

Q&A from Credit Where Credit is Due- Expanding Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) in ECE Higher Education Programs (Nov. 21, 2024)

- 1. Comment: It would be interesting to see what each state offers for credit for the CDA. I have seen 6, 9 and 12.**

A: We are actually planning a CPL webinar focused just on CDA so we will explore this more in our next CPL webinar.

- 2. Q: What is an IHE?**

A: Institution of Higher Education

- 3. Q: These data refer to PLA students in general, correct? Not necessarily ECE students?**

A: Yes, that is correct (in general, not just ECE students).

- 4. Q: What does ACE stand for?**

A: ACE stands for American Council on Education

- 5. Q: Can you explain what a portfolio course is? How many credits? Interdisciplinary or departmental?**

A: Some programs have a course to assist and support students in creating portfolios. Institutions can do these how they see fit. Some may be for credit, others may be non-credit. The same applies to departments, however usually they are within the department they will award credit.

Also good to note that City Colleges of Chicago has a portfolio course students can take which is course androgynous-they enroll and prep their portfolios in that class.

A: CCV offers two varieties of portfolio courses where students in all fields are guided through the same process to prepare portfolios. In the Focused Portfolio, the credit requests need to be in one curricular area or very closely connected and they are capped at 16. In the full APL course, credit amounts and disciplinary areas are not capped.

- 6. Q: You say you award 6 units for the CDA? For what courses?**

A: We do CD 120 and a CD 299 that count towards graduation. We are in the middle of updating our curriculum and it will count for CD 120 and 107 once the new curriculum is approved. This will mean it will count for 6 credits towards the initial credential (Basic Certificate) across City Colleges of Chicago. CD 120 is Introduction to Early Childhood Education and CD 107 is Health, Safety & Nutrition. It's also important to note that we have a policy that students need to hit 70% competency to get PLA credit awarded. The course updates that are going through the process now kept an eye towards this to support starting off with credit for knowledge in the field for those with a CDA.

A: CCV does not award automatic college credits for the CDA. Students can use a portfolio process to describe and document their learning for a college-credit award, which might include learning acquired through the CDA process.

7. Q: What about graduate studies? Are these in consideration?

A: Some institutions do use CPL for graduate courses, but most often it is used for undergraduate coursework.

8. Q: Has IL used AI or virtual reality to assess students' competencies?

A: Some colleges within IL have used virtual reality systems!

9. Q: What is the name of the CPL program (at CCV)?

A: We offer a variety of CPL options through the Office of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

Assessment of Prior Learning (APL)—EDU 1240 is a three-credit, semester-long course with focus on the creation of a portfolio that describes and documents prior learning in a variety of academic subject areas. Credit requests are not limited and the average award is 30 credits. Students pay only the three-credit course tuition and a one-time assessment fee of \$300. The portfolio review is completed the following semester. Awarded credits are free, saving the average student over \$8,000!

Focused Portfolio Development (FPD)—EDU 1225 is a one-credit course. Students create a portfolio that provides details and evidence for up to 16 credits of prior learning in one specific academic subject area (or very closely related). Students pay only the one-credit tuition and a one-time assessment fee. There is no additional cost for the credits received through FPD. Students may submit a second portfolio in another academic area later and pay only the \$200 portfolio assessment fee. Portfolios are evaluated at the end of the semester, so students have results before the next semester starts! A common ECE combination of requests in a Focused Portfolio includes:

- 3 credits: Introduction to ECE
- 3 credits: Curriculum Development in ECE
- 3 credits: Communication in ECE
- 3 credits: Child Development
- 3-4 credits: Professional Field Experience (internship course at CCV)

CCV also offers Credit by Exam (CLEP & DSST), Course Challenge and Competency Based Pathways, and Education and Training Evaluation Service (ETES). All of these options make up our menu of Prior Learning Assessment offerings.

10. Q: I'm from California and wondering how CPL works on the transcript when the student transfers from the 2-year to the 4-year programs.

A: We will be discussing this in an upcoming webinar on policies around CPL. Stay tuned for more.

A: This, usually, sits in institutional policies regarding transfer. I do not know of any state-level policies that require the transfer of PLA courses- either in Gen Ed or in Career. There are some mandates of PLA to be awarded (CDA legislation).

