



## University Policy Statement

### UPS 310.000

## CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

CSU Executive Order 1036 states that academic credit earned from 1) examinations, 2) learning, skills, and knowledge acquired through experience, 3) learning acquired outside formal higher education, and/or 4) education, training and service provided by the Armed Forces of the United States shall apply towards admissions eligibility and/or the degree. Students may earn up to 25% of total program units through prior learning assessment. To count towards a master's degree, credit for prior learning units must be at the 400- or 500-level and be acceptable for graduate credit; units do not count toward in-residence units for the graduate program.

### I. CHALLENGE EXAMS

Students shall be granted credit toward their degree and to meet curriculum requirements by the satisfactory completion of **campus-originated challenge examinations** (as differentiated from placement examinations). Information about challenge examinations shall be included in the campus catalog and a central website. Challenge exams shall be made available to students upon request (Title 5 40408) for courses identified by the academic unit as offering a challenge examination.

Campus-originated challenge examinations are to be comprehensive and administered by the sponsoring academic units. A student may request a challenge exam in advance of the start of a semester in which the course is being offered by using the appropriate University form available in the Office of the Registrar, and securing signed approval from the chair of the academic unit in which the course is offered.

Challenge examinations shall be administered no later than the end of the second week of the semester. Matriculated students shall enroll in the course being challenged prior to taking the exam. If the student does not pass the challenge exam, the student will have the option of completing the course. Upon successful passage of the examination, the student shall be excused from the course and the instructor shall report the grade of "CR" to the Office of the Registrar. A challenge examination for any course may be administered only once per student.

### II. STANDARDIZED EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Undergraduate students shall be granted credit toward the baccalaureate degree and to meet curriculum requirements by the satisfactory completion of **standardized examinations** such as Advanced Placement (AP) Tests, International Baccalaureate (IB), and College Level Entrance Program (CLEP). The Office of the Chancellor shall maintain a list of standardized examinations and their appropriateness of systemwide general education. The required passing score and minimum amount of credit awarded toward a degree or general education for a standardized exam is determined by the Office of the Chancellor (see CSU Systemwide Credit for External Examinations). Credit for passage of a standardized examination shall not be

awarded if equivalent degree credit has been earned through regular coursework, prior learning assessment, or other instructional processes. Awarding of duplicate credit due to overlapping tests, college-level courses, or both shall be avoided. In the case of a partial overlap, the amount of credit awarded to the student shall be reduced. Credit for passage of standardized examinations shall not be awarded when credit has been granted at a level more advanced than the content level in the examination.

For students who enter as first year students, the campus will specify whether the credits earned by passing standardized external examinations or system-wide examinations shall be applicable as general education, major, or elective credits. For transfer students who enter with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), or full or partial certification in CSU General Education (GE) Breadth, the campus shall honor certifications that apply credits earned by passing standardized external examinations as authorized by CSU policy.

The campus may establish policies that allow the granting of additional credits earned by standardized examination upon matriculation. The Chancellor's General Education Advisory Committee shall evaluate a proposed standardized exam for systemwide general education academic credit and make recommendations on its appropriateness.

No more than 30 units of credit from standardized exams shall be applied to the degree excluding International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Tests. The name of the examination, the student's score, and the credit earned shall be identified in the student's transcript.

Credit by external examination may not be used to fulfill the minimum units in residence requirements for the undergraduate or graduate degree.

### **III. CREDIT FOR DEMONSTRATED LEARNING, KNOWLEDGE, OR SKILLS ACQUIRED THROUGH NON-MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

Academic credit for learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience shall only be used to earn credit toward a degree, not for determining eligibility for admission unless previously transcribed on a student's academic record. Credit shall be awarded for a specific CSUF course or major's requirement. The academic unit offering the specific course(s) shall determine the extent to which credits from experiential learning will be applied to degree, general education, or elective credits. Objectives, policies, procedures, and criteria for awarding credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience shall be fully described in the catalog and campus web site.

Matriculated CSUF students who have established evidence of a satisfactory learning pattern (15 units in residence for undergraduate students; enrollment for graduate students) may seek credit for experiential learning that is appropriate to the student's degree objective and/or general education requirements. Academic credit awarded for experiential learning for students who enter CSUF with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), full, or partial certification in CSU General Education Breadth, shall be accepted for articulation and transfer. Academic credit shall be awarded for experiential learning that is creditable and verifiable. Verification of experiential learning shall be assessed through appropriate methodologies including written examinations, portfolios, personal interviews, demonstrations, or other means. Assessments shall be created and evaluated by faculty or subject matter experts. Supporting documentation of prior experiential learning may be supplied by an immediate supervisor and/or employer. A

student's academic record shall identify the specific course or category of degree requirement for which the student has received credit for demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skills acquired through experience. Students shall be allowed to appeal a negative decision regarding credit for experiential learning using the petitions process.

#### **IV. CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING ACQUIRED OUTSIDE OF TRADITIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION**

Students may earn academic credit toward a degree using workforce or industry learning completed outside of traditional higher education. Credits shall be granted based on the recommendation of an organization such as the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) or the American Council on Education (ACE) that conducts evaluations of training offered by employers or the military. Examples of industry-recognized credentials include the Society of Human Resource Management, IBM Corporation, Google IT, and Fire and Rescue Training. Students shall be awarded course credit as recommended by the ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training or other approved guides as appropriate for a student's academic objectives.

Credits shall be awarded for a specific CSUF course or major's requirement. The academic unit offering the specific course(s) shall determine the extent to which credits from workforce learning will be applied to degree or elective credits. The extent to which credits from workforce learning will be applied to general education requirements shall be determined by the Office of the Registrar. Students shall be allowed to appeal a negative decision regarding credit for experiential learning using the petitions process.

#### **V. CREDIT FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES**

Education, training, and service completed during military service shall be evaluated to award appropriate academic credit towards degree completion to students who are veterans. Evaluation of education, training, and service provided by the Armed Forces shall be based on the recommendations in the American Council on Education (ACE) Military Guide. Academic work completed at one of the U.S. Armed Forces accredited institutions should be evaluated and articulated in the same manner as other regionally accredited colleges or universities.

Credits shall be awarded for a specific CSUF course or area in a degree program requirement. The academic unit offering the specific course(s) shall determine the extent to which credits from the armed forces will be applied to degree or elective credits. The Office of the Registrar shall determine the extent to which credits from education, training and service by the Armed Forces of the United States will be applied to general education requirements. The number of units allowed shall follow the recommendations of the ACE Military Guide. Academic credit awarded for education, training and service by the Armed Forces for students who enter CSUF with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), or full or partial certification in CSU General Education Breadth, shall be accepted for articulation and transfer. Accurate records that such credit has been awarded must be maintained for review by state and federal veterans' education compliance officials. Students shall be allowed to appeal a negative decision regarding credit for education, training and service by the Armed Forces using the petitions process.

Source: Academic Standards Committee

**EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2, 2025**  
Supersedes UPS 310.000 dated 7-10-2024  
and ASD 24-51