



Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Guidelines

NNMC is aware that many adult learners may have gained college-level knowledge and/or competencies through both professional and life experiences which have the potential to be incorporated into their academic programs. NNMC's Guidelines to award Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), sometimes referred to as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), describe methods used by NNMC to provide currently enrolled students with an avenue to document professional and prior learning experiences for credit consideration. This option enables students the opportunity to complete degrees faster and at a lower cost. NNMC offers a number of options for currently enrolled students to earn CPL:

1. CLEP, University of Cambridge International Examinations, or Advanced Placement Exams,
2. American Council on Education (ACE) Guides,
3. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests DSST program credit or military training,
4. Prior certifications including locally evaluated industry and workplace credit,
5. Credit by a locally developed examination, and/or
6. Prior learning portfolio submitted for consideration.

Eligibility & Expectations

Students interested in obtaining prior learning credit must:

1. Be fully admitted and currently enrolled as an NNMC degree-seeking student.
2. Be in good academic standing.
3. Be motivated, self-directed students with significant, demonstrable, and documentable experiential learning. Individual departments may also set certain course prerequisites. However, no other specific eligibility requirements shall exist, including age requirements.
4. Consult with their faculty academic advisor about the possibility and advisability of seeking CPL.
5. Personally pay fees associated with prior learning (for example, exam fees or the portfolio review fee). Financial aid cannot be applied.
6. Align prior learning considerations with courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements of a declared program. Changing majors will result in a reassessment of the applicability of the CPL (with the exception of General Education courses).
7. Meet the NNMC residency requirement listed in the Catalog (a student must earn 25% of hours required for a degree/certificate in instruction delivered via NNMC). PLC will not count toward this 25% minimum. CPL shall not exceed 25% of the total credits of a program, even if more courses are eligible.
8. Be aware NNMC will treat prior learning from a previous institution under the rules used for any other type of transfer credit.

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9. Be aware that CPL granted for NNMC courses will receive a CR grade for exams or portfolios. Students transferring courses need to be aware that other institutions may have their own policies about CR grades. CR grades do not have any impact on NNMC GPA.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

NNMC Testing Services administers subject examinations. These examinations are computer-based and are applicable for the following courses:

American Government (50)	POLS 1120 (3)
American History I (50)	HIST 1110 (3)
American History II (50)	HIST 1120 (3)
Analysis & Interp. of Lit. (50)	ENGL 1120 (3)
Biology (56)	BIOL 1110/L (4)
Calculus w/ Elem. Functions (47)	MATH 1510 (3)
Chemistry (56)	CHEM 1215/L (4)
College Algebra (46)	MATH 1215 (3)
College Algebra (50)	MATH 1220 (3) <i>(50 or higher for 1215 & 1220)</i>
College Algebra/Trigonometry (61)	MATH 1250 (3) <i>(61 or higher for 1220 & 1250)</i>
College Spanish I & II (50)	SPAN 1110/1120 (6) <i>(50-62 will earn 6 cr.)</i>
College Spanish I and II (63)	SPAN 1110/1120 (6) <i>(63 or higher for 12 cr.)</i>
Freshman College Comp. (44)	ENGL 1120 (3) <i>(Essay is required)</i>
General Psychology (50)	PSYC 1110 (3)
Human Growth & Development (50)	PSYC 2120 (3)
Introduction to Business Law (50)	BLAW 2110 (3)
Introduction to Marketing (50)	MKTG 2110 (3)
Introduction to Sociology (50)	SOCI 1110 (3)
Natural Sciences (56)	ENVS 1110/L
Principles of Macroeconomics (44)	ECON 2110 (3)
Principles of Management (46)	MGMT 2110 (3)
Principles of Microeconomics (41)	ECON 2110 (3)

Advanced Placement (AP)

Advanced Placement (AP) is a program that offers year-long college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. For further information see the [NM Higher Education Department Advanced Placement Policy](#).



Prior Certifications

Check with the appropriate department for possible credit for prior certification.

