

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY BOARD POLICY

Policy Number: 308

Subject: Ozark Campus Prior Learning Assessment Policy

Date Adopted: August 2016

Revised: _____

“Prior Learning Assessment” (PLA)

To recognize learning that a person acquired outside a traditional academic environment, Arkansas Tech University-Ozark Campus relies on the following process to ensure practices are consistent with academic integrity and responsive to nontraditional learners. Such learning may be derived from multiple means including but not limited to: various life and work experiences, employer training programs, independent study, non-credit courses, non-college courses or seminars, non-credit apprenticeship or vocational or otherwise certification programs, or volunteer or community service experience. Some of this learning may be equivalent to college level learning.

The term “prior learning assessment” is the process by which an individual’s experiential and extra-institutional learning is assessed and evaluated for purposes of granting college credit. Supporting documentation that demonstrates learning outcomes, competencies, and professional skills gained through prior learning must be submitted.

Approved apprenticeship or licensing training must provide evidence of mastery of subject as well as evidence to support that instruction is college level, documentation that successful completion is achieved, and evidence that the course met an industry criteria.

Procedures

In certain instances, a student who has been accepted into a degree program may present evidence that would suggest that he or she may be eligible to receive credit for a course or courses either through aggregate educational experience or through some combination of occupational experiences.

Credit for prior learning offers students the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained through life experiences and apply this knowledge towards credit in a certificate/degree program. In such cases, application for Prior Learning may be made.

Eligibility:

A student must be matriculated in an Arkansas Tech-Ozark certificate or associate degree seeking program to be eligible to apply for prior learning credit. During any semester of attendance at the Ozark Campus, application can be made for prior learning and it will be posted during the second (or successive) semester of attendance. (Attendance should be consecutive semesters.)

Not all programs provide the prior learning credit option; students should consult with the Office of Academic Affairs or program chairs for eligible programs and the process used for application.

Number of Credits:

Students may be awarded a maximum of 24 semester credit hours for prior learning not to exceed 50% of the technical coursework required for a technical certificate or associate degree.

Validation Methods:

Arkansas Tech-Ozark offers two methods of validation. One is credit by industry certification or apprenticeship and the other is by institutionally prepared challenge exam. The following guidelines and methods are acceptable when validating prior learning for awarding credit:

1. To earn institutional credit for specific courses demonstrated by current certification in Approved industry standards tests. Current approved certifications are listed in the appendix and on the ATU – Ozark website. Additional certifications may be approved through the program chair and approved by curriculum committee as recommended by the CAO.
2. To earn institutional credit by exam for specific courses, student will sit for an institutionally prepared challenge exam to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter and/or skills. The examination will be thorough and in keeping with established goals and objectives of the course(s) and the overall program. Prior learning must match existing courses using the course description and course outcomes for guidance. Specific courses and exam proficiency shall be determined by program chair and approved by curriculum committee through a recommendation by the CAO.

The program chair offering the prior learning course(s) will assign a faculty member who will discuss the subject area to be tested with the student and administer the test. The challenge examination will be comprehensive in nature.

Grades for challenge examinations will be either pass (P) or fail (F), with full course credit granted for a grade of “P” (pass).

Program chair or faculty will record the score earned through challenge exam. If a student passes the challenge exam, Program chair or faculty member will record the score and recommend credit be awarded. Chief Academic Officer will approve or disapprove the granting of credit for prior learning credit based on the score of the exam and recommendation of the program chair.

Appropriate credit(s) shall be applied to the student’s academic record and a notation entered on the student’s transcript indicating successful completion. Since a traditional grade (A-F) is not entered, the prior learning credit is not calculated into the student’s grade point average (GPA).

If the student fails to pass the exam, no entry is made on the academic transcript but a record of the unsuccessful completion will be maintained in the student’s file.

- If student does not pass the challenge exam, he or she will be ineligible for another challenge exam in that course and must successfully complete the course as needed to fulfill program requirements.
- A student who has previously received a failing grade in a course (or less than “C” for transfer) may not request credit by challenge exam in that course.
- Credit will not be granted for any course in which student has previously earned a passing grade.
- Credit must be applicable to the program in which the student is matriculated.
- Students may not apply for prior learning credit after graduation.

Application:

Prior learning credits shall be applied to meeting degree or program requirements in the same manner as credits earned at Arkansas Tech-Ozark.

Prior learning credit will be awarded through notation of “*Credit by Exam*” for specific courses and course titles used to award credit earned by normal participation in the course. Neutral grades of Pass or Fail shall be utilized. Conventional letter grades shall not be used.

