

# EARNING CREDIT THROUGH PRIOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Credit for prior learning assessment (PLA) allows students, who have mastered academic or technical competencies, to demonstrate their knowledge for credit in a multitude of course content areas. Course credit is awarded when content mastered through an experience is comparable to the student learning outcomes of a COM course. This arrangement offers students an opportunity to lower costs, save time, and prevent repetition of mastered competencies. The following criteria must be met to earn credit through prior learning experiences:

- The student must be enrolled in a COM certificate or degree program in the current semester.
- The student must provide official documentation (transcripts, license/certification, etc.) supporting the request for credit.
- The student must meet eligibility requirements specific to the PLA option.
- The student must satisfactorily complete six (6) non-developmental credit hours at COM prior to PLA credit being added to transcript.
- The PLA credit must apply to the student's certificate or degree at COM.
- No more than 24 credit hours may be earned through PLA applicable to a degree at COM; however, no more than 50% of a workforce certificate may be earned through PLA options. Exceptions may be made on appeal for completed transfer programs above 50%.

## Traditional Transfer

A student may transfer up to 75% of the credit hours needed toward any degree at COM; however, students seeking an Associate of Applied Science degree must take at least half of the required specialized courses at COM. Transfer credit must be from a college or university accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. See the Transfer of Credit to COM section of this catalog for policy on receiving credit through traditional transfer.

## Credit by Examination

Students may receive credit for courses through external exams or local exams:

1. External exams: Students may receive credit by exam for CLEP, AP, and DSST exams. A handout is available online at <https://www.com.edu/testing-center/clep.html> or in the Testing Center for those seeking credit through a CLEP exam. COM is a center for administering CLEP (College Level Examination Program) and DSST tests. Credit at COM as well as at other colleges may be obtained by earning passing scores on these tests. If the course is to be transcribed at another college, it is the student's responsibility to determine which test is needed for credit for the desired course.
2. Internal Exams: Some departmental tests are available. Students should speak with the corresponding department before scheduling an internal exam.

Transcripts are not created solely to award credit by examination. See the Testing Services section of this Catalog for policy on receiving credit.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Testing Center in the Enrollment Center.

## Portfolio Assessment

Students will be required to enroll in an online course which helps the student develop a for-credit portfolio that reflects credit-worthy learning experiences and aligns the student experience and skills with the learning outcomes of specific courses. Further information may be obtained by contacting a COM advisor. A Petition for Credit form must be completed and signed by the program faculty, appropriate dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Registrar before credit is granted. Certain fees may apply.

## Petition for Credit for Non-Credit Courses

Credit for non-credit courses is only granted when those non-credit courses are taken at COM; however, exceptions are made to this rule for non-credit courses taken elsewhere to be applied to the Law Enforcement and Fire Technology academies and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). A maximum of 24 credit hours may be requested. Coursework must have been completed in the previous five years. Students must provide documentation of content and level of non-credit courses (non-credit course syllabus, including Student Learning Outcomes) to demonstrate credit course equivalency as well as documentation demonstrating that noncredit instructor credentials are equivalent to credit faculty requirements. Students petitioning for credit applicable to the Law Enforcement and Fire Technology Academies must be a certified peace officer or firefighter.

Law Enforcement, Fire Technology, and EMS Exception: For any non-credit coursework not completed at COM, petitioner will take credit by exam, scoring 75 percent or higher. A Petition for Credit form must be completed and signed by the program faculty, appropriate dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Registrar before credit is granted. Certain fees may apply.

## Petition for Credit for Professional Certifications

College credit may be granted for certain professional certifications if specific criteria are met. Documentation must be provided showing that the certification and work experience is equivalent to a specified credit course that COM offers. Students must have completed at least six (6) hours of college credit courses at COM to petition for credit. A Petition for Credit form must be completed and signed by the program faculty, appropriate dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Registrar before credit is granted. Certain fees may apply.

## Transfer Credit for Educational Experiences Completed through the US Armed Forces

College credit may be granted for educational experiences completed while in the US Armed Forces. Veterans submitting original copies of their DD Form 214, Armed Forces of the United States Report of Transfer or Discharge, or an official Report of Educational Achievement through the U.S. Armed Forces Institute (USAFI), may receive transfer credit and advanced placement as recommended by the Commission of Accreditation of Service Experiences of the American Council on Education. Applicants may also submit their Joint Services Transcript (JST) for evaluation. Acceptable transfer credit courses will be

approved by the Registrar upon recommendation by the appropriate program faculty, appropriate dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

## **Transfer Credit for National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)**

Credit may be granted for training and education programs offered outside of the traditional college classroom setting through National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS). Equivalent credit may be granted after the student applies for transcript evaluation through the Admissions and Records Office. A Petition for Credit form must be completed and signed by the program faculty, appropriate dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Registrar before credit is granted. Certain fees may apply.