

FHSU Procedures for Portfolio-Based Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Portfolio-Based Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Some adult learners enter our institution with knowledge and skills not recognized by formal institutional credit awards. A portfolio CPL program allows students a means to seek credentialing based on their significant learning gained outside the classroom.

Portfolio-based CPL has become an accepted practice at universities offering high quality adult learning programs. Between 2004 and 2011, CPL granting institutions grew by 35% to 2,007 institutions (<http://www.cael.org/News/Are-More-Institutions-Offering-PLA->). In 2012, the entire Pennsylvania State System adopted the use of CPL. According to the Council for Adult & Experiential Learning's (CAEL) research study *Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success*, CPL students have:

- higher graduation rates;
- demonstrated greater persistence in completing courses;
- improved time to degree;
- higher GPAs;
- completed more tuition-bearing credits at their home institution.

Procedures for Awarding Credit for Portfolio-Based CPL

A student must be admitted to the university as a degree-seeking student to be eligible for portfolio-based Credit for Prior Learning.

The portfolio coordinator will assess the needs of the student, advise them of the CPL options, and help them select which option is best. The coordinator will implement FHSU's CPL policies and coordinate the process among student, assessor, department chair, Assistant Provost for Academic Programs, and the Registrar's office.

Availability of Portfolio Based Credit for Prior Learning

The university will promote those departments where portfolio-based credit for prior learning is available through a trained FHSU faculty assessor on its website to prospective students. Portfolio-based credit for prior learning may not be available in all departments and the university shall insure the accuracy of this promotion prior to student enrollment in UNIV 099. The portfolio CPL coordinator will work with university advisors to accurately communicate where portfolio CPL is available in the university.

If the portfolio coordinator identifies that the student has life experiences that could potentially lead to credit via portfolio, the student will enroll in UNIV 099 Prior Learning Portfolio. Students enrolled in UNIV 099 will be able to request credit evaluation for up to 15 credits of course work at FHSU. The portfolio created in this course shall be based on learning the student has obtained through life, traditional and nontraditional learning experiences, and work. At a minimum, each portfolio should consist of:

- an expanded resume or learning chart
- PLA course petition, including a correlation between the learning outcomes of the course and how they match the evidence in the portfolio
- A CPL essay with substantial documentation and/or examples in support of the course petition

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The CPL course essay should be constructed using the Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning (<http://learningfromexperience.com/research/>):

- Descriptions of concrete experiences and learning gained from those experiences
- Reflections of learning
- Development of concepts based on those reflections
- Examples of using those concepts

CPL Assessors

The CPL Coordinator will work with FHSU academic departments to identify and train faculty portfolio “**assessors**”. FHSU faculty assessors must meet university HLC minimum qualified faculty requirements. A portfolio completed in the UNIV 099 course may be submitted by a student for an assessment of a maximum of 15 total credits. A student will be charged an assessment fee for each course assessment request they submit. FHSU faculty members who agree to assess portfolio documentation for possible academic credit will be paid from the proceeds of the course assessment fee.

Student Responsibilities

Students enrolled in UNIV 099 Prior Learning Portfolio will successfully complete all course requirements. Students understand that credit awards are determined by departmental practice and may vary across the university. FHSU neither implies nor guarantees an award of credit for portfolios submitted for evaluation to departments. Students must submit a request for portfolio CPL assessment with fee payment within a period of one year after completing UNIV 099. A student who does not submit a request for portfolio CPL assessment within one year after completing UNIV 099 may re-submit a request for assessment only with the payment of an additional portfolio CPL fee.

Fees

The submission of a CPL portfolio carries with it the understanding that significant amounts of professional time and expertise by faculty and staff members will be expended above and beyond the confines of traditional course instructional time. Therefore, a CPL portfolio fee will be assessed per course for which credit is desired. Fees are used by the institution to cover costs incurred by portfolio assessor time/effort and for the creation of evaluation rubrics. Fees associated with the submission of portfolios for evaluation are non-refundable.

Portfolio Assessor (Faculty) Responsibilities

A portfolio assessor's role is to determine whether a student has proven that he or she has comparable learning to earn credit with a passing grade. Once the portfolio has been submitted, the assessor will be given access to the portfolio via an email containing a web link.

Full-time FHSU faculty who desire to perform the role of a portfolio assessor shall be required to complete training from the university in portfolio assessment prior to being assigned portfolios for review. However, no portfolios will be assigned to a faculty member who has not completed university-approved portfolio-based CPL training. Portfolios will be reviewed according to a university-approved portfolio CPL rubric.

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The portfolio is based on student learning that has occurred prior to completing UNIV 099. Just as each instructor will personalize a course and focus on different aspects of a subject, portfolios may not exactly match what would be taught in a class. A portfolio is not an independent study where an instructor may determine the particular scope or focus of the work. However, the portfolio should demonstrate a breadth and depth of knowledge in a particular area that would be comparable to what is taught during a semester and must demonstrate how all expected course learning outcomes are met.

When assessing the portfolio, an assessor assigns a pass or fail grade rather than assigning a letter grade. Passing shall be considered “C” level work and above. Assessors are not expected to correct any spelling or grammatical errors and university-level writing competency is expected. The assessor will use a portfolio rubric to assess the level of the portfolio.

Assessors who are unsure about recommending or denying credit may, in consultation with the CPL coordinator, request more information from the student.

The assessment can have one of the following outcomes:

- recommend credit be given for the proposed course
- recommend credit be given for a different course
- deny credit be awarded

When completed, the assessor completes the portfolio evaluation form which is sent to the department chair for processing.

