

# *Credit for Prior Learning*

## *Columbia College*

Portions of this document are adapted from materials published by Barry University (FL), Bellevue University (NE) and University of Pittsburgh/Bradford (PA).



## Introduction

Many students who participate in learning experiences outside the classroom wish to earn college credit for their work. Columbia College offers a number of ways students may earn such credit. CLEP tests, ACE credit and course test-outs are the preferred means because they require a theory-base for awarding credit, have national norms/criteria or both. If none of the above credit-awarding methods are an option, Columbia College awards credit for prior learning (CPL).

Before applying for CPL credits, students must have completed 12 hours of Columbia College credit. Students also must have completed ENGL 111 and ENGL 112 or their equivalent with a grade of C or better. These credits, if taken at Columbia College, may be included in the 12-hour requirement.

## Credit Award

Columbia College courses that offer CPL credit are generally applicable to degree requirements. A maximum of 15 credits of prior learning can be awarded. CPL is not awarded where college credit in a similar course has been earned. CPL credit does not count toward Columbia College residency.

### Courses for which CPL is available:

#### Art

ARTS 101	<i>Art Principles</i>
ARTS 120	<i>Drawing I</i>
ARTS 130	<i>Painting I</i>
ARTS 150	<i>Photography I</i>
ARTS 211	<i>Watercolor I</i>
ARTS 215	<i>Illustration I</i>
ARTS 126	<i>Graphic Design I</i>
ARTS 262	<i>Printmaking I</i>

#### Business Administration

ACCT 381	<i>Federal Income Tax – Individuals (see note 1)</i>
FINC 295	<i>Risk and Insurance (see note 2)</i>
FINC 298	<i>Personal Financial Planning (see note 3)</i>
FINC 354	<i>Investments (see note 4)</i>
FINC 397	<i>Principles of Real Estate (see note 5)</i>
MGMT 152	<i>Business Mathematics</i>
MGMT 330	<i>Principles of Management</i>
MGMT 341	<i>Small Business Management</i>
MKTG 352	<i>Personal Selling and Sales Management</i>

Note: Individuals who currently hold a professional designation/license can receive credit for the above courses as indicated upon submission

of a statement of designation/license renewal from the appropriate professional regulatory organization. Designations/licenses must be active at the time credit is sought.

1. Certified Personal Accountants (CPA) with an undergraduate accounting degree and at least five years of work experience in a public or private organization.
2. Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) or Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter (CPCU)
3. Certified Financial Planner (CFP) or Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC)
4. Certified Financial Planner (CFP) or Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) or NASD General Securities Representative (Series 7)
5. Real Estate Salesperson or Broker's License

## Computer and Mathematical Sciences

CISS 234	<i>Visual Basic</i>
CISS 236	<i>COBOL Programming</i>
CISS 238	<i>Java Programming</i>
CISS 240	<i>Introduction to Programming</i>
CISS 241	<i>Introduction to Programming</i>
CISS 242	<i>Programming II</i>
CISS 243	<i>Programming III</i>
CISS 245	<i>Advanced Programming</i>
CISS 280	<i>Systems Analysis and Design I</i>
CISS 285	<i>Structured Systems Analysis and Design</i>
CISS 320	<i>Systems Analysis and Design II</i>
CISS 325	<i>Systems Analysis, Design and Implementation Projects</i>

## Criminal Justice Administration and Social Work

CJAD 201	<i>Criminal Investigation</i>
CJAD 203	<i>Crime Scene Investigation</i>
CJAD 303	<i>Crime Scene Photography</i>
CJAD 306	<i>Military Justice Systems</i>
CJAD 351	<i>Community Based Corrections</i>
MSCJ 561	<i>Crisis Intervention</i>

## Education

EDUC 250	<i>Beginning Field Experience I</i>
EDUC 251	<i>Beginning Field Experience II</i>
EDUC 350	<i>Advanced Field Experience I</i>
EDUC 351	<i>Advanced Field Experience II</i>
EDUC 420	<i>Student Teaching in the Elementary School</i>
EDUC 422	<i>Student Teaching in the Secondary School</i>
EDUC 424	<i>Student Teaching in the Middle School</i>
EDUC 499	<i>Internship</i>
EDUC 699	<i>Internship</i>

## History and Social Sciences

None

## Humanities

None

## Science

BIOL 230     *Medical Terminology*

## Standards for Quality

CPL is evaluated using the following criteria:

- It has general applicability outside the specific situation in which it was acquired;
- It articulates theories, principles and general techniques;
- It has both a theoretical and practical understanding of the subject area;
- It may be assessed by a faculty expert;
- It is of college-level quality as determined by the faculty expert;
- It meets specific course objectives or competencies and has a relationship to degree aspirations or educational goals;
- The knowledge or skill represented as learning is current with that expected in the classroom/employment situation; and
- The level of confidence equals or exceeds what would normally be considered a C level of performance in the classroom.

