

# Credit for Prior Learning Policy - Undergraduate

---

UW-La Crosse appreciates and values students' learning experiences outside of the confines of UWL's sponsored credit instruction and uses a student-centered approach to recognize, evaluate and award credit for that knowledge. Students may be awarded credit for their university-level learning through a variety of ways including but not limited to transfer coursework, credit by national exam, military experience and training, industry-certified and assessed credentials or licensures, and UWL administered prior learning assessments. These methods of gaining credit for prior learning (CPL) foster educational attainment and can shorten time to degree or credential completion.

Each UWL academic department is encouraged to identify or develop an assessment tool for awarding credit for each course the department determines to be introductory and eligible for CPL, including courses applicable to the Skills Component of the General Education Program. Students should work with Admissions, their advisor, or dean's office to identify possible pathways to gaining credit for their university-level knowledge.

## Credit by transfer

The University of Wisconsin System Undergraduate Transfer Policy (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/uw-system-undergraduate-transfer-policy/>) provides guidance to UW institutions regarding the admission and credit evaluation of transfer students from UW institutions, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and other accredited colleges and universities. Key aspects of the policy, as well as other general transfer information, can be found within the policy.

Credits considered for transfer to UWL must have been earned at regionally or nationally accredited institutions, e.g., Higher Learning Commission/North Central Association. In addition to institutional accreditation, the quality, comparability, and applicability of the credits are examined to determine transferability to UWL. Transfer credit is allowed for appropriate college-level courses completed at four-year colleges and universities as well as from two-year colleges and vocational/technical schools with accredited college parallel programs. Credits in vocational/technical programs other than college parallel programs typically will not transfer to this university (see WTCS Transfer Policy below for more information).

### Transfer of low grades

A course in which a low grade (e.g., C-, D, D-) was earned and accepted by this university may be applied to general education and/or core requirements but will be subject to re-evaluation at a later date if the student chooses to major, minor or focus in the subject area or discipline in which the low grade was earned and a higher grade is required to meet program requirements.

## General education waiver policy

Students who have completed the following may transfer to UWL as having satisfied the General Education Program:

- Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university;
- Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree from a regionally accredited college or university including but not limited to:

- Associate of Arts and Science degree from a University of Wisconsin System Branch Campus;
- Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree from a Wisconsin Technical College System institution with an accredited college parallel program.
- The Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC).

Students admitted with a bachelor's degree or an associate degree are still required to meet all core, professional, ethnic studies, prerequisite, major and minor requirements. The university reserves the right to review the student's associate degree and require additional general education courses.

## Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Transfer Policy

In accordance with UW System undergraduate transfer policy, students transferring from a Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) accredited liberal arts/collegiate transfer program to UWL may generally transfer up to 72 credits. UWL may accept additional credits toward the degree where appropriate. Students must follow UWL's established minimum credits earned in residence requirement for undergraduate graduation.

UWL may grant transfer credit for general education (i.e., in communications, behavioral sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and natural science) offered within a WTCS applied associate degree program. In determining transferability of these courses, UWL will consider the quality and comparability of the coursework and its applicability to degree requirements.

## Transcripts from transfer students

UWL accepts transcripts sent directly from the issuing institution(s) or through an electronic, secure document sending service. Transcripts that are marked "Issued to Student" or that are hand delivered by a student will not be accepted unless the transcript remains sealed in the original stamped envelope from the issuing institution(s).

## International coursework

International institutions must be recognized by the appropriate authority in the country, such as the Ministry of Education. Course descriptions from all university-level courses are required. If detailed course descriptions are not provided, transfer credit will not be awarded. Please note that English language courses are not transferable to UWL, as they are not offered at university-level in the United States.

## Conversion of quarter-hours and units

All transfer credit processed from quarter-hour institutions will be converted to semester credits at UWL. Similarly, course work measured in units will be converted to semester credits. This will ensure students will receive the equivalent number of credits. To make the quarter-hour to semester-hour conversion, UWL multiplies quarter credits by 0.666. For example, if a student has 40 quarter credits ( $40 \times 0.666 = 26.64$ ), the student will receive 27 semester credits.

## Transfer resources and articulation agreements

The University of Wisconsin System maintains the Transfer Wisconsin (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/transfer/>) website. The site includes the Transferology (<https://www.transferology.com/school/uwlax/>) credit transfer tool which provides information about how courses transfer in the University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Technical College, and Wisconsin Tribal College systems. In addition, the site includes transfer guides,

articulation agreements, the Universal Credit Transfer Agreement (UCTA) and Transfer Plans.

### Universal Credit Transfer Agreement

The Universal Credit Transfer Agreement (<https://www.wisconsin.edu/transfer/universal-transfer/>) (UCTA) provides a set of courses that are transferable between all University of Wisconsin System institutions and Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) districts and typically satisfy general education or general degree requirements.

### Articulation agreements

UW La Crosse faculty and staff work jointly to identify pathways for students using labor market data, job protection data and course capacity information with domestic and international partner institutions. All current articulation agreements can be found on the Academic Affairs (<https://www.uwlax.edu/academic-affairs/resources/articulation-agreements/>) webpage. For additional information, contact the UWL Admissions Office.

