

# University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) Prior Learning Credit Policy

## Purpose

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) acknowledges that students may acquire significant learning and achievements outside of the traditional classroom environment. The following policy provides a framework for awarding undergraduate credit for various types of prior learning, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Level/Advanced Subsidiary Level (A-Level/AS-Level), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), and Basic Military Training (BMT). The Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Program aims to recognize and award academic credit for these experiences, enhancing the academic journey of our students.

## Policy Overview

### Types of Prior Learning Credit (PLC)

- **Advanced Placement (AP):** Credit awarded based on UMES' equivalency charts and official scores.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB):** Credit awarded based on departmental approval and official scores.
- **Advanced Level/Advanced Subsidiary Level (A-Level/AS-Level):** Credit awarded based on departmental approval and official scores.
- **College-Level Examination Program (CLEP):** Credit awarded for successful completion of CLEP exams based on ACE recommendations.
- **Basic Military Training (BMT):** Credit awarded for military training and experience based on ACE recommendations.
- **Portfolio Review** - Students create a portfolio to translate their prior experiences (both through work and life) into college credits

### Credit Limits and Restrictions

- Students may earn a maximum of 60 credits from PLC, including CLEP, AP, and IB credits.
- A maximum of 30 credits may be earned through CLEP exams.
- Credit will not be awarded for both PLC and completing an equivalent course.

- AP, IB, or A-Level/AS-Level exams repeated or taken after matriculation will not be awarded credit.

### **Credit Application and Evaluation**

- **AP Credit:** Inform the advisor about any AP credit earned or anticipated. Credit awarded based on UMES equivalency charts for scores of 3-7. Official scores must be sent directly from College Board to UMES using institution code [insert code].
- **IB Credit:** Credit awarded based on departmental approval. Official scores must be sent from the International Baccalaureate Results Service. IB credits must be a 3 or higher to award credit
- **A-Level/AS-Level Credit:** Credit awarded based on departmental approval. Official scores must be sent by Cambridge International Exams or approved boards.
- **CLEP Credit:** Credit awarded for scores of 50 or higher based on ACE recommendations. Official score reports must be sent to UMES using Score Recipient Code [insert code]. Students must complete a Permission to Enroll form before taking CLEP exams.
- **Basic Military Training Credit:** Military credits are reviewed by the department. If they see prior credit that fits the program will award credit after faculty review. The Registrar's Office will only review the basic training however, it is always sent for further review. Up to six credits may be awarded for Basic Military Science and Basic Physical Fitness. Documentation required includes JST or DD-214. Documentation should be sent to Records and Registration Services at UMES. Military service training credit will be based on ACE recommendations.

### **Criteria for Awarding College Credits for External Learning**

- Original documents must be provided from primary sources.
- Documentation must reflect current industry standards and be completed within ten years prior to the request, or five years for Health Professions.
- Course competencies must be demonstrated at a grade equivalent of “C” or better for undergraduate courses.
- Documentation must confirm that granting credits is in the student’s best interest for their advancement.

## **Procedure for Appeals**

- Submit a request for review to the transfer coordinator within 4 weeks, specifying reasons and providing supporting evidence.
- An Appeals Committee will review the request and present a decision within 2 weeks.

## **Credit-by-Exam**

- Eligibility: Minimum of 12 credit hours completed at UMES and a GPA of 2.0 (waivable for first-semester students with departmental approval).
- Application: Apply through the Division of Letters and Sciences and achieve a grade of C- or better. Grades are posted as resident credit.
- Restrictions: Not available for courses where the student is registered beyond the Schedule Adjustment Period or for any part of the final 30 credit hours without Provost permission.

## **Accepted Agencies**

We generally accept credits from all ACE-accredited platforms including Study.com. In addition, we accept Sophia Learning credits. However, we accept Straighterline credit on a limited basis upon previously established partnerships with UMES.

## **Exclusions and Appeals**

- UMES does not award credit for prior learning experiences from DANTES, PONSI, Coursera, Outlier, departmental credit-by-exam from other institutions, or life experiences.
- Appeal of any credit must be requested from the Transfer Services website.
- Health-related programs typically do not allow prior learning credits to be applied toward coursework. Please check with those departments.

## **Review and Updates**

- This policy is subject to periodic review and updates. Changes will be communicated through official channels and reflected in updated policy documents.

## **Graduate Students**

- CPL does not apply to coursework for which credit was previously granted.
- Graduate students can earn a maximum of nine units for prior professional learning if approved by their graduate program. No more than 30% of the total units required for graduation can be from prior learning.
- Graduate programs may offer challenge exams or individualized assessments for prior learning. Students must be degree candidates with a 3.00 GPA to have the units recorded.

## **Departmental Exams**

- UMES offers departmental challenge exams in various foreign languages. Students may contact the department for details.

## **Individualized Assessments**

- For courses without standard exams, students may contact the academic department to explore individualized assessment options, such as portfolio review or performance-based assessments.

## **Portfolio Review**

Students create a portfolio to translate their prior experiences (both through work and life) into college credits. College level learning:

1. reflects complex comprehension, not the memorization of basic information.
2. reflects the ability to apply practical and theoretical knowledge in ways appropriate to a given field.
3. reflects the ability to interpret how you solved problems and adapted depending on the situation.
4. reflects the ability to analyze how certain learning experiences align with course learning outcomes.

## Definitions:

1. Practical knowledge - standard knowledge and practices needed to accomplish certain skills or tasks.
2. Theoretical knowledge - an understanding of a subject's principles and theories, such as explaining why certain information, behaviors, and practices occur and how a subject relates to other complex problems/issues.
3. Course learning outcomes - statements that summarize what a learner will be able to do after completing a course. Each UMES course has a set of course outcomes on the syllabus. You must prove that you have mastered each course outcome for you to receive college credit. When you create your Documentation of Learning, an evaluator will analyze your work and your supporting evidence to determine if you have mastered the learning outcomes for the course targeted.

Your supporting evidence alone is not proof of college-level learning. You will use your DoL to categorize learning experiences, cite specific evidence, and clearly document how your experiences and evidence demonstrates college-level learning for each outcome.

Examples of evidence/documentation. This is not a comprehensive list, just an example of what might be considered evidence.

Examples of projects and documents completed (computer code, website, lab documents, diagrams, deliverables, PPT files for presentations you gave)

Project management or productivity tracking documents

Specific files demonstrating mastery of software applications

Business plans

Audio or visual recordings of you presenting

Drawings, pictures, visual renderings

White papers, emails, other written documentation from a job

Learning verification letters

Syllabi or other formal professional development summaries, with evidence of completion

Exam results

Evidence of solving a problem

Field notes

Copies of certifications or training completion awards

Your employer may not allow you to share information about sensitive projects or learning experiences.

You may be able to redact files or create sample documents or projects to show how you would solve a problem.