

Prior-Learning Student Handbook

Prepared by the
CMU Prior-Learning Assessment Team (PLAT)

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What is Prior-Learning Credit?

Prior-Learning credit can be awarded for college-level learning students have already acquired. College credit for prior learning is not a new idea. College Level Examination Programs (CLEP) and other testing programs allow students to receive college credit for prior learning in a specific course or subject area offered by the college or university. (Contact your advisor for more information about these programs.) CMU's Prior-Learning credit option is based on a portfolio rather than a test, and it can result in more credits than you might receive from a test.

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," but the credit awarded may be applied to students' degree program, usually 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. The competency model allows students to have their college-level learning recognized, regardless of whether we offer specific courses pertaining to what they have learned.

As an adult, much of your personal and professional development has probably occurred outside the traditional academic classroom. Through such experiences, you may have acquired skills and knowledge that could satisfy some of your CMU degree requirements. For assessment purposes, we categorize students' prior-learning experiences into three areas:

- **Work Experiences** (based on employment positions)
- **Training Experiences** (e.g., workshops, seminars, or classes taken to enhance learning and professional development)
- **Life Experiences** (other, less-formal, volunteer-type interests and activities that are of substantial duration and have resulted in college-level learning)

The above experiences also represent how the body of the Prior-Learning portfolio is organized. For any of your learning from these experiences to be considered for credit, you will need to assemble a portfolio that explains and documents the experiences and what you learned from them (i.e., what competencies you have acquired). Key in this process is your "self-assessment," which explains the learning that occurred through the experiences. Your portfolio will then be evaluated to determine whether credit can be awarded, and if so, how much and at what level.

Prior-Learning credit at CMU had its beginning in the early 1970s when we began offering courses on military bases in the United States. Military personnel sought credit for the learning they achieved through professional experiences. CMU developed a Prior-Learning Assessment (PLA) process and assembled a team to evaluate portfolios submitted for college credit. CMU now serves undergraduate and graduate students in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Since the program's inception, the Prior-Learning Assessment Team (PLAT) has evaluated over 10,000 portfolios.

How Do I Know if I Qualify for Prior-Learning Credit?

All graduate and undergraduate students admitted to CMU and enrolled in a degree program offered through CMU Global Campus are eligible for Prior-Learning credit. However, a portfolio is evaluated only after transfer credits have been evaluated. A Transfer Credit Evaluation form, transcripts from each college or university attended, and a CMU transcript showing all transfer and earned credits must be submitted with the portfolio.

You should meet with your academic advisor before beginning the portfolio-development process. The advisor may be able to help you identify the experiences that would be most applicable to your degree program if Prior-Learning credit is awarded.

- **For undergraduate credit:** You can include experiences from the completion *date on your high school diploma*.
- **For graduate credit:** You can use experiences only from the *previous 7 years or the completion date of your latest undergraduate degree*, whichever is more recent.

However, prior learning does not work for everyone, and there is no easy answer as to whether you should spend the time and energy involved in developing and submitting a portfolio. Individuals have had different experiences, for differing lengths of time, and will explain these experiences in different ways, all of which can affect the amount of credit received.

To download a short questionnaire that might help you decide whether the portfolio approach will benefit you in pursuing your degree, go to the page in the Prior-Learning Credit web site titled “Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms.”

What Kinds of Learning Can I Get Credit for?

You have the opportunity to obtain credit for your previous work, training, and life experiences. CMU's policies and procedures for awarding Prior-Learning credit have been influenced by the standards for assessing learning published by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the American Council on Education (ACE).

1. Credit is awarded only for *learning* and not simply for *doing*. You will not receive credit for having had the experience; you must be able to explain what you learned from the experience and how you have applied that learning. Experience provides the setting in which potential learning may take place; however, individuals respond to similar experiences differently, which affects the learning that actually takes place. Thus, two people may hold similar jobs requiring the same responsibilities, and yet they may learn quite different things, depending on such variables as what a person already knew or didn't know when starting a position, the learning that a special project may have afforded, and/or the changes in an industry that resulted in a person needing to learn new concepts and skills.
2. Credit is awarded only for *college-level* learning, which is based upon the premise that college learning provides a balance between theory and practical application. Many worthwhile experiences may take place in employment, training, and other life settings, but they may not provide the blend of theoretical and practical knowledge that college credit requires. Experiences that qualify for *college-level* credit are those that provide the learner with the general principles and concepts of a field, which in turn enable the learner to apply that learning to other settings.
3. Prior-Learning credit will not be given if credit has already been granted through other courses, whether CMU transfer, examination credit (including CLEP) or some other venue. If you have transferred any courses to CMU, then you must include in your portfolio a current CMU transcript along with a copy of your Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE) form.

Note: Courses taken at other regionally-accredited academic institutions but not accepted for CMU transfer credit (usually because CMU has no equivalent course) may be submitted for Prior-Learning credit as "Training" experiences.

Prior-Learning credits may be used in place of required or elective courses in your major or minor, or as elective credits, as determined by your academic advisor.

However, Prior-Learning credits may *not* be used for

- University Program courses;
- Competency courses, including math, oral speech, writing and writing-intensive, and quantitative reasoning (QR); or
- the 30-semester-hour residency requirement (see the *Global Campus Bulletin*).

Your academic advisor will assist you in determining how the Prior-Learning credits may be applied toward your degree.

The Prior-Learning Assessment Team (PLAT) can award undergraduate credit at the lower (UNV 297) or upper (UNV 497) levels; graduate credit is awarded only as UNV 697. The following describe the qualities and assumptions about the levels:

Undergraduate Lower-Level (UNV 297): Skills and knowledge acquired at the lower division level are comparable to those that could be learned in the first two years of college. This includes basic concepts, procedures, and terminology that apply to a job and that show a good grasp of the fundamentals as well as

codes, rules, or regulations that govern on-the-job behavior. Learning at this level can be categorized as at the information, comprehension, and application level. The person uses and gains skills and operates independently or with a minimum of direct supervision.

Note: Learning at the vocational level, which is derived primarily from practical training in a trade and represents predominantly non-analytic skills (e.g., auto body repair, cosmetology, dental assistant, barber) is not generally considered college-level.

Undergraduate Upper –Level (UNV 497): Experiences awarded credit at the upper level represent more advanced learning. This level presupposes that basic knowledge has already been acquired. Instead, the emphasis is on in-depth learning. The person demonstrates the ability to analyze relationships and to understand underlying or organizing principles. The person operates more or less independently, is involved in the application of concepts at an advanced level, is able to solve problems and implement ideas in a creative manner, and has some research skills that can be applied to decision making.

Graduate (UNV 697): Graduate-level credit is available only to students enrolled in graduate degree programs offered through CMU Global Campus. Graduate learning reflects complex competencies that go beyond those that are upper-level undergraduate. The person operates largely in a world of concepts and policies that assumes a foundation of baccalaureate degree knowledge. Whether the experiences are quite narrow in focus (e.g., suicide prevention) or very broad (e.g., developing educational programs), the person demonstrates considerable practical and theoretical understanding of the field. Work elements include activities and learning in areas such as planning, research, forecasting, organizing, etc. The person would be likely to apply learning systematically across situations and share knowledge with others in the field.

How Many Credits Can I Earn for Prior Learning?

The maximum number of credits students can apply to an undergraduate degree is 60. The maximum number for graduate students is 10. However, the number of credits actually awarded depends on a number of factors:

- the length and duration of the experiences submitted for consideration
- the quality of the student's self-assessment of learning
- whether the learning is college-level (undergraduate or graduate)
- whether sufficient and appropriate documentation has been provided in support of the student's claims
- whether the portfolio includes all the required components in the correct order and meets all other requirements

The Prior-Learning Assessment Team (PLAT) uses the chart on the next page to determine the *potential* number of credits for each work and training experience submitted in the portfolio (i.e., each IV and V-Tab). In determining the number of potential credits for life experiences (VI-Tabs), the Team looks at whether the experience is at least two years of in-depth and sustained duration. Generally, though, life experiences receive the least amount of credit, in most cases, no more than 1 to 3 credits.

Work Experiences

As can be seen in the chart on the next page, experiences of fewer than 10 months in a single position would not result in any credits, while 16 to 25 months could result in three credits, assuming that the self-assessment and documentation are strong. On the other hand, eight years or longer in *one position* would have a maximum potential of 15 credits. Because the time is calculated per IV-Tab, submitting different positions as separate tabs can generate more potential credit hours. In some cases, evaluators might be able to combine short but related experiences to award credit. For example, military personnel may have a 6-month assignment and then be reassigned to another position. In this case, it is appropriate to submit the short work experience, as it may be possible for evaluators to combine it with another experience to generate credit.

Training Experiences

Workshops and seminar-type training experiences require 45 hours in-class clock hours to generate 1 credit, assuming that the self-assessment reflects college-level learning. For non-transferred course completed at a regionally-accredited institution, credits are generally awarded based on the number of semester hours completed, assuming that the grade in the class was a C or higher.

Life Experiences

Experiences must have occurred over a sustained span of time (2 years/24 months) and show substantial involvement to be eligible for any credit. Even though evaluators can combine multiple experiences and various Tabs to award credit, Life Experiences generate the least amount of credit, are not required for undergraduate portfolios, and generally are not included in graduate portfolios.

Easy-Reference Guide for Determining Number of Potential Credits for *Each* IV and V Tab

Work Experiences (IV Tabs)

Undergraduate Credit for each position (IV tab)	
Months on Job	Max potential credit hours
0 - 9	0
10 - 12	1
13 - 15	2
16 - 18	3
19 - 22	4
23 - 28	5
29 - 33	6
34 - 38	7
39 - 43	8
44 - 50	9
51 - 57	10
58 - 64	11
65 - 71	12
72 - 80	13
81 - 89	14
90 - 99+	15

Graduate Credit for each position (IV tab)	
Months on job	Max potential credit hours per job
0 - 9	0
10 - 15	1
16 - 20	2
21 - 25	3
26 - 30	4
31 - 35	5
36 - 40	6
41 - 45	7
46 - 50	8
51 - 55	9
56 - 84+	10

Training Experiences (V Tabs) (Undergraduate & Graduate)

Courses from Regionally- Accredited Schools that did not transfer to CMU*	
Class Hours	Credit Hours
0 - 14	0
15 - 29	1
30 - 44	2
45 - 60	3
and so on	

*Every 15 class hours = 1 credit. The number of credits for a course as reflected on the school's transcript is how much we award.

Trainings, Workshops, Seminars*	
Class Hours	Credit Hours
0 - 44	0
45 - 89	1
90 - 134	2
135 - 180	3
and so on	

* Every 45 hours = 1 credit. For Vehicle Design students with trainings from Batavia or Philpott Automotive Engineering School, every 40 hours = 1 credit.

10 CEUs (Continuing Education Units) = 1 credit

A downloadable copy of this chart can be found on the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled "Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms."

When Should I Apply for Prior-Learning Credit?

We encourage students to submit their portfolio *early* in their academic program, before they take courses that might duplicate their Prior-Learning experiences. Portfolios are evaluated continuously throughout the year, but expect an *8-to-10 week turnaround time* for processing your portfolio from the time it is received at CMU's Prior-Learning Office until you receive your award-notification letter. Students who are awarded Prior-Learning credit early in their academic careers have a much more accurate timeline for planning and meeting degree requirements, which also alleviates some of the stress that many students feel as graduation nears.

