Appendix QQ

MSUN Policy 405

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHERN

Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual

Section 400: Academic Affairs

405 Learning Experience Assessment Program

Effective: February 12, 2001
Revised: July 2013
Review Date: July 2015
Responsible Party: Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Purpose

Montana State University Northern recognizes and values experiential learning. This fact extends beyond providing Advanced Placement opportunities, use of the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dantes Transcripts, Military/Veteran Training, Trade Competency Examinations, awarding credit for prerequisites conditional upon grades in more complex vertically dependent courses, and allowing challenge examinations for specific courses and other faculty approved competency measures. Students have the opportunity to earn college credit for learning outcomes of life and work experiences which can be demonstrated to be equivalent to learning outcomes from formal traditional college course work.

The opportunity to earn college credit for what has been learned through life and work experiences is provided through the Learning Experience Assessment Program. While enrolled in the Portfolio course, the student develops a formal, written document of professional quality following guidelines set forth in the *Portfolio Manual*. The completed document is assessed by individual faculty assessors and appropriate college chairs/deans and certified by the Provost Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Montana State University Northern.

Montana State University Northern does not intend to be a transcription service for the general public through Learning Experience Assessment Program (LEAP) or any of its programs and operations. The range of students for which experiential credit programs are intended include enrolled students who are: a) seeking degrees from MSU-Northern; b) maintaining or seeking to extend a credential or license, or to meet continuing employment demands; c) using the services of the University for their lifelong learning goals; d) constituents of the University who seek credit bearing experiences consistent with the University role and scope.

Policies

1. The catalog under which the student enters Montana State University Northern and under which the student intends to graduate specifies the degree programs which permit the use of experiential learning credit earned through the Learning

Experience Assessment Program.

2. Prior to submission of the portfolio document for assessment, the following are to be submitted to the appropriate office for evaluation: a) a declaration of major; b) relevant transcripts of all prior college work; c) certificate programs convertible to college credit; d) military credit evaluations and any other experience from which the student may receive college credit.

   This will reduce difficulties associated with "double counting" credit, enhance student advising, and provide the portfolio assessment process with a more meaningful context for decision making and credit evaluation. Credit awarded by transfer or through other means ***shall not be duplicated*** through the portfolio process.

3. Upon payment of the current course fee(s) for LEAP 289, the student will receive a *Manual*, supplementary materials, and access to advisement necessary to complete the portfolio process.

   The initial registration fee ensures the student's enrollment in LEAP 289 for one semester. Students successfully completing portfolios through Section II of the *Portfolio Manual* will receive a grade of P.

4. All aspects of the portfolio preparation and assessment process shall occur under the direction of the instructor.

5. Students may apply through the portfolio process for specific course credit for courses listed in the University catalog. Students seeking specific course credit should contact the appropriate department chair to determine whether they can meet the course objectives before applying for specific course credit. The student is responsible for providing all materials for this determination process requested by the department chair or designee. A positive judgment in the determination process does not *guarantee* award of specific course credit.

6. Using the provisions of the catalog (or supplement) in effect upon the student's entry into the University, the student may apply for credit by experience with that allowed under the degree plan of the student's declared major. ***Credit will be limited to not more than 25% of the credits needed for a degree***. No graduate credit can be obtained through the portfolio process.

7. Students may request credit under catalog courses available at the institution. It shall be the responsibility of the student to obtain catalogs, syllabi, or other supporting material specified by the instructor to enhance the validity of the assessment process.

8. The portfolio document, when submitted for assessment, must be prefaced with a signed, legally notarized affidavit attesting to the validity and accuracy of the contents of the document.

9. Students who plan to graduate in a given year and whose programs contain credits to be earned though LEAP must submit their completed portfolios(see *Manual*) for assessment ***at least 10 weeks prior to the deadline*** for submission of graduation papers.

10. Upon completion of the assessment process, the total cost of credits attempted through the portfolio process is due and payable upon billing. No diploma or transcript shall be issued to a student who has not paid all fees due.

