



POSTSECONDARY ACCELERATION

Credit for Prior Learning and Credentials

Implement a consistent state policy for awarding postsecondary program or elective credit for prior learning, work experience and earned industry credentials.



Colorado

In 2020, Colorado passed HB 20-1002, which enables students and adults to earn postsecondary credit for prior work experience, including work-based learning. The act requires the Department of Higher Education to conduct a study concerning awarding academic credit for prior learning within all state institutions of higher education. Beginning in the 2022–23 academic year, unless a plan is implemented prior to then, institutions shall accept and transfer academic credit awarded for work-related experience as courses with guaranteed-transfer designation or part of a statewide degree transfer agreement. Rules and implementation details are pending.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

As one of the first of states seeking to systematize credit for prior learning, Colorado is a pioneer in this area. As it completes its study in preparation for implementation of the program, Colorado can ensure that the prior learning and earned credentials awarded college credit truly expand access for learners seeking college attainment while also meeting a high standard for quality and alignment.

RESOURCES

N/A

POLICIES

- [HB 20-1002](#). College Credit for Work Experience



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Oregon

In 2012, HB 4059 tasked the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission with increasing the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning. To achieve this, the commission was charged with working with the State Board of Higher Education, community college districts and institutions of higher education. The statutory language requires the credit be “awarded only for high quality course-level competencies.”

The following year, and in line with statute requirements, Oregon began creating the Prior Learning Standards, which were written by a subcommittee of practitioners and approved by the commission’s credit for prior learning advisory committee, following reviews by higher education institutions. To help formalize agency policies and standards, the state facilitated a pilot with 14 higher education institutions. In 2017, these policies and standards were formally adopted for implementation by any Oregon institution offering credit for prior learning. Program standards include prior learning for exams, industry certifications, military credit, prior experiential learning and licensure. The commission’s prior learning advisory committee continues to meet annually to address and report to the Legislature on items such as increasing the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning, improving assessments and developing articulation agreements.

To help ensure continuous improvement, Oregon has conducted two environmental scans to collect data on credit for prior learning, both of which have informed further changes to the process and allowed the state to strengthen alignment with instructional capacity.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

The 2020 report on credit for prior learning notes that Oregon can clarify data input and credit for prior learning documentation processes across institutions to be able to get a more accurate sense across institutions. Additionally, it recommends Oregon consider simplifying student transfers across institutions and investigate how to ensure credit for prior learning credits appropriately transfer across institutions.

RESOURCES

- [Credit for Prior Learning Reports](#)
- [Oregon Credit for Prior Learning Standards: Summary of Revisions for the Standards](#)
- [Credit for Prior Learning](#)
- [Credit for Prior Learning: House Bill 4059 \(2012\) 2019 Report to the Oregon Legislature](#)

POLICIES

- [HB 4059](#). Credit for Prior Learning
- [ORS 350.110](#). Coordination Between Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Public Universities, Community College Districts and Independent For-Profit and Not-For-Profit Institutions of Higher Education



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Tennessee

Tennessee created Timewise TN (prior learning assessment) so that students can earn credit for what they already know. Through this program, the state allows students to earn credit three ways: credit by examination, credit recommendations for past training and portfolio assessments. Credit by examination includes credit for Advanced Placement, College Level Examination Program, statewide dual credit challenge exams, International Baccalaureate and others. In 2012, a Prior Learning Assessment Task Force drafted and approved prior learning assessment standards to be used by Tennessee institutions of higher education—these standards ensure that institutional requirements are consistent and accessible for all students to earn credits based on prior learning. Additionally, the Tennessee Department of Education established an agreement with the Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology on the acceptance of industry certifications earned in high school for credit.

The Tennessee Board of Regents' Awarding of Credits Earned Through Extra-Institutional Learning to Community Colleges policy authorizes the community colleges to develop procedures for the recognition of equivalent extra-institutional learning processes that include the awarding of credit for Advanced Placement. This results in a variation across the state on what is considered for postsecondary credit.

Passed into law in 2014, the Tennessee Veterans Education Transition Support (VETS) Act establishes a program of recognition for higher education institutions that allocate resources for veterans' successful transition from military service to college enrollment. An institution receiving VETS Campus certification not only prioritizes outreach to veterans but also successfully delivers the services necessary to create a supportive environment in which student veterans can prosper while pursuing their education. A VETS Campus must create and maintain a process for the assessment of prior learning that grants academic credit to veterans for transferable training and experience attained through services in the armed forces.

OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN

Tennessee can standardize the requirements for extra-institutional learning across community colleges.

RESOURCES

- [Timewise TN](#)
- [Servicemember Opportunity Portal](#)

POLICIES

- [TN Code Annotated 49-7-1307](#). Tennessee Veterans Education Transition
- [TBR Policy 2.01.00.04](#). Awarding of Credits Earned Through Extra - Institutional Learning to Community Colleges