While portfolios can be submitted at any time, consider the following dates as guidelines for receiving Prior-Learning awards in time for graduation:

- May 1 for August graduation
- September 1 for December graduation
- February 1 for May graduation

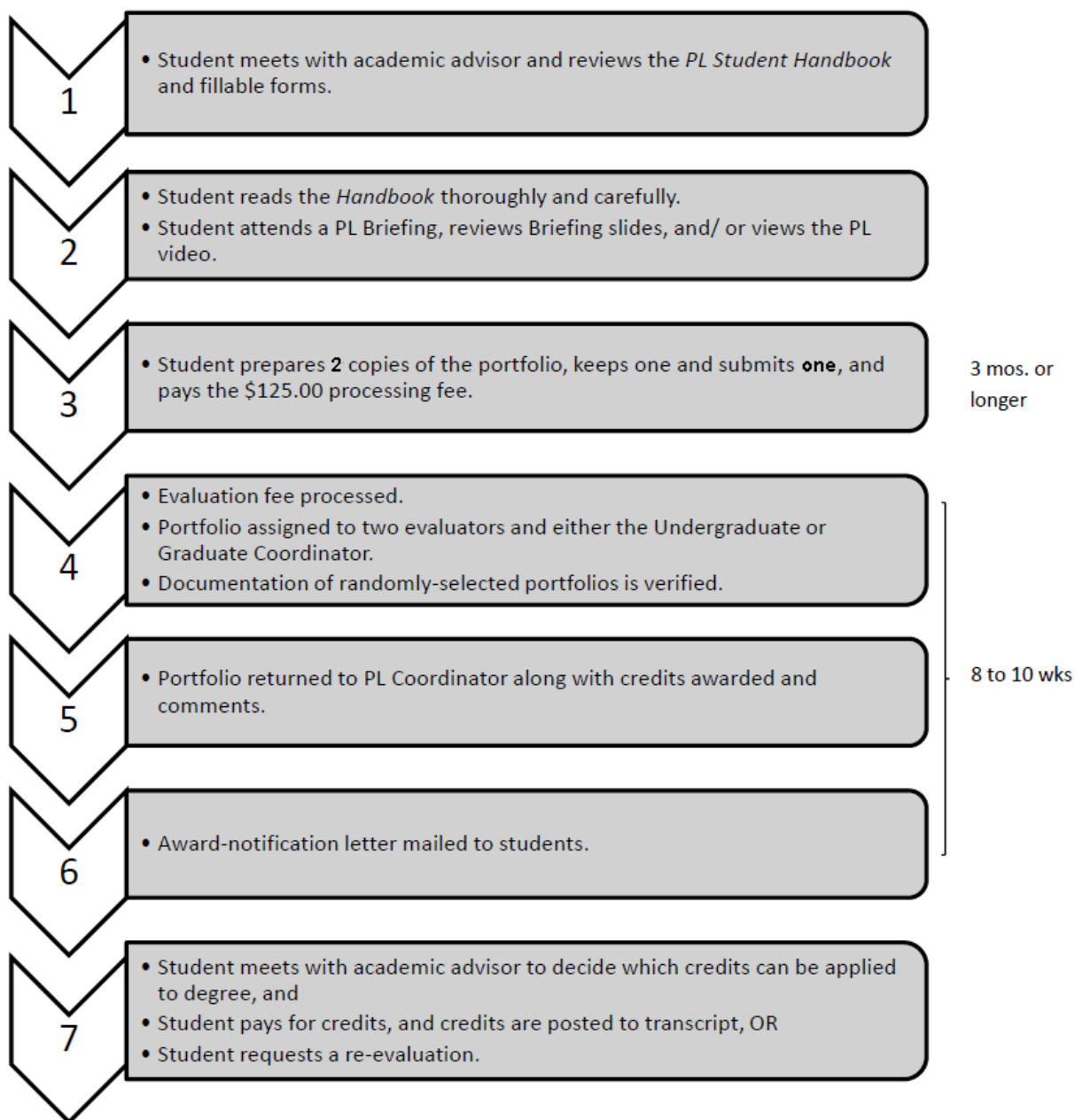
What is Involved in Preparing a Prior-Learning Portfolio, and How Long Will it Take?

Developing a Prior-Learning portfolio requires organizing and collecting documents; writing self-assessments of the learning acquired from various work, training, and/or life experiences; and completing the fillable forms according to the guidelines explained in this handbook.

The process of preparing a portfolio varies substantially from one student to the next. The time involved will depend on your work responsibilities, family obligations, volunteer activities, community involvement, and the number of courses you are taking during the time the portfolio is being prepared. Other factors include the number of years to be covered, the number of experiences submitted, and the availability of verification documents. Occasionally, a student will prepare a portfolio in as little as three months, but most take six months or longer. The sooner you begin, the better.

A diagram depicting the Prior-Learning portfolio process is on the next page.

Prior-Learning Portfolio Process



Components of a Prior-Learning Portfolio

Your completed portfolio will have at least six sections (i.e., Tabs) but may have as many as eight, depending on whether you include all three of the body sections (Tabs IV, V, and VI), instead of only one or two. For example, a student who is only interested in obtaining credit for learning from work experiences would include only the section pertaining to work experience (Tab IV) and wouldn't bother to include the sections pertaining to training (Tab V) or life experience (Tab VI). On the other hand, a student only interested in obtaining credit for courses from regionally-accredited schools that didn't transfer to CMU would only include the section pertaining training (Tab V) and not the sections pertaining to work or life experiences (Tab IV and Tab VI).

The chart on the next page shows the order in which the sections (Tabs) must be arranged in the portfolio. All the Tabs (except Tab VII) are fillable PDF forms.

Thereafter, each of the following steps is explained:

Step 1: Preparing

Step 2: Planning

Step 3: Completing the Fillable Tab Forms and Writing the Self-Assessments of Learning

Step 4: Assembling the Portfolio

Arrangement of Portfolio Components

Tabs I and II: Personal & Educational Information (a one-page fillable form; required)
Copies of all transcripts and, if applicable, a CMU Transfer Credit Evaluation are placed after this form.

Tab III: Tables of Contents (a multi-page fillable form)

- **Tab III-1:** Table of Contents for Tab IV (Work Experience).
- **Tab III-2:** Table of Contents for Tab V (Training Experience).
- **Tab III-3:** Table of Contents for Tab VI (Life Experience).

Tab IV: Work Experience (one or more multi-page fillable forms for each job/position)

- **Tab IV-1** for most recent position (fillable form, self-assessment, and documentation)
- **Tab IV-2** for next most recent position (fillable form, self-assessment, and documentation)
- and so forth

Tab V: Training Experience (a multi-page fillable form for each training)

- **Tab V-1** for most recent training (fillable form, self-assessment, and documentation)
- **Tab V-2** for next most recent training (fillable form, self-assessment, and documentation)
- and so forth

Tab VI: Life Experience (a multi-page fillable form and self-assessment for each experience)

- **Tab VI-1** for most recent activity (fillable form, self-assessment, and documentation)
- **Tab VI-2** for next most recent activity (fillable form, self-assessment, and documentation)
- and so forth

Tab VII: Signature Block & Notarization (a one-page *non-fillable* form; required)

Tab VIII: Portfolio Checklist (a multi-page fillable form; required)

Note: Your portfolio must contain at least one of the experience tabs: IV (Work Experience), V (Training Experience), or VI (Life Experience). It could contain all three, just two, or only one.

Step 1: Preparing

1. Review the Prior-Learning video and Briefing slides (PDF) available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site to determine if submitting a portfolio is right for you and to develop an understanding of the overall development process and submission guidelines. You can return to these materials for additional review as you work on your portfolio. If you decide to develop and submit a portfolio, then complete the tasks below and on the next several pages.
2. Download and save to your computer the required fillable forms from the Prior-Learning Credit web site. These forms, called “Tabs forms,” are what you will use during each step of the writing process. You will only need one copy of each for Tabs I & II, III, VII, and VIII, but you will likely need multiple copies of the forms for Tabs IV, V, and perhaps VI, because *each* experience in these sections submitted for credit in your final portfolio will require a separate completed Tab form and documentation. Save each copy of the form with a different filename, e.g.,

YournameIV-1.pdf JaneDoeIV-1.pdf

YournameIV-2.pdf JaneDoeIV-2.pdf

and so on.

Then, save all copies of the same forms in a folder on your computer, e.g.,

☐ IV forms (Work Experiences)

☐ V forms (Training Experiences)

☐ VI forms (Training Experiences)

3. Download the worksheets available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site. These will help you plan and organize information.
4. Purchase manila folders or develop some other system for organizing your information as you gather required documents and complete the various Tab forms and self-assessments.
5. Purchase three 3-ring binders and Tab dividers. You will need these for assembling and submitting the portfolio. All pages will need to be 3-hole punched. *Do not use plastic page protectors* for any materials.

Downloadable PDFs of all worksheets, charts, and fillable forms are available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site.

Step 2: Planning

1. Begin to gather information by reviewing the fillable Tab forms, making notes, and considering what forms of supporting documentation you will need and how you will obtain it.
2. Review the worksheets and fillable forms for Tabs IV, V, and VI. As you complete the worksheets, consider the following:
 - All part- and full-time employment positions you have held for at least 10 months, including military service, or other self-employed activity that generated income and resulted in college-level learning. For each job/position, you will need to submit a fillable IV-Tab form and include supporting documentation.
 - All trainings (workshops, seminars, and/or courses) attended for the primary purpose of increasing or maintaining current skills, knowledge, or certification, whether required by the employer or attended for other professional reasons. For each training, you will need to submit a fillable V-Tab form and include supporting documentation.
 - **Workshops/Seminars:** Employer, agency, or other sponsored-training sessions may be eligible for credit if they resulted in college-level learning and consisted of at least 45 in-class clock hours or resulted in 10 Continuing Education Units (CEUs). A self-assessment of learning is required.
 - **College/university courses:** If CMU denied transfer credit for a course you took at a regionally-accredited institution, you may submit that course for Prior-Learning credit. Each course must be submitted on a separate fillable V-Tab form with a copy of the transcript, but no self-assessment of learning is required.

Undergraduate courses: A minimum grade of C or higher is required.
Graduate courses: A minimum course grade of B and a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 or higher are required.
 - Any other activities (i.e., life experiences) that represent college-level learning and substantial time involvement and depth. Life experiences can be difficult to self-assess and typically receive the least amount of credit. For each experience, you will need to submit a separate fillable VI-Tab form and include supporting documentation.
3. Consider the amount of *time* spent in each work, training, and/or life experience. Time spent is important in considering the number of credits you could earn and how many experiences you need to submit. For example, if you are only seeking a few credits, then you won't want to waste your valuable time developing a portfolio that covers decades of employment experiences or a large number of trainings. Focus on the experiences that are most likely to lead to credits you can apply to your degree. Your advisor can help you decide which experiences to focus on in your portfolio.
4. Begin identifying the supporting documentation you will need and where and from whom you will get it, e.g., employment-verification letters or other documents, completion certificates for workshops, transcripts from other schools you've attended, etc.
5. Complete a worksheet for **each** work experience (employment position), each training experience, and each life experience that you think you might include in the final portfolio. Use the worksheets as the basis for developing and drafting your self-assessment for each work, training, and life experience. Do not include the worksheets in your portfolio—they are simply to help you develop content for the IV, V, and VI Tabs.

