

## Memorandum to Presidents

*Vol. X, No. X*

**Date:** December 4, 2023

**To:** Presidents, State-operated Campuses  
Presidents, Community Colleges  
Statutory College Contacts

**From:** Ram Ramasubramanian, Provost

**Subject:** Policy and Guidance: Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation (Discussion Draft)

**Copy:** President, University Faculty Senate; President, Faculty Council of Community Colleges; President, Student Assembly; and Chief Academic Officers, Registrars, Institutional Research, and Information Technology at All Campuses

This memorandum provides guidance on implementing the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees' Resolution 2023-8, [State University of New York Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation Policy](#), adopted on February 7, 2023. The resolution supersedes SUNY's 1976 policy of the same name that was communicated via Memorandum to Presidents Vol. 76 No. 11. By adopting and implementing the 1976 policy, SUNY became one of the first university systems in the country to formally adopt this type of assessment. System-wide implementation of this expanded policy will enhance the types of verifiable college-level learning to be recognized, including, but not limited to: military education and training; professional and industry certifications and licenses or other credentials; performance on standardized published exams; non-credit and continuing education study; on-the-job training/education; and work experience. The policy is consistent with SUNY's statutory mission to provide the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population of New York State.

Implementation of the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, also referred to as Prior Learning Assessment or PLA and Credit for Prior Learning or CPL, will increase access to, and success in, higher education, in particular for those who are under-represented in higher education. Chancellor King's 2023 policy agenda articulates Economic Development and Upward Mobility priorities to support a strong focus on award of academic credit by evaluation for learning that takes place outside of the traditional classroom including through on-the-job-training, military experience, apprenticeships, and industry certifications. Campuses should focus their earliest attention on expansion in these areas as a strategy for recruitment and enrollment growth, while also developing and enhancing strong partnerships with employers to expand the evaluation of certifications and apprenticeships for credit towards SUNY degrees.

*For questions about this memorandum, please contact the Office of the Provost at [provost@suny.edu](mailto:provost@suny.edu). This guidance, along with additional information and resources, is also available on the SUNY Academic Affairs website, <https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/aace/>.*

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT BY EVALUATION**

**Campus Expectations**

It is the policy of the State University of New York that all campuses are expected to maximize opportunities for students to receive credit for prior learning. As described in SUNY Board of Trustees policy, shared governance and faculty oversight are vital to the success of prior learning assessment implementation. Moreover, campuses are encouraged to view credit for prior learning as a potential strategy for recruitment of new students (including conversion of non-credit workforce development enrollees to for-credit degree programs) and enrollment growth. A robust approach to credit for prior learning incorporates:

1. military education and training;
2. industry certifications, apprenticeships (including in partnership with labor unions), and related employer-recognized credentials that lead to upward mobility;
3. standardized published exams including but not limited to Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations.

To achieve these objectives, each campus is expected to review and update existing campus-level policies and procedures or develop new campus-level policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, and identify an action plan for implementation that will maximize opportunities for students in order to further access, enrollment, retention, completion, economic mobility, and other measures of student success, which are consistent with SUNY's policy for Award of Academic Credit by Academic Evaluation (the policy is included within this document, immediately following the guidance).

1. When reviewing/updating or developing campus-level policies and procedures for the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation, campuses should review associated policies and procedures to ensure there are not unnecessary barriers for student opportunities for award of credit.
2. Campus implementation action plans are expected to build on existing efforts and allow for the award of credit according to criteria and guidelines approved by the faculty. Each implementation action plan must: 1) identify the highest priority areas for campus expansion of credit for prior learning (including but not limited to military education and training; professional and industry certifications and licenses or other credentials); 2) include a timeline for scaling credit for prior learning opportunities; and 3) describe how the campus will market credit for prior learning opportunities as part of a strategy for enrollment growth, including in the highest priority areas and for enrollees in non-credit workforce development and non-credit microcredential programs who already positively connected to the campus. Note: Individual faculty approval is not required for distinct cases that meet established criteria and guidelines approved through the shared governance process.
3. Campus implementation action plans must include a strategy for data tracking that will enable annual campus reporting to System Administration through regular Institutional Research mechanisms, which will include baseline data and track growth of the award of credit on campus. Data tracking will employ data standards established by SUNY System Administration's Office of the Provost and will be effective for the 2023-24 academic year (*a link will be provided in the final version*).
4. Campus implementation action plans must include a strategy for a coordinated effort across applicable campus units including but not limited to enrollment management, financial aid, communications/marketing, veterans/military coordinators, workforce development leads, and

