**APM 218**

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**Academic Credit for Prior Learning Assessment Policy**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the variety of methods for earning academic credit at Fresno State. This policy expresses the commitments of the faculty to an asset-based philosophy and recognition of the many ways that students learn and demonstrate their learning. Additionally, this policy complies with Executive Order 1036.

1. Definitions
2. *Examination* is a set of questions or exercises used to evaluate skill or knowledge in a particular area. Exam responses may be documented in hard copy, electronic, or multimedia format. For the purposes of this policy, types of examinations include:
3. Challenge exam: refers to a campus-originated exam that is used to demonstrate knowledge of course content. It is developed by at least one Fresno State faculty member and is accepted by the department as satisfying the requirements of the course. A challenge exam provides credit for prior learning that is demonstrated.
4. Placement exam: establishes appropriate placement for learning and does not provide credit
5. Standardized external examination: for example, Advanced Placement (AP) Exams, College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate Exams (IB)
6. *Outcomes-based Education* is an educational model in which the educators first identify the desired end results, identify and develop the means to achieve those results, and assess student learning. The results of the assessment are used to improve both instruction and curriculum. This means that faculty members publicly articulate learning outcomes and assessment criteria in advance of instruction. They also focus curriculum and instruction on the agreed-upon student learning outcomes. Student progress and completion of courses and programs of study are determined by proficiency in the articulated outcomes.
7. *Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)* is the evaluation of college-level knowledge or skills an individual has gained outside of the classroom for college credit. Evidence of prior learning successfully assessed by a Fresno State faculty member is accepted by the department as satisfying the requirements of a course.
8. *Standards and Criteria* are established specifications by which student achievement is determined.
9. Accepted Approaches to Admissions Eligibility and College Credit in the CSU1
10. Standardized External Exams

Fresno State will award admission eligibility and/or baccalaureate credit to be applied to the degree for those students who pass any of the following standardized external examinations:

1. Advanced Placement (AP) Tests
2. College Level Entrance Program (CLEP)
3. International Baccalaureate (IB) program2

The amount of credit awarded and the minimum passing scores for successful completion of AP, IB, and CLEP is distributed annually by the Chancellor's Office in a coded memorandum.

Students shall ensure official test scores and/or transcripts are sent to Fresno State for evaluation.

1. Challenge Exams

Departments may develop and provide challenge exams for major and elective courses to matriculated students. Courses meeting University Requirements (UR) and General Education (GE) requirements are not available for challenge exams; however, students may be able to provide evidence of prior learning for assessment of these courses (see section E below).

Students who successfully complete a challenge exam for a course will be awarded academic credit that is documented in their academic record.

1. Educational Experiences in the Armed Services

Fresno State will award students credit toward admissions eligibility and toward the degree for specific types of formal instruction in non-collegiate settings in the military4. The following guidelines apply:

1 There are other factors that may impact admissions eligibility. Please contact the Office of Admissions for more detail.

2Section 1.2 of EO I036

3Section 1.3.1 of EO I036

4 Section 3. 1 of EO I036

1. Completion of programs cited in the Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services will be accepted for undergraduate or graduate credit as recommended by the American Council on Education in its current publications. Further, Fresno State will limit the number of units it allows to be counted toward the baccalaureate degree to the units recommended by the American Council of Education in its current publications.5
2. Formal instruction in non-collegiate military settings may receive undergraduate credit for courses that are comparable to courses offered at most CSU campuses. Credit will not be allowed for occupationally oriented courses enabling one to operate as a technician.6
3. Fresno State will make every effort to award the above credit for specific university requirements and/or a category of university degree requirements rather than as elective credit. For example, completion of basic military training may be used toward satisfaction of Area E in Title 5.7
4. Students shall ensure official military transcripts (CCAF or JST) are sent to Fresno State for evaluation.
5. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)of Course-based Learning

Fresno State may award credit toward the degree for matriculated students who bring knowledge, skills, and abilities to Fresno State that enable them to satisfy all the learning outcomes of a course.