Step 3: Completing the Fillable Tab Forms and Writing the Self-Assessments of Learning

As was explained earlier, your portfolio will consist of at least six sections but perhaps as many as eight, depending on whether you include all three of the body sections (Tabs IV, V, and VI) or only one or two. You will compile all sections of the portfolio by completing several different fillable PDF forms and, after each form, including copies of the required documentation (e.g., letters from current and previous employers, transcripts, copies of certificates of achievement for trainings, etc.)

All the fillable forms are PDF files, so to download and complete, you need access to a computer with a recent version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed (it's free). Formatting standards, such as typeface and size, have already been set for the forms. After you have completed the forms, you will print them out and assemble them in your portfolio along with your supporting documentation.

In writing your self-assessment of learning in Tabs IV, V, and VI, your primary purpose is to develop arguments to persuade evaluators to grant 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. (**Note:** Later in this section, we explain how to complete the fillable IV and V-Tab forms, including how to figure out how many competencies for which you may request credit in each IV and V-Tab form.)

Evaluators do not grant credit simply for the amount of time you spent working, training, or engaging in various other activities, although the duration of the experience is used to determine the maximum number of credits *possible* for each work, training, or life experience form. When deciding whether to grant credit and, if so, at what level, evaluators will consider the extent to which each self-assessment you have included for a specific competency is equivalent to 3-credit hours of college-level learning. For undergraduate students, evaluators will also decide whether the learning reflected by the self-assessment merits lower- or upper-level credit; for graduate students, they will decide whether the learning reflected by the self-assessment merits graduate-level credit. If it doesn't, then no credit will be awarded.

If you want feedback on the quality of your written self-assessments, you may submit them to the CMU Writing Center at <http://global.cmich.edu/writingcenter/submission/>.

In what follows, we take you through each of the fillable forms, and in most cases, we have included a copy of the form with explanatory comments inserted.

All portfolios are subject to the university policy on Academic Integrity. Portfolios are to be the students' own work, and all self-assessment responses are to be in the students' own (English) words. For additional information, see CMU's Academic Integrity Policy.

Tabs I and II: Personal and Educational Information

This one-page form will require just a few minutes to complete. The Tabs I and II form requires your identifying information, dates for previous degrees (high school or undergraduate), the degree currently being pursued, and a list of institutions from which you earned college credit.

For Tabs I and II, complete the form and include copies of transcripts for all institutions on your list. Unofficial (“student”) copies are fine, but you will need to obtain these for each institution on your list. Most schools now have electronic transcript files/academic histories for students to access and print off their records, if needed. Also include the Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE) form that is completed by the CMU Registrar’s Office for any courses taken at another institution. Place the transcripts and the TCE (if required) in the portfolio immediately following the completed Tabs I & II form. Do not include any additional materials or information in this Tab section.

Two samples of the Tabs I and II form are shown on the next two pages. The first is for undergraduate students and the second is for graduate students. Marginal explanations have been inserted but are not included in the actual PDF forms which are a bit larger and can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled “Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms.”

Copy of the Fillable Form for Tabs I and II (for Undergraduate Students)

Tab I: Personal Information			
Student ID#:		E-Mail:	
Name:		Present Employer:	
Address:		Address:	
Telephone: () Ext.:		Telephone: () Ext.:	

Tab II: Educational Background/Degree Sought			
Degree Option sought:			
Area(s) of Concentration (if applicable):			
CMU Center:		Advisor:	
Date of high school Graduation:			
<i>If you have earned a degree from a community college, please identify:</i>			
Degree obtained:			
College/Institution:			
Location:			
Major:		Minor:	
		Date awarded:	
List all additional colleges or universities you have attended but from which you did not receive a degree:			
IMPORTANT: Copies of transcripts (including CMU transcripts) are required for all undergraduate work. If you have received transfer credit from CMU for work completed elsewhere, then you must also include a copy of your CMU Transfer Credit Evaluation along with copies of all your transcripts.			

Comment [MLK1]: Enter your CMU Student ID number here.

Comment [MLK2]: Include a current email address by which you can be reached.

Comment [MLK3]: Include your current name. If some of your transcripts or other supporting documents include a last name different from your current name, include it here as well, e.g., Jane Doe (Smith).

Comment [MLK4]: If you are not currently employed, enter NA in the space (i.e., not applicable), and leave blank the Address and Telephone number spaces pertaining to employment.

Comment [MLK5]: Include your current mailing address, whether a street address or PO Box.

Comment [MLK6]: Include the area code and telephone number where you can be reached during business days.

Comment [MLK7]: Enter the name of your degree exactly as it appears in CMU's *Global Campus Bulletin*.

Comment [MLK8]: If your degree has an area of concentration, enter it here exactly as it appears in CMU's *Global Campus Bulletin*.

Comment [MLK9]: Enter the name of the CMU Center at which your Advisor works.

Comment [MLK10]: Enter the name of your Academic Advisor.

Comment [MLK11]: If you obtained a degree from a community college, enter the name of the degree you obtained, e.g., Associate's Degree or Certificate, etc. If you did not obtain a degree, enter NA (i.e., not applicable), and leave the rest of the spaces blank.

Comment [MLK12]: Enter the name of the school from which you obtained the degree.

Comment [MLK13]: Enter the subject area in which you obtained your Associate's Degree or Certificate, e.g., Medical Transcription.

Comment [MLK14]: If you obtained a minor, enter it here.

Comment [MLK15]: In the actual fillable form, there's a space here for you to list any other schools you have attended, including trade schools.

Comment [MLK16]: Don't forget to include in your portfolio—immediately after this form—copies of all your transcripts and, if applicable, your Transcript Credit Evaluation.

Copy of the Fillable Form for Tabs I and II (for Graduate Students)

Tab I: Personal Information			
Student ID#:		E-Mail:	
Name:		Present Employer:	
Address:		Address:	
Telephone: () Ext.		Telephone: () Ext.	

Tab II: Educational Background/Degree Sought			
Degree Option sought:			
Area(s) of Concentration (if applicable):			
CMU Center:		Advisor:	
Date of high school graduation:			
Undergraduate degree:			
University/College:			
Major:		Date awarded:	
Undergraduate degree:			
University/College:			
Major:		Date awarded:	
Additional Graduate Work Completed (other than at CMU): <i>Specify courses by title, and indicate semester or quarter hours of credit.</i>			
Title	Credit hours	Institution	Date(s)
IMPORTANT: Copies of transcripts are required for all undergraduate and graduate work, including work completed at CMU.			

Comment [MLK1]: Enter your CMU Student ID number here.

Comment [MLK2]: Include a current email address by which you can be reached.

Comment [MLK3]: Include your current name. If some of your transcripts or other supporting documents include a last name different from your current name, include it here as well, e.g., Jane Doe (Smith).

Comment [MLK4]: If you are not currently employed, enter NA in the space (i.e., not applicable), and leave blank the Address and Telephone number spaces pertaining to employment.

Comment [MLK5]: Include your current mailing address, whether a street address or PO Box.

Comment [MLK6]: Include the area code and telephone number where you can be reached during business days.

Comment [MLK7]: Enter the name of your degree exactly as it appears in CMU's *Global Campus Bulletin*.

Comment [MLK8]: If your degree has an area of concentration, enter it here exactly as it appears in CMU's *Global Campus Bulletin*.

Comment [MLK9]: Enter the name of the CMU Center at which your Advisor works.

Comment [MLK10]: Enter the name of your Academic Advisor.

Comment [MLK11]: State whether you obtained a Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, or Bachelor of Applied Arts, or some other degree (if you obtained your degree from a school outside the U.S.). If you obtained more than one degree from the same school, enter them here as well, but if you obtained another degree from a different school, enter it separately three lines down.

Comment [MLK12]: Enter the name of your major as it appears on the transcript of the school from which you obtained the degree.

Comment [MLK13]: Enter the name of your minor as it appears on the transcript of the school from which you obtained it. If you did not obtain a minor, enter NA (i.e., not applicable). If you received more than one minor from the same school, enter them both here, but if you obtained another minor from a different school, enter it separately three lines down.

Comment [MLK14]: This coursework need not have led to a graduate degree. If it did, then instead of entering specific courses, enter the degree title in the space under Title (e.g., M.A. in Educational Technology), the total number of credits you completed in satisfaction of the degree requirements in the Credit Hours space, the name of the university under Institution, and the date you completed the degree.

Comment [MLK15]: Don't forget to include in your portfolio, immediately after this form, copies of all your transcripts. They don't need to be official copies.

Tab III: Tables of Contents (III-1, III-2, and III-3)

The fillable Tab-III PDF form for the Tables of Contents is divided into three sections:

- Tab III-1 is for listing each of the individual *work* experiences submitted in the IV Tab section of your portfolio (a separate IV-Tab form for each position held for at least 10 months, e.g., IV-1, IV-2, and so on).
- Tab III-2 is for listing each of the individual *training* experiences submitted in the V Tab section of your portfolio (a separate V-Tab form for each training of at least 45 in-class clock hours or 10 CEUs, e.g., V-1, V-2, and so on).
- Tab III-3 is for listing each of the individual *life* experiences submitted in the IV Tab section of your portfolios (a separate VI-Tab form for each activity of 24 months or longer, e.g., VI-1, VI-2, and so on).

In each of the three Table of Contents Tabs, list information in reverse chronological order (most recent at the top, oldest at the bottom). The column for documentation should list only *actual* documents submitted.

Each of the three parts of the Tab-III form has plenty of space for entering information for multiple experiences (i.e., the individual experiences being submitted in the Tab-IV, V, and VI sections. Use however many spaces as you need and leave the rest blank.

Include a Table of Contents for each Tab section for which you are submitting experiences for credit. For example, if you are submitting only IV-Tabs for work experiences, then include the Table of Contents Tab III-1 but not the ones for Tabs III-2 and III-3. Likewise, if you are submitting only V-Tabs for training experiences or courses from regionally-accredited schools that did not transfer to CMU, then include the Table of Contents Tab III-2 but not the ones for Tabs III-1 and III-3.

Sample copies of the Tabs III-1, III-2, and III-3 Tables of Contents are included on the next few pages. The actual fillable PDF forms are a bit larger and can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled "Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms."

Copy of Tab III-1: Portfolio Table of Contents for IV Tabs

Tab III-1: Portfolio Table of Contents for IV-Tabs

Use this form to prepare a table of contents that briefly outlines all information included in the IV-Tab section of your portfolio. List your work experiences in reverse chronological order, i.e., the most recent experience first, then the next most recent, and so forth. Be sure each experience is documented.

IV-Tab #	Position & Dates of Employment	Name of Employer	Documentation
IV-1			
IV-2			
IV-3			
IV-4			
IV-5			

Comment [MLK1]: Include a copy of the Tab III-1 only if you are submitting IV-Tabs in your portfolio (i.e., if you are requesting credit for any learning acquired from work experiences). If you are not submitting any IV-Tabs, then omit Tab III-1.

Comment [MLK2]:
If you are requesting credit for learning from any work experiences, then you will have at least one IV-Tab in the IV-Tab section of your portfolio. These you will number in the fillable IV-Tab forms, one form for each experience (e.g., IV-1 will be your current or most recent experience, IV-2 your next most recent, and so on). Here in the Tab III-1 Table of Contents, you will enter some of the same information as you will enter in the top section on the first page of each of those IV-Tab forms.

