



**WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE**

**MAC WARNER**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

**eFILED**

6/7/2021 4:24 PM

Office of West Virginia  
Secretary Of State

---

**NOTICE OF FINAL FILING AND ADOPTION OF A LEGISLATIVE EXEMPT, INTERPRETIVE OR PROCEDURAL  
RULE**

AGENCY: Community And Technical College Education TITLE-SERIES: 135-59

RULE TYPE: Procedural Amendment to Existing Rule: Yes Repeal of existing rule: No

RULE NAME: Awarding Undergraduate College Credit for Prior Learning, Advanced Placement Credit, College-Level Examination Program, and Nursing Career Pathways

CITE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: -B1-1A, 18B-1-6, 18B-1B-4, 18B-2A-4, 18-2E-11A

This rule is filed with the Secretary of State. This rule becomes effective on the following date:

July 7, 2021

**BY CHOOSING 'YES', I ATTEST THAT THE PREVIOUS STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT.**

Yes

Angela S Kerns -- By my signature, I certify that I am the person authorized to file legislative rules, in accordance with West Virginia Code §29A-3-11 and §39A-3-2.

**TITLE 135**  
**PROCEDURAL RULE**  
**WEST VIRGINIA COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE EDUCATION**  
**SERIES 59**  
**AWARDING UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING, ADVANCED**  
**PLACEMENT CREDIT, COLLEGE-LEVEL EXAMINATION PROGRAM, AND NURSING**  
**CAREER PATHWAYS**

**§135-59-1. General.**

1.1. Scope. -- This rule establishes guidelines for West Virginia public colleges and universities for the awarding of college credit for prior college-level learning through prior learning assessment, for acceptance of advanced placement credit, awarding of credit for the College-Level Examination Program, and awarding of credit for completion of the Nursing Career Pathway.

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §18B-1-1A, 18B-1-6, 18B-1B-4, 18B-2A-4, 18-2E-11A.

1.3. Filing Date. -- June 7, 2021.

1.4. Effective Date. -- July 7, 2021.

**§135-59-2. Purpose for Prior Learning Credit.**

2.1. Legislative goals established for West Virginia state colleges and universities provide that higher education in West Virginia should contribute fully to the growth, development, and quality of life of the state and its citizens. This policy details the responsibilities of the state higher education institutions regarding the awarding of college credit for prior college-level learning gained outside the higher education academic environment.

2.2. The West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council)/ West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) recognizes that some students, particularly adults and non-traditional students, may have acquired prior college-level learning through the development of skills or knowledge that closely parallel those outcomes taught in college-level courses. It is important that colleges and universities have the opportunity to evaluate learning that has taken place outside the higher education academic environment and to award academic credit when appropriate.

2.3. The purpose of this rule is to outline the terms and conditions under which West Virginia public colleges and universities award and/or transfer credits toward a degree or certificate based upon Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and to provide consistent and accessible methods for students to earn these credits.

2.4. It is the intent of the Council/Commission to permit the awarding of undergraduate academic credit for prior learning through a variety of assessment methodologies that will ensure the academic credibility of such credit. Under these guidelines, in accordance with institutional policies and procedures, each institution shall award academic credit for prior learning that is equivalent to coursework which satisfies the requirements for the degree program in which the student is enrolled.

2.5. The Board of Governors Associate of Applied Science degree program and the Regents Bachelor of Arts degree program maintain specific guidelines and requirements for the use of credit for prior learning. This policy does not replace existing guidelines.

**§135-59-3. Definitions.**

3.1. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is defined as the assessment of college-level learning for college credit gained outside the higher education academic environment. For example, individuals may acquire college-level knowledge or skills through work, employee training programs, military service, independent study, non-credit courses, or community service. Only documented and demonstrated college-level learning will be awarded college credit.

3.2. In support of providing opportunities for students to earn college-level credit for college-level learning that has been acquired outside the higher education academic environment, the assessment of prior college-level learning can be accomplished through a variety of assessment methods including, but not limited to the following:

3.2.1. Advanced Placement Exams.

3.2.2. American Council on Education (ACE) Guides.

3.2.3. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams.

3.2.4. DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST).

3.2.5. Excelsior College Examination Program (ECE).

3.2.6. Institutional Course Challenge Examination Credit.

3.2.7. International Baccalaureate Program (IB).

3.2.8. Institutional Evaluation of Industry and Workforce Training such as apprenticeships, certifications, and licensure.

3.2.9. Portfolio Assessment/Review Credit.

3.2.10. Prior Military Training Credit.

3.2.11. Nursing Career Pathway.

**§135-59-4. Principles.**

4.1. West Virginia public colleges and universities value the diversity of their students. This diversity includes the unique experiences, interests, and intellectual pursuits that may lead to the acquisition of college-level learning. The acquisition of college-level learning is validated by assessment methods that are academically sound and rigorous.

