

Revision Responsibility: Executive Vice President-Provost
Responsible Executive Officer: Executive Vice President-Provost

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy 2:01:00:03](#)
[TBR Policy 2:01:00:04](#)
[TBR Policy 2:03:00:00](#)
[PLA Policy and Practice for TN Public Colleges and Universities](#)
Columbia State Community College Catalog

PURPOSE To establish criteria and procedures for awarding of external credit.

POLICY

A maximum of 75% of total semester credit hours earned through any combination of external credit may be applied toward a degree. A student must earn 25% of hours required for a credential in instruction delivered by Columbia State. Possible sources of external credit include (1) credit by examination, (2) military service/armed services schools, (3) specific high school courses, and (4) prior learning. None of these various sources of external credit will count toward the 25% minimum residency requirement.

To receive external credit, the following conditions must all be met:

- Applicant must have been admitted to Columbia State Community College
- Students must consult with an advisor about the possibility and advisability of seeking external credit.
- Students must have declared an academic program.
- If a student is awarded external credit toward curriculum requirements for a particular program, a Change of Major necessitates reassessment of applicability of the credit.
- Applicants must not have received any grade, with the exception of a "W", in similar titled courses for which credit is awarded.
- Credit is awarded only in areas offered within the current curriculum of the College and related to the student's educational program.
- Credit is awarded only for those learning experiences in which it can be documented that all outcomes for specific courses in an approved degree program have been met.

Semester hours of credit toward graduation are awarded on the basis of these conditions, but grades or quality points are not awarded. These credits will not affect the academic grade point average.

I. Credit by Examination

- A. External Credit by Exams - Students may earn college credit by examination for acceptable scores on College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) Examinations, the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) Advanced Placement Examinations, the Enhanced American College Testing Program (ACT), the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP), or comprehensive subject examinations.

To receive credit by examination, official documentation must be received directly from the testing agency. If a Tennessee public institution has previously transcribed credit for CLEP, ACT, or Advanced Placement for a transfer student that credit will be awarded without additional documentation. Credit will be recorded on the student's record after they have been admitted to the College.

1. CLEP: Prior to 2001, credit is awarded for acceptable scores received on subject examinations only. CLEP discontinued the classification of Subject exams and General exams with the transition to computer-based testing in 2001. Therefore any acceptable test scores reported after 2001 will be reviewed for applicability to comparable Columbia State courses. A table is provided in Appendix A that shows the required score used by Columbia State, the course equivalent at Columbia State, and the amount of credit that will be awarded for each exam and score on the exam.
 2. CEEB: Columbia State participates in the Advanced Placement Program of CEEB and awards appropriate credit in selected courses to qualified students who present an official record of a grade of 3 or above on the examination. A table is provided in Appendix A that shows the required score used by Columbia State, the course which is most equivalent to the material on the examination and/or is included in the General Education Core on a Tennessee Transfer Pathway, and the amount of credit that will be awarded for each exam and score on the exam.
 3. ACT: Students whose standard score on the Enhanced ACT English test is 32 or above may receive credit for Composition I and II. Students whose standard score on the Enhanced ACT Mathematics test is 31 or above may receive credit for Precalculus Algebra.
 4. IAAP: Persons having successfully passed sections of the IAAP examination are eligible to receive 13 semester hours of credit at Columbia State enumerated in the Columbia State Catalog. This is subject to change whenever (1) the content of the examination is changed so that it does not correspond to the content of the course designated above, or (2) content of the Columbia State Courses designated above is revised to the degree that it does not correspond to the examination content.
 5. DANTES Subject Standardized (DSST)- Students may earn college credit for acceptable scores on the DANTES Subject Standardized Test based on Columbia State or TBR policy, or credit can be awarded based upon the credit recommendations and minimum scores recommended by the American Council on Education. Students should submit an official DANTES transcript for review.
- B. Columbia State Challenge Examination Credit: Credit by institutional examination may be available for courses as determined by division deans if a CLEP examination is unavailable or as agreed to in a Dual Credit agreement with local high schools.
- i. Students must see the instructor of the course to discuss the course syllabus and text and decide whether to attempt the examination, and, if appropriate, schedule an appointment to take the examination. Students who wish to take an exam must complete and obtain the instructor's signature on the Application for Permission to Take Credit by Examination (Appendix B).
 - ii. Prior to taking the examination, the student must seek approval from the appropriate division dean and obtain the dean's signature on the Application for Permission to Take Credit by Examination (Appendix B).

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- iii. The student must then take the form and payment to the Business Services Office, Pryor Administration Building 114. The student must pay the fee established for “credit by examination.”
 - iv. Upon offering the examination, the instructor must photocopy the receipt for payment of the fees and attach it to the Credit by Examination Grade Report (Appendix C).
 - v. The instructor must submit the Credit by Examination Grade Report (Appendix C) and the photocopy of the receipt to the appropriate division dean.
 - vi. Upon approval by the division dean, the Credit by Examination Grade Report (Appendix C) and the photocopy of the receipt are submitted to the Records Office.
 - vii. Credit will be awarded provided the student’s performance on the test is at least a “C” and the student has earned 12 semester hours of resident credit at Columbia State (excluding Learning Support courses). Semester hours credits toward graduation are awarded on the basis of these tests, but grades or quality points are not awarded and the academic grade point average is not affected.
 - viii. Credit awarded prior to the last day of final exams will be posted in that semester. Credit awarded after the last day of final exams will be posted in the following semester.

