



Writing competencies: Crafting self-assessments and navigating academic integrity



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Writing competencies: Crafting self-assessments and navigating academic integrity



This session will delve into the origins and mechanics of competencies, offering a detailed guide on crafting self-assessments for each competency. Additionally, we will cover CMU's Plagiarism/Academic Integrity policy during the session with Dr. Ted Clayton, Professor of Political Science.

**Writing Prior Learning
Competency Assessments**



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We will cover:

1. What is the competency assessment model?
2. What is a competency assessment?
3. How do I determine what my competency title should be?
4. Tips for Defining College-Level Learning from Experiences
5. How long should my written competency assessment be?
6. The levels of CMU prior learning credit awards.
7. CMU's Plagiarism/Academic Integrity policy.



What is the competency assessment model?

CMU recognizes the value of adult experiential learning and offers the opportunity for students to obtain academic credit for that learning. Our prior-learning model is based on “competencies” rather than on course “equivalents,” and the credit awarded may be applied to students’ degree program, usually as elective credits. The competency model allows students to earn credit in various areas of learning, regardless of whether CMU offers any specific courses in those areas (for example, law enforcement, culinary arts, cosmetology, or automobile design).



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What is a competency assessment?

In writing your self-assessment of learning in Tabs IV (Work Experiences), V (Training Experiences), and VI (Life Experiences), your primary purpose is to develop arguments to persuade evaluators to grant college level credit for your prior learning from work, training, and/or life experiences. For *each* specific learning competency for which you want credit, you must develop an argument, and the best approach is to use a three-part structure for each competency: **claim, supporting evidence, and reasoning.**

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How do I determine what my competency title should be?

Job Duties/Responsibilities/Training Outcomes:

Look at your responsibilities from your job description for this job/position or learning objectives from trainings.

Learning you acquired:

Identify any *new* skills, concepts, principles, methods, or procedures you learned. Also identify existing skills, concepts, principles, methods, or procedures you *improved*. List examples of how you applied this learning on the job.

Possible Competency Titles:

Extrapolate a list of titles for possible competencies for which you might obtain credit. Utilize the Sample Competency Titles document for suggestions.

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Tips for Defining College-Level Learning from Experiences

The following tips represent a number of ways that you can describe your knowledge to increase the chances of earning college level credit:

- 1. Identify stages and factors involved in each step of the process and the reasons for including them.**
- 2. Personalize your knowledge and experiences.**
- 3. List and describe characteristics of well-run/poor programs, good/ineffective managers, coaches, teachers, parents, ice-skaters, etc.**
- 4. Discuss patterns you see in working with people and their individual or group needs.**

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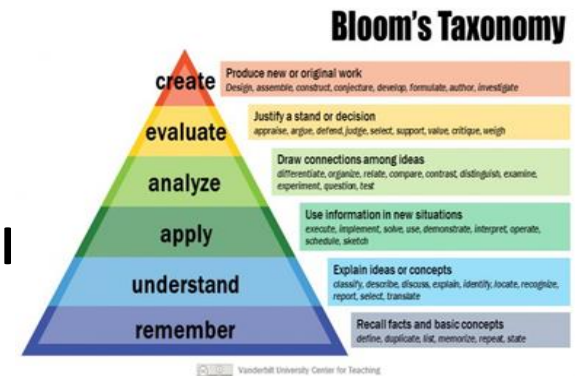


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Tips for Defining College-Level Learning from Experiences, continued

5. What is inherent in the decision-making process?
6. When you discuss what you do, you need to take it to a deeper level and address the procedures and who is affected.
7. Demonstrate your critical thinking and analysis.
8. What is your knowledge base?
9. Use Action Words and the Blooms Taxonomy Model



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Examples of what the evaluators are looking for

Focus on the learning, not the act itself

Poor self-assessment:

“I was a landscaper. I planted trees.”

This indicates what the person did, not what they learned

Good self-assessment:

“As a landscaper I developed the ability to analyze soil moisture content and select appropriate plants for the environment.”

The focus of the writing is on what the person learned and the application of new knowledge to the job responsibilities

Examples and details are important

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How long should my written competency assessment be?

Undergraduate competency assessments should be 750 – 1,000 words in length (a page and a half of the assessment form)

Graduate competency assessments should be 1,000 – 1,200 words in length (a page and a three quarters of the assessment form)



CMU awards prior learning credit at three levels:

- lower-level undergraduate **UNV 297**
- upper-level undergraduate **UNV 497**
- graduate **UNV 697**
- **Determined by quality of writing and level of learning demonstrated**



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CMU's Plagiarism/Academic Integrity policy

Policy on Academic Integrity:

Because academic integrity is a cornerstone of the University's commitment to the principles of free inquiry, students are responsible for learning and upholding professional standards of research, writing, assessment, and ethics in their areas of study. In the academic community, the high value placed on truth implies a corresponding intolerance of scholastic dishonesty. Written or other work which students submit must be the product of their own efforts and must be consistent with appropriate standards of professional ethics. Academic dishonesty, which includes cheating, plagiarism and other forms of dishonest or unethical behavior, is prohibited.

If you're not sure whether something is allowed, contact us and ask.

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Final Thoughts

The most common comment from evaluators in denying credit is that the written assessment detailed what the student **did** and not what the student **learned**.

If credit is denied upon initial evaluation, you will have the opportunity to rewrite a competency (once within 45 days from date of award letter).



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We Are Here to Help

YOUR success is OUR success!



In Person – if you are in the Mt. Pleasant, Michigan area, you can schedule an appointment with our Prior Learning staff located in the CMU's North Campus, Innovation and Online, 802 Industrial Drive, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858. Call (989) 774-7126



Phone – call our Prior Learning staff members who can assist you over the phone. Call (989) 774-7126



Email – send your questions to us via email priorlearning@cmich.edu



Webinars and In-Person Sessions - check our Prior Learning webinar page for upcoming live webinars in in person live sessions that focus on specific topics helpful to you as you begin the Prior Learning Portfolio process <https://www.cmich.edu/academics/innovation-online/resources/credit-for-prior-learning/prior-learning-webinars>



Webpage – our webpage has a wealth of information to assist you in planning, preparing and submitting a portfolio. The web page has links to worksheets/templates, a comprehensive Student Handbook, FAQs, links to archived webinars, video briefings and much more <https://www.cmich.edu/academics/innovation-online/resources/credit-for-prior-learning>

Resources



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