Some students find it helpful to complete the Tab III-1 Table for Contents form *before* completing the individual IV-Tab forms, but some students do it the other way around. The important thing is for the information reported in the Tab III-1 Table of Contents to agree with the information you've included in the individual IV-Tab forms. When evaluators perceive inconsistency, they tend not to award credits.

Comment [MLK3]:
One of the most common mistakes students make is not including consistent dates of employment here in the Tab III-1 Table of Contents, the individual IV-Tabs, and in the verification letters from employers. If these dates don't agree, evaluators may not award any credit or may decide to award credit based on whichever dates reflect the shortest duration of employment. Double check all dates for consistency. For example, if your employment-verification letter states that you worked in the IV-1 position from June 2005 to August 2011, then those are the dates you must include in your IV-1 form and in the IV-1 entry in the Tab III-1 Table of Contents. If the dates in the employment-verification letter are incorrect, then it's up to you to get the employer to send you a revised letter with the correct dates *before* you complete the portfolio.

Comment [MLK4]:
Regarding "Documentation," be sure to list in the Documentation spaces *only* the supporting documentation included in your portfolio after each IV-Tab form, and list the items in the order in which they are arranged in the portfolio.

Comment [MLK5]:
The actual fillable PDF form includes space for students to include information for up to 15 IV-Tabs. To save space in the handbook, we've only included the first page of that form here. We've never had anyone use all 15 spaces, but there's always a first time!

Copy of Tab III-2: Portfolio Table of Contents for V Tabs

Tab III-2: Portfolio Table of Contents for V-Tabs

Use this form to prepare a table of contents that briefly outlines all information included in the V-Tab section of your portfolio. List your training experiences in reverse chronological order, i.e., the most recent experience first, then the next most recent, and so forth. For each course, workshop, or seminar, indicate whether you have included (1) an outline or class description; (2) information on instructor's credentials; (3) verification of completion; (4) specific documentation of in-class and out-of-class hours. Do not submit training experiences that are not or cannot be specifically documented by a source other than you or a relative.

V-Tab #	Title of Session/Course & Dates	Content Outline or Description	Instructor Qualifications	Certificate of Completion or Transcript	Exact # of Class Hours
V-1					
V-2					
V-3					
V-4					
V-5					
V-6					
V-7					
V-8					
V-9					
V-10					

Comment [MLK6]:
Include a copy of the Tab III-2 *only* if you are submitting V-Tabs in your portfolio (i.e., you are requesting credit for learning acquired from training experiences or for courses taken at regionally-accredited schools that did not transfer to CMU). If you are not submitting any V-Tabs, then omit Tab III-2.

Comment [MLK7]:
If you are requesting credit for learning from any training experiences, then you will have at least one V-Tab in the V-Tab section of your portfolio. These you will number in the fillable V-Tab PDF forms, one form for each experience (e.g., V-1 will be your current or most recent experience, V-2 your next most recent, and so on). Here in the Tab III-2 Table of Contents, you will enter some of the same information as you will enter in the top section on the first page of each of the V-Tab forms.

Some students find it helpful to complete the Tab III-2 Table for Contents form *before* completing the individual V-Tab forms, but some students do it the other way around. The important thing is for the information reported in the Tab III-2 Table of Contents to agree with the information you've included in the individual V-Tab forms. When evaluators perceive inconsistency, they tend not to award credits.

Comment [MLK8]:
Regarding "Title of Session/Course & Dates": If you are submitting one or more V-Tabs for courses from a regionally-accredited college that did not transfer to CMU, then place the name of the course in this space exactly as it appears on the transcript. The only checkboxes you will need to check are the last two, i.e., transcript and class hours. (See the instructions later in this section of the handbook about how to complete the V-Tab forms.)

However, for any other types of training—e.g., workshops, seminars, courses taken at non-accredited schools, etc.—you will need additional forms of supporting documentation.

Comment [MLK9]:
In the actual fillable PDF form, you will see check boxes in these last four columns. Simply click on the appropriate boxes. This is sort of a mini-checklist to make sure you've included all the required information in your V-Tabs.

Comment [MLK10]:
The actual fillable PDF form includes space for students to include information for up to 25 V-Tabs. To save space in the handbook, we've only included the first page of the form here. Rarely has a student submitted more than 25 V-Tabs; in fact, most submit fewer than 10.

Copy of Tab III-3: Portfolio Table of Contents for VI Tabs

Tab III-3: Portfolio Table of Contents for VI-Tabs

Use this form to prepare a table of contents that briefly outlines all information included in VI-Tab sections of your portfolio. List your life experiences in reverse chronological order, i.e., the most recent experience first, then the next most recent, and so forth. Do not submit life experiences that are not or cannot be specifically documented by a source other than you or a relative.

VI-Tab #	Title of Experience & Dates	Experience Provider or Location	Documentation
VI-1			
VI-2			
VI-3			
VI-4			
VI-5			

Comment [MLK11]:
Include a copy of Tab III-3 only if you are submitting any VI-Tabs in your portfolio (i.e., you are requesting credit for learning from life experiences). If you are not submitting any VI-Tabs, then omit Tab III-3.

Comment [MLK12]:
If you are requesting credit for learning from any life experiences, then you will have at least one VI-Tab in the VI-Tab section of your portfolio. These you will number in the fillable VI-Tab PDF forms, one form for each experience, e.g., VI-1 will be your current or most recent experience, VI-2 your next most recent, and so on. Here in the Tab III-3 Table of Contents, you will enter some of the same information from the top section on the first page of each of those VI-Tab forms.

Some students find it helpful to complete the Tab III-3 Table for Contents form *before* completing the individual VI-Tab forms, but some students do it the other way around. The important thing is for the information reported in the Tab III-3 Table of Contents to agree with the information you've included in your individual VI-Tab forms. When evaluators perceive inconsistency, they tend not to award credits.

Comment [MLK13]:
Regarding "Documentation," be sure to list in the Documentation spaces *only* the supporting documentation included in your portfolio after each VI-Tab form, and list the items in the order in which they are arranged in the portfolio.

Comment [MLK14]: Again, The actual fillable PDF form includes space for students to include information on up to 10 VI-Tabs. To save space in the handbook, we've only included the first page of that form here. Rarely has a student submitted more than 10 VI-Tabs; in fact, most submit just a couple or none at all.

Tab IV: Work Experience (Employment Positions)

Tab IV refers to the entire work-experience section of your portfolio, which will consist of one or more separate IV-Tab forms. You will include an IV-Tab form for each job/position (full- or part-time) you held primarily for the purpose of supporting yourself financially (e.g., direct wages, housing for compensation, etc.) and for which you are seeking to obtain credit for the learning you acquired from the job/position.

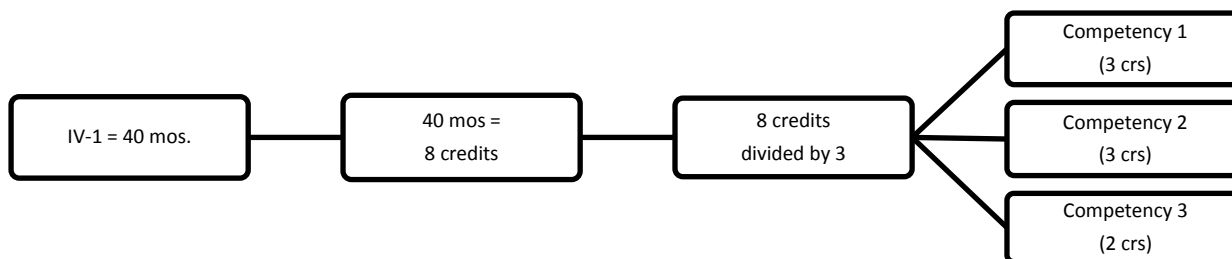
However, as noted earlier, the number of potential credits for each position/job depends, in part, on how many months you spent in the job/position: You must have held the job/position for at least 10 months for 1 credit). From there, though, the potential number of credits differs between undergraduate and graduate students. For example, to be eligible for 3 credits, an undergraduate student must have worked in the position for at least 16 months, whereas a graduate student must have worked in the position for 21 months.

The IV Tabs typically account for most (75-85%) of the total credits awarded for an undergraduate portfolio, and they account for nearly all credits for graduate portfolios.

If you don't plan to submit for credit any of the learning you acquired from work experiences, then omit this section and move on to Tab V and/or Tab VI.

Generally, students benefit most from credits awarded in 3-credit blocks, although 1- and 2-credit awards are also possible. Thus, you should think strategically about how many credits you need and for what competencies. Thus, for each work experience you submit on an IV-Tab form, you need to determine how many months you worked in the position, how many credits those months are worth (by looking at the chart on the form), and the maximum number of competencies for which you may request credit (assuming your self-assessment of learning is written effectively and the learning is college level).

The diagram below illustrates this process for an undergraduate student submitting her most recent work experience (IV-1 Tab), from July 2010 to November 2013, which is 40 months (each July through June is 12 months \times 3 = 36 months, and July to November = 4 months, and $36 + 4 = 40$ months).



Thus, in her IV-Tab form for this position, the students may include self-assessments for up to *three* competencies, two of which would count for 3 credits and one for credits. She may not submit more than three competencies.

Evaluators do not award more than 3 credits for a single competency, so you need to make sure that your competency titles do not overlap within or among your various IV, V, and VI Tabs. For example, you would not want to request 3 credits for Customer Service in IV-1 and another credit for Customer Service in V-2.

Be sure to review the section of this handbook pertaining to how many credits you can earn from prior learning; included there is a copy of the “Easy Reference Guide for Determining Number of Potential Credits for Each IV and V Tab.” A downloadable copy of the guide is available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site. A truncated version of the guide is included in the fillable IV and V-Tab forms. Length of employment alone does not guarantee any credit, though. The self-assessment of learning for each competency must also be written effectively, and the learning assessed must be college level (undergraduate, upper or lower level; or graduate).

A sample copy of the IV-Tab form is included on the next page. The actual fillable PDF form is a bit larger, and longer, and can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled “Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms.” Many students find it helpful to complete the Worksheet for IV Tabs before completing the individual IV-Tab fillable forms. The worksheet can be downloaded from the same web page.

Copy of an IV Tab Form

Tab IV—Work Experience

IV-

Dates of employment (mm/yy)

From: To: Months on job:

Full-time?

Part-time? # of hrs/wk:

Exact title of position, rank, and salary:

Name of employer (firm, organization, etc.) and address including Zip Code:

Name and title of immediate supervisor:

Address of supervisor:

Phone #: ()

STOP!

Before completing Parts A through C of this IV-tab form, look at the appropriate chart below to determine the number of potential credits you are eligible to receive for the learning you acquired in this position (if your self-assessment is effective). For every 3 credits for which you are eligible, you will write a self-assessment of ONE competency. For example, if you worked 45 months in this position and are eligible for 9 credits, then you will write a self-assessment for three (3) competencies and no more. If you worked more than 99 months and are eligible for 15 credits, include no more than five (5) competencies.

Undergraduate Credit for each position (IV tab)	
Months on Job	Max potential credit hours
0 - 9	0
10 - 12	1
13 - 15	2
16 - 18	3
19 - 22	4
23 - 28	5
29 - 33	6
34 - 38	7
39 - 43	8
44 - 50	9
51 - 57	10
58 - 64	11
65 - 71	12
72 - 80	13
81 - 89	14
90 - 99+	15

Graduate Credit for each position (IV tab)	
Months on job	Max potential credit hours per job
0 - 9	0
10 - 15	1
16 - 20	2
21 - 25	3
26 - 30	4
31 - 35	5
36 - 40	6
41 - 45	7
46 - 50	8
51 - 55	9
56 - 84+	10

Comment [MLK1]: Enter the number 1 in this space for your most recent job/position; this will be your Tab IV-1. Number sequentially each subsequent form you complete for each job/position, i.e., IV-2 for your next most recent job, IV-3, for the one before that, and so on. You may submit as many IV tabs as jobs you've held as long as you were employed in each position for at least 10 months (for 1 credit) and the learning was college level.