II. External Credit for Military Service/Schools

Credit awarded for completion of services schools will be governed by recommendations from the current Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services. Military transcripts must be presented to the Records Office. Upon presentation of a separation (DD Form 214), and completed Request to Grant Credit for Military Service (Appendix D) the following credit may be awarded:

- A. Up to six semester hours credit in health and physical education or physical education and military science is granted for a minimum of three years, eleven months, and twenty days of reserve or National Guard service in the armed forces of the United States. Veterans, who have fewer than three years, eleven months, and twenty days will be awarded one semester hour credit for each year of reserve or National Guard duty.
- B. Credit may be awarded for attendance at military schools and job classifications based upon recommendations from the Office of Educational Credit of the American Council on Education after consultation with an academic advisor. Military service credit is awarded provided that proper documentation supporting service-related educational experiences is presented to the director of records before the end of the second term of enrollment and information is submitted to the Veteran’s Affairs certifying official.
- C. Veterans with less than one year of continuous full-time service who have completed basic training while on active duty will be awarded credit as recommended in the Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services.

III. Dual Credit for Specific High School Courses

- A. A student who has completed a career/technical secondary course of study or certain other

high school courses which have been articulated with the College or through the State of Tennessee (Dual Credit), has received a regular high school diploma, has enrolled in a postsecondary institution within two years of graduation, and who demonstrates attainment of equivalent learning outcomes for specified career courses may receive credit for those courses through the Columbia State Community College articulation process. This postsecondary credit will be granted upon successful admission to Columbia State. Transfer of articulated career/technical credit from Columbia State to other institutions is at the discretion of the receiving institution.

- B. Columbia State and each participating high school must have a process for establishing common learning outcomes for specified courses for articulation. Competency lists and syllabi of the courses from the institutions involved must be maintained and documented.
- C. Credit awarded must be for specific courses and must be awarded only on the basis of the petitioning student successfully passing a challenge examination or competency-based assessment procedure for which the standards proficiency are approved and accepted by the receiving collegiate institution.
- D. Students wishing to participate in the articulation program must:
 - i. Meet all regular admissions requirements of Columbia State as published in the Columbia State Community College Catalog.
 - ii. Provide official transcript of work completed at the high school.
 - iii. Attend the Columbia State Community College testing day and complete a comprehensive subject assessment for each credit requested or meet assessment requirements as stated.
 - iv. Pass the assessment requirements for each course for which credit is requested.
 - v. Enroll at Columbia State within two years of the date of graduation from high school.
 - vi. Contact the Science, Technology, and Mathematics Division at Columbia State to request the credit.

IV. External credit for Prior Learning

- A. A currently enrolled student at Columbia State may demonstrate college-level knowledge of a subject that they have acquired outside a traditional college classroom (work, community service, licensure/certification/diploma/apprenticeship programs or other experiences) through the development of a portfolio. Credit will be awarded under this provision using a recognized guide or procedure as detailed below. Two types of Prior Learning credit may be awarded.
 - i. **Course Equivalency Credit:** Prior learning which is assessed based on the documented achievement of course specific learning outcomes will be transcribed as that course. Prior learning will be assessed based on a pass/fail evaluation and will be assigned a "TP." Because no grade is assigned other than "TP," no Quality Points will be awarded to count toward GPA.
- B. The total amount of credit awarded cannot exceed 75% of the requirements for the degree or certificate. The credit will be identified as experiential credit on the transcript.

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- C. Students seeking prior learning credit should first contact the retention coordinator for the Science, Technology, and Mathematics division to complete a Request for Prior Learning Credit Portfolio Consideration Form (see Appendix E).
 - i. The completed request form will be reviewed by a faculty member in the discipline for which credit is sought and the division dean.
 - ii. If the Dean and faculty member agree that the prior learning experiences justify granting of credit, the student will be asked to provide a portfolio of relevant experiences. The website [Learning Counts](http://www.learningcounts.org) (www.learningcounts.org) provides more information on the options and costs of creating a portfolio.
 - D. After the portfolio is submitted for consideration it will be evaluated by one or more trained assessor(s). The assessor must provide reasoning for the number of credit hours awarded or a written explanation provided for evaluation of portfolio regardless of outcome.
 - E. If the student is awarded credit then the faculty member will complete an Approval of Course Credit for Prior Learning form (see Appendix F) and forward the form for approval by the division dean and executive vice president-provost.
 - F. The credit will be posted after the student has paid the applicable fees, listed in the current college catalog, and has successfully completed twelve (12) semester credit hours at the College. Credit awarded for prior learning will not apply toward meeting residency requirements for graduation.

V. External Credit for Occupational and Workplace Training

Credit awarded for completion of workplace (corporate, volunteer, government, etc.) training may be awarded based on recommendations by nationally recognized college credit recommendation services or the individual evaluation and determination of the College. A letter grade of "TP" will be assigned for credit granted. Because no grade is assigned other than "TP," no Quality Points will be awarded to count toward GPA.

December 1988; Revised: September 24, 1997; May 28, 2001 (new policy format); September 8, 2011 (new policy format and updated titles); July 14, 2014 (changed policy name and included PLA Policy per TBR mandate); November 19, 2015 (removed the sections on accepting block credit from Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology and Department of Labor Apprenticeship Program per TBR mandate)