

Senate Recommendation 2024-03-01 c-5-a-proposed-policy-for-march-senate-1 – Graduate
Experiential Learning Credit

Susan Eagle

Robert Fischer

APPENDIX C

Graduate Council Policy Committee

Minutes – Jan. 31, 2024

Voting Members: Sarah Bonis, Nick Fessler, Jieyoung Kong, Tonya Bragg-Underwood, Adam West, & Ray Blankenship (Chair)

Subject: Graduate Policy Committee Meeting

Advisory Members: Dr. Jennifer Hammonds, Interim Director of the Graduate School
Guest: Dr. Rheanna Plemons and Dr. Margi DeSander

Announcements: None

The policy committee met via Zoom to discuss the following policy proposals.

Revise: Graduate Experiential Learning Credit

Minor revisions and additions were made to the proposal. The committee voted (6/0) via email to approve the proposal and send it to the Graduate Council for approval.

Proposal Date: 10/16/2023

College of Education & Behavioral Sciences
Proposal to Revise a Graduate Academic Policy
(Action Item)

Contact Person(s):

Marguerita DeSander, SLPS Department Chair and Associate Dean for Retention, Persistence and Degree Completion, CEBS, 270-745-6039, (marguerita.desander@wku.edu)

Jennifer Hammonds, University Registrar, 270-745-5030 (jennifer.hammonds@wku.edu)

Identification of proposed policy revision:

1. **Catalog statement of existing policy:**

Experiential Learning Credit

WKU does not provide graduate credit for experiential learning, credit by exam, or professional certificates unless programs (degree and non-degree) specifically seek approval through the Graduate Council and have ensured that such credit is consistent with the WKU mission, that the learning outcomes are at the graduate level, and that the credit is comparable to other WKU graduate courses.

(Approved by Graduate Council 2/14/13)

2. **Catalog statement of proposed policy:**

WKU offers multiple pathways for graduate students to earn course specific credit for prior learning (not work experience) provided that the experience is aligned with course and program learning outcomes.

Eligibility: To earn graduate credit for prior learning, a student must be enrolled and registered at Western Kentucky University.

Application of Credit: Credit for prior learning shall be applied to degree or program requirements in the same manner as credits earned through the completion of the equivalent courses at WKU. Credit (CR grade) will be applied for WKU course equivalents when students demonstrate mastery of course objectives. Credit will be counted only once for the same course. Not all departments accept credit for prior learning; therefore, students must work closely with their advisor to determine eligibility.

Subject to departmental or university policy a maximum of 12 total hours in the credential may be earned via credit for prior learning (CPL), with the total number of (CPL) credit hours earned and credit hours transferred from another institution not to exceed 50% of the total hours in the credential.

Commented [RB1]: There was a discussion that WKU is considering accepting 12 hours for an FBI program that Ogden is working on. Changing this to 12 hours would avoid asking for an exception.

Residency: Credits for demonstrated knowledge earned through any prior learning method do not fulfill WKU residency requirements.

Grading: Credit awarded by prior learning assessment at WKU shall receive a CR grade. Letter grades will not be used. The transcript will not indicate an unsuccessful attempt to earn credit for prior learning.

Transcription: Credit awarded for prior learning will be transcribed indicating the method of prior learning assessment used.

Fees: The Office of the Registrar will collect fees for the credit for prior learning.

Departmental Credit By Examination or Demonstration

At the discretion of the academic school or department, graduate students enrolled at WKU may receive credit on the basis of departmental graduate-level examinations or demonstrations.

To assess student proficiency, a school or department should develop an appropriate comprehensive proficiency examination or demonstration within the department by means of a graduate faculty committee to ensure graduate rigor. The department must maintain a record of all examinations or demonstrations available to students.

To be eligible to take a graduate departmental comprehensive proficiency assessment, a student must be fully matriculated, in good standing, and regularly enrolled at WKU. Credits earned in this manner will be recorded on the student's official transcript as non-residence credit but will not be considered as a part of the normal semester load in the term in which the examination is taken. A student may not register for a graduate departmental comprehensive proficiency assessment for a course while enrolled in that course. A student may not take a departmental comprehensive proficiency assessment in a course which has been previously taken at WKU or at another accredited institution.

After consulting with the academic department, the student desiring to take a graduate departmental comprehensive proficiency assessment must complete an appropriate request form in the Office of the Registrar. A fee of \$50 per credit hour must be paid at the time the form is submitted. This fee covers the cost of exam administration and grading. The form must be submitted to the Registrar prior to the end of the third week of classes in either the fall or spring semesters. The Registrar will notify the appropriate department of the student's request. The department will administer the comprehensive proficiency assessment during the seventh week of classes. The student must obtain the specific time and place for testing from the department chair.