Comment [MLK2]: In the spaces for dates of employment, round to the nearest month. For example, if you started this job on August 14, 2010, then enter 08/10, and if you began work on August 16, 2010, enter 09/10. Do likewise for end dates. Notice also that we request the dates *from* and *to*, not *from* and *through*. So if your end date is August 16, 2010, you would enter September 2010 in the "To" space. Most employment verification letters report start and end dates by month and year, and they sometimes report dates as *from* and *through*, not *from* and *to*. But make sure the dates you enter here match logically the dates in your employment-verification letter or other documentation. Then count up the months of your employment, and enter that number in the space provided for months on the job.

One of the most common mistakes students make is not providing consistent dates of employment for each position listed in the Tab-III Table of Contents for the IV Tabs, the individual IV-Tab forms, and the documentation. If evaluators detect inconsistency that can't be resolved easily or logically, they might not award any credits.

Comment [MLK3]: Make sure the position title or rank (for military personnel) and salary entered here match the title/rank and salary in your supporting documentation.

Comment [MLK4]: Be sure to read these instructions carefully and follow them thoroughly.

Comment [MLK5]: You are welcome to submit an IV-Tab form for each position at which you worked at least 10 months, but most students prefer to apply credits received in 3-credit block, which would require more months on the job (16 for undergraduate students and 21 for graduate students).

To determine the number of competencies for which you will need to develop titles and write self-assessment in Part B of this form, divide the number of credits the position is potentially worth by 3, and add another competency for any remainder. For example, if you are an undergraduate who worked 40 months in the position and could potentially receive up to 8 credits, you would develop three competency titles and self-assessments, two worth 3 credits each and one worth 2 credits. If you only want to submit the two 3-credit competencies, that's fine, too. (See also the diagram in the Tab IV section of the *Prior-Learning Student Handbook*.)

Tab IV—Work Experience

Part A. Job Description:

Identify and give a full description of the responsibilities you had while in this position. Your description should relate to your official job title/rank and description.

Comment [MLK6]: In the actual fillable form, a space is provided here for you to enter your job description. We suggest you compose the description in MS Word, proofread and edit it carefully, and then paste it into the space. The default format in the form is 10-point Times Roman.

Part B. Competencies and Self-Assessments

Using the chart on the previous page to determine of how many credits your months on the job are worth, complete one of the competency self-assessment sheets on the next few pages for *each 3-credit competency* you for which you are requesting credit. Do NOT submit more than five (5) competency self-assessment sheets, and do NOT submit more sheets than you are entitled to (e.g., if your number of months on the job is worth only 9 credits, then include no more than three (3) self-assessment sheets, one for each 3-credit competency).

Comment [MLK7]: In this sample, we've provided only one competency section for Part B, but the actual fillable form contains a sufficient number of pages for up to 5 (five) competencies, which is the maximum any student may submit for a single work experience, assuming the student has worked a sufficient number of months on that job to be eligible for credit for that many competencies.

Tab IV—Work Experience

Competency Title 1:

What did you learn about this competency? Provide a 750 to 1,000-word self-assessment of your learning, i.e., write an argument to support of your claim about what you learned. Be sure to provide specific examples and reasoning to support your claim about what you learned and how you applied what you learned. Do not just tell us what you *did*; tell us what you *learned* and how you applied it.

Comment [MLK8]: In the space provided, enter the title of the first competency you plan to address. If number of months on the job makes you eligible for only 3 or fewer credits, then address only one competency.

Comment [MLK9]: In the actual fillable form, two pages of space is provided for each competency for you to enter your self-assessment of learning. We suggest you compose the self-assessment in MS Word, proofread and edit it carefully, and then paste it into the space. The default format in the form is 10-point Times Roman.

Be sure to review the sections of the Portfolio Checklist (Tab VIII) titled "Tab IV: Work Experience" and "Quality of Writing in Tabs IV, V, and VI."

Tab IV—Work Experience

Part C: Documentation

In the rest of this section, include copies of your supporting documentation from the employer regarding this work experience. It must include

- your position/rank and job description(s) and
- verification of your dates of employment in the position.

All letters of verification must have

- an inked or electronic signature;
- be on letterhead or clearly indicate that the letter was received electronically; and
- provide a means of contacting the writer of the letter, e.g., a current postal address, phone, and/or e-mail address.

In addition to the above, you may include

- copies of annual performance evaluations, and
- any other relevant information, such as certificates of achievement or for trainings not included in any V-Tabs.

If any of the specific documentation listed above is not included, please explain in the space below:

Comment [MLK10]: Part C is as important as Parts A and B, so provide accurate and credible documentation.

Comment [MLK11]: We don't mind looking at a few additional forms of documentation, such as those listed here. But some students mistakenly believe that stuffing their portfolios with irrelevant documentation will impress evaluators. The opposite is more likely, because an overabundance of documentation tends to make evaluators suspicious, as if the student is attempting to distract us from the relevant information, of which we actually need very little. In other cases, students simply try to overcompensate, as if they think a 20-pound portfolio will lead more credits. It won't, because we evaluate based on the quality of the portfolio, not its weight.

Save yourself a lot of time and effort by including only the minimum amount of documentation necessary to support your claim about the job you held and the dates you held it. Focus your energies on writing effective self-assessments of learning for each competency.

Tab V: Training Experience (Workshop/Seminars and Non-Transferred Course Work)

Tab V refers to the entire training-experience section of your portfolio, which will consist of one or more separate V-Tab forms. You will include a V-Tab form for each training for which you are seeking to obtain credit for the college-level learning you acquired.

V Tabs typically account for 25-15% of the total credits awarded for an undergraduate portfolio, and a bit less for most graduate portfolios.

If you don't plan to submit for credit any of the learning you acquired from training experiences, then omit this section and move on to Tab VI.

The number of potential credits for each training depends on how many in-class clock hours you spent in or Continuing Education Units (CEUs) you received for the training.

To be considered for credit, the self-assessment for each training experience must reflect college-level learning, with advanced college-level learning needed for graduate credit.

Be sure to review the section of this handbook pertaining to how many credits you can earn from prior learning; included there is a copy of the "Easy Reference Guide for Determining Number of Potential Credits for Each IV and V Tab." A downloadable copy of the guide is available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site. Note the two categories of training experiences and the differences in terms of how they are submitted:

- *For workshops and seminars, or courses taken at non-regionally accredited schools*, at least 45 class hours or 10 CEUs are needed for every 1 credit, assuming that the self-assessment and documentation reflect learning at the appropriate level (undergraduate or graduate). Additional supporting documentation is also required.
- *For courses completed at other regionally-accredited colleges, universities, or trade schools that did not transfer to CMU*, no self-assessment of learning is required, and the only documentation needed is a copy of the transcript from the school where you completed the course.

To be considered for credit, *each* training or non-transferred course must be submitted as a separate V Tab. However, if you have several shorter trainings *on the same subject* that, combined, total at least 45 class hours, you can submit them in a single V-Tab form. For example, if you completed several trainings related to various software applications that, combined, equaled at least 45 class hours, you could submit them as a single training experience using the competency title "Computer Applications."

A sample copy of the V-Tab form is included on the next page. The actual fillable PDF form is a bit larger and can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled "Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms." Many students find it helpful to complete the Worksheet for V Tabs before completing the individual V-Tab fillable forms.

Copy of a V Tab Form

Tab V—Training Experience

V-

Title of Training	Sponsor	Start Date(s)	End Date(s)	In-Class Clock Hours

STOP! Before completing the remainder of this V-tab form, look at the charts below to determine the number of potential credits you are eligible to receive for the learning acquired from this training (if your self-assessment is effective). If the training you are submitting in this V tab does not meet the minimum number of class hours listed in the chart, then don't submit the training as a V tab. However, if you can combine it in a single V Tab with the several other short trainings on a related subject that, together, total at least 45 class hours (for 1 credit), then do so. However, all college courses, regardless of the number of class hours, must be submitted individually as separate V tabs.

A Course from a Regionally-Accredited School that Did Not Transfer to CMU*	
Class Hours	Credit Hours
0 – 14	0
15 – 29	1
30 – 44	2
45 – 60	3
and so on	

*Every 15 class hours = 1 credit. The number of credits for a course as reflected on the school's transcript is how much we award.

Trainings, Workshops, Seminars*	
Class Hours	Credit Hours
0 – 44	0
45 – 89	1
90 – 134	2
135 – 180	3
and so on	

* Every 45 hours = 1 credit. For Vehicle Design students with trainings from Batavia or Philpott Automotive Engineering School, every 40 hours = 1 credit.

10 CEUs (Continuing Education Units) = 1 credit

Comment [MLK1]: As with the Tab IV forms, enter the number 1 in this space for your most recent training; this will be your Tab V-1. Number sequentially each subsequent form you complete for each training of at least 45 class hours, i.e., V-2 for your next most recent training, V-3 for the one before that, and so on.

Comment [MLK2]: In the space for the title of the training, enter the title as it appears on your supporting documentation. If the V Tab you are submitting is for a course from a regionally-accredited school that did not transfer to CMU, enter the title of the course here exactly as it appears on the transcript from the school.

In the space for the sponsor, enter the name of the company, agency, or school that provided the training.

In the space for start and end dates, be sure the dates entered here match the dates on your supporting documentation.

In the space for in-class clock hours, if you are submitting the V Tab for a training, workshop, seminar, or course from a non-regionally-accredited school, enter the number of hours you sent in class on the training. Be sure that the number of hours reported here agrees with the number reported in your supporting documentation, which you will include in your portfolio after this form.

However, if you are submitting this V tab form for a course taken at a regionally-accredited school that did not transfer to CMU, then enter in the clock hours space the number of credits for the course as indicated in the transcript, which you will include in the portfolio, not only after Tabs I and II but also after every V Tab you are submitting for a course that did not transfer.

Comment [MLK3]: Be sure to read the instructions thoroughly and follow them carefully.

Comment [MLK4]: As you can see, you won't be eligible to receive credit for individual trainings of fewer than 45 class hours, but if you have several trainings on the same topic that, combined, add up to at least 45 hours, you may submit them together in a single V-Tab form.

Part A: Self-Assessment: The next section is required for all types of trainings EXCEPT a college course taken at regionally-accredited school that did not transfer to CMU. In that case, move on to Part B.

Comment [MLK5]: In this sample, we've provided only one competency section for Part A, but the actual fillable form contains a sufficient number of pages for up to 3 (three) competencies.

Tab V—Training Experience

Competency Title 1:

What did you learn about this competency? Provide a 750 to 1,000-word self-assessment of your learning, i.e., write an argument to support of your claim about what you learned. Be sure to explain why you took the training(s); what you learned from the training(s), including underlying principles, concepts, and skills; and how and where you have applied the learning in your professional/personal life.

Comment [MLK6]: In the space provided, enter the title of the first competency you plan to address. If the number of months on the job makes you eligible for only 3 or fewer credits, then address only one competency.