Transferability:

While Arkansas Tech-Ozark has determined experiential learning credit awarded to be of adequate quality, comparability, and applicability to award equivalent credit, transfer of credit to other institutions is not guaranteed. Receiving institutions determine transferability of experiential learning credit to their institution.

Fees:

A fee per semester credit hour requested will be charged to cover costs and is non-refundable.

Financial Aid will not cover fees for course credit awarded through Prior Learning.

Procedure:

1. During the first semester of attendance at ATU-OC, student should meet with program chair to discuss the possibility of earning Prior Learning Credit.
2. Application forms are available in the Office of Academic Affairs, and must be completed and approved to request a challenge exam with program faculty. Once the form has been completed, it must be signed by the appropriate program chairperson and by the Chief Academic Officer. If the request is approved, the student must go to the Office of Student Accounts to pay for the exam. When the student returns to the Chief Academic Officer with the receipt, the program chair will be notified to proceed with the administration of the challenge exam.
3. This exam will be thorough and in keeping with established goals and objectives of the course(s) and the overall program. Theoretical knowledge will be tested by faculty recommendation through common acceptable measures (i.e., paper and pencil, computerized, etc.) with the possibility of a skills component. Both written and skills testing are encouraged to ensure “course rigor” is maintained and achieved.

4. Program faculty will administer the exam at a time and place set by the Chief Academic Officer and program faculty.

5. The examination will be graded by the faculty involved in its design. When the grade has been assigned, the program chair will forward the graded examination and the signed and dated request for credit to the Chief Academic Officer.

If the student passed the exam with a score of 70% or better, program faculty will forward to the Chief Academic Officer requesting credit for the course be granted. The Chief Academic Officer will route a copy of the completed form to the Associate Registrar and credit will be transcribed during the second (or successive) semester of attendance at Arkansas Tech-Ozark.

If the student fails to pass the exam, no entry is made on the academic transcript but a record of the unsuccessful completion will be maintained in the student's file.

6. A student may request credit for as many examinations in any one semester as approved by the Chief Academic Officer. The total amount of credit or the number of courses "challenged" will be prescribed specifically for that student based on previous experiential learning, workplace experience, certifications earned, etc. University transfer students may earn a maximum of 24 semester credit not to exceed 50% of the technical coursework required for a technical certificate or associate degree through Prior Learning.

7. Credit granted will be entered on the permanent record by designating the course number, course title, and "P" for pass grade. The grade of "P" does not calculate in the grade point average.

Effective Date: Recommended date for policy approval: September 1, 2016.

Appendix Current Industry Standard Credential

MOS Certification in Word

MOS Certification in Excel

ASE Certification in Automobile & Light Truck Certification

Tests (A1 - A9)

1. A1 – Engine Repair
2. A2 – Automatic Transmission/Transaxle
3. A3 – Manual Drive Train & Axles
4. A4 – Suspension & Steering
5. A5 – Brakes
6. A6 – Electrical/Electronic Systems
7. A7 – Heating & Air Conditioning
8. A8 – Engine Performance
9. A9 – Light Vehicle Diesel Engines

AWS Certification in MIG Welding

AWS Certification in TIG Welding

American Heart CPR and First Aid for Health Care Providers

First Year Lineman Apprenticeship

Second Year Lineman Apprenticeship

Third Year Lineman Apprenticeship

Fourth Year Journeyman Lineman Apprenticeship

Programmable Logic Controllers

PLC Level 2

Equivalent Course Credit

BST 1013 Word Processing and
BST 2113 Advanced Word Processing
BST 1053 Spreadsheets and
BST 2053 Advanced Spreadsheets

1. AST 1004 Gasoline Engine Theory
2. AST 1223 Advanced Automotive Drive Trains
3. AST 1113 Introduction to Automotive Drive Trains
4. AST 1213 Automotive Chassis and Steering
5. AST 1103 Automotive Brake Systems
6. AST 1003 Automotive Electronics, AST 2103 Advanced Automotive Electronics
7. AST 1203 Automotive Climate Control
8. AST 1005 Engine Performance, AST 2113 Advanced Engine Performance
9. AST 2203 Diesel Theory

WLD 1503 Gas Metal Arc (MIG) Welding
WLD 1603 Gas Tungsten Arc (TIG) Welding

EMTP 1001 CPR and First Aid for Healthcare Providers

PLA ###6 Lineman 1

PLA ###6 Lineman 2

PLA ###6 Lineman 3

PLA ###6 Journeyman Lineman

PLA ###3 Programmable Logic Controllers Level 1

PLA ###3 Programmable Logic Controllers Level 2