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Credit for Prior Learning Experiences and Education

[Click here for a printable brochure.](#)

For many adult learners, the traditional path to a college degree can take too much time. Finding the time to complete a degree program can be challenging. However, at Penn State, it may not take as long as you think.

If you have prior college-level learning experiences — at another college or university, in the military, in the workplace, through self-study, or in high school — your academic adviser can help you identify how alternative credit acquisition can apply toward meeting your degree goals. At Penn State we're ready to help you explore your options. Contact a campus [adult learner advocate](#) to learn more. Based on your program of study requirements, here are some of the ways you may be able to earn college credit:

[Credit by transfer from another institution](#)

[Credit by examination](#)

[Credit for training in the military](#)

[Credit for training in business, industry, and government](#)

Credit by transfer from another institution

Credits Earned at Regionally Accredited Colleges and Universities

All college-level course work completed with a minimum grade of "C" (2.0) at a regionally accredited institution can be considered for transfer to Penn State. Ask the registrar at the institution where you earned the credits to send an official transcript directly to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. Each course will be evaluated by the Undergraduate Admissions Office. Some courses will be direct equivalents to Penn State courses; others will be transferred as general credits. You can check the transferability of many courses yourself, using Penn State's Transfer Course Evaluation Guide, available online at www.admissions.psu.edu/my_admissions/tas/psuToOthers.cfm.

Credits Earned at Nonregionally Accredited Colleges and Universities (Credit by Validation)

College-level course work completed with a minimum grade of "C" (2.0) at an institution that awards associate degrees or higher, but is not a member of a regional accrediting association, may be transferable to Penn State by validation (Policy 42-81).

Prior to completing the Student Request for Credit by Validation form, we encourage you to review potential courses for validation with an academic adviser. Then you should complete the Student Request for Credit by Validation form, available from the admissions office at each campus, indicating which courses you want validated and return the form to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. The Undergraduate Admissions Office will determine the credits eligible to be validated from

the official transcript and list them on the Credit by Validation form. The Undergraduate Admissions Office will return the form to the applicable academic department, which will evaluate it and return the results to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. As an alternative to validation, you may take an examination to document your knowledge. If you are interested in this option, you should discuss it with your adviser or the Undergraduate Admissions Office.

Credits Earned at Accredited Institutions outside the United States

College-level course work completed at a foreign institution that is recognized by the appropriate authority, and awards degrees equivalent to those in the United States, may be transferable to Penn State. Ask the institution where you completed the course work to send an official transcript directly to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. If the transcript is not in English, you also must provide a translation. Three- to five-sentence descriptions of each course are also required.

Credit by Examination

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Administered by the College Board, CLEP provides college credit for examinations that test college-level knowledge in specific disciplines. CLEP test centers are conveniently located on several Penn State campuses across the state.

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A schedule of credit awarded by Penn State for CLEP examinations is available online at <http://admissions.psu.edu/academics/credit/clep>. You must score in the fiftieth percentile or higher and may acquire no more than 60 credits through CLEP. After taking a CLEP examination, ask the College Board to send an official transcript to the Undergraduate Admissions Office.

CLEP exams are free for eligible military personnel and civilian employees. More information on CLEP is available online at www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/about.html.

Credit for Noncollege Education Experiences/Training in the Military

Credit by Examination with Penn State

Students who have acquired substantial knowledge in a specific subject area may request an examination as a substitute for completing the usual classroom requirements of a course. Contact your adviser to initiate the process and obtain the appropriate form. Authorization to take the examination rests with the applicable academic department. A minimum grade of "C" (2.0) must be earned for credit to be awarded; pass/fail grades are not assigned. A per-credit fee is charged, regardless of the final grade.

American Council on Education (ACE) Experiences/Training

ACE evaluates noncollege educational experiences/training programs and recommends college credit where appropriate. These recommendations are posted on the military transcript (e.g., SMART, AARTS, and CCAF). If you are a veteran or a member of the active-duty armed services or reserves, you may be granted college credit for your educational experiences/training by submitting your ACE-evaluated military transcript to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. Application of these credits to your program of study depends on your major and discussions with your academic adviser or department head.

Defense Activity Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES)

DANTES and the DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) may provide additional course work credits for your program of study, depending on your major. Complete the DANTES form to request the official transcript of the testing and the scores, and pay the fee for the scores to be sent to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. The academic department that offers a comparable course will review your results and determine whether or not credit may be awarded. Contact your academic adviser or the Undergraduate Admissions Office for more information.

Health and Physical Activity

Health and physical activity credit may be awarded to veterans or members of the active-duty armed services or the reserves upon completion of basic training. Use the Web site provided by your branch of service to have your military transcript (SMART, AARTS, and CCAF) sent to the Undergraduate Admissions Office for evaluation.

Credit for Noncollege Educational Experiences/Training in Business, Industry, and Government

American Council on Education (ACE) Training Programs

ACE evaluates noncollege organizational training programs for college credit and publishes its recommendations in the ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training (available online at www.acenet.edu/nationalguide). You may be granted college credit for your noncollege organizational training. Ask ACE to send an official transcript to the Undergraduate Admissions Office for evaluation. Application of these credits to your program of study depends on your major and discussions with your academic adviser.

Police Academy Training Programs

Police academy training programs may provide additional opportunities for college credit acquisition. Submit an official transcript showing your successful completion of the police academy training program to the Undergraduate Admissions Office. Application of these credits to your program of study depends on your major and discussions with your academic adviser.

Nursing Programs

Nurses may receive college credit based on licensure. As a registered nurse with a valid RN license, you will receive 33 advanced-standing credits toward a bachelor's degree. A licensed practical nurse (LPN) who is admitted to the associate degree or bachelor of science program in nursing may be eligible to receive credit toward first-year nursing course work. Application of these credits to your program of study depends on your major and discussions with your academic adviser.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment is a process through which a student documents that college-level learning experiences have been obtained through noncollege experiences, not necessarily in a classroom setting. Portfolio assessment may result in the award of credit for one or more specific Penn State courses, up to a maximum of 30 credits for a baccalaureate degree or 15 credits for an associate degree. A fee is assessed to recover the costs of the portfolio review, regardless of whether credit is awarded. To explore this option further, contact your academic adviser or the adult enrollment coordinator at your campus. A list of adult enrollment coordinators is on the Web at www.itshows.psu.edu/contact.