Summary of Assessors Actions:

- Agree to evaluate the portfolio
- Complete the Assessor Training
- Review the portfolio
- Request additional information from student (optional)
- Complete evaluation rubric
- Submit evaluation
- Provide any additional feedback

An assessor is paid for each portfolio they assess.

Appeals

A student may appeal the assessor’s evaluation to the department chair. If the department chair upholds the assessor’s decision, then the student can appeal to the Assistant Provost for Academic Programs. The Assistant Provost will make a final determination based on this recommendation.

In lieu of an appeal, the student can re-develop the portfolio and apply again for the CPL credit by paying the portfolio application fee again. A student may only apply for portfolio CPL credit twice for the same course, however.

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Department Chair Responsibilities

Department chairs are responsible for ensuring that the CPL process is completed according to FHSU policy, Regents CPL guidelines, and FHSU procedures. Department chairs will review the recommendation from the FHSU faculty assessor and request payment from the Assistant Provost for Academic Programs upon completion.

Awarding of Credit in Certificate or Degree Program

Portfolio credit will be awarded by semester based on when the completed portfolio is submitted. The semester the credit is earned will be determined following the time frame listed below. All other university policies regarding the transcription of transfer credit shall apply.

Portfolio Submission Dates	Semester Credit is Awarded
August 1 – December 1	Fall
January 1 - May 1	Spring
June 1 - July 31	Summer

Credit hours earned through Credit for Prior Learning will be assigned the grade of “CR”. Students may apply a maximum of 6 credit hours earned through Credit for Prior Learning toward an undergraduate certificate, up to 30 credits (15 credits of portfolio review) for an associate’s degree, and up to 60 credits (15 credits of portfolio review) for a bachelor’s degree. Graduate students may apply a maximum of 6 credit hours earned through Credit for Prior Learning towards master’s degrees. No credit hours earned through Credit for Prior Learning may be applied towards Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) or doctorate degrees at FHSU.

To meet residency requirements students must complete a minimum amount of course work at FHSU with a passing letter grade for each degree level. Current minimums are: 6 credit hours to be awarded a certificate, 15 credit hours to be awarded an associate’s degree, and 30 credit hours to be awarded a bachelor’s degree. For graduate students, credit hours earned through Credit for Prior Learning are not counted for the purpose of determining if at least half of the program of study has been completed with FHSU coursework.

The credits awarded through the prior learning method process are awarded for a FHSU degree. FHSU does not guarantee the credits awarded through the portfolio prior learning method will transfer to other institutions or be applied to other FHSU degree programs.

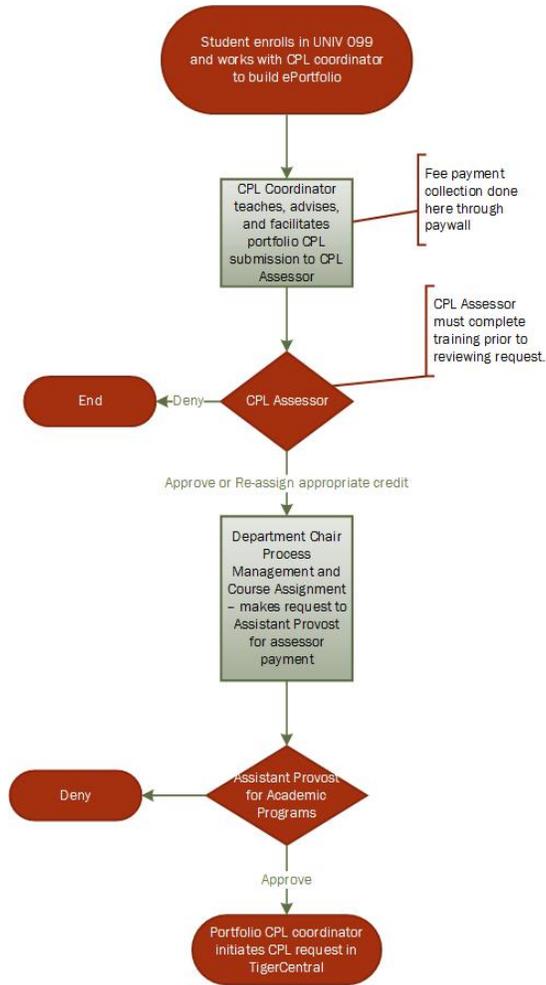
Step-by-Step Procedure

1. Adult learner gains knowledge of portfolio options through advisor, FHSU website, Virtual College, department, or other means.

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2. Adult learner contacts portfolio coordinator for information about the process.
3. Student enrolls in UNIV 099: Prior Learning Portfolio
4. At the end of UNIV 099, student submits portfolio to the portfolio coordinator who assigns it to the appropriate FHSU departmental assessor.
5. FHSU assessors independently review the portfolio.
6. Upon completion of the portfolio review, assessors will complete one of the following actions:
 - a. Approve the portfolio with an award of “CR” in the course requested
 - b. Award “CR” credit using different title or level of course
 - c. Deny credit
7. The portfolio assessor’s decision routes to the department chair to initiate payment processing for the faculty member and the Assistant Provost for Academic Programs for final review.
8. The Assistant Provost for Academic Programs makes the final determination of credit (or denial) and notifies the portfolio CPL coordinator who initiates the CPL workflow notification process in TigerCentral if credit is granted and communicates with the student.

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Approved by Faculty Senate 2-6-17

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