4.2. West Virginia public colleges and universities shall employ prior learning assessment aligned with their respective missions, the principles of academic integrity, resources, and student educational attainment and success.

**§135-59-5. Institutional Policies Regarding Awarding Credit for Prior Learning.**

5.1. State colleges and universities shall develop institutional policies for evaluating prior learning and for awarding credit consistent with this policy.

5.1.1. Each institution shall develop appropriate policies and procedures for awarding credit for a student's prior college-level learning in accordance with this policy, accrediting bodies' guidelines for prior learning assessment, and principles of good educational practice.

5.1.2. Institutional policy will apply to all academic programs.

5.1.3. The institutional policy on Credit for Prior Learning must be filed with the Council for Community and Technical College Education and the Higher Education Policy Commission.

5.2. Institutions shall identify the forms of PLA credits that the institution will award, the processes for acquiring such credit, and make that information publicly available to students, faculty, and other stakeholders.

5.3. Institutions shall have discretionary authority to award academic credit for prior learning that is equivalent to coursework which meets the requirements for the degree program in which the student is enrolled.

5.4. Credit for prior learning can apply toward majors, minors, general education requirements, and electives that count toward the student's chosen degree or certificate. Prior Learning Assessment credit may also satisfy prerequisite requirements. College credit awarded through PLA shall not be treated differently in its application and use than its course equivalencies or appropriate block credit.

5.5. Credit for prior learning shall only be awarded to students who are admitted to the institution and have declared a major field of study.

5.6. Credit awarded through PLA shall not count toward institutional residency requirements.

5.7. The evaluation of a portfolio must be completed by faculty with appropriate professional credentials. Course-specific examinations must be designed and evaluated by faculty with appropriate professional credentials. A recommendation for credit shall be made to the appropriate academic officer at the institution and in accordance with the institution's PLA guidelines.

5.8. Institutions must accept PLA credit up to 30 credits for bachelor's degrees, up to 15 credits for associate's degrees, and up to 6 credits for certificate programs.

5.8.1. Institutions may set a higher limit not to exceed 60 credits for bachelor's degrees, not to exceed 30 credits for associate's degrees, and not to exceed 15 credits for certificate programs.

5.8.2. If a program accrediting body has a specific maximum for PLA credit, then that maximum should be honored by that particular program.

5.9. Credit awarded through Prior Learning Assessment must be clearly identified as such on a student's official transcript according to institutional PLA guidelines, but it should be evident that the credits are PLA. Such credit shall not be used to determine a student's grade point average or used in the calculation of graduation honors. The credit should be recorded as "Credit" only.

5.10. Student requests for awards of academic credit for prior learning shall be submitted in accordance with the guidelines established by the institution. Institutions must establish a written record of

their decisions and the basis for that decision in accepting or declining a Prior Learning Assessment (whether it is portfolio evaluation or other type of assessment) for academic credit. Institutional policies should ensure the transparency of the award or denial of PLA credit. Additionally, institutions must develop and communicate a process for appealing PLA decisions.

5.11. Prior Learning Assessment fees may vary based upon the type of assessment performed. Prior Learning Assessment credit and transcripting fees to students must be clearly published and made available to the student.

5.12. Institutions will regularly review their PLA policies to ensure that they are consistent with accreditation PLA guidelines and state, regional, and national practices.

#### **§135-59-6. Transferability of Prior Learning Assessment Credits.**

6.1. Credits earned through PLA will be transferable in accordance with Series 17: Transferability of Credits and Grades at West Virginia Colleges and Universities. Once on a student's transcript, credits earned through prior learning shall be treated no differently than other credit coursework on a student's transcript.

6.2. PLA credit awarded at one institution, which meets the West Virginia Core Coursework Transfer Agreement or other statewide articulation agreements, must be accepted as transfer credit toward the degree if the student transfers to another West Virginia public college or university in accordance with the guidelines of that particular policy or agreement.

#### **§135-59-7. Reporting the Awarding of Prior Learning Assessment Credits.**

7.1. Each institution shall maintain records of the number of students awarded credit for prior learning, number of credits for prior learning awarded, type of assessment method(s) used, and other recipient data, which will be reported to the Council for Community and Technical College Education/ Higher Education Policy Commission on an annual basis. Council/Commission staff will develop specific reporting guidelines and advise each institution of those guidelines.

#### **§135-59-8. Policy for Acceptance of Advanced Placement Credit.**

8.1. West Virginia state colleges and universities shall accept advanced placement credits according to the following guidelines:

8.1.1. High school students completing advanced placement examinations of the College Board with a minimum score of 3 will receive credit at any state college or university, as indicated in the list of advanced placement exams offered by the College Board. The Central Office of the Community and Technical College System of WV maintains a list of all College Board advanced placement exams and the minimum number of credits that each institution shall grant. Credit is to be awarded solely on the basis of satisfactory performance of a score of 3 or higher on the advanced placement examinations.

