MCLA - Credit for Prior Learning Policy
Approved - Spring 2021

Matriculated students of MCLA may earn up to 15 credits for learning outside of college. To apply for credit for prior learning, students create and submit portfolios documenting life experiences (work, community, military service, etc.). Portfolio content must demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes for specific courses in the MCLA curriculum. All experiences referenced in the portfolio must predate enrollment at MCLA. Credits awarded for prior learning are regarded as transfer credits. Prior learning credits awarded will not be included in the 45 MCLA credits required for graduation.

Any student seeking credit for prior learning via portfolio should initiate planning no later than achieving 60 credits towards graduation at MCLA, and plan to submit the portfolio for credit review no later than achieving 90 credits towards graduation. To initiate the process, the student must contact the Associate Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education (DGCE) for consultation on the application process.

After speaking with the Associate Dean, the student must submit an application outlining the plan for the portfolio, a resume, a list of potential course matches from the MCLA course catalog, and a 2-3-page summary of credit-worthy experiences. The application must be submitted to the Associate Dean of DGCE at MCLA. The student is required to consult with appropriate department chairs to confirm the relevance and to establish the learning objectives of the courses they propose to substitute for their prior learning experiences.

The main elements of the portfolio include the application, narrative, resume, and documentary evidence. The portfolio must include a substantial, reflective narrative describing the experiences, and relevant learning, and show how these match the learning outcomes of courses selected from MCLA's course catalog. Appropriate documentary evidence is required to support the student's explanation of the overall value of the experience and the specific skills, abilities, and knowledge gained.

Any student seeking to submit a portfolio for prior learning credit must enroll in MCLA's Experiential Credit Portfolio Preparation and Writing (ENGL 395) course for support and assistance with portfolio preparation. ENGL 395 is a 3-credit course the student must complete successfully before the student can submit the portfolio for credit review. A student may request waiver from the ENGL 395 requirement if recommended by all department chairs related to the proposed submission. Waiver is based on the determination of the chairs' assessment of student's ability to present a successful portfolio, as measured by demonstrating a detailed understanding of how learning was applied later, and the implications of learning in new and novel situations.

The student must submit the completed portfolio to the Associate Dean for DGCE. A per-credit fee is assessed at the time of submission. The Associate Dean transmits the portfolio to the appropriate academic department for faculty review. The final decision on the recommendation for the awarding of credit is made by the Dean of Student Success and Engagement.

The College has established due dates for portfolio submission that are posted on the DGCE website. Portfolios received by the due dates will be reviewed, evaluated, and returned within 8-12 weeks of receipt. Portfolios received after the due dates may take longer than 12 weeks to review and return.

Students who do not receive credit, or who receive fewer credits than proposed, may revise their portfolios and resubmit for an additional review. Finally, credit for prior learning is never guaranteed. Students should work with their advisors to develop alternate degree completion plans in cases where credit awards are lower than for which they applied.