## Portfolio Assessment

Students seeking CPL must submit a portfolio of relevant information that describes the learning acquired in a specific course area. Portfolio contents are described below. Students must have adequate writing skills (ENGL 111 and ENGL 112 are prerequisites). An evaluation assessment fee of \$75 per credit hour is required for each course submitted for review. This fee is payable upon submission of the portfolio.

No additional fees are assessed if credit is awarded. Each portfolio is assessed by a full-time faculty member in the corresponding subject. If the faculty member determines that the knowledge of the subject is college-level and equal to a grade of C or better, credit will be awarded. If the

knowledge is judged to be insufficient, the faculty member will deny credit. If the faculty member decides more information is needed to make a recommendation, the student will be asked to submit additional evidence.

## Acceptability of CPL

Each college has policies regarding acceptance of CPL. It is the student's responsibility to know the CPL acceptance policy for any school to which CPL credit may be transferred. Most employers recognize CPL, but some do not. It is the student's responsibility to know employer policy for CPL.

## Pre-Portfolio Activities

Students are expected to undertake the following preliminary activities:

### Conduct a knowledge inventory.

Review job history, area of study or special training, volunteer work, hobbies and other activities. List areas of knowledge and skills acquired.

### Choose areas for which college credit is sought.

As to be demonstrated in the portfolio, evaluate prior learning based on ability to demonstrate knowledge. Ensure that it is equivalent to a college course and to the need of college credits in that subject.

### Find appropriate course descriptions.

For each subject search the Columbia College catalog to locate a description of an actual course that best reflects the knowledge. Make certain the course has been approved for the relevant degree program and that it is on the list of courses approved for portfolio assessment.

## Portfolio Preparation

Students are expected to prepare the portfolio as follows:

1. Cover page
2. Table of Contents
3. Chronological record
4. Life experiences
5. Competencies
6. Goal statement
7. Narrative
8. Subjects and course descriptions
9. Documentation

Collect materials that document knowledge of the subject. Documents include samples of work, letters of verification

from employers or others, notes taken in training courses, transcripts, annotated bibliography or any other material that offers proof.

Describe the content and process of the learning. Write a narrative that outlines the learning – explaining how it was acquired and introducing the materials provided.

## Portfolio Assembly

Each course requires its own folder or binder. All information in the portfolio is typewritten using Arial style 12 font, double space, one-inch margins on all sides and numbered pages.

Once a portfolio is submitted, it is an academic record that becomes the property of Columbia College. It cannot be returned, and will be retained for one year.

Materials are arranged as follows:

### Cover Page

On one page (maximum) summarize the learning that occurred during life experiences that is proposed for credit.

### Table of Contents

Chronological record: List all jobs held, including full-time, part-time and volunteer. Note duties, skills and expertise used in performing job tasks.

### Life Experience

List community/religious activities, club/organization memberships, training programs or non-credit courses, hobbies/recreation, cultural pursuits, independent research.

### Competencies

(Source: American Council on Education)

1. Administration or effectively managing, handling and directing places, units, events and situations.
2. Communication or effectively listening, sending and responding to messages in a variety of audiences.
3. Critical thinking or effectively analyzing problems, ideas and situations.
4. Creativity or effectively producing innovative ideas, designs and methods for new and/or existing situations, events and procedures as well as artistic expression.

5. Interpersonal relations or effectively interacting with others.

6. Investigation and research or effectively seeking out information.

7. Supervision and leadership or effectively overseeing and directing people.

## Goal Statement

The goal statement cannot exceed one page in length. It contains a discussion of how educational goals relate to the student's professional life and personal goals. Students should ask themselves the following series of questions (Source: Vermont State Colleges and their Student Handbook on Educational Assessment and Portfolio Preparation).

Am I interested in:

- learning a new profession?
- broadening my knowledge and skills in certain areas?
- qualifying for graduate or professional school?
- increasing my competencies on the job?
- enriching my life through learning?
- acquiring credentials for career advancement?
- changing careers?

## Narrative

The narrative conveys to the faculty member knowledge of the material outlined in the course description. The narrative is in two sections of the portfolio: the life experiences analysis and the competencies section. A successful narrative:

- is well written, using professional vocabulary as appropriate
- describes knowledge of the subject
- specifies when, where and how knowledge was acquired
- relates learning to every topic noted in the course description and syllabus
- introduces each piece of evidence
- clearly shows a relationship between evidence and course material

The narrative must be at least two pages and no more than 10 pages in length. It should be organized either chronologically, citing each learning experience in sequence, or topically, discussing each topic within the course separately, and grouping the learning experiences according to topic.

