Pennsylvania College of Technology

Procedure Statement

Title: Advanced/Alternative Credit **Number:** PR 4.41

Approved by:
Presidential Action

Approved Date: 09/1983
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Persons/Departments Affected:
Admissions & Secondary Partnerships Office, Academic School Offices, Registrar's Office, Undergraduate Students

Responsible Department:
Academic Affairs, Registrar's Office

Definitions:

Advanced Credit: credit awarded for demonstrated college-level learning completed prior to a student's initial enrollment, typically validated through standardized examinations or approved college-level coursework undertaken during secondary education. Examples include, but are not limited to, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) coursework. The awarding and application of advanced credit are subject to institutional standards regarding minimum performance thresholds, course equivalencies, and applicability to degree requirements. Advanced credit creates the opportunity for students to begin their college work at a higher level in either the subject in which they received advanced credit or a related subject.

Alternative Credit: credit awarded for college-level learning acquired outside traditional academic instruction before or during enrollment, as validated through approved assessment methods or external credential evaluation. Such learning may include, but is not limited to, Penn College credit by exams, standardized credit-by-examination programs (e.g., CLEP), military training, industry-recognized certifications, portfolio assessment, work/life experience, or evaluated non-collegiate coursework. These forms of credit may be collectively referred to as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). The awarding and application of alternative credit are subject to institutional policies regarding eligibility, evaluation standards, and applicability to degree requirements.

Competency Assessment (Advanced Credit): available for courses taken in high school that directly relate to an undergraduate student's chosen major, competency assessment offers students the opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating skills and knowledge for specific courses. Assessment is verified

by the high school instructor of the course and confirmed by the appropriate academic school at Penn College.

Credit by Exam (Alternative Credit): available for courses numbered at the 100 and 200 level, credit by exam offers undergraduate students the opportunity to earn credit by successfully completing a scored assessment of the student's knowledge and skills that are equal to the learning objectives for a specific course. Minimum passing score standards are set by the appropriate academic school to determine if credit will be awarded to undergraduate students; no grades lower than a C may be considered for credit. Programmatic accreditation standards and requirements may limit the eligibility of certain courses for credit by exam.

Credit for Work/Life Experience (Alternative Credit): offers undergraduate students the opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating skills and knowledge obtained through specific work or life situations that are equal to the learning objectives for a specific course.

Advanced Placement (AP) (Advanced Credit): assessments administered by the College Board© to indicate a level of proficiency in selected college-level courses. Minimum score standards are set by the appropriate academic school to determine if credit will be awarded to undergraduate students.

International Baccalaureate (IB) (Advanced Credit): assessments administered by International Baccalaureate® to indicate a level of proficiency in selected college-level courses. Minimum score standards are set by the appropriate academic school to determine if credit will be awarded to undergraduate students.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP) (Alternative Credit): assessments in various subject areas created by the College Board© and administered by colleges and universities in the United States. Minimum score standards are set by the appropriate academic school to determine if credit will be awarded to undergraduate students.

Procedure:

<u>Competency Assessment</u>

I. The Admissions Office promotes advanced credit through general marketing efforts. Undergraduate applicants are directed to contact their respective academic school to request additional information.

II. Upon request from the undergraduate applicant, the academic school office sends a letter and competency assessment form to the high school or career and technology center instructor. Once completed, the form is returned to the appropriate academic school office.

III. The competency assessment form must be returned to the academic school office prior to the start of the first semester of enrollment. Exceptions to this deadline may be granted by the dean of the academic school.

IV. The academic school will notify undergraduate applicants of any required testing as support for the competency assessment form and assist students with completion of the testing process.

V. The academic school, once in receipt of all necessary documentation, determines whether credit will be awarded.

VI. If it is determined that credit is awarded, the academic school completes all paperwork for the credit to be placed on the undergraduate applicant's transcript and sends it to the Registrar's Office for processing. Advanced/alternative credit will not be calculated into student's grade-point averages (GPAs).

VII. Undergraduate applicants are notified by the academic school office whether or not they will receive advanced credit based on the competency assessment review process.

VIII. If credit is awarded, the academic school will make any necessary changes to the student's schedule.

IX. If an undergraduate student elects to take the course, the advanced credit record will be removed from the transcript upon notification by the academic school.

X. The Registrar's Office will remove advanced credit from student's transcript if student does not matriculate.

Credit by Exam

I. Undergraduate Student:

A. Indicates to the appropriate academic school administrator, in writing, 100- and 200-level course(s) listed in the College Catalog that they wish to challenge by exam, providing a brief rationale for the request.

II. Academic School Administrator:

A. Checks the undergraduate student's record to determine if:

1. the student was not previously enrolled in the course;
2. the student is currently registered; and
3. sufficient time remains to complete the process prior to the end of the second week of classes for semester-long courses or the first week of class for short-term courses, if the student is challenging a course in which they are currently enrolled. In this instance, the

school administrator may recommend consideration for a refund policy waiver.

B. Determines if the course is eligible for credit by exam based on programmatic accreditation standards and requirements.

C. Confers with the appropriate course instructor who:
   1. verifies the validity of the request based on the student's rationale and basis of knowledge; and
   2. provides the evaluation instrument and performance criteria.

III. Undergraduate Student:

A. Pays the nonrefundable Credit-by-Exam fee at the Bursar/Student Accounts Office prior to administering the exam and receives an official receipt.