academic advising units, and with regional employer and local government partners, and must describe how professional development will be provided.

5. Campus policies and procedures for the Award of Academic credit by Evaluation must be documented and ensure academic integrity through adherence to New York State Education Department regulation<sup>1</sup> and guidance<sup>2</sup> as well as the expectations of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.<sup>3</sup>
6. Periodic reports of campus metrics of the Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation will be regularly assessed and provided to the public and to the SUNY Board of Trustees.
7. Campus policies and procedures as well as implementation action plans must be submitted to the System Administration Office of the Provost by *Month Date*, 2024. The submission must include an inventory of recognized credit for prior learning, which shall be updated each semester, and which System Administration will use to create a System-wide inventory of recognized credit for prior learning and post such inventory on the SUNY website.

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<sup>1</sup> Credit toward an undergraduate degree shall be earned only for college level work. Credit toward a graduate degree shall be earned only through work designed expressly for graduate students. The institution shall assure that credit is granted only to students who have achieved the stated objectives of each credit-bearing learning activity. As of the date of this MTP, applicable NYSED regulation is accessible at [https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/Ieca63dd8c22111dd97adcd755bda2840?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/Ieca63dd8c22111dd97adcd755bda2840?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)).

<sup>2</sup> Credit is only granted for prior learning that is demonstrated to be equivalent to that in the institution's registered curricula and component courses. As of the date of this MTP, applicable NYSED guidance is accessible at <https://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/departments-expectations-admissions-academic-support-services-credit>.

<sup>3</sup> As of the date of this MTP, applicable MSCHE policy is accessible at <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/iy7dxzso6x0pgk36yldowhzea2bkl48l.pdf>; guidance is accessible at <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/n8vxjzsnegv0rzh0gfckdrngi6ut38lh.pdf>; and, procedures are accessible at <https://msche.box.com/shared/static/jawn9nkxgi5fvj66cathv9ualww94nv8.pdf>.

## **System Administration Support**

SUNY System Administration will provide support to campuses to realize the Board of Trustees' goal of becoming a leader in Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation. The Provost or designee will:

1. Serve as a resource for campuses as they review/update or develop campus-level policies and procedures and identify implementation plans to expand the award of credit.
2. Work with campuses to ensure that faculty and staff have access to the training necessary to support effective implementation of the award of credit that goes beyond performance on standardized published exams and that prioritizes opportunities for collaboration and consistency.
3. Provide campuses with a working set of data definitions and standards that will enable implementation of data collection, reporting, assessment, and use of data to inform future decisions.
4. Publish and regularly update an inventory of all recognized credit for prior learning at each campus.
5. Establish a Community of Practice (CoP) across SUNY campuses including but not limited to faculty, chief academic officers, registrars, admissions, communications, military/veterans coordinators, and information technology.
6. Facilitate a campus advisory group to System Administration's Office of the Provost.
7. Coordinate the various workstreams involved in Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation at System Administration, including but not limited to a technology platform, academic evaluation, training, communications, and assessment.

The System Administration Provost shall be responsible for overseeing implementation of this policy, including distributing additional guidance and resource materials to campuses, assessing progress, and reporting back to the SUNY Board of Trustees, and shall provide an annual updated data brief on Award of Academic Credit by Evaluation.