

§133-59-10. Policy for the College-Level Examination Program.

10.1. ~~This policy shall serve as a rule for the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Entrance Examination Board in West Virginia state colleges and universities.~~ Credit awarded by an institution in conformity with this policy rule shall be transferable to all West Virginia state colleges and universities. Further, the universities shall award credit ~~shall be awarded~~ only once to recognize mastery of course content. The universities shall not award credit ~~shall not be awarded~~ for equivalent courses in which students have already earned such credit through course work, CLEP, institutional challenge examinations, life experience, or other mechanisms.

§133-59-11. Subject CLEP Examinations.

11.1. ~~Students~~ Universities may ~~be awarded~~ credit for the student ~~successfully completion of~~ completing any or all of the CLEP Subject Examinations presently offered or developed in the future. They student must achieve a score equal to or above the required score of the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education for CLEP Exams current at the time the student takes the examination ~~was taken~~. The university shall award credit ~~shall be awarded~~ in an amount not exceeding the number of semesters for which the examination was designed. The university shall not assign a grade ~~shall not be assigned, and or include~~ the credit ~~will not be included~~ in the computation of the student's grade-point average. The institution shall equate the CLEP credit earned with existing course offerings. If no equivalent course is offered by the institution, the university shall consider the credit earned by CLEP examination ~~shall be considered~~ elective credit. ~~Students shall not receive~~ The universities shall not award CLEP Subject Examination credit for equivalent courses in which ~~they have a~~ student has already earned credit.

§133-59-12. General CLEP Examinations.

12.1. As of the effective date of this ~~policy rule~~, an institution may award credit within the limits of the most recent recommended CLEP scores posted by The College Board. ~~At the time of this rule, The College Board chart is found at the following URL: located at <https://clep.collegeboard.org/pdf/what-your-score-means.pdf>.~~

12.2. ~~It should be made clear to~~ Universities shall clearly advise students that such credit in general education may not meet specific program requirements of the institution awarding the credit or of other institutions to which the student may later transfer. The credit shall then be used as elective credit.

~~Students shall not receive~~ Universities shall not award CLEP General Examination credit for equivalent courses in which ~~they have~~ a student has already earned credit.

12.3. An institution awarding credit through CLEP may establish scores higher than specified above for Subject and General Examinations if ~~it is~~ the institution establishes that the higher scores equate to a satisfactory level of performance by students actually enrolled in the equivalent course(s) at that institution.

§133-59-13. Academic Record.

13.1. The permanent academic record of the student shall indicate which credit was earned by CLEP examination.

§133-59-14. Enrollment.

14.1. Students must be enrolled in an institution in order to receive credit from the institution. Students who have taken CLEP examinations prior to enrollment must submit an official CLEP transcript.

§133-59-15. Nursing Career Pathways-Policy.

~~15.1. Nursing continues to offer multiple ways for students to enter the profession and has consistently advocated for creative and innovative opportunities for academic progression that meet the needs of a student population that is diverse along numerous dimensions. While it is certainly possible to change goals and directions, early consideration of the desired end point can provide helpful direction in selecting the most efficient and effective path to reaching career goals. The goal of the nursing career pathway is to give students a clear picture of how to enter the profession and a shorter, more affordable way to progress through the education they need. The pathway includes dual or advanced placement credit for high school students when admitted to nursing programs in community and technical colleges or baccalaureate institutions, seamless transition to bachelor's completion degrees in nursing as needed, and employment opportunities as nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses along the pathway.~~

~~15.2. The universities shall accept student course credit earned through dual credit and/or early enrollment as part of the Nursing Career Pathway Program must be accepted with student consent by institutions as higher education credits counting toward credits specific to the major of nursing or nursing science. The student's secondary school shall identify completion of the nursing pathway shall be identified on the high school transcript. Students completing the nursing pathway shall also be in possession of receive the Therapeutic Services Certificate.~~

~~15.3. Dual credit or early enrollment~~ courses in the Nursing Career Pathway are developed as required course credit according to West Virginia ~~Department Board~~ Department Board of Education (~~WVDE~~) Policy 2150, *Assuming Quality of Education: Regulations for Education Programs*, and ~~WVDE~~ Policy 2520.13, *West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Programs of Study/Standards for Career and Technical Education*. These courses include college-level freshmen English, college algebra or statistics, anatomy and physiology and general psychology. A list of approved dual credit/~~early enrollment~~ courses may be found on the West Virginia Department of Education's website.

15.4. Students may also earn college-level credit for the Nursing Career Pathway and specific to the major of nursing or nursing science through Advanced Placement courses (AP) as ~~stipulated under~~ set out in Section 8 of this rule.

15.5. Nothing in this rule shall prevent institutions from awarding additional dual credit/~~early enrollment~~ or AP credit toward the Nursing Career Pathway as allowed under by the institution's approved policies for awarding such credit.

§133-59-16. Micro-Credentials.

16.1. Institutions may offer micro-credentials for credit or non-credit to currently enrolled students (internal) or to transient students (external) enrolling for a specific set of courses.

16.2. Micro-credentials awarded to a student may be stackable and grouped or aggregated to provide a pathway to larger credentials. That is, micro-credentials may be used as credits for the awarding of a traditional degree. Non-credit micro-credentials may be converted to credit via the CPL process as outlined in section five of this rule.

16.3. Students who successfully complete a micro-credential, whether credit or non-credit, will earn a digital badge or institutionally recorded and approved credential for verification to students, whether full-time, part-time, or non-credit. Institutions shall keep records of all earned non-credit badges or micro-credentials.