If available, course-level learning may be assessed in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, portfolio review, recorded performance, and/or committee review.

Supporting information may be supplied by a field supervisor and/or employer if the learning occurred in a field setting. Satisfactory assessment shall be verified by faculty with expertise in the appropriate discipline(s).8

Students who successfully assess a course will be awarded academic credit that is documented in their academic record.

5 Sections 3.1 & 3.2.1 of EO 1036

6 Section 3.l of EO 1036

7 Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 of EO 1036

8 Section 2.3 of EO 1036

1. Limitations of Awarding Academic Credit
2. Conditions for External Exams

Fresno State will use the list of standardized external and system-wide examinations maintained by the Chancellor's Office.9 Additionally, Fresno State accepts the uniform system passing scores and the minimum amounts of credit awarded for the calculation of admissions eligibility and toward the degree.10

1. Conditions for Campus-Originated Challenge Exams

Students may not challenge a course that is a prerequisite to a course for which academic credit has already been earned. Further, a student may not elect to challenge a course for which any grade (including "F", "WU", "IC", "NC", or "AU") was received in a previous semester, for which academic renewal has been granted, or for which a prior challenge or attempt to assess has been unsuccessful.

1. Conditions for Credit of Prior Learning Assessment

Students may not request PLA for a course that is a prerequisite to a course for which academic credit has already been earned. Further, a student may not request PLA for a course in which any grade (including "F", "WU", "IC", "NC", or "AU", or equivalent) was received in a previous semester, for which academic renewal has been granted, or for which a challenge or previous attempt to assess has been unsuccessful.

1. Limit of Units

Academic credit awarded for external or system-wide examination, educational experience in the armed services, instruction in non-­collegiate settings, and/or learning, skills and knowledge acquired through experience are limited to 25% (30 units of a baccalaureate degree). A maximum of 30 semester units is allowed for Credit for Prior Learning, including Credit by Examination (CLEP, DANTES, etc.), military credit and/or education. Maximum does not include Credit for Advanced Placement Examination (AP) & International Baccalaureate (IB). Procedures for awarding credit, including unit limitations for addition of minors and double majors, are further described in the Catalog and on the University's web site11 and as referenced in APM 201.

9Section 1.2.4.1of EO I036; Coded Memo: 2008-28

10Section 1.2.2.1, 1.2.4.2 of EO 1036

11Section 1.2.3.4 of EO 1036

1. Exceptions to the Award of Credit

Credit by examination may not be used to fulfill the university's residency requirement. Successful completion of a challenge exam for a course for which the challenge was prohibited (as detailed in the section of "Conditions for Credit") will not receive credit.

Credit shall not be awarded twice for the same demonstrated university-level learning, unless otherwise specified in the Catalog; the rule is against duplication and credit. For example, credit for passage of standardized external exam or system-wide examination will not be awarded when equivalent degree credit has been granted for regular coursework, credit by assessment, or some other instructional process.12

Credit shall not be awarded for passage of an external examination when credit has already been awarded at a level more advanced than the content of the examination.13

1. Documenting Credit for the Academic Record

The University shall waive required coursework based on the score of a placement exam resulting in a lower division requirement being satisfied. This will be documented in the student's academic record as "satisfied," without awarded credit. The source of the placement exam and the student's score will be included in the record.

Credit earned through successful challenge exam and/or prior learning assessment, will be documented in the student's academic record as Credit/No Credit (CR/NC). Credit earned by exam, prior learning assessment, or formal instruction in non-collegiate setting shall be clearly identified in the student's academic record.14

Students shall be allowed to appeal decisions regarding credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience through existing campus grade appeal procedures. 15

1. Continuous Renewal

This policy shall be reviewed ten years from its implementation date to determine its effectiveness and appropriateness. This policy may be reviewed before that time as necessary.

11Section 1.2.2.5 of EO I036

12Section 1.2.2.4 of EO 1036

13 Sections 1.2.3.5 and 3.4.3 of EO 1036

14Section 3.4.1 of EO 1036

15 Section 2.5.3 of EO 1036