Comment [MLK7]: In the actual fillable form, two pages of space is provided for each competency for you to enter your self-assessment of learning. We suggest you compose the self-assessment in MS Word, proofread and edit it carefully, and then paste it into the space. The default format in the form is 10-point Times Roman.

Be sure to review the sections of the Portfolio Checklist (Tab VIII) titled "Tab V: Work Experience" and "Quality of Writing in Tabs IV, V, and VI."

Tab V—Training Experience

Part B: Supporting Documentation

For a course taken at a regionally-accredited college, university, or trade school: Include a copy of the transcript from the school, and circle or highlight on the transcript the course for which you are requesting credit. No additional documentation is necessary.

Comment [MLK8]: Part B is as important as Part A, so provide accurate and credible documentation.

Comment [MLK9]: No self-assessment is necessary in this case, only a copy of the transcript.

For all other trainings (e.g., workshops, courses, seminars, etc.): Include the following:

1. An outline, syllabus, or description of the training provided by the instructor(s) to the participants
2. Identification of each instructor along with her/his credentials or qualifications
3. Verification of the requirements for admission to the course (e.g., high school diploma, associate degree, other training experiences, or employment status)
4. Verification of the number of in-class clock hours
5. Verification of the type and time of preparation outside the classroom
6. Verification of the method of testing or evaluation of the students
7. Verification of the grade or evaluation received
8. Verification of course completion (e.g., a signed certificate or transcript)

If any of the specific documentation listed above is not included, please explain in the space below:

Tab VI: Life Experience

Tab VI refers to the entire life-experience section of your portfolio, which will consist of one or more separate VI-Tab forms. You will include a VI-Tab form for each life experience for which you are seeking to obtain credit for the college-level learning you have acquired. Life experiences are usually unpaid volunteer-type experiences, special-interest projects, hobbies, or service activities.

Life experiences can be difficult to self-assess and typically receive the least amount credit, even at the undergraduate level and are not usually included in graduate portfolios.

The number of potential credits for each life experience depends on the duration and depth of your engagement in the activity (usually, for 1 credit, several hours per month for at least 24 months). In addition, to be considered for credit, all self-assessment for life experiences must reflect college-level learning, with advanced college-level learning needed for graduate credit.

A list of sample competency titles for life experiences can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled “Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms.” From there, click on the link to “Sample Competency Titles.”

Copy of a Tab VI Form

Tab VI—Life Experience	
VI-	
Activity	Dates of Activity (mm/yy)
	From:
	To:
Organization (if applicable)	Estimated Hours Per Month

Comment [MLK1]: As with the Tab IV and V forms, enter the number 1 in this space for your most recent experience; this will be your Tab VI-1. Number sequentially each subsequent form you complete for each training of at least 45 class hours, i.e., VI-2 for your next most recent training, VI-3 for the one before that, and so on. Few students include more than two and tend to receive only one or two credits per activity.

Comment [MLK2]: In the space for the activity, enter a descriptive title.

Comment [MLK3]: In the space for dates, be sure that the dates entered here agree with the dates in your supporting documentation.

Comment [MLK4]: In the space for organization, if the activity is sponsored by or performed on behalf of an organization, agency, or other entity, identify it here. If the activity is one you engage in for yourself or a family member, then enter "Self."

Comment [MLK5]: In the space for estimated hours per month, be sure the number you enter here agrees with the number in your supporting documentation.

Part A: Self-Assessment |

In the spaces provided on the next page, provide a competency title and self-assessment of the learning you acquired during this experience. Usually, credit for only one competency is requested for each life experience and worth between 1 and 3 credits, depending on the depth and duration of the experience.

Comment [MLK6]: In this sample and in the actual fillable form, space for only one competency section for Part A is included, because no more than three credits is awarded for life experiences and usually only 1 or 2.

Tab VI—Life Experience

Competency Title: _____

What did you learn about this competency? Provide a 750 to 1,000-word self-assessment of your learning, i.e., write an argument to support of your claim about what you learned. Be sure to explain why you engaged in the experience; what you learned from it, including underlying principles, concepts and knowledge (e.g., social, civic, technical, artistic), mental and physical skills and knowledge; and how and where you have applied the learning in your professional/personal life. _____

Comment [MLK7]: In the space provided, enter the title of the competency you will address.

Comment [MLK8]: In the actual fillable form, two pages of space is provided for you to enter your self-assessment of learning. We suggest you compose the self-assessment in MS Word, proofread and edit it carefully, and then paste it into the space. The default format in the form is 10-point Times Roman.

Be sure to review the sections of the Portfolio Checklist (Tab VIII) titled "Tab VI: Work Experience" and "Quality of Writing in Tabs IV, V, and VI."

Tab VI—Life Experience

Part B: Documentation

Include the following:

- A detailed description of the activity and your involvement in it
- Letters from two persons, who are not your relatives, stating their qualifications and verification of the experience
- Evidence of your involvement in the activity (e.g., photographs, non-proprietary documents, etc.).

All letters of verification must

- have an inked or electronic signature
- be on letterhead or clearly indicate that the letter was received electronically; and
- provide a means of contacting the writer of the letter, e.g., include a current postal address, phone, and/or e-mail address.

If any of the specific documentation listed above is not included, please explain in the space below:

Comment [MLK9]: Part B is as important as Part A, so provide accurate and credible documentation.

VII Tab: Signature Block & Notarization Page

The notarized signature should be done *after* the portfolio is fully developed and *immediately before* you submit the portfolio for evaluation.

- The date of the notary signature is considered the end date for the portfolio.
- Take one copy of your completed portfolio and one copy of the VII-Tab form with you to the Notary Public. (Remember: Don't include the original signed VII-Tab form in your two portfolios; include copies instead.)
- Most banks or credit unions will have a Notary Public available to complete the form; also check with your employer to see if a Notary Public is available where you work.

The VII-Tab form (PDF) can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled "Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms." It is *not* a fillable form; you and the Notary Public must handwrite your names, signatures, and dates.

Tab VIII: Portfolio Checklist

The fillable Portfolio Checklist is designed as a final review to ensure all materials are included and placed within the correct Tab sections. The checklist also encapsulates the criteria used by evaluators.

Include the completed Portfolio Checklist at the end of your portfolio, *after* the Tab VII Signature Block & Notarization Page.

The fillable Tab VIII Portfolio Checklist (PDF) can be downloaded from the Prior-Learning Credit web site on the page titled “Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms.”

Step 4: Assembling the Portfolio

Review the diagram in the section of this handbook pertaining to what is involved in preparing a portfolio, and then do the following:

1. Print out *two sets* of all your completed Tab forms and documentation:
 - Tabs I & II, including your transcripts and, if applicable, your Transfer Credit Evaluation;
 - Tab III-1 Tab III-2, and/or Tab III-3 (Tables of Contents);
 - All your IV-Tab forms (if any) with supporting documentation placed at the end of each form;
 - All your V-Tab forms (if any) with supporting documentation at the end of each form;
 - All your VI-Tab forms (if any) with supporting documentation placed at the end of each form;
 - Tab VII (signed and notarized); and
 - Tab V-III (Portfolio Checklist)
2. Assemble both sets of the above in a regular 3-ring binder. DO NOT use any plastic page protectors for any of the pages. You will have two binders with identical contents.
3. Insert tab dividers to separate *each section* in the portfolio (e.g., Tab I & II, Tab III, Tab IV, etc.). Within each Tab IV, Tab V, and Tab VI, also section insert Tab dividers in between each of the individual Tab forms and documentation (e.g., between VI-1, IV-2, IV-3; V-1, V-2, V-3; VI-1, VI-2, VI-3).
4. Be sure that the dates in the Table of Contents match the dates on each IV, V, and VI-Tab form and on the documentation submitted with each Tab form included in those sections.
5. Be sure that the documentation listed in the Table of Contents for Tabs IV, V, and VI are actually included after each Tab form you submit in those sections.
6. Use your CMU student ID number for identification. *Do not* include your Social Security number anywhere in the portfolio, and black it out on all documentation.
7. For documentation that applies to more than one experience, be sure to make copies and include a copy at the end of each relevant IV, V, and V Tab form. For example: a Human Resources form may document multiple trainings or positions. If so, make copies and include a copy, with relevant information highlighted, at the end of each V Tab form to which it pertains. Likewise, if you are submitting V Tabs for courses taken at the same regionally-accredited school but that did not transfer to CMU, then include a copy of the transcript from that school at the end of each V Tab you are submitting for one of the courses (and highlight or circle on the transcript the title of the course in question for that V Tab). In other words, each Tab form within the IV, V, and VI Tab sections should present a complete segment of information relevant for that experience.

To see sample portfolios, go to the page on the Prior-Learning Credit web site called “What is Involved in Preparing a Prior-Learning Portfolio, and How Long Will it Take?”

How Do I Submit My Prior-Learning Portfolio for Review?

The Prior-Learning portfolio consists of completed forms, responses/explanations to questions on the forms, and documents that verify the length of experiences and support the learning claimed. The forms and self-assessments (explanations of learning) must use Standard Written English and be typed, single spaced, with a space in between paragraphs. Use the default font in the fillable PDF forms, which for the self-assessment portions, is 10-point Times Roman. Handwritten self-assessments are unacceptable and will receive a “zero” award.

- *Make two portfolios:* Submit *one copy* for evaluation and *keep the original* for your records. Never send original copies of any documents, as the submitted portfolio will not be returned to you.
- *Mail the copy* of the portfolio and the \$125.00 portfolio-processing fee to

Central Michigan University
College of Education & Human Services, Prior Learning Assessment
195 Ojibway Court, Room 421
Mount Pleasant MI 48859

How Will My Prior-Learning Portfolio Be Evaluated, and How Long Will it Take?

Members of the Prior-Learning Assessment Team (PLAT) evaluate learning based on the content and quality the student's self-assessment in the portfolio, not on its applicability to a specific degree program. Each portfolio is evaluated independently by three PLAT members, who are graduate faculty at CMU. Faculty must apply for membership and are selected based on their backgrounds and knowledge. They serve for 3-6 years and participate in extensive initial and on-going training for evaluating portfolios.

Evaluators use the "Portfolio Checklist" (which students are required to include at the end of the portfolio as Tab VIII). In general, though, they do the following:

1. They first look at the duration of each experience (i.e., the IV, V and/or V Tabs), because the length of the experience determines the maximum number of potential credits for the experience. (See the section above titled "How Many Credits Can I Earn for Prior Learning?")
2. Evaluators then look at the supporting documentation for each experience submitted. If any documentation is missing, incorrect, inconsistent, or in some other way problematic, evaluators will not review further that section of the portfolio.
3. Evaluators then decide whether the self-assessment for each experience demonstrates *college-level* learning. They do not grant credit simply for the amount of time you spent working, training, or engaging in various other activities, although the duration of the experience is used to determine the maximum number of credits *possible* for each IV Tab. When deciding whether to grant credit and, if so, at what level, evaluators will consider the extent to which each self-assessment you have included for a specific competency is equivalent to 3-credit hours of college-level learning. For undergraduate students, evaluators will also decide whether the learning reflected by the self-assessment merits lower- or upper-level credit; for graduate students, they will decide whether the learning reflected by the self-assessment merits graduate-level credit.
4. Evaluators also consider the quality of your writing. They must be able to quickly and easily read and understand what you have written. If they have to work too hard to figure out what you mean, they are unlikely to grant credit. Reviewers also are unlikely to be persuaded by writing that contains numerous errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage. Not only do such errors slow down evaluators' reading time, but they also reflect poorly on students who are asking for college-level credit (especially upper-level or graduate-level credit). Bottom line? As in most professional contexts, the quality of your writing matters.
5. Evaluators will not be identified to students. If an evaluator personally knows the student submitting a portfolio, that student's portfolio will be assigned to another evaluator.