### Retroactive credit

Students who enter UWL with advanced preparation in world languages (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/globalcultureslanguages/#gcl-retrocredit>) and mathematics (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/mathematics/#math-retrocredit>) may receive credit for that preparation by passing an appropriate advanced-level UWL course with a grade of "B" or better. See Admissions retroactive credit (<https://www.uwlax.edu/admissions/ap-ib-clep-credit/#tm-12695>) for more specific information.

All students who plan to continue a language already studied in high school must take the UW System Placement Test to determine the appropriate class level. The UWL Admissions Office will send Placement Test information to all accepted new first-year students. A student may receive retroactive credit provided a grade of "B" or better is earned in the student's first university course above the introductory level in a particular language. Retroactive credit may be given in one or more languages. No retroactive credit is given for any phonetics course.

### Credit by national/international exam

UWL offers credit for a variety of exams, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and the College-Level Examination Programs (<https://www.uwlax.edu/admissions/ap-ib-clep-credit/>). Official transcripts from the exam board must be submitted to the Admissions Office for evaluation to determine how academic credit will be awarded. See the Admissions website (<https://www.uwlax.edu/admissions/ap-ib-clep-credit/>) for common course equivalencies based on individual exam scores.

### Advanced Placement

Students who have participated in the Advanced Placement Program (AP) in high school and have received scores of 3, 4, or 5 will receive academic credit. Official transcripts of AP work must be submitted to the Admissions Office directly from the College Board for evaluation to determine how academic credit will be awarded. UWL's AP School Code is 1914. Contact the AP Testing Center at: [apcentral.collegeboard.com/home](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/home) or by phone at (888) 225-5427 for more information.

### CLEP

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) is a national program administered through the College Board. UWL will follow The American Council on Education (ACE) guidelines and recommendations for minimum scores for awarding credit in all subject examinations. Students should contact the Counseling and Testing Center 608.785.8073 for information about CLEP, and to order the exam.

Students who have taken CLEP exams at other approved sites may submit the results to the Admissions Office for evaluation to determine if academic credit will be awarded. Transcripts must be submitted directly from the College Board to the Admissions Office. More information is available on the CLEP website (<https://clep.collegeboard.org/>).

### A-Level exams

In many cases, students may receive advanced standing credit for some A-level exams. After a student has been admitted, the Admissions Office will perform an evaluation of credit for A-Level exam results. To grant the credit, we require an official copy of the A-Level exam certificate from the examination board. Credits will not be posted from Results Slips or internal school transcripts.

### International Baccalaureate

UWL will accept all International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level (HL) examinations with a score of 4 or greater. IB Standard Level (SL) examinations will receive credit if listed on the Admissions website (<https://www.uwlax.edu/admissions/ap-ib-clep-credit/#tm-international-baccalaureate-ib->). Official IB transcripts should be submitted to the Admissions Office for evaluation.

### DSST/DANTES

The DSST is a national, standardized exam evaluated by the American Council on Education Credit Evaluation Service (ACE). DANTES Subject standard tests provide students the opportunity to demonstrate college-level learning by taking exams that assess knowledge and skills taught in college courses if they achieve the minimum score required by UWL on the exams. Students must submit an official transcript to the Admissions Office for evaluation. More information is available on the DSST (<https://getcollegecredit.com/>), Prometric (<https://www.prometric.com/>), and Admissions websites.

### Credit for military training and service

Students at UWL may earn credit for the completion of basic training and advanced individual training. Military service school credit may be granted in transfer based upon recommendations of the American Council on Education. Credit for vocational/technical training or in a military occupational specialty will not be accepted. The Joint Services Transcript (JST) is the basic document used to evaluate transfer credits. To request an official copy of their transcript, students should visit the Joint Services Transcript (<https://jst.doded.mil/official.html>) site. Air Force enlisted personnel will continue to receive their official professional military education transcript from the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) (<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Barnes/CCAF/Display/Article/803247/community-college-of-the-air-force-transcripts/>).

Credit for military training and service is guided by WI Act 59 and WI Act 147. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with Admissions or their dean's office for applicability of awarded credits to their program and the UWL Veteran Services Office before making determinations regarding prior military credit. Students who are given credits that may not pertain directly to their program could be disadvantaged for financial aid purposes or other designations.

According to WI Act 59, Section 623m. 36.31 (4), upon receiving from the federal department of defense a student's official JST or CCAF transcripts, the institution or college campus in which the student is enrolled shall do the following:

- a. Accept all American Council on Education credit recommendations included in the official Joint Services Transcript

and award academic credit to the student in accordance with these recommendations.

b. Accept all credits included in the Community College of the Air Force transcript and award academic credit to the student accordingly.

Institutions will award credit according to these guidelines:

- The educational quality of the learning experience the student seeks to transfer;
- The comparability of the nature, content and level of the learning experience to that offered by the receiving Institutions; and
- The appropriateness and applicability of the learning experience to the programs offered by the receiving institution, in light of the student's educational goals.

