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EVALUATION CREDIT BY PORTFOLIO POLICY AND PROCEDURES (ECP)

OVERVIEW

A **portfolio** is a student-prepared written presentation documenting college-level learning – describing what was learned and how the learning was acquired. The portfolio is designed to verify how experiences have contributed to learning which is relevant to college study. The final portfolio provides evidence that the student has developed skills, knowledge and attitudes equivalent to those that would be learned as the result of taking a college-level course.

The student begins by conducting an inventory of his/her non-college learning to identify college-level competencies relating to a particular course and program area, then prepares the description of learning describing what was learned and the manner in which the learning was acquired. The description of learning, in conjunction with letter(s) of recommendation, documentation, resume and a reflection constitute a completed portfolio.

In order to be successful in completing a portfolio, the student should have a professional attitude that elicits constructive feedback. S/he must be a competent writer, capable of reflection and willing to analyze his/her skills. The student must be able to create a viable argument for course credit and express thoughts in a clear and convincing manner. S/he will be guided through the process of portfolio preparation, but will be the major contributor of content and will determine the focus of the writing.

PROCESS

1. APPLICATION AND AUTHORIZATION:

- a. The student, who must be enrolled in a Program of Study, meets with CAS staff to discuss eligibility and whether the portfolio option is appropriate considering the following:
 - Program of Study.
 - Extent and duration of experience.
 - Ability to schedule time to complete the portfolio requirements.
 - Self-discipline and motivation to work in a non-structured environment.
 - Willingness to engage in reflection upon and analysis of experiences.

- b. The student is provided the appropriate course syllabus and may be referred to faculty experts to clarify any concerns pertaining to required documentation.

2. **PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT:**

The student will create an account on <https://myexperiencecounts.mass.edu/home>. Once an account is created templates will be available as well as the course syllabus to help guide the student. The student will upload all of their work to this electronic portfolio. A CAS staff member provides instruction and guidance in the preparation of the portfolio. This includes assisting the student in the evaluation of skills or competencies learned; the preparation, editing and presentation of written documents; and the integration of portfolio components to create a well-stated argument for course credit.

In the course of preparing this petition for credit, the student will need to reflect on the nature of his/her experiential learning and on ways to present a convincing claim that this knowledge is worthy of college credit. Reflection should include these considerations:

- What do I understand now that I did not understand before?
- What skills or competencies have I gained through this experience?
- What different techniques or approaches am I aware of?
- How do I apply the ideas or concepts learned?

3. **AWARD OF CREDIT:**

Portfolio credit is awarded for verifiable college-level learning acquired through work or life experience. The credit-worthy portfolio must demonstrate that student competencies are comparable to outlined course learning objectives. Grading of the portfolio is determined by its cumulative effectiveness in the following categories:

- a. Completeness.
- b. Overall organization.
- c. Clarity, correctness and effectiveness of narrative in identifying what skills, knowledge and attitudes were learned, describing how experiential learning occurred and how the learning was applied.
- d. Documentation.

The completed portfolio is submitted to a Review Committee. Recommendation for course credit award is based on approval by all members of this Review Committee. If credit award is approved, the student is registered for the course by the Center for Alternative Studies and Educational Testing. If credit is denied, an explanation for that decision is provided.

Credit awards are transcribed using the comparable NSCC course number and title. Credit does not apply to the 25% -credit residency degree requirement. Credit awards are included on the student's official transcript once the student account is paid in full.

For specific course credit by Portfolio, the level of performance must be equivalent to a C (73%) or better for the student to earn credit, which will be in the form of a PC for "Pass."

4. **PAYMENT:**

Upon submission of the portfolio for evaluation, the student pays a fee of \$100 per portfolio.

CRAFTING the PORTFOLIO

1. **ASSESS SKILLS:**

Before the student can begin the task of creating a portfolio, s/he must consider and describe:

- what was learned through various experiences
- how that learning was applied

The student first creates a list of experiences and then identifies the skills gained as a result of those experiences. Finally, the student creates a brief summary of experiences which allowed him/her to develop college-level skills/competencies.

Steps in the assessment process:

- a. Identify and list experiences (e.g., jobs, volunteer work, training, travel, hobbies) related to the area for which the student wishes to obtain credit. Include the title of the work or volunteer position, dates or length of time spent, level of responsibility or authority, with whom the student worked, and other related details.
- b. Identify and describe competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) gained in relation to the experiences described. (Note: Not all skills will be equivalent to those which might be acquired through college-level course work).
- c. Identify and collect documentation that verifies skill acquisition.
- d. Write an objective paragraph in the following format:

Sentence 1. **"As a result of my experiences, I learned ... "**
general competencies for the petition.

[list

Sentence 2. "**My learning is evidenced by ...**" [*list documentation*].

Sentence 3. "**My documented experience represents** [*time in hours, weeks, months, years*] **of work, volunteering, in-service training in the field of ...**".

2. MATCH COMPETENCIES TO COURSE(S):

In order to receive credit, competencies gained through experiences must match learning outcomes for the identified course or course(s).

Once the student has determined the competencies gained through experiences, s/he identifies a course or courses which align with the identified skills and outlines the connection

between competencies and the learning outcomes specified in a course syllabus. These are the steps in the process:

- a. Review identified skills and course offerings.
- b. Identify course match.
- c. Review syllabus/ course learning outcomes.
- d. Describe how learning gained through experiences matches the learning outcomes in the course(s).

3. PREPARE COMPONENTS OF PORTFOLIO:

When the student has described all experiences and the competencies gained and has translated all of this into academic terms, it is time to put the pieces together:

- to write the narrative,
 - select appropriate documentation that verifies competencies,
 - put it into finished form.
- a. **PETITION:** This form constitutes your actual request / application for consideration of documented skills as equivalent to course content and worthy of credit.
 - b. **RESUME:** Create or revise a resume that includes education and employment and that is reflective of experiences and learning for which course credit is sought.
 - c. **DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING** should describe learning that took place through experiences, identify how competencies were learned, and specify how the learning was applied; it should indicate the level of expertise at the beginning and end of the related experiences and should relate to a body of competencies that correspond to the content of a course that is taught at NSCC. Students must document the relationship

between prior learning, the course objectives, and their degree program, and should discuss the theory acquired through their knowledge and experience.

- d. **LETTER(S) OF RECOMMENDATION:** Request letter/s of recommendation, which reference the skills that the student is attempting to document, from supervisors or other persons qualified to comment on the student's professional skills.
- e. **DOCUMENTATION:** Select supporting documentation that verifies the competencies described in the portfolio narrative, e.g., job descriptions, certificates, evaluations, records, tapes, presentations, products of work.
- f. **REFLECTION:** Write a paragraph that reflects on the ways in which this project fostered a new level of understanding for you as a learner, i.e., what served as the most formidable obstacle and what proved to be easy?