A: CCV's portfolio evaluated and ETES credits are documented on an Office of Prior Learning Assessment transcript. They are transfer credits – even at CCV, so students still need to satisfy residency requirements to complete a CCV program. CCV policy addresses this transfer along with the acceptance of ACE, DSST credit evaluations and others in our Acceptance of Transfer Credit Policy found here:

https://docs.ccv.edu/CCVPolicyFiles/Acceptance_of_Transfer_Credit_and_Other_Forms_of_External_Credit_CCV_Policy.pdf

Course Challenge and Competency Based Pathway credits go directly onto the CCV transcript as ungraded credit and are marked as challenge credit. They do not count as residency credits.

11. Q: What is a CCV course challenge? In what areas can students focus the focused portfolios? How many faculty supervise these students?

A: The traditional CCV Course Challenge is an option for a student to demonstrate their prior learning in an individual course to a faculty evaluator for a credit award. The student receives advisor approval to challenge any course in the catalog, pays a flat fee equal to 1-credit of tuition (\$280), and is paired up with a faculty member who teaches that course to complete faculty determined assignments to demonstrate their learning against the course Essential Objectives over a 60-day period. The student works independently on the assignments and the faculty member grades them. If the student is awarded a C or better on the assignments, the credit is awarded directly onto the CCV transcript as ungraded credit. This is an individualized process. Faculty are compensated at the hourly rate for approximately 3 hours of evaluation time. These contracts are for evaluation only and do not factor into the teaching load.

We also offer Competency Based Pathways (CBP) in 12 courses, which are a standardized version of the Course Challenge. With these standardized challenges, I worked with teams of faculty in advance to pre-set the assignments that ALL students challenging these 12 courses would need to complete. The assignments align with the course Essential Objectives and are evaluated on a rubric available to the students at the outset. These are set up in Canvas (our LMS) and the student and faculty evaluator are loaded in there to access/evaluate the assignments. Supporting resources for completing the assignments are also in the LMS. Grant funding was used to establish these Competency Based Pathways, so students did not pay for that development. Students are limited to no more than 12-credits of Course Challenge/CBP coursework, since it saves them time/money to utilize portfolio options for most with more than 6-9 credits of learning to document.

The focused portfolios can be in any curricular area. For ECE students, those areas are often ECE, EDU, or BUS. However, students could prepare a focused portfolio in Art, Music, World Language, Technology, Communication, etc.

Portfolio courses are capped at 16. A single faculty member teaches the portfolio process. The process is the same regardless of the discipline/field of the student. Students are supported by their Academic Advisor and the faculty is supported by the Office of Prior Learning Assessment. Portfolio faculty award a grade for the course, but the PLA Office hires subject matter experts to evaluate the student portfolios. All portfolios are evaluated by teams of subject matter experts: two faculty for each Focused Portfolio and four faculty for each APL portfolio. Evaluations are facilitated by the Director of PLA. Faculty evaluators are compensated for their time with a separate contract at the hourly rate.

12. Comment: You may want to think about those that have a general studies degree in a different setting and how to get another setting for ECE degree qualifications.

A: I see a TON of these students at CCV. Those with BA's and MA's in a different field that might not meet the qualifications on the state ECE career ladder. They are particularly well served by Competency Based Pathways.

13. Q: Do you do a lot of advertising for these programs?

A: Every adult learner (25 and up or military connected) who applies to CCV gets a message on the night that they apply asking them to consider Prior Learning Assessment to save time and money on their path by getting credit for what they already know. I also do outreach work with VTAEYC and other ECE-affiliated groups across the state and offer specific informational workshops for those in the field (where they get pd hours). However, you can NEVER advertise this too much. Advisors need to be trained to speak to all incoming students about the potential for PLA/CPL, since many of these students lack confidence/knowledge around their prior learning and the equivalence with college-level learning.

14. Q: You mentioned faculty guide student through the portfolio process. Can you speak to how this is done in the course? Is it one faculty or is it different faculty depending on the course?

A: At CCV, a single faculty member teaches each portfolio course. Each course is capped at 16. The syllabus, resources, student handbook, and faculty handbook are all provided by the PLA Office and the faculty member is trained by PLA to deliver the course – most have a background in portfolio evaluation as part of that training. Other faculty (subject matter experts) are hired to evaluate the portfolios after they are submitted. The faculty member who taught the portfolio course is never part of the committee that determines the portfolio credit award.