8.1.2. When the examination is in the area of the student's major, the institution will award credit toward the major or the core curriculum.

8.1.3. An academic department within the institution may, upon approval of the institutional faculty, require a higher score than 3 on an advanced placement test if the credit is to be used toward meeting a course requirement for a major in the department.

8.1.4. Credits awarded by regionally or nationally accredited institutions of higher education in West Virginia for successful completion of advanced placement exams are transferable to West Virginia state colleges and universities in accordance with the advanced placement policy of the receiving institution.

**§1335-59-9. Institutional Responsibility.**

9.1. Each institution shall develop guidelines for acceptance of advanced placement credits that are consistent with the provisions of this rule and publish the guidelines in the college or university bulletin and/or other appropriate institutional publications.

**§1335-59-10. Policy for the College-Level Examination Program.**

10.1. This policy shall serve as a rule for the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Entrance Examination Board in West Virginia state colleges and universities. Credit awarded by an institution in conformity with this policy shall be transferable to all West Virginia state colleges and universities. Further, credit shall be awarded only once to recognize mastery of course content. Credit shall not be awarded for equivalent courses in which students have already earned such credit through course work, CLEP, institutional challenge examinations, life experience, or other mechanisms.

**§1335-59-11. Subject CLEP Examinations.**

11.1. Students may be awarded credit for the successful completion of any or all of the CLEP Subject Examinations presently offered or developed in the future. They must achieve a score equal to or above the required score of the Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials of the American Council on Education for CLEP Exams current at the time the examination was taken. Credit shall be awarded in an amount not exceeding the number of semesters for which the examination was designed. A grade shall not be assigned, and the credit will not be included in the computation of the student's grade-point average. The institution shall equate the CLEP credit earned with existing course offerings. If no equivalent course is offered by the institution, the credit earned by CLEP examination shall be considered elective credit. Students shall not receive CLEP Subject Examination credit for equivalent courses in which they have already earned credit.

**§1335-59-12. General CLEP Examinations.**

12.1. As of the effective date of this policy, an institution may award credit within the limits of the most recent recommended CLEP scores posted by The College Board. At the time of this rule, The College Board chart is found at the following URL: located at <https://clep.collegeboard.org/pdf/what-your-score-means.pdf>.

12.2. It should be made clear to students that such credit in general education may not meet specific program requirements of the institution awarding the credit or of other institutions to which the student may later transfer. The credit shall then be used as elective credit. Students shall not receive CLEP General Examination credit for equivalent courses in which they have already earned credit.

12.3. An institution awarding credit through CLEP may establish scores higher than specified above for Subject and General Examinations if it is established that the higher scores equate to a satisfactory level of performance by students actually enrolled in the equivalent course(s) at that institution.

**§1335-59-13. Academic Record.**

13.1. The permanent academic record of the student shall indicate which credit was earned by CLEP examination.

**§135-59-14. Enrollment.**

14.1. Students must be enrolled in an institution in order to receive credit from the institution. Students who have taken CLEP examinations prior to enrollment must submit an official CLEP transcript.

**§135-59-15. Nursing Career Pathways Policy.**

15.1. Nursing continues to offer multiple ways for students to enter the profession and has consistently advocated for creative and innovative opportunities for academic progression that meet the needs of a student population that is diverse along numerous dimensions. While it is certainly possible to change goals and directions, early consideration of the desired end point can provide helpful direction in selecting the most efficient and effective path to reaching career goals. The goal is to give students a clear picture of how to enter the profession and a shorter, more affordable way to progress through the education they need. The pathway includes dual or advanced placement credit for high school students when admitted to nursing programs in community and technical colleges or baccalaureate institutions, seamless transition to bachelor's completion degrees in nursing as needed, and employment opportunities as nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses along the pathway.

15.2. Student course credit earned through dual credit and/or early enrollment as part of the Nursing Pathway Program must be accepted by institutions as higher education credits counting toward credits specific to the major of nursing or nursing science. Completion of the nursing pathway shall be identified on the high school transcript. Students completing the nursing pathway shall also be in possession of the Therapeutic Services Certificate.

15.3. Dual credit or early enrollment courses in the Nursing Career Pathway are developed as required course credit according to West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) Policy 2510 and WVDE Policy 2520.13. These courses include college-level freshmen English, college algebra or statistics, anatomy and physiology and general psychology. A list of approved dual credit/early enrollment courses may be found on the West Virginia Department of Education's website.

15.4. Students may also earn college-level credit for the Nursing Career Pathway and specific to the major of nursing or nursing science through Advanced Placement courses (AP) as stipulated under Section 8 of this rule.

15.5. Nothing in this rule shall prevent institutions from awarding additional dual credit/early enrollment/AP credit toward the Nursing Career Pathway as allowed under the institution's approved policies for awarding such credit.