According to WI Act 147, students may choose whether or not to accept the credits from their JST or CCAF transcript awarded by UWL. Furthermore, an institution or college campus may not award academic credit to a student for each course for which the student, upon consultation with the institution's or college campus's staff, objects to the awarding of credit for that course.

## Credit for professional/industry learning

In some disciplines, industry-certified training programs, assessments, or licensures may allow for credits awarded toward a student's specific degree requirements. These industry certified credentials must be verifiable and are up to individual UWL departments to determine validity and applicability to a student's program of study. Additional documentation or assessments may be required to validate learning and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. A list of UWL courses or programs recognizing or granting credit for professional/industry learning can be found on the Admissions website. Students should work with their dean's office or the appropriate academic department for more information or to request professional/industry learning to be reviewed for potential credit.

## Credit by institutional prior learning assessment

UWL departments and faculty have developed a variety of assessment tools to evaluate student learning specific to those departments. Assessments may include written exams, skills demonstrations, portfolio presentations or a combination of these. A small non-refundable fee will be charged for each assessment and is payable to the Cashiers Office. The fee must be paid prior to attempting the assessment and will go to the department offering the assessment.

Students interested in completing an institutional prior learning assessment should check with the department and their dean's office to make arrangements for completing the assessment. Students may not complete an institutional assessment for credit more than once unless they can provide sufficient rationale that additional learning has occurred since the last attempt.

## Portfolio

UWL students may seek credit for prior learning through a rigorous portfolio and evaluation process. The academic department or faculty must approve the use of the portfolio for credit prior to the student engaging in the portfolio process. Each portfolio is evaluated by a qualified content matter expert based on the published standards and learning outcomes of the course for which credit is being requested.

The prior learning portfolio is a collection of evidence or artifacts that directly supports a claim for credit for a specific course. Required documentation may vary depending on the course for which a student seeks credit.

A current list of UWL courses using the portfolio review process to grant credit for prior learning can be found on the Admissions website. For courses not listed here, students should contact the academic department to determine if the portfolio process is an option.

## Additional limitations and exceptions

Credits awarded through credit for prior learning do not count toward UWL's residence requirements. A minimum of 30-degree credits must be registered for and earned through UWL for a baccalaureate degree. A minimum of 15 credits must be registered for and earned through UWL for an associate degree. Individual departments may have more strict residency requirements. Please see UWL's undergraduate residence requirement policy (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies/graduation/#undergraduate-residence-requirement>) and individual department websites for more information.

Specific degree requirements differ among the various UWL schools and colleges. Credit will be applied toward degree requirements appropriately, depending upon which major and/or degree the student intends to complete based on the specific UWL department rules and regulations. To learn more about degree and major requirements, students should consult the undergraduate catalog (<http://catalog.uwlax.edu/undergraduate/>) or the appropriate undergraduate major. Admission to UWL does not assure admission to specific degree programs. All transfer students must meet the same criteria as continuing students (e.g., grade point average, course requirements, etc.) for admission to specific majors or programs.

## Transferring in CPL

Credit for prior learning that is internally reviewed, assessed and transcribed as a course equivalent by any University of Wisconsin institution will be considered for applicable credit by UWL as well. All other CPL awarded credits by non-UW institutions may need additional explanation or evaluation by UWL subject matter experts and may require additional fees.

## Transfer out CPL

For students who choose to transfer to another University of Wisconsin institution, that receiving institution will review UWL granted credits and determine how the credit will apply to their degree, guided by their institutional policies. Non-University of Wisconsin institutions may or may not review UWL granted credits. Students considering transferring to a non-UW System institution should contact that institution for their policies regarding granting credit for prior learning.

## Transcription of credit for prior learning

Credits awarded for prior learning will be posted on a student's transcript listed under the appropriate heading (e.g., Transfer Credits, Test Credits, Other Credits). After being admitted to UWL, the Admissions Office will evaluate a student's submitted credit for prior learning documents. Awarded credits will be posted to the term that corresponds with the admitted term or when the transfer course was completed. If a student pursues credit for prior learning at a later time, the credits awarded will be transcribed to the term the exam or assessment was evaluated.

Transfer courses earned are listed under the heading "Transfer Credits" on the student's transcript along with the grades earned and are recorded in terms of UWL courses. The student's record shows courses,

grades, and credits. Credits earned through AP, CLEP and IB are listed under the heading "Test Credits" on the student's transcript. All other credit awarded through the credit for prior learning process is listed under the heading "Other Credits." If a student attempts an institutional assessment and is unsuccessful, no record of the attempt will be noted on the student's UWL transcript.

Course credit earned via credit for prior learning does not carry grade points and does not factor into the UWL resident grade point average. Exceptions to this policy are necessary for admission into certain programs/majors or for eligibility requirements such as for athletics. Credits for CPL may be used for satisfactory academic progress (<https://www.uwlax.edu/finaid/resources/policies/satisfactory-academic-progress-policy/>) calculations for financial aid. Course credit earned via credit for prior learning does not factor into UWL enrollment status.

\*Note: This policy was last updated in fall 2022 and will be reviewed on a 3-5 year basis.