Credit for Prior Learning

Links to Each Section:
General Information
Policy Procedure
Portfolio Assessment
Definitions

General Information:

The Colorado State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE) supports the concept of life-long learning to meet the retraining, upgrading, and personal enrichment needs of students. It is the policy of the Board that a student's experience outside the college classroom shall be evaluated for college credit at the student's request.

Credit may be issued for life experience in safety-related work areas as provided for in the Credit for Prior Learning Policy. (Note: If you wish to seek credit for life experience for required general education courses, please contact the OSH Program regarding proper procedure for doing so. This may be accomplished through CLEP exams.)

In the Colorado Community College System, Credit for Prior Learning, often referred to as non-college or experience-based learning, is credit for learning that has been attained outside the sponsorship of accredited postsecondary education institutions. The term "credit for prior learning" applies to learning acquired from work and life experiences, correspondence and extension courses, and participation in formal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry. Thus, credit awarded is not just for experience, but for college-level learning which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained as a result of their prior learning experiences.

A student at a Colorado community college may receive credit for prior learning only if the learning is evaluated through formal procedures, meets the standards of specific courses at the college, and relates to the educational program in which the student is enrolled.

The student must provide a portfolio for each applicable course documenting prior learning of the objectives for that course. The portfolio must contain rationale, information, and material that demonstrates that the student has acquired knowledge and skills equivalent to that of a student completing college classroom course work for the same course. This documentation should include supporting certificates or other related evidence of the acquired knowledge and skills. The student portfolio will be carefully and thoroughly evaluated by TSJC faculty and administration and credit hours assigned accordingly.

Policy Procedure:

Credit for Prior Learning credits awarded through portfolio may not exceed 25% of the degree/certificate requirements. For the Occupational Safety and Health Technology Program, this equates to 18 credit hours, based on a total of 70 credit hours required for the AAS degree. The maximum number of credits allowed as Credit for Prior Learning toward the Certificate in OSHT is 8, based on a total of 30 credit hours required.
Credit awarded for prior learning through this policy may not be used to meet residency credit requirements for certificate or degree programs, and **a student must enroll for and complete at least one semester hour of credit at the college before any Credit for Prior Learning will be posted on the student's transcript.**

Credit for Prior Learning will generally not transfer to another college or university; students should check with an institution to which they plan to transfer for that institution’s policy regarding transfer of portfolio credit. Likewise, Trinidad State Junior College and the Occupational Safety and Health Technology program do not accept portfolio credits as transfer credit from other institutions.

All credits awarded for prior learning must be evaluated and meet ‘C’ level standards or higher for recognition under this policy. Award of credit will be as follows:

**Portfolio: Credit (no grade)**

**Portfolio Assessment:**

Credit for portfolio learning which has been acquired through work and life experiences is to be evaluated and substantiated through a formal portfolio assessment program which entails the following:

1. **Development of Portfolio**

   First, review the OSH course descriptions on the Colorado Community College System Common Course Numbering web site and do a self-assessment of how your own prior training and on-the-job experience match up with the OSH courses. After you have determined the course(s) for which you want to seek credit for life experience (maximum of 18 credit hours for AAS degree and maximum of 8 credit hours for Certificate in OSHT), email the OSHT Program with a list of courses and the supporting documentation you plan to use for each course.

   Upon approval from the OSHT Program, you will be emailed an approval to proceed with your portfolios. At this point, you should return to the Common Course Numbering web site (“OSH course descriptions” linked above) to review the learning objectives and course outline for each class for which you will complete a portfolio. You will need to address the learning objectives in your written narrative (see "Required Components" below).

   **-Required Components-**

   The format must be in accordance with the Credit for Prior Learning Handbook, Chapter IX. *(Note: Items listed in Chapter IX that are actually needed are Cover Page and Table of Contents, Narrative of Intent/Relevance/Course Requests [these can be combined into a single section], Resume, and Documentation. You do not need to include your Degree/Certificate Program Plan or the Request for Portfolio Credit form, as these will be included by the OSH Program evaluator.)*

   Students, when developing their portfolio, are to **address each of the evaluative criteria listed below:**
• The learning must be demonstrable.
• The learning must have both a theoretical and an applied component. (See definitions.)
• The learning must be college level.
• The learning must be currently applicable.
• The learning must be equated to a specific course in the college’s curriculum applicable to the student's certificate or degree requirements.

The following includes the expected minimum:

• A cover page and table of contents page. On the cover page, please include both your name and your student ID number (beginning with S); your portfolio cannot and will not be processed if this number is not included.
• A short (generally 2-7 pages) written narrative of intent/relevance/course requests document, explaining in detail the student’s theoretical and applied learning and how it meets the learning objectives for the particular course. A separate portfolio must be completed for each course for which the student is seeking credit for life experience.
• A copy of the student’s resume.
• Documentation which supports the information in the written narrative. This documentation may include certificates of completion for training courses, printouts of company-sponsored training records, letters of verification from current or previous supervisors, examples of student-compiled safety programs, and any other information which supports the student’s narrative. (It is not necessary to send entire written programs; an example - for instance, one section of a program - is sufficient.) To support information with regard to on-the-job experience and duties, a letter from a supervisor or manager is REQUIRED.

DO NOT SEND any original documents that you want returned; we will not make copies or return documents. Enclose only photocopies, as all information that we receive will be kept in your student file here at the college, upon approval of your portfolio.

2. Evaluation of Portfolio

Completed portfolios must be either emailed to osh@trinidadstate.edu or faxed to 719-846-5074.

Initial evaluation of the portfolio will be conducted by subject matter expert(s) in the OSHT Program. The evaluators will utilize the criteria delineated under the “Development of Portfolio” section above when assessing Credit for Prior Learning portfolios.

After OSHT Program review and approval, the portfolio must be evaluated and approved by the Dean of Career and Technical Education, the Registrar, and the Vice President for
3. Processing and Evaluation Cost

The portfolio evaluation fee will be equivalent to 50% of the current in-state tuition rate (see [http://www.trinidadstate.edu/students/business-office/tuition-fee-schedule-istc](http://www.trinidadstate.edu/students/business-office/tuition-fee-schedule-istc) for current rates). Once the portfolio is approved and credit awarded, you will receive a billing memorandum from the TSJC Business Office.

**Definitions:**

Applied Component: The experiential component of the learning described in the portfolio, which may include paid, civic, community, or volunteer work.

Awarded Credit: Credit received for college-level learning gained from non-collegiate experiences (e.g., work and life experiences; correspondence and extension courses; civic, community and volunteer work; and participation in formal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry.

Earned Credit: Credit received from the completion of college courses taken while the student is officially registered and enrolled at a college or university.

Portfolio: A document which is prepared by the student and which contains rationale, information, and material that demonstrates that the student has acquired knowledge and skills equivalent to that of a student completing college classroom course work for the same identified course(s).

Prior Learning: Non-college or experience-based learning that has been attained outside the sponsorship of accredited postsecondary education institutions.

Theoretical Component: The training component of the learning described in the portfolio, which may include correspondence or extension courses, as well as participation in formal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry.