



SECTION I
PART X PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

1.00 Introduction

Learning obtained outside the classroom can be assessed and documented through a variety of types of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). The purposes of this policy are 1) to set statewide expectations for awarding college credit for PLA, 2) to ensure that credits awarded for PLA by one institution are not lost in transfer, and (3) to provide transparent information to students, families and advisors. This policy supports the Colorado Commission on Higher Education’s 2012 master plan, [Colorado Competes](#), Goals 1 and 3 to increase degree completion and close achievement gaps.

2.00 Statutory Authority

- 2.01 Pursuant to §23-1-108.5(5), C.R.S., “All credits earned by a student in any general education course identified as corresponding with a course included in the course numbering system [GT Pathways] shall be automatically transferable among all higher education institutions upon transfer and enrollment of the student... The commission shall adopt such policies and guidelines as may be necessary for the implementation of this section. Each governing board shall modify its existing policies as may be necessary to accept the transfer of these credits.”
- 2.02 Pursuant to §23-1-113.2(2), C.R.S., first-time freshman students who have successfully completed an international baccalaureate diploma program shall, at a minimum, be granted 24 semester credits, identified by the institution and that apply to the institution’s general education or other degree requirements. An institution may only grant less than 24 semester credits or their equivalent if the student has received a score of less than four on an exam administered as part of the international baccalaureate diploma program.
- 2.03 Pursuant to §23-1-125(1), C.R.S., “(d) Students have a right to know which courses are transferable among the state public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education; (e) Students, upon completion of core general education courses, regardless of the delivery method, should have those courses satisfy the core course requirements of all Colorado public institutions of higher education; (f) Students have a right to know if courses from one or more public higher education institutions satisfy the students' degree requirements; (g) A student's credit for the completion of the core requirements and core courses shall not expire for ten years from the date of initial enrollment and shall be transferrable...” and §23-1-125(3), C.R.S., “The commission shall adopt such policies to ensure that institutions develop the most effective way to implement

the transferability of core course [GT Pathways] credits.”

- 2.04 Pursuant to §23-1-125(4), C.R.S., “Competency testing. On or before July 1, 2010, the commission shall, in consultation with each public institution of higher education, define a process for students to test out of core courses, including specifying use of a national test or the criteria for approving institutionally devised tests. Beginning in the 2010-11 academic year, each public institution of higher education shall grant full course credits to students for the core courses they successfully test out of, free of tuition for those courses.”
- 2.05 Pursuant to §23-1-125(4.5), C.R.S., “Prior learning. Beginning in the 2013-14 academic year, each public institution of higher education shall adopt and make public a policy or program to determine academic credit for prior learning.”

3.00 General Provisions

- 3.01 Receiving institutions may require students to resubmit test scores or other documentation if they transfer.
- 3.02 Institutions shall limit the number of PLA credits accepted in transfer only by the residency requirements of the regional and other accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- 3.03 While the Commission may establish and publish conditions for applicability of PLA credit toward meeting GT Pathways requirements, institutions will establish and publish conditions for applicability of PLA credit toward meeting requirements of the major. In the case of transfer, the receiving institution shall determine if the PLA credit awarded by the sending institution can apply to the major requirements at the receiving institution.

4.00 Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Cut Scores

- 4.01 The statewide minimum cut score for awarding GT Pathways credit for AP exams shall be 3, and for both the SL and HL versions of the IB exams shall be 4. The Department, in collaboration with the institutions, may make exceptions in rare cases where the content of an exam may not meet GT Pathways requirements, such as with GT-AH4 World Language, which can be met only with the equivalent of 200-level coursework.
- 4.02 At least 3 credit hours shall apply first to the appropriate GT Pathways content area requirements until the amount of credit has been met for that GT Pathways content area. In the case of AP science exams, at least 3 credit hours shall apply to the GT-SC2 category (lecture course without laboratory) or, if there is a verified laboratory experience that is discipline-specific to the AP exam or advanced high school course taken, then at least 4 credit hours shall apply to the

GT-SC1 category (course with required laboratory). For example, a student seeking biology GT-SC1 credit through the AP Biology exam must have biology laboratory experience specifically, not science laboratory experience in general.

Once a GT Pathways content area requirement has been met, any additional credit may be awarded to fulfill other degree requirements, such as general education, elective or major/prerequisite credit. For example, the GT Pathways history requirement is 3 credits. If a student brings passing cut scores on two different history exams (such as US History and also World History, which qualifies the student for at least 6 credits), then the student shall receive 3 credits applied towards the GT Pathways history requirement. Any additional credits may be awarded to fulfill other degree requirements, such as general education, elective or major/prerequisite credit.

- 4.03 Institutions may use their existing processes to determine the amount of credit to award for AP scores of 4 & 5 and IB (both SL & HL) scores of 5, 6 & 7 but they must award at least 3 credits, or at least 4 credits for GT-SC1 (science courses with labs).
- 4.04 Credit awarded shall be transcribed as a course satisfying the appropriate GT Pathways category at the institution. When there is no equivalent, the institution shall create a generic transfer equivalency for a course in that GT Pathways content area (i.e., GT-AH1, GT-AH2, and etc.).
- 4.05 Institutions may advise students with PLA credits that the student may be more successful in subsequent coursework if they take the college course but the institution may not require the student take the college course.

5.00 College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) Cut Scores

- 5.01 <insert CLEP and DSST recommendations here once approved, expected late 2016>

6.00 Course Challenge Options

- 6.01 Per §23-1-125(4), Colorado Revised Statute, "...each public institution of higher education shall grant full course credits to students for the core [GT Pathways] courses they successfully test out of, free of tuition for those courses." Each public institution shall define a process for students to test out of GT Pathways courses, "...including specifying use of a national test or the criteria for approving institutionally devised tests." If the student transfers, receiving institutions shall apply that credit to the appropriate GT Pathways category.
- 6.02 Requesting a course challenge option is at the enrolled student's discretion. Institutions, including instructors of the course and department chairs, shall not

refuse the enrolled student's request, except that:

- a) Institutions may set their own policies in regards to allowing students to challenge courses in which they are currently enrolled or had been previously enrolled; and
- b) Institutions may set their own policies in regards to limiting the number of times students can attempt to challenge a course in one semester or in total.

6.03 Institutions shall:

- a) If the student earns the equivalent of a C- or better on an institutionally-devised challenge exam, transcript the credits as earned institutional credit and, at a minimum, include the name and number of the course, the number of institutional credits, and note that it was a challenge exam; and
- b) Include in the catalog, on the website, and provide to students through academic advising, course challenge policies and related information (such as fees).

6.04 Institutions may:

- a) Set their own policies in regards to counting course challenge credit as residency work;
- b) Set their own fees for administering course challenge options but the fees shall be transparent and reflect actual costs, including faculty and staff time and any appropriately