## Subjects and Course Descriptions

Compare the inventory of competencies to Columbia College coursework for ideas about subjects appropriate for the portfolio. After identifying proper subject areas, choose course descriptions to match them. Inclusion of the course description in the portfolio proves that the subject is college-level, indicates its credit value and summarizes claimed knowledge. The college course master syllabi file contains course descriptions and can be found at <http://www.ccis.edu/academics/syllabi.asp> or in the college catalog.

## Documentation

Evidence provides direct documentation of knowledge and skills, pertains specifically to the topics in the course descriptions and supports the statements in the narrative about learning experiences. Typically two types of evidence are required: primary and secondary.

### Primary Official Documentation

- letters from employers/supervisors (originals)
- letters from business partners/consultants (originals)
- letters from clients and vendors (originals)
- letters from leaders of professional community organizations (originals)
- job descriptions, job evaluations and military evaluations (copies)
- education and award certificates/licenses (copies)

All primary official documentation must have organization letterhead/logo, describe position or activity and include accurate dates in month/year format.

### Secondary Official Documentation

- letters from members of professional community organizations/activities (originals)
- notarized letters from coworkers, friends, family members who have specific knowledge/activity (originals)

All secondary official documentation must be notarized if an organization letterhead/logo is not available and must describe position or activity and include telephone contact number and accurate dates in month/year format.

## Evidence of Training

Evidence to document training must reflect the amount of time devoted to the training, material covered and level of proficiency reached. Training is documented through one or more of the following:

- course transcripts, official course description or syllabus
- completed class assignments
- notes taken in class
- training manual, textbook or other literature used
- graded tests, reports or other work evaluations
- annotated bibliography or list of materials used
- certificate of attendance
- proof of enrollment
- diploma
- assigned reading list

## Evidence of Work-Related Training

The following pieces of evidence document learning related to paid or unpaid employment:

- reports, proposals or other material written on the job
- awards of citations
- blueprints, schematics, artwork or other work products
- military separation papers
- resumes
- letters from supervisors or employers
- licenses
- performance evaluations
- membership in professional trade organizations
- newspaper, magazine clippings
- description of job requirements
- description of license or certification requirements

## Other Forms of Evidence

Activities including community service for personal causes may be documented as follows:

- recommendations
- awards
- newspaper or magazine clippings
- letters of corroboration from co-volunteers, clients served, supervisors
- a list of books read
- annotated bibliography
- patents obtained
- a list of countries visited
- mementos from countries lived in and traveled
- exhibits such as photographs, videotapes, etc.
- programs from performances

## Letters of Verification

Letters from employers, work associates or community leaders who have first-hand knowledge of your involvement and abilities may be needed. The request for a letter should include:

- statement that the purpose of the letter is for verification of learning rather than a recommendation
- explanation of nature of working relationship
- expectations and level of accomplishment
- writer's qualifications for commenting on activities and expertise
- information related to the course description
- comments directly and separately on each learning experience

## Submission of Portfolio

Send the portfolio to the assistant dean for the Extended Studies Division, Columbia College 1001 Rogers St., Columbia, MO 65216. Attach to the portfolio a check or money order for the assessment fee. The assessment fee for each course submitted for evaluation is \$75 per credit hour. Anticipate 60 to 90 days for the evaluation process to be completed. Students will be notified of the evaluation outcome and credit, if awarded, will be posted to the transcript at no additional charge.



FORM C

# COLUMBIA COLLEGE

## Portfolio Evaluator's Report

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student \_\_\_\_\_

Student Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Faculty Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Faculty Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_

### RECOMMENDATION TO AWARD CREDIT:

Course Title/Number \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Credits \_\_\_\_\_

I recommend that the student above BE/NOT BE (circle one) awarded credit for prior learning based on the portfolio submitted to me for evaluation.

Copies to:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Department Chairperson
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Dean
- \_\_\_\_\_ Registrar
- \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Evaluator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student



FORM B

# COLUMBIA COLLEGE

## CPL Portfolio Assessment for Credit Request Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

I request to have my portfolio assessed in the following course offered by Columbia College:

Catalog Number \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Fee \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I understand the College will arrange a portfolio assessment and that the cost of each assessment is \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I further understand that if I am awarded the credit, the credits earned will be applicable to my degree. (A check or money order payable to *Columbia College* for the correct amount must accompany this request.)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_