



**SUBJECT:**                   **Credit Based on Experience**

**REFERENCE:**           **Board of Governors, Associate in Applied Science Degree Completion Program Guidelines (Revised December 2004)**  
**LEAP Credit Process**

**1.     PURPOSE**

To establish procedures for awarding of college credit based on life experience.

**2.     SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY**

All employees and students.

**3.     DEFINITIONS**

The term “life experience” is given only for those experiences that produce learning and skills comparable to the outcomes of courses or training at post-secondary levels. As a general principle, if colleges and universities award credits for the acquisition of certain kinds of knowledge and skills by standard course work, then comparable competence acquired in other ways will be credited through this experience assessment process. The basic intent of the program is to make college degree programs reasonably available to adults with work and family responsibilities.

**4.     POLICY**

Under certain conditions a person may receive credit for past experiences, provided that those experiences are related to material content normally covered in a course or courses offered by Southern. An experience does not necessarily have to be work experience to be considered.

**5.     BACKGROUND OR EXCLUSIONS**

Assessment of experience for credit is conducted only for students who have been admitted to Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College. Advisory assessments are not made. There is no manual or guide that may be consulted to obtain probable estimates about awards of credit.

**6.     GENERAL PROVISIONS**

The evaluation of student competence is made by teaching faculty. College faculty make judgments about the quality and value of the work their students regularly submit. These same faculty members are asked to review the statements and documentation of a student seeking credit equivalency, and where appropriate, to interview the student, and then to make a recommendation for an award of credit only in those areas in which the faculty member has been trained and regularly teaches.

The quality of evaluation of a student’s work should be quite comparable to that of traditional or standard



programs, since the same academic personnel make the judgements in this program as in standard course and/or program offerings. The faculty making the evaluation may be as demanding or as lenient as they feel appropriate. The Division Chair responsible for the certificate or degree program, the faculty, and the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) share the general responsibility of seeing that academic standards are maintained and, at least as important, that the adult student receives a fair evaluation and an award of credit that does justice to the concept of college learning.

## 7. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

A. The following steps are required for credit based on experience:

1. After admission to Southern, the student who wishes an assessment to be conducted prepares a detailed and documented portfolio of his or her adult learning experiences that are to be evaluated. (Board of Governors Associate in Applied Science Adult Degree Completion Program students must complete EL 201, Portfolio Development, as part of this process.) The student will also pay a \$300 portfolio review fee and complete form SCP-3227.A, *Credit Petition for Experiential Learning*, for each course petitioned upon submission of the portfolio to the Director of Adult Experiential Learning. Fees for evaluation of the portfolio must be paid prior to the assessment process.
2. The Director of Adult Experiential Learning will forward the portfolio submission to the appropriate Division Chair, who then submits the document to the faculty of the appropriate academic department or disciplines. The faculty member chosen to make a specific evaluation is instructed, where necessary, by the Division Chair about the procedures to be followed. Normally the teaching faculty of Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College will make these evaluations. If the student's experience being assessed lies outside the professional competence of Southern's faculty, the Director of Adult Experiential Learning will request a competent individual from another institution or another expert to make the evaluation.
3. The Director of Adult Experiential Learning's function is to provide general instructions to the student as a guide to preparing the portfolio and to assign credit petitions to appropriate divisions or recruit other experts to review the material submitted. It is also the Director of Adult Experiential Learning's role to advise division chairs of all previous and concurrent evaluation and recommendations of credit, so that faculty evaluators from similar or related areas do not recommend duplicate credit.
4. The Division Chair will assign a faculty member in each appropriate field in which the student is requesting credit to evaluate the student's experience as documented through the portfolio. The faculty member chosen to make a specific evaluation is instructed, where necessary, by the Division Chair about the procedures to be followed.
5. The faculty member may request an interview with the student. The purpose of an interview is to allow the faculty member making the evaluation the opportunity to verify, in an appropriate manner, the information in the portfolio and to secure additional information from the student or other sources about the experiences described in the portfolio. Also, if there are original works of art, voluminous published materials or other bulky materials to be presented as supporting evidence, these would normally be brought to an interview rather than submitted with the portfolio. The purpose of the interview is not to dispense with a well-prepared written



portfolio, since a written record of the evidence on which the award of credit is based is preserved in the student's permanent file in the Registrar's office.

6. The faculty member making the evaluation may seek additional information about the student's knowledge and abilities through the Director of Adult Experiential Learning, directly from the student, or from persons knowledgeable about the student's achievements. The faculty member is free to defer a credit recommendation until the student's written materials are completed to satisfaction. If the faculty evaluator requires additional information, the student will have 30 days in which to provide the additional information.
7. Although comparable in some ways to proficiency testing, the process of evaluation employed is performed through a review of the portfolio, rather than by testing. However, if the student prefers, he or she is free to demonstrate knowledge of specific academic fields by taking various standardized tests, such as those offered through CLEP and similar programs, or challenge exams for specific courses.
8. After the faculty member has completed the evaluation, he or she makes a recommendation for an award of credit on form SCP-3227.A, Credit Petition for Experiential Learning. The evaluator can award the full number of credit hours petitioned, partial credit, or no credit. The preferred method of recommendation is to equate the student's competencies with actual courses listed in the institution's curriculum. However, since this is not always possible, the recommendation may be made in terms of block credit in particular area.
9. After a faculty member's recommendation for credit is made, the Division Chair reviews it and makes a recommendation to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) for approval or denial of the credit recommended by the faculty member. Form SCP-3227.A is returned to the Director of Adult Experiential Learning until the entire portfolio is evaluated, at which time all credit awards are submitted to the CAO.
10. The actual awarding of academic credit for life experience is made by the CAO. After the CAO's approval has been given, the Office of the Registrar is officially notified of the award of credit, and this award is entered into the student's permanent record. The Registrar's office will notify the student in writing of the outcome of this evaluation. A grade of "CR" (credit) is provided for any credit petition granted.
11. The appropriate posting fees must be processed and paid before the Registrar shall affix the awarded credit to the student's transcript.
12. The student has the right of appeal if the awarding of academic credit seems unreasonably low or is denied; however, the request for a second evaluation must be made in writing to the Director of Adult Experiential Learning within 10 working days of the date on the notification letter sent to the student. The Director of Adult Experiential Learning will forward this request and documentation to the Chief Academic Officer. A final decision will be made in consultation with the faculty evaluator division chair, and CAO. No portfolio may be submitted more than twice for consideration including the original submission. If submitting a portfolio for a second evaluation, the student may elect to submit additional information to strengthen the petition.



- 13. For a variety of reasons, no timetable for completing student evaluations can be set in advance. In some cases, individual evaluations may require as much as a whole semester to complete because a student may be requesting credit under the auspices of several academic divisions, his/her experiences fall into several disciplines or because experts from outside the institution must be contacted to make the evaluations. Although every reasonable effort will be made to proceed expeditiously, students should not assume that the evaluation can be completed in a few weeks or even a few months. Normally the final decision will be made in one semester, although in some complex cases, an evaluation may take more than one semester.

**8. CANCELLATION**

None.

**9. SIGNATURE**

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<b>Board Chairman</b>	<b>Date</b>
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<b>President</b>	<b>Date</b>

**Attachments:** SCP-3227.A, Portfolio Evaluation Form

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**Revision Note:** Additions and deletions were made to this policy September 20, 2005.