



Policy Number: II.15
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Policy Implementation: Provost/VP for Academic Affairs and Student Services

SACSCOC Standard: 10.8

Non-Traditional Academic Credit

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

In accordance with Athens State University's educational mission, this policy establishes the requirements and standards used in the assessment of prior learning and the award of non-traditional academic credit for learning, experiences, and/or examinations offered outside postsecondary education. These standards are based on comparable practices at other institutions of higher education, but also recognize the unique status of the University as an upper-division institution.

Prior learning, which may be considered for assessment and the award of non-traditional credit, may have been acquired in programs or through examinations offered by entities in government (including the military), business, industry, or other non-collegiate organizations. In addition, non-traditional academic credit may be awarded for acceptable work experience and technical training when such experience or training is appropriate for the program of study being pursued.

Official documentation appropriate to the type of non-traditional credit being sought must always be submitted with any application for non-traditional credit (see details in the sections that follow).

Athens State University follows the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations for awarding non-traditional credit for courses and occupations offered by the military, and for courses and examinations offered by other non-collegiate organizations.

II. Eligibility

Students Who Meet Standard Admission Requirements

In order to be eligible to apply for non-traditional credit, a student who has been admitted to the University in one of the standard admission categories (see the policy [Admission Requirements](#) for additional information) must have completed at least one semester at Athens State as a degree-seeking student in good standing, and must be currently enrolled or registered at the time of application for non-traditional credit.



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Students Who Do Not Meet Standard Admission Requirements

Prospective students who do **not** satisfy the minimum semester hour requirements for admission, and who have completed prior learning that may be eligible for one or more types of non-traditional academic credit, may be able to use such learning to justify admission to Athens State University, provided:

- The prior learning and potential credit to be awarded is judged to be equivalent to the completion of a technical degree program at an accredited technical college; or
- The prior learning and potential credit to be awarded, together with any other college credit earned, is judged to be not less than the minimum hours of college credit required for regular transfer admission.

In addition, a prospective student who wishes to use prior learning to justify admission must:

- Have completed at least 18 semester hours of coursework at an institution(s) accredited by an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, with a cumulative transfer grade point average of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.
- Have completed courses or earned credit by examination (CLEP/DSST/AP) with acceptable scores in: English Composition I, English Composition II, and a college-level mathematics course (100 level or higher).

Admission to Athens State University is **conditional** until official transcripts are provided to the Office of Admissions from **all** institutions previously attended, and **all** documentation for any potential non-traditional academic credit has been received and verified. Official assessments for non-academic credit will be processed **only** when the conditionally admitted student has completed one semester at Athens State as a degree-seeking student in good standing.



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III. Limitations on Non-Traditional Academic Credit

For a student applying for any type of non-traditional credit, certain limitations exist. Non-traditional credit is awarded only if:

- The credit does not duplicate other earned academic credit;
- The credit is applicable to the program or major being pursued, or can be used to fulfill general electives required for a program or major.
- The credit does not exceed the maximum allowed for the program the student is pursuing.

Typically, applications for non-traditional academic credit will not be accepted from graduating seniors after the graduation application deadline for a given semester or term.

In addition, in accordance with general University requirements for graduation:

- No more than 64 semester hours earned through non-traditional/non-graded sources may be applied toward a student's degree program at the undergraduate level.
- No more than 6 semester hours earned through non-traditional/non-graded sources may be applied toward a student's degree program at the graduate level.
- Non-traditional credit awarded does not count towards University residency requirements.

IV. General Procedures for Assessing Prior Learning and Awarding Non-Traditional Credit

The specific procedure and documentation required in an application for non-traditional credit depend on the type of prior learning being assessed. Detailed procedures and requirements for each type are established by the Director of Adult Learner Services, under the direction of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services, subject to the limitations specified above.

Credit by Examination

Credit awarded for acceptable completion of examinations in any of the categories below is recorded as **non-graded college credit and therefore has no effect on a student's grade point average. Applicability of any credit earned by examination towards the pre-professional or professional course requirements for a particular Athens State degree program and major is**



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subject to the approval of the appropriate faculty advisor(s) in the particular College offering the program or major.

Specific information concerning the minimum acceptable scores and credit awarded can be found on the Athens State University Testing Center website.