After the assessment has been completed, the department chair will notify the Registrar in writing as to whether or not the student demonstrated acceptable proficiency. If the department recommends credit be granted, the semester hours earned will be recorded on the official transcript. However, the credit will not be used in computing the grade point average since letter grades will not be assigned.

Military Service Credit

WKU strives to be a military friendly institution that will provide military personnel the ability to attend WKU and receive graduate credit for formal courses and primary occupations offered while in the military. WKU awards graduate credit based on the

American Council on Education (ACE) Guide recommendation, and the credit will count as non-residence credit. Undergraduate credit nor credit used toward an undergraduate credential will not apply toward a graduate degree. Active duty soldiers or military veterans are required to submit official military transcripts prior to admission. Any soldier who is retired or discharged from the military will be required to submit their official military transcripts and a copy of the DD form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty of Service) member copy 4. The DD 214 must have characterization of service listed on the form. The DD 214 Form may be requested at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>. Official military transcripts may be requested at <https://jst.doded.mil/>.

Portfolio Evaluation

Students who have acquired extensive college-level knowledge and skills in academic areas including but not limited to employment, military experience, civic activities, volunteer service, organizational training or workshops, or other non-traditional means may be granted credit for the knowledge and skills they have gained through agreements and partnerships, departmental proficiency assessments, or portfolio development and evaluation. This policy focuses on portfolio development and evaluation while referencing national and departmental assessments when appropriate.

Portfolio evaluation is considered an opportunity for students to demonstrate knowledge and is not a guarantee of credit for experience. Students will complete a graduate-level portfolio of their prior learning as a part of a portfolio development course, taught by a graduate faculty who has undergone training by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Please note: the three credits earned in the portfolio course will count toward residence, while the prior learning credit awarded will be non-residence credit. The portfolio, with varying forms of documents, will tie graduate course learning outcomes to the knowledge and skills students have acquired through experiential learning at the graduate level. Graduate credit earned will depend upon the student's ability to produce a portfolio that communicates learning outcomes consistent with the WKU mission on the level expected for the credit sought. Before registering for this course, students must consult with their advisor to discuss the feasibility of seeking graduate credit in a particular area. Portfolio courses are available based on student need. Currently, IDST 550 is the only approved portfolio course available for students to enroll for credit evaluation. The student and/or advisor should contact the School of Leadership & Professional Studies to request enrollment in the course prior to the start of the semester or term. In addition to tuition for the course, students must pay a course fee to cover the cost of the portfolio review.

The portfolio will be submitted to two full-time graduate WKU faculty members, at least one from each area for which the student is seeking credit, upon successful completion of the course. These graduate faculty experts will review the portfolio and determine if and how much academic credit is to be granted should be given for a specific graduate course. The consensus recommendation of the reviewers must be approved by the department chair(s) and dean(s) of the college(s) concerned, and then will be forwarded to the Office of the Registrar to transcript recommended credit.

For additional information, visit www.wku.edu/cpl.

Commented [RB2]: This paragraph was deleted since changing the percentage to 12 total hours was addressed above.

Commented [RB3]: PLA was changed to cpl to be consistent with the changes earlier in the document.

Alternative Forms of Credits for Prior Learning

WKU's colleges and academic departments may agree to award graduate credit based on verified trainings, ACE credit, or certification evaluated by program faculty. Credit based on trainings and certifications must meet graduate-level rigor and be approved through the curricular process.

Commented [RB4]: Etc was deleted since it affords too much subjective interpretation.

- 3. **Rationale for proposed policy revision:** The Graduate School's existing policy (approved in 2013) states WKU does not accept credit for experiential learning. However, departments are requesting credit through the curricular process. The purpose of this policy revision is to align process with practice and create a standard for The Graduate School in an effort to recruit students into graduate programs and build community partnerships. Experiential learning credit at the graduate level is awarded by other institutions including those accredited by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- 4. **Impact of proposed policy revision on existing academic or non-academic policies:**
 - 4.1 Impact on policies: None.
 - 4.2 Impact on populations that may be affected: None.
- 5. **Proposed term for implementation:** Fall 2024
- 6. **Dates of prior committee approvals:**

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| Graduate Council Policy Committee | <u>February, 2, 2024</u> vote (6/0) |
| Graduate Council | _____ |
| Faculty Senate | _____ |






March 2024 Faculty Senate Recommendation

Final Audit Report

2024-04-24

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