Evaluation takes about 8-10 weeks from the date the portfolio is received by the Prior-Learning Assessment Office. However, if we must postpone reviewing or must return a portfolio due to missing components or information or for inconsistent or conflicting information, then the review process will take longer.

The characteristics evaluators look for in a portfolio are reflected in the "Portfolio Checklist," which is the final section (Tab VIII) of your portfolio. A fillable PDF copy of the "Portfolio Checklist" is available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site under the page link titled "Worksheets, Charts, and Fillable Forms."

How Will I Be Notified of My Award?

After the portfolio has been evaluated by the three PLAT members, you will receive an award-notification letter indicating the specific competencies awarded, the experiences from which they came, and the level of credit (e.g., UNV 297, UNV 497, or if graduate, UNV 697). You will also be informed of the cost to transcript all the credits, but you will be charged only for the credits you actually decide to include on your transcript (\$95/credit hour). Your advisor will work with you to decide which and how many credits you can use.

A sample letter and notification are shown on the next two pages. The student had submitted a portfolio containing only V Tabs (11 of them), requesting credit for nursing courses that did not transfer to CMU (because CMU does not have a nursing program). She received 22 credits, most at the lower level (UNV 297) and 5 at the upper level (UNV 497).

The final section of the award notification includes the total cost of the credits awarded, but, again, you will pay only for the credits you decide to apply to your degree.

May 23, 2013



The evaluation of your Application for Prior Learning Credit (notarized April 29, 2013) has been completed and the semester hours of credit awarded are listed on the attached Award Notification.

It is important you realize, although all of the awarded credits may be added to your transcript, only those credits approved and placed on your Program Plan by your advisor will meet requirements for graduation. Your advisor may accept a maximum of 60 credit hours and may reject any or all of the awarded credits toward your degree. The payment due date is listed on the Award Notification.

Prior Learning fees are nonrefundable. Therefore, you should meet with your advisor **before you pay for any credit**. Credits paid for will be added to your transcript after you have successfully completed five (5) semester hours with Central Michigan University.

REEVALUATION REQUESTS: If you do not agree with your evaluation, you may appeal by forwarding a written request for reevaluation within **45 days of the date of this letter**. You are permitted only **one** request for reevaluation. Thus, you should make every effort to prepare a complete, substantive appeal.

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS: A processing fee is not required for additional submissions. Tabs submitted must have a personal information page, and have been notarized.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Prior Learning Office (1 866-774-1018, Option #1).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Zainea'.

Al Zainea
Prior Learning Administrator
CMU Global Campus

Attachment: Award Notification
c: Student PL Portfolio
Program Center File

AWARD NOTIFICATION PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

NAME: [REDACTED]	DATE: May 23, 2013																						
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]	Student #: [REDACTED]																						
<p>CREDITS AWARDED:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Nutrition in Nursing Practices (V-1)</td> <td align="right">2.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Nursing Therapeutics II (V-2)</td> <td align="right">2.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Scientific Inquiry (V-5)</td> <td align="right">2.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Health Promotions I (V-6)</td> <td align="right">3.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Basic Clinical Comp I (V-7)</td> <td align="right">1.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Health Assessment Lab (V-8)</td> <td align="right">1.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Health Assessment (V-9)</td> <td align="right">3.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Nursing Therapeutics I (V-10)</td> <td align="right">1.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 297B Introduction to Professional Nursing (V-11)</td> <td align="right">2.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 497B Basic Clinical Comp. II (V-3)</td> <td align="right">2.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>UNV 497B Health Promotions II (V-4)</td> <td align="right">3.00 Sem. Hrs.</td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">If the number designator is followed by an "A," this indicates the experience for which you were granted credit is primarily work experience; a "B" indicates primarily training experience; "C" indicates a combination of "A" and "B"; a "D" indicates the experience is life experience; and an "E" indicates any combination of work, life, and training experience.</p>		UNV 297B Nutrition in Nursing Practices (V-1)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Nursing Therapeutics II (V-2)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Scientific Inquiry (V-5)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Health Promotions I (V-6)	3.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Basic Clinical Comp I (V-7)	1.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Health Assessment Lab (V-8)	1.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Health Assessment (V-9)	3.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Nursing Therapeutics I (V-10)	1.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 297B Introduction to Professional Nursing (V-11)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 497B Basic Clinical Comp. II (V-3)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.	UNV 497B Health Promotions II (V-4)	3.00 Sem. Hrs.
UNV 297B Nutrition in Nursing Practices (V-1)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.																						
UNV 297B Nursing Therapeutics II (V-2)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.																						
UNV 297B Scientific Inquiry (V-5)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.																						
UNV 297B Health Promotions I (V-6)	3.00 Sem. Hrs.																						
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UNV 497B Basic Clinical Comp. II (V-3)	2.00 Sem. Hrs.																						
UNV 497B Health Promotions II (V-4)	3.00 Sem. Hrs.																						

THE EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT INDICATES:

Inadequate Documentation:
Non-Collegiate Level:
Limited Time:
Comments: Correction on V-3 and V-4 tabs, awarded 497 level.

<p>Fee to record Prior Learning credit is \$85.00 per credit/hour.</p>	
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE (22.00 Credits):	\$1,870.00
PAYMENT DUE DATE:	5/23/2014
<p>PAYMENT IS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR. CREDITS NOT POSTED WILL BE LOST.</p>	

How Will Prior-Learning Credits Be Applied to My Degree, and How Much Do They Cost?

Your advisor will work with you to determine which Prior-Learning credits listed on the award-notification letter may be used toward your degree. Thus, after you receive your award letter, meet with your academic advisor right away. Your advisor is responsible for determining whether and how the awarded credits may be used in your degree program, based on the following policies:

- You may complete and submit a portfolio at any time (after becoming a CMU student and meeting with your advisor). However, you must have completed 5 semester hours of CMU course work *before* Prior-Learning credit can be recorded on your transcript.
- You will pay only for the credits you actually use for your degree (i.e., credits posted to your CMU transcript), whether these are all or only some of the credits awarded.
- You have one year from the date of the award letter to pay for and transcript your Prior-Learning credits. Credits not paid for and transcribed within one year are lost; however, you can start the process over by submitting a new portfolio.
- Prior-Learning credits may count toward major, minor, and concentration requirements, or as free electives, in accord with the specific degree program, *except for the following*:

Undergraduate degrees

- A maximum of 60 Prior-Learning credits may be applied toward a degree; however, only 20 of the credits can be used to fulfill requirements for upper-level (400-level) coursework.
- Prior-Learning credits may not count toward the 30-semester-hour residency requirement (see the *Global Campus Bulletin*).
- Prior-Learning credits may not be used to fulfill General Education requirements (i.e., not University Program and not competency courses, such as math, oral speech, writing, or quantitative reasoning).

Graduate degrees: A maximum of 10 Prior-Learning credits may be applied. (In compliance with state regulation, graduate students in California may use only up to 6 semester hours of Prior-Learning credit on their degree program.)

If I'm Not Satisfied with the Amount or Level of Credits Awarded to Me, Can I Appeal?

Yes. Students may request a re-evaluation. They may also submit additional material or an entirely new portfolio.

Re-Evaluation Requests

Students are allowed *one* request for re-evaluation of their original award. However, such re-evaluations should not be needed very often. The Prior-Learning Assessment Team (PLAT) assumes that students have thoroughly considered all experiences, explained the learning effectively, and completed the portfolio carefully according to the specifications and directions in this handbook. In turn, Team members carefully apply CMU's guidelines in awarding Prior-Learning credits.

However, if, after reviewing your award and discussing it with your advisor, you feel that the awards should be different in the competency titles given, in the level of credits awarded, or in the amount of credit, you may request a "Re-evaluation."

A re-evaluation could be beneficial, if, after reviewing your notification letter, you find that

- More documentation has become available since submitting the portfolio.
- The competency title of the award does not seem to match the learning described.
- The number of credits awarded seems too low for the duration of an experience (as indicated in the chart on the IV and V-Tab forms).
- The level (200 or 400) of the award does not appear to reflect the level of the experience described. (**Note:** For graduate portfolios, if the evaluators feel that the learning described in the self-assessment does not reflect graduate-level learning, they simply won't award any credit.)

Submissions for re-evaluation are most beneficial when they show careful thought, clearly explain why the request is being made, and provide additional explanation and/or documentation that supports the request. You are permitted only one re-evaluation, and you have 45 business days from the date on the award-notification letter to request a re-evaluation of the credits awarded.

Re-evaluations must include

- a letter explaining what is being requested, for which experience; and
- a complete, substantive rationale for re-evaluation along with supporting materials and documentation.

In considering whether to request a re-evaluation, you should remember that your portfolio was examined by three members of the Prior-Learning Assessment Team: a) two members of the Team independently evaluated your portfolio in detail and submitted separate recommendations; and b) the Team's Undergraduate or Graduate Coordinator completed a third, detailed, independent review and combined it with information from the first two evaluators in formulating the final award recommendation.

In formulating your request for a re-evaluation, pay special attention to the award-notification letter. In addition to describing the recommended credits, this letter indicates which parts of the portfolio (if any) were not used or not used fully, as a basis for the initial credit award. This information may indicate whether the maximum credit possible was awarded or whether the portfolio lacked some elements and in

which areas. For example, it may indicate that

- documentation of learning was insufficient;
- the learning described was not college level; and/or
- time spent in an experience was insufficient for an award, and evaluators could not identify a basis for combining experiences to grant credit.

A fourth section of the award-notification letter allows the evaluators to comment on other issues relevant to your recommendation. For example, a comment might indicate that the self-assessment (explanation of learning) was weak and did not warrant full credit. Another comment might indicate that all or part of the experience described learning included in a transfer or CMU course for which you already received credit.

Occasionally, concerns about the award recommendation are related to the specific competency title used or, in the case of undergraduate portfolios, the level of the award (e.g., 297 versus 497 level). These are also legitimate reasons for requesting a re-evaluation. For such re-evaluations, you should clearly explain why you believe a different title or level is warranted. It is not useful to request re-evaluation of parts of the portfolio for which you can provide no information.

Review the award form comments and the portfolio sections to which the comments refer before requesting a re-evaluation. To be effective, a request for re-evaluation needs to

- specify the sections that you wish to have re-evaluated, and
- include additional information (i.e., further explanation/self-assessment or documentation) that addresses any comments/concerns indicated in the award letter.

Note: Because re-evaluations are complete reviews of the entire portfolio, a re-evaluation request could result in additional credit, no additional credit, or a reduction in the original award.

If you have any questions, please call or email the PLAT Hotline at priorlrn@cmich.edu (preferred) or call (866) 774-1018, option #1.

Requests for re-evaluation should be made in writing and be addressed to

Central Michigan University
College of Education & Human Services, Prior Learning Assessment
195 Ojibway Court, Room 421
Mount Pleasant MI 48859

Additional Portfolio Submissions

Students may submit an unlimited number of additional portfolios for evaluation until the degree is earned as long as

- submissions do not duplicate any experience assessed in previous portfolios, and
- the original portfolio is available to the evaluators. The Prior-Learning Assessment Office will keep your portfolio for one year. After one year, you will need to submit a copy of the original portfolio along with a copy of the new one.