- **CLEP** – A student may earn college credit through the completion of examinations in the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), provided acceptable scores are achieved. If acceptable scores are achieved in accordance with the minimum acceptable scores set by ACE, the CLEP credit will be added to the student’s official Athens State transcript. **Credit earned through CLEP is transcribed as 100 or 200-level credit. Official CLEP transcripts must be submitted before credit is awarded.** If official CLEP transcripts cannot be obtained, no credit will be awarded.
- **ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) TEST** – A student may earn college credit through the completion of examinations through the National Examination of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) Advanced Placement Program. If acceptable scores are achieved in accordance with the minimum acceptable scores set by the University, the AP credit will be added to the student’s official Athens State transcript. **Credit earned through AP is transcribed as 100 or 200-level credit. Official AP transcripts (scores) must be submitted before credit is awarded.** If official AP transcripts (scores) cannot be obtained, no credit will be awarded.
- **DSST** – A student may earn college credit through the completion of a DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST) under the Defense Activity for Non-traditional Educational Support (DANTES), provided acceptable scores are achieved. If acceptable scores are achieved in accordance with the minimum acceptable scores set by the University, the DSST credit will be added to the student’s official Athens State transcript. Credit earned through DSSTs may be transcribed as 100, 200, 300, or 400-level credit. **Official DSST transcripts must be submitted before credit is awarded.** If official DSST transcripts cannot be obtained, no credit will be awarded.
- **NOCTI** – A student may earn college credit through the completion of certain examinations offered by the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI), provided



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acceptable scores are achieved. If acceptable scores are achieved in accordance with the minimum acceptable scores set by the University, the NOCTI credit will be added to the student's official Athens State transcript. Credit earned through NOCTI exams may be transcribed as 100, 200, 300, or 400-level credit. **Official NOCTI transcripts must be submitted before credit is awarded.** If official NOCTI transcripts cannot be obtained, no credit will be awarded.

- **Course-specific Challenge Examinations** – Some programs and majors offered by the three academic Colleges of the University may offer challenge examinations for specific Athens State courses required for the program or major. These examinations are developed and assessed by faculty members associated with the particular program or major. Applicable tuition and fees may be assessed for credit earned by challenge examination. Credit earned through course-specific challenge examinations may be transcribed as 300 or 400-level credit.

Credit for Military Experience and Training

Non-traditional academic credit may be awarded to students who have served in the Armed Forces and have appropriate experience or completed specialized training. College credit for military experience or training is awarded according to the American Council on Education (ACE) course credit recommendations. Applications for credit based on military experience or training will generally require documentation that may include:

- Appropriate official military transcripts (including AARTS, JST, and/or SMART). **Note: United States Air Force members whose military experience has been accepted by the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) should submit CCAF transcripts directly to the Office of Admissions rather than applying for non-traditional credit.**
- Copies of certificates, awards, and other documentation related to military courses or training.

Documentation of military experience and training will be evaluated according to ACE guidelines, and will consider Military Occupational Specialties and military education based on exhibit dates and ACE recommendations.

Credit received from military experience or training will be awarded as elective credit unless approved by the appropriate faculty member to fulfill specific course requirements.



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Credit for Professional Training (Certifications and Licenses)

Some Athens State programs may award non-traditional credit for completion of professional training, coupled with related work experiences, when the training and experience are relevant to the particular Athens State program.

The maximum amount of non-traditional credit that may be awarded in a program and the specific requirements for the documentation and evaluation of the professional training will be published in the appropriate program section of the University catalog. **Applicability of any credit awarded for professional training towards the pre-professional or professional course requirements for a particular Athens State degree program and major is subject to the approval of the appropriate faculty advisor(s) in the particular College offering the program or major.**

Credit for Work Experience: Portfolio Assessment

Students seeking credit for work experience through portfolio assessment are encouraged to complete the ADP 301 course, which guides a student through the process of developing a portfolio (current tuition/fee rates apply).

Non-traditional academic credit may be awarded to students who have acquired significant knowledge through legitimate experiences outside an academic environment. The award of non-traditional credit for such experiences generally requires the submission and assessment of a portfolio that includes relevant supporting documentation and follows ACE recommendations for the award of college credit related to workforce training when appropriate. The specific requirements for documentation and the guidelines for the evaluation of experience and training will be established by the Director of Adult Learner Services. Non-traditional credit awarded through portfolio assessment may only be used to fulfill elective hours unless credit is approved by the appropriate faculty member to satisfy specific class requirements. Portfolio credit is awarded as



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non-graded credit and has no effect on a student's grade point average. Students are required to pay an assessment fee to have work experience reviewed for credit.

Applicability of any credit awarded for work experience towards the pre-professional or professional course requirements for a particular Athens State degree program and major is subject to the approval of the appropriate faculty advisor(s) in the particular College offering the program or major.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Credit

Athens State University recognizes International Baccalaureate (IB) credit with a score of 4, 5, 6 or 7 on the higher-level examinations. IB score reports should be sent to the Athens State University Registrar's Office for evaluation. Additional credit may be awarded on a course-by-course basis as approved by the department. Some departments may award credit based on the subsidiary examinations. The academic unit responsible for the student's program of study will determine the application of credits toward specific degree requirements. If awarded, credits will be recorded without grades or quality points and will not, therefore, be included in the calculation of grade point average.

V. Responsibility for this Operating Policy

A. Policy Owner

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the President has assigned the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services as the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. This policy will be updated/published in the University Policy, with pertinent sections published in the University catalog.



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B. Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services.