Locally Developed Examinations

Faculty academic advisors, with the approval of the Department Chair, may authorize students to take a locally developed exam to give credit for an appropriate course. The exam fee is \$50 per credit hour. (The instructor will be paid two thirds of the total exam fee.) This fee is nonrefundable and must be submitted prior to taking the exam. Individual academic departments have the authority to determine what courses may be eligible for a locally developed exam.

Instructions for Locally Developed Exams

1. Request permission to take the exam.
2. Complete the Locally Developed Exam Application form and pay the fee to the cashier.
3. Instructor will develop the exam within two weeks of payment.
4. Students will complete the exam within two weeks of the exam development.
5. Instructor will evaluate the exam within two weeks of exam completion.
6. Students will be notified of the results. Students must receive at least a C- on the exam to pass the course. Course entries will reflect a grade of "TR," as if the course had been transferred to Northern.
7. Results from locally developed exams are final.
8. If the student fails a locally developed exam, they may retake the exam up to three times but must pay the \$50 per credit hour fee for each attempt.



Prior Learning Portfolio

A portfolio assessment of prior learning is based on the documentation you choose to present. Contents of the portfolio may differ or vary based on the course(s) you align your prior learning to and/or departmental expectations. Below are general eligibility and expectations for a portfolio. Students should consult with their faculty academic advisor early in the process about the possibility of submitting a portfolio for specific expectations.

Portfolio Application Process

1. Review the approved list of courses for prior learning courses in the NNMC Catalog and NNMC website.
2. Contact the appropriate department chair or your faculty academic advisor to discuss guidelines for prior learning credit applications, the syllabi for targeted courses, and to determine the best way to proceed. The faculty academic advisor will evaluate and approve the appropriateness of a portfolio development.
3. Upon faculty academic advisor approval of a portfolio assessment, choose a course(s) to target in your assessment portfolio. It is important that the number of credits sought through the portfolio, plus any other credits that have been already granted for prior learning, do not exceed the 25% credit threshold for the entire program. Moreover, the student and advisor should discuss the **NNMC General Guidelines for Prior Learning Credit Portfolios**.
4. Complete the **Prior Learning Credit Portfolio Application Form** and submit the nonrefundable fee(s) to the cashier. The fee for submitting a portfolio for Prior Learning Credit is \$100 per credit hour (example, \$300 for a 3 credit hour course). This fee is nonrefundable regardless of approval decision. Submit the Prior Learning Credit Portfolio Application form (with a copy of the receipt) to the department chair for final authorization. The department chair will assign two faculty reviewers for each portfolio submission.
5. Submit electronically (PDF format) your portfolio/appropriate documentation for review by the following deadlines: Fall semester - September 30; Spring semester - February 28.
6. The faculty reviewer(s) will review and notify you whether the portfolio has been approved or denied within six weeks after the semester deadlines (September 30 and February 28).
7. Faculty reviewer(s) must provide a written explanation for evaluation of the portfolio regardless of outcome. Portfolio review documentation will be saved by NNMC for 5 years.

NNMC General Guidelines for Prior Learning Credit Portfolios

Portfolio Length: Portfolio length will vary by discipline. Portfolio should be adequate length to provide sufficient evidence that the student has mastered the student learning outcomes of the courses being petitioned for prior learning credit. Portfolios may not be longer than 30 pages.

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Required Writing Level: College-level writing is expected. Portfolio should be written with correct grammar, mechanics, and punctuation. Writing should be clear and direct.

Portfolio Documentation: Academic Departments require different materials as applicable to their various disciplines. Students may submit the following items as determined by the specific department:

- Official transcripts/certificates
- Official License documents
- Official publications (conferences, journals, powerpoint presentations, video recordings, etc.)
- Official work samples
- Official syllabi/textbooks of courses completed
- Letters of recommendations
- Other additional items required by discipline

Estimated Portfolio Preparation Time: Estimated time to complete the portfolio varies by discipline. Students should expect to spend at least six to eight weeks to collect evidence and documentation for the portfolio. Prior to completing the portfolio, students need to approach the department chair/faculty member with their intentions and discuss department specific guidelines.

