

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING POLICY**

**EFFECTIVE 11/12/2018**

**BACKGROUND**

Credit for prior learning through portfolio assessment is an available option at the UW Oshkosh Master of Public Administration Program. A learning portfolio is a formal written document that identifies the knowledge and skill acquired through non-formal learning/non-university experiences, and provides evidence to support a request for credit. Credit for prior learning is not granted for the experience itself, but for the verifiable learning outcomes which grew out of the experience. This credit can be granted for demonstrated learning that results from life experiences (e.g., employment, volunteer work, community service, government service, military service/training). The student's learning must relate to the learning outcomes in a particular course or courses in the MPA program. The learning which occurred as a result of these experiences must be validated in accordance with this policy to ensure it is equivalent to that acquired at the graduate level in terms of quality and outcomes.

**CRITERIA**

To qualify for graduate credit for prior learning:

1. The student must be enrolled as a graduate student in good standing at UW Oshkosh.
2. Experiences to be counted as credit for prior learning cannot be more than 7 years old.
3. No more than 6 credits can be awarded for prior learning.
4. No more than 9 credits overall via credit for prior learning or transfer may be applied to a graduate degree.
5. The credits for prior learning can apply towards core and elective MPA courses.
6. Credit for prior learning cannot apply to courses in which a student has already earned a grade. No grade will be attached to the credit received for prior learning.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **A. College of Letters and Science Approval and Procedure**

Students who anticipate applying for credit for prior learning in the College of Letters and Science must present a brief proposal to the Dean indicating their intent before beginning preparation of a portfolio. The proposal should include the following:

1. Identification of the course(s) for which the prior learning would be substituted.
2. A statement describing the experiences they believe would qualify them to receive credit.
3. A rationale for equating the quality of the prior learning experience with that of the course(s) in question.
4. A copy of the student's complete academic record.

After receiving approval from the Dean, students may proceed to prepare a portfolio to present to the Department of Public Administration offering the course(s) in question. Final evaluation and approval of the credit(s) to be granted will be the responsibility of the department.

### **B. Department of Public Administration Approval and Procedure**

The Department of Public Administration will award credit for prior learning by:

1. Approval of participation by a formal vote of department faculty
2. Approval of methods and criteria to assess prior learning which includes assessment of a formal portfolio.

#### Procedure

1. Evaluation must be done by a committee of three faculty or academic staff from the department, one of whom will serve as chair.
2. Committee members will review the portfolio no later than four weeks.
3. If the committee recommends no credit, the student may provide additional information to the committee and request reconsideration.
4. The committee decision following such reconsideration will be final.
5. The department chair and the Dean's Office must approve a committee recommendation that credit(s) be granted. Approval by the Dean's Office will include an assurance that appropriate procedures have been followed.
6. Students may choose to enroll in INTRDSCP-145 (Assessment of Prior Learning), a one-credit, seven week, pass or fail course on how to construct an academic learning portfolio, but are not required to do so. Credit earned in INTRDSCP-145 will not count toward the credits required for and Letters and Science degree.

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## **PUTTING THE PORTFOLIO TOGETHER**

The student's completed portfolio should contain the following elements in this order:

### **1. Table of Contents**

A complete table of contents—including page number references—is important to the organization of the portfolio.

### **2. Resume**

A current resume will give the assessors a clearer sense of who the students are and will allow them to see where their experience and prior learning fit into the total picture.

### **3. Description and Documentation of Learning**

The most important section to receiving graduate credit(s) is the summary in which the student brings together the components of their learning and relate how it corresponds to the course's theories and concepts. Students should consult the specific course syllabi for the learning in which they are requesting credit by contacting the faculty of the course. For each specific subject students should indicate how they acquired this knowledge, where, when, and in what context and how this fit with the course learning objectives (e.g., describe the various experiences that contributed to learning; provide an estimate of the amount of time they engaged in activities; describe where the experience took place; describe exactly what they did in each experience and the people they interacted with; and so on).

### **4. Bibliography**

Students should include full bibliographic citations, in APA style, for any readings included in their description.

### **5. Appendix**

All documentation and supporting material is placed in the appendix and referred to at the appropriate place in the body of the portfolio. Students should label the appendices (Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, etc.).

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