An additional portfolio might be beneficial if, after receiving some Prior-Learning credit, a student takes several years to complete the undergraduate or graduate degree requirements and has additional

experiences and learning that might warrant college credit. In another situation, a student may have submitted only a few of his/her experiences, but his/her advisor suggests that more Prior-Learning credit could be obtained and used. The student could then submit another portfolio for additional credit.

Procedures in applying for an additional portfolio are the same as used in submitting an original one. However, no additional application fee is required.

Where Can I Learn More About Prior-Learning Credit?

- View the Prior-Learning video. (The link to the video is available on the Prior-Learning Credit web site under the link “Where can I learn more about Prior-Learning Credit?”)
- Attend a Prior-Learning Briefing. (See the list of upcoming briefings on the Prior-Learning Credit web site under the link “Where can I learn more about Prior-Learning Credit?” Registration is required, and an online form is available on the web site.)
- Review the presentation slides from previous Prior-Learning Briefings. (These are available as a downloadable PDF on the Prior-Learning Credit web site under the link “Where can I learn more about Prior-Learning Credit?”)
- Complete the online form on the Prior-Learning Credit web site to request additional information.
- Contact your academic advisor. If you don’t yet have an advisor, contact Linda Bailey, the Prior-Learning Assessment Coordinator by e-mail **priorlrn@cmich.edu** (preferred) or by calling toll-free **866-774-1018, Option #1**.

Other Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please review the following questions before contacting the Prior-Learning Coordinator.

General

- Q1: What exactly is a “portfolio”? Are there samples that I may look at and use for a model to create my portfolio?

A portfolio is a 3-ring binder that contains all of the “Tabs” and their contents. You will create two copies of the portfolio, keeping one and submitting one.

- Q2: What format is the portfolio written in?

Use Standard Written English for your self-assessment in response to the questions listed for each Tab; “bullet point” responses are not appropriate (except for the job description on the Tab IV form). For additional details, see the sections this handbook pertaining to how to prepare the portfolio and complete the fillable Tab forms.

- Q3: Am I required to submit official transcripts with my portfolio?

No. Unofficial transcripts are acceptable from CMU and any other schools where credit was granted. Your academic advisor can help you access copies of your transcripts from other institutions. If you have transferred any credits to CMU, a CMU Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE) must be included in your portfolio.

- Q4: How will I know how many credits were awarded for my portfolio?

You will receive a letter indicating the credits awarded, the course competency titles, and the level of the award. For example, UNV 497A Leadership (3) indicates three credits for Leadership at the 400 level (undergraduate upper level). See your advisor as soon as possible to discuss the award.

- Q5: Is any Prior-Learning credit possible for credits earned at other institutions that did not transfer to CMU?

Yes. Two of the reasons that credits do not transfer are that the program does not exist at CMU or that the credits were issued from a

non-accredited school. If the courses that did not transfer are from a regionally-accredited school, then they may be submitted as a Training (Tab V) without any self-assessment. However, if the courses are not from a regionally-accredited school, they may still be submitted as a Training (Tab V) but must include a self-assessment and other required documentation.

- Q6: I am planning on graduating in two months. May I request to have my portfolio evaluated immediately? Is there a fee to have my portfolio evaluated quickly?

All portfolios are evaluated in the order in which they are received. You may request to have your portfolio evaluated in a short time, but we cannot guarantee that your request will be granted. Thus, no additional fee is charged for expedited review.

- Q7: I am planning on graduating at the end of the semester. How do I know if I need to take any more classes or if my Prior-Learning credits will be enough to graduate?

Until the Team has an opportunity to evaluate the portfolio, there is no way to know how many credits will be awarded. You should work with your advisor to plan your potential course schedule including when to submit your Prior-Learning portfolio.

- Q8: Should I request credit for a specific course in my degree plan?

No. Credits are awarded for competencies learned through the various work, training, and life experiences. In the fillable IV-Tab forms, you will need to identify the competency title(s) for what you are claiming to have learned and want credit. Be sure to include a full explanation and examples to show what you learned. Once a competency is awarded, your academic advisor will determine if a substitution for a required or elective course on the degree plan is possible.

Q9: How do Prior-Learning credits affect my GPA?

They don't. No grades are attached to the Prior-Learning credits and, thus, they do not affect your GPA.

Q10: Can Prior-Learning credits be applied to another institution?

Generally, Prior-Learning credits are not transferable to or from CMU. You would need to check with non-CMU institutions for any transfer policies regarding transfer of Prior-Learning from CMU to another school.

Q11: Is there anyone who would be able to help me if I get stuck on how to do something?

Yes. Contact Linda Bailey, the Prior-Learning Assessment Coordinator, by phone at 1-800-774-1018, Option #1 or by e-mail at priorlm@cmich.edu.

Q12: Will my portfolios be returned to me after they are evaluated?

No. CMU retains the portfolios for one year. You should make a separate portfolio to keep for your records. Reminder: Original certificates and other documentation should not be included in the submitted portfolios, as these will not be returned.

Work Experience (Tab V)

Q1: Should I include all of my work experiences from high school until now?

For undergraduate portfolios, include any work experiences since high school of at least 10 months' duration that you can document and for which you can explain the college-level learning you acquired.

For graduate portfolios, include any work experiences of at least 10 months' duration since you completed your most recent undergraduate degree OR in the past 7 years, whichever more recent. Thus, if you graduated 5 years ago, you may include only work experiences for the past 5 years; if you graduated 8 years ago, you may include work experiences only for the past 7 years.

Q2: Some of my work experiences were over 20 years ago. How can I provide adequate verification after that length of time?

This may be the most difficult part of documenting prior work experiences. If the employer is still operating, you should contact the human resource department and ask about their policies and process regarding providing documentation for previous employees. If the employer has closed or if there is no one currently employed who knew you during the time you worked there, you may need to seek out former co-workers and ask for brief letters from them verifying your dates of employment and the position(s) you held. Other sources for documentation of the dates of employment include W-2 statements or personnel evaluations. If you cannot verify the employment dates, the job responsibilities, or the learning described in the self-assessment, then evaluators cannot award credit, and you should omit this job from your portfolio.

Q3: As the self-employed owner of a business, how can I document my work experiences and learning?

As with any work experience, you must document time in the position, job responsibilities, and the learning acquired. An accountant or attorney employed by your business or involved with the establishment of the business may be able to provide some of the documentation. Vendors and clients to whom you have sold products, purchased products, or provided services should also be able to provide some evidence of your responsibilities. Legal documents, such as Articles of Incorporation or tax documents, are helpful in verifying that the business exists and your position in it.

Q4: Do I group all part-time experiences together as one full-time work experience?

*No. **Each** full and part-time work experience is to be presented in a separate IV-Tab form, with experiences placed in **reverse chronological order** (i.e., most recent first). Be sure to indicate which positions were full or part-time by checking the appropriate box on the first page of each IV-Tab form.*

- Q5: What if the timelines for some of my work experiences overlap? How should I place these in my portfolio?

*List all work experiences in **reverse chronological order**. If dates overlap, always place a full-time work experience before the part-time work experience for that period.*

- Q6: If I was employed during high school and kept that job after I graduated, may I count all of the time I was employed for my work experience? If I am a graduate student who was employed during college and kept the job after graduation, may I count all of the time I was employed for my work experience?

*No. For undergraduates, only the months of employment **after you graduated** from high school may be counted towards the undergraduate degree. For graduate students, only work experiences since completion of the undergraduate degree **OR** the past 7 years, whichever is more recent, may be included.*

- Q7: If two jobs are very similar, may I place both of them in one IV-Tab form?

No. Each work experience must be submitted as a separate IV-Tab form.

- Q8: I was paid while completing an apprenticeship/ or internship. Is this considered a work experience or a training experience?

For undergraduates, if the apprenticeship or internship was completed after you graduated from high school and did not count for academic credit on your college transcript, then you may submit it for Prior-Learning credit as a training (V-Tab). But be sure to include a complete self-assessment and documentation for the experience. If you are a graduate student and completed an internship or apprenticeship after obtaining your undergraduate degree or within the last 7 years, whichever is more recent, and if you did not receive academic credit for it, you may submit the experience as a training (Tab V).

- Q9: What if my name has changed and many of my work experiences are documented under another name?

List the name change(s) early in Tab I, and explain at the end of the relevant Tab IV, V, or VI forms.

Training Experience (Tab V)

- Q1: Are we required to complete this section?

No. Each student may choose to include or disregard this portion of the portfolio.

- Q2: I have multiple related trainings covering a 5-year period. Should I group them together as one Tab V in my portfolio, or treat each one separately?

It depends. Usually, each training experience should be submitted separately to ensure that the self-assessment addresses the learning that occurred within each of the trainings and that all trainings are properly documented. Keep in mind that a minimum of 45 class hours is required for 1 credit.

However, if you have completed several shorter trainings on a similar subject (e.g., various forms of computer applications) that together equal at least 45 class hours, then you should combine them into a single Tab V form. You will still need to include a self-assessment of learning and provide documentation for each training.

On the other hand, if all you have are several small trainings on unrelated subjects, then don't spend time addressing them in the Tab V section of your portfolio, because you will not receive any credit for them.

- Q3: May I submit a training that is not related to my current job? Is it possible to earn credit for trainings that are unrelated to work experiences?

Yes. Any training may be submitted on a Tab V form. Trainings do not have to be related to a current or former work experience, but they must reflect college-level learning.

- Q4: Should I include the original certificates and awards in the portfolio as documentation of trainings?

No, original documents should never be submitted, as portfolios are not returned to students. Make copies of documentation and insert the copies at the end of the relevant V-Tab form.

Life Experience (Tab IV)

- Q1: Are we required to complete this section?

No. Each student may choose to include or disregard this portion of the portfolio.

Generally, these experiences are the most difficult to self-assess, because the student enjoys the experience, but describing the learning that occurs is often difficult. Also, documentation must come from two non-relatives and the experience must be for at least two years.

- Q2: What kinds of life experiences are applicable? Can personal experiences, job change/layoff, death, healing, travel, care giving, or hobbies be considered?

Yes. The above list, although not complete, includes good examples of possible areas of life experiences. You must include a thorough self-assessment, documentation, and evidence that this experience was in-depth and that you acquired college-level learning from it.

Re-Evaluation

- Q1: If I am not satisfied with the credits awarded for my portfolio, either the number of credits or the level, may I request to have my portfolio re-evaluated?

Yes. One re-evaluation is permitted, so be sure to read carefully the award-notification letter and follow all of the recommendations for re-submission of your portfolio.

- Q2: If I am submitting my portfolio for a re-evaluation, do I need to send one more complete copy of the portfolio?

No. Do not send the entire portfolio again. Send only one copy of the sections (Tabs) that are to be re-evaluated and any documentation needed. Be sure to include a cover letter that addresses why you are requesting a re-evaluation, what you are submitting, and how the materials improve on the initial submission.

- Q3: If I request a re-evaluation, do I need to pay the processing fee again?

No. The portfolio-processing fee is charged only once. There is no additional fee for the re-evaluation or for additional portfolio submissions.

The Prior-Learning Assessment Team wishes you the best in developing an excellent portfolio that will result in the maximum credits possible for you to complete your degree program.