Portfolio Necessities: A student requesting prior learning experience credits, after consultation with the department chair/faculty of his/her intention, will be provided with the following:

1. Prior Learning Credit Portfolio Application Form
2. NNMC Portfolio Guidelines (including Portfolio Template)
3. Departmental Portfolio Guidelines

Then the student will develop the portfolio as a self-directed activity with NO assistance from faculty/chair/NNMC staff.

Additional Requirements

1. A student must be admitted to NNMC.
2. Program specific courses require that the student is an active degree-seeking student in that program.
3. For some courses, students requesting CPL credits must complete the prerequisite course/s of each requested course unless the requested CPL also covers the prerequisite course/s. See specific department for guidelines.

Maximum Credit Hours for Prior Learning: Maximum credit hours cannot exceed 30 credit hours for Bachelor degrees and 15 hours for Associate degrees. These limits



include all methods of earning prior learning credits (such as, CLEP, Locally-Developed Exam, and/or Portfolio). Students may earn prior learning credit for general education, support courses, program specific courses, and elective courses.

Transfer Courses: Students should be aware that credit for prior learning granted for NNMC courses through portfolio review will receive a CR grade. Students transferring need to be aware that other institutions may have their own policies about CR grades. CR grades do not have any impact on NNMC GPA.

Portfolio Template

Prior Learning Credit Portfolios should follow this organizational template (individual departments may have additional template guidelines):

1. **Cover Sheet:** Name, Prior Learning Credit Portfolio, Academic Department, Date
2. **NNMC Prior Learning Credit Application Form**
3. **Portfolio Summary:** Narrative summarizing the content of the portfolio. Introduction to the student's experience, education, and training that relate to the learning outcomes of the particular course(s). Overview of the documentation included in the portfolio.
4. **Course Information:** Course name and number, credit value, course description, student learning outcomes.
5. **Narrative:** Detailed explanation how the student's experiences provided learning that satisfies the student learning outcomes of the course. Students should explain the specific documentation that is included and how this evidence demonstrates learning related to the course objectives.
6. **Documentation:** Evidence of valid experiences related to the learning outcomes of the course. May include any of the following: Official transcripts/certificates, Official License documents, Official publications (conferences, journals, powerpoint presentations, video recordings, etc.), Official work samples, Official syllabi/textbooks of courses completed, Letters of recommendations, and/or Other additional items required by discipline
7. **Departmental Portfolio Evaluation Rubric (if required by the individual department):** Copy of the rubric with self-evaluation from the student.

Decisions

1. Forms of non-portfolio CPL such as CLEP, DANTES, etc: If credit is denied for a course equivalency, an explanation or justification must be made available to the student. When the exam is offered by an external agency, it cannot be appealed to NNMC.
2. Portfolio evaluation decision is final. Portfolios will be evaluated by at least two faculty from the appropriate department. Decision will be based on the evidence provided by the student. Faculty will provide detailed feedback to document justification for the decision.



3. Students may resubmit portfolios that were denied approval. In these cases, students will be required to submit an additional **Prior Learning Credit Portfolio Application Form** and pay the nonrefundable \$100 per credit hour fee. In the portfolio, students should indicate this is a resubmission and include a section in the narrative that explains how they met the concerns of the initial review.

Internal Procedures for Maintaining Transparency and Consistency

Periodic review of CPL guidelines

NNMC reviews CPL program guidelines and procedures at least every five years. The review should involve evaluating all aspects of CPL policy, procedures, and portfolio audits, for consistency with state, regional, and national practices. Additionally, NNMC keeps an electronic repository for:

- a. Volume of CPL credits awarded per field annually (per CPL category and total).
- b. CPL recipient data including, but not limited to, a demographic summary of CPL recipients (age, race, and GPA) as well as measures of recipient success (per CPL subcategory and total).
- c. All portfolios submitted for CPL including the written review from the faculty reviewer(s) will be kept electronically.

Transparency

Criteria and practices are published on the NNMC website.

Responsible Division/Unit: Office of the Provost

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