11. Uponcompletion of the assessment process, the student will furnish two copies of the portfolio document to the University that shall become part of the student's permanent Montana State University Northern record.

12. Studentsmay submit subsequent requests to earn experiential credit, based upon competencies acquired outside credit bearing classes, after initial completion of the portfolio process. Registration and credit fees for such requests shall be those in force at the time of the subsequent request.

Procedures

Procedures defined here are for the purpose of assuring the faculty, the University, the Board of Regents, and accrediting bodies that credit earned by a student through the portfolio process has been rigorously and validly assessed in terms of its equivalency to traditionally awarded credit for classroom-based courses, or field-experience-based instruction. These procedures are designed to support and enhance the policies and foundations of the assessment process.

1. Credit recommendations of individual assessors must be examined by appropriate chairs/deans who head colleges in which the student requests specific course credits. Chairs/deans may approve assessors' recommendations or return the portfolio to them with a recommendation to alter the assessment. If the chair/dean and the assessor cannot reach a resolution, in the latter situation, the Chair/Dean's decision shall be controlling.

2. Students whose portfolio documents are not approved by the Chair shall be advised, in writing, of the right to appeal. The Admissions and Standards Committee shall convene upon *the request of the student to hear appeals on an assessment*. The Committee may request the presence of the student, any assessor, a student's advisor, the chair, or other persons it deems necessary to ensure the validity of its deliberations and subsequent judgments.

3. The rulings of the Admissions and Standards Committee are subject to appeal to the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs through the petition process.

4. The student will be required to register in LEAP 289 to seek early and full advisement from the department responsible for the student's major.

5. Chairs will designate at least one assessor who has expertise to evaluate credit requests in the disciplines or areas of study which are deemed to be within the departments' respective spans of academic purview. When feasible, assessors should not be members of the Admissions and Standards Committee.

6. Various types of formal, informal and experiential learning may be considered in the assessment process including the following:
    a. Experiential learning which is based on-the-job training programs, including military/veteran occupation specialties (MOS) and experiential based schools which are not included in the American Council on Education (ACE) manual for credit evaluation.
    b. Formal employer sponsored training and/or in-house, non-collegiate training programs. c.
    c. Formal training completed under the auspices or approved by Department of Labor, labor unions, or similar agencies. d
    d. Formal and/or informal training documented by certification or licensure.
    e. Informal training and learning outcomes resulting from occupational and/or employed-status change activities.
    f. Instruction through some regionally non-accredited post-secondary institutions which may be accredited by specialty organizations.
    g. Any workshop or instructional activity approved or sponsored by the Office of Public Instruction.
    h. Experiences which the student deems to have had significant, meaningful, college-equivalent effect upon personal or occupational development.
    i. Training from any source documented by training records, syllabi/training materials and/or letters of verification.
    j. Skills, knowledge and values acquired through direct work and/or life experiences.

7. Students participating in the Learning Experience Assessment Program should be aware that:
    a. Credits awarded may be less than the number of credits requested.
    b. Prerequisites for any specific course for which the student requests credit through the portfolio process must be satisfied prior to assessment of that course through a process specified by the appropriate department chair.
    c. The student bears the full responsibility for providing a professional quality portfolio and other deliverables (e.g. documents, pictures, specimens, work samples, etc.) specified in the Portfolio Manual as interpreted by the instructor.
    d. Specific course credits earned through LEAP are similar to credits earned by challenge and are officially awarded on the same basis.
    e. Experiential credit will be transcripted at the earliest possible time following a student's successful completion of the prescribed process for the type of experiential credit being sought and payment of all fees associated with the portfolio process. It will be noted on the transcript that credits will only be officially awarded upon completion of all other degree requirements

8. A written record of the disposition of each portfolio will be furnished by the department chair to the student's official file (Registrar's Office), the department in which the student is a major, the assessor's file, and to the student, within 10 days following receipt of all fees.

9. Faculty performing specific course assessments included in a student's portfolio are entitled to payment for services proportionate to the per credit rate in force at the time such assessment is begun.

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