

**Campus Administrative Policy**

**Policy Title:     Awarding Graduate Credit from Prior Learning Sources**

Policy Number: 7007                      Functional Area:     Academic & Faculty Affairs

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Effective:                                      August 1, 2020  
Date Last Amended/Reviewed:     July 13, 2020  
Date Scheduled for Review:         July 1, 2027  
Supersedes:                                 N/A—New Policy

Approved by:                                 Donald M. Elliman, Jr.  
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Prepared by:                                 Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning  
Reviewing Office:                         Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and  
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Responsible Officer:                       Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and  
  Student Affairs

Applies to:                                    CU Anschutz Medical Campus  
  CU Denver Campus

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**A.     INTRODUCTION**

This policy describes how CU Denver Campus and CU Anschutz Medical Campus (“the university”) accepts and applies credit from prior learning experiences in work or other environments towards graduate degree programs. The prior experience should have led to similar learning to that provided by the CU Denver or CU Anschutz courses for which it will substitute. In addition to this policy, the rules of the school or college that awards the degree also apply in determining credit from prior learning experiences.

**B.     POLICY STATEMENTS**

**1.     Applying Transfer Credit from Institutions Accredited by an Accreditor Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an Institutional Accrediting Agency**

The evaluation process and any decision to accept and apply credits previously awarded by institutions in the U.S. that undergo accreditation by an accreditor

recognized by the U.S. Department of Education is determined by the program faculty according to the rules and procedures defined by the program and the school/college that awards the degree. Students should provide sufficient information (e.g. a course syllabus) so that the program can establish that the prior coursework was similar in content to that of the courses for which it will substitute. Once a course has been evaluated and accepted for transfer, the transfer equivalency will be entered into the Student Information System for all future presented transfer courses of the same description. A minimum of a C- course grade is required to be accepted for transfer; however, the program may also establish a higher minimum course grade acceptable for transfer.

**2. Applying Credit from International Institutions of Higher Learning**

Evaluating credit previously awarded by international institutions of higher learning is determined by applying the criteria defined in section B.1.; in addition, the program should examine the definition of credit hour used by the international institution to ensure that it is equivalent, or at least comparable, to that used by the university.

**3. Awarding Credit for Learning Experiences in Settings other than Accredited Institutions of Higher Learning**

Prior learning can occur in a variety of settings outside of institutions of higher learning. Such settings include (but are not limited to) previous experiences in the workplace, the community or the military. The authority to award credit towards a graduate degree at CU Denver Campus or CU Anschutz Campus for these experiences or coursework resides with the schools/colleges and the faculty of their degree- or certificate-granting programs. The prior experience should have led to the acquisition of knowledge or skills similar to that of the courses for which it will substitute in the university degree or certificate. Programs must also ensure that their standards for awarding credit are rigorous and comply with the policies of the University, the State of Colorado and the Higher Learning Commission (with particular attention to the definition of credit hour and where appropriate, assessment of learning).

- At least 25% of the credits applied to a university graduate degree must be from coursework taken at CU Denver Campus or CU Anschutz Medical Campus. Individual schools, colleges or degree programs can require a higher percentage of credits that must be obtained from coursework taken at CU Denver Campus or CU Anschutz Medical Campus.
- The amount of credit applied to a university degree for prior learning experiences in settings other than in accredited institutions of higher learning in the U.S. or international higher learning institutions, cannot exceed 25%.
- There are a variety of resources and agencies to evaluate transcripts and assess the validity of transfer credit from foreign higher learning institutions. These include UK National Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC), World Education Services

(WES), Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE) and National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES). In some instances, the national program accrediting agencies may also have policies or procedures pertaining to acceptance of credit from foreign higher learning institutions.

- Degree and/or certificate programs that elect to award credit for learning experiences in settings other than institutions of higher learning must develop policies and practices for determining assignment of credit. Such policies should include a description of the mechanism(s) by which prior learning experiences are evaluated for their relevancy to the degree, the acquisition of student learning and how they are applied towards the degree (e.g. core requirements, electives, etc). Programs shall publicly disclose this information on their appropriate websites.
- Schools and colleges with degree and/or certificate programs that elect to award credit for prior learning experiences will ensure that all of the programs comply with institutional guidelines, best practices and requirements of specialized accrediting agencies.
- Schools and colleges with degree and/or certificate granting programs that elect to award credit for prior learning experiences will provide oversight, including periodic review, of these practices within their programs. Programs that award credit for prior learning experiences will include a description of their practices and assessment methods in the self-study submitted for the periodic review of the degree program. The Provost Office may also examine programs that are awarding credit for prior learning experiences when concerns are brought to its attention.
- Programs that award credit for prior learning experiences must advise and work with the Registrar's office to ensure that such credit is noted on a student's transcript.
- In the case of awarding credit for coursework undertaken at non-accredited entities, such coursework should define expected learning outcomes and have an associated assessment plan to monitor achievement of the learning objectives.
- Degree and/or certificate programs may require additional evidence to establish or verify student learning resulting from the prior learning experience. For example, this could include requiring the student to undertake one or more exams, or an assessment by program faculty of a student's portfolio.
- Programs should maintain a record of the evaluation process and make it available to the provost or other entities, such as accrediting bodies, upon request.
- Programs seeking exemptions to any stipulations included in this policy can apply to the provost by providing supporting rationale and supporting documentation. The provost's decision on any such exemptions will be final.

## Notes

1. Dates of official enactment and amendments:  
August 1, 2020: Adopted/Approved by the Chancellors.
2. History:  
August 1, 2020: This new policy describes the acceptance and application of credit from prior learning towards graduate degree programs. In addition to this policy, the rules of the school or college that awards the degree also apply.
3. Initial Policy Effective Date: August 1, 2020
4. Cross References/Appendix: N/A