

UT Health Science Center: AA106-H Credit for Prior Learning Policy	
Version 2	Publication Date: 01/31/2025

No./Title: AA106 – CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING POLICY	Resp. Office: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS Approval Body: CASA	Effective Date: 10/12/2015
Category: Academic	Last Review: 10/05/2021	Next Review: 10/05/2024
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Related Policies & Information:	In 2012, the Tennessee Prior Learning Assessment Task Force published a report, titled, Recommended Standards in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy and Practice for Tennessee Public Colleges and Universities. Available at: https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/Recommendations%20for%20Standards%20in%20PLA%20-%20Final%20Version%201-1.pdf	

POLICY

The UTHSC provides students with opportunities to demonstrate college and university-level learning gained in non-credit or experiential settings. The institution has established practices for evaluating and granting academic credit for such learning.¹

POLICY RATIONALE AND EXPLANATION

Value Statement

“The public colleges and universities of Tennessee value the diversity of their students. This diversity includes the unique experiences, interests and intellectual pursuits that lead to the acquisition of knowledge that may be at the college level. College-level learning is the same whether acquired in the traditional college classroom or through non-collegiate sources. This equivalency is validated by academically sound and rigorous prior learning assessment.”²

UTHSC accepts credits for learning gained outside the traditional academic environment in accordance with the guidelines and recommended standards for Tennessee Public Universities¹ pending the review and approval of the request. Where appropriate, UTHSC accepts armed services course credits using the guidelines developed by ACE³ (American Council on Education) to satisfy general education and elective requirements.

¹ This policy does not apply to students in the College of Pharmacy at this time due to accreditation standards.

² Source: Recommended Standards in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy and Practice for Tennessee Public Colleges and Universities.

³ The Military Guide may be found at <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx>

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Parameters for Awarding Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

“Any credits awarded for prior learning must be in compliance with the Standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC Standard 10.8) and policies and guidelines of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the University of Tennessee.”¹

PROCEDURE⁴:

A student who meets the following conditions may seek credit for prior learning by following the UTHSC procedure for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA):

- The student must have been admitted to one of the UTHSC academic programs.
- The student must consult with an advisor about the possibility and advisability of seeking credit for PLA.
- The student may only seek PLA for courses directly applicable to the curriculum requirements of the declared academic program.

A student may apply for no more than 18 credit hours through portfolio assessment of prior learning experiences. Students seeking credit for prior learning must submit the portfolio assessment of prior learning by the dates provided by the colleges.

The PLA process is self-paced and should include interaction with a college-based portfolio development expert and, when appropriate, with the college-based portfolio assessor.

Development of the Portfolio

Credit for prior learning must be evaluated based on what the individual has **learned** and **not simply as work experience**. The following outline for creating a portfolio for evaluation of credit for prior learning should be followed by a student seeking credit for prior learning.

- I. **Cover Page**
- II. **Table of Contents**
- III. **Course Specific Information**
For students seeking credit for electives, the information provided would be based on catalog listing at the home institution. For students seeking credit for major courses, the information provided would be taken from the UTHSC Catalog.
 - a. Course Name
 - b. Course Description
 - c. Course Learning Objectives
- IV. **Academic Honesty Statement**
- V. **Current Resume**
- VI. **Specific Prior Learning Narrative (2-4 pages)**

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The student should provide details about the learning environment as well as overall objectives for any educational activities associated with work in a health profession. For example, if a specialty certification was awarded, what knowledge, skills and attitudes were required to receive this credential. The student may have completed continuing education programs or other professional development experiences. If so, these should be detailed in the narrative.

VII. Documentation that demonstrates learning

This may include documents detailing specialty certification, professional development or continuing education.

- a. Document 1
- b. Document 2
- c. Document 3
- d. Document, etc.

⁴ Students admitted to the online MLT to MLSBS must have completed the MLT degree as a requirement for admission to the baccalaureate program. Additionally, these students must have completed 30 credits of general education.

Assessment of the Portfolio

Faculty assessors must be a full-time program director or designee in the academic program where the student was admitted. These assessors must have demonstrated expertise in portfolio evaluation.

The rubric for assessing prior learning must include these elements:

- Identification of critical learning events experienced by the student;
- Breadth and depth of new knowledge and skills(s) acquired;
- The relationship of new knowledge and skill(s) with appropriate theory/concepts associated with academic discipline and degree program;
- The application of new knowledge and skill(s);
- Critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills; and,
- Supportive documentation.

Assessor Training and Requirements

Faculty members who assess the portfolio should have subject matter expertise as well as pedagogical expertise.

Process for Institutional Acceptance of Credit

1. All credits awarded for prior learning must be submitted to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs using the *Request for Institutional Acceptance of Academic Credit for Prior Learning* form.

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2. Once reviewed, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will submit the form to the Registrar.
3. The registrar will enter the credit into the student's academic record using standard notations for the transcript.

Appeals Process

Students may appeal decisions regarding credits for prior learning to the Academic Dean of the College. Should the Academic Dean uphold the decision of the assessor, the student may appeal to the Dean. A final appeal may be made to the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs.

APPROVAL HISTORY

Effective: October 12, 2015

Approved: October 6, 2015, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

Approved: October 12, 2015, Chancellor

Revised: January 15, 2019, CASA

Approved: January 15, 2019, Chancellor

Reviewed: October 5, 2021, CASA

Approved: 10-11-2021, Chief Academic Officer