B. Submits the official receipt to the academic school.

IV. Academic School Administrator:

A. Directs that the appropriate exam be administered to the undergraduate student and verifies that the exam is evaluated.
   1. Standard exams may be administered by an academic school staff designee or designated instructor and appropriately evaluated. The College will determine how the exam is administered, i.e. paper/pencil or through the learning management system, and any associated proctoring procedures.

   2. Exams for courses that include both a lecture and lab courses should be designed to assess both theoretical and hands-on knowledge.

   3. Exams for courses not often challenged will be individually prepared and evaluated by a designated instructor with expertise in the subject area.

B. Completes the *Alternative Credit Verification* form (official internal use only) and submits it, along with the official receipt, to the Registrar's Office.

V. Registrar's Office:

A. Records the alternative credit on the College transcript upon notification of approval from the academic school. Advanced/alternative credit will not be calculated into student's grade-point averages (GPAs). However,

the scores may be used to determine eligibility and ranking for selective admission Nursing & Health Sciences majors.

B. Scans the *Alternative Credit Verification* form for electronic storage within the student's permanent academic record.

VI. Credit by Exam can be taken only once per course and cannot be used to remove an earned letter grade.

VII. The Registrar's Office will remove alternative credit from student's transcript if student does not matriculate.

Credit for Work/Life Experience

I. Undergraduate Student:

A. Undergraduate students who have been accepted to the College and believe their experience warrants consideration for academic credit for a specific course will apply, in writing, to the appropriate academic school.

B. Indicates to the appropriate academic school administrator, in writing, courses listed in the College Catalog for which they will seek credit, describing briefly the rationale for this request and asking for an interview.

II. Academic School Administrator:

A. Reviews the undergraduate applicant's letter and either grants an interview, requests further information, or rejects the request in writing.

B. Conducts an interview, if appropriate, and determines the validity of the applicant's request on an individual course basis.

C. If allowed to proceed with the request, directs the student to the Bursar/Student Accounts Office to pay the appropriate fee.

III. Undergraduate Student:

A. Pays a nonrefundable fee per course at the Bursar/Student Accounts Office prior to having the Credit for Work/Life Experience evaluated, and receives an official receipt.

B. Returns the official receipt to the academic school.

IV. Academic School Administrator:

A. Checks the official receipt to ensure that the required fee has been paid.

B. Appoints a committee to serve in assessing and evaluating the undergraduate applicant's request for credit(s).

V. Committee:

A. Identifies the components of the assessment, e.g., notarized letters from past employers, taped speeches, portfolio of applicant's work.

B. Receives, reviews, and assesses the applicant's request for credit.

C. Approves or rejects all or a portion of the applicant's request.

D. Forwards its recommendation to the academic school administrator.

VI. Academic School Administrator:

A. Reviews the recommendation of the committee.

B. Either approves the recommendation of the committee, all or in part, and completes and signs the *Alternative Credit Verification* form (official internal use only) and forwards it to the Registrar's Office or rejects the recommendation of the committee.

C. Advises the undergraduate student of the final decision.

VII. Registrar's Office:

A. Records the alternative credit on the College transcript upon notification of approval from the academic school. Advanced/alternative credit will not be calculated into student's grade-point averages (GPAs).

B. The Registrar's Office will remove alternative credit from student's transcript if student does not matriculate.

C. Scans the *Alternative Credit Verification* form for electronic storage within the student's permanent academic record.

Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB)/College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

I. Undergraduate Student:

A. Arranges for the testing agency to send the official AP, IB and/or CLEP score reports to the Admissions & Secondary Partnerships Office.

B. Prior to scheduling classes, ensures that all score reports have been evaluated to avoid repeating any coursework. Scores cannot be transferred in after the second week of classes for a course in which a student is currently enrolled.

II. Admissions & Secondary Partnerships Office:

A. Documents receipt of official AP, IB and/or CLEP score reports.
   1. If no record exists for an undergraduate student, or the student is only in inquiry status, score reports are held in Admissions Office until an application is received.
   2. If a record exists for an undergraduate student, score reports are forwarded to the Registrar's Office for review.

III. Registrar's Office:

A. Upon receipt of AP, IB and/or CLEP score reports; appropriate credit to be awarded shall be determined and placed onto the official academic transcript. Advanced/alternative credit will not be calculated into student's grade-point averages (GPAs). However, the scores may be used to determine eligibility and ranking for selective admission Nursing & Health Sciences majors.

B. Unofficial score reports will be processed, but a hold will be placed on the undergraduate student's record preventing the student from scheduling classes for future semesters until the official documents are received.

C. Notifies the student of the College's evaluation.

IV. Academic Schools:

A. Establish and periodically review the minimum scores for which credit will be awarded, communicating any changes to the Registrar's Office.

Revision History:

Date: 07/2026 Clarified language regarding "advanced" and "alternative" credit; combined Procedures 4.41.01 – 4.41.04 into one document.

Date: 11/2024	Updated to reflect new terminology and process associated with student information system conversion. Once reviewed and added to student transcript, advanced credit will be removed by Registrar's Office if student does not matriculate.
Date: 08/2020	Revised the procedure to reflect change in process.
Date: 08/2017	Modified language to clarify notification process and placement of credit earned through competency assessment; minor content reorganization; modified definitions; defined that the policy applies only to undergraduate students.
Date: 03/2014	Minor editorial changes; delete reference to advanced "placement" credit; added definition of advanced credit
Date: 07/2011	Editorial changes

Cross References:

Advanced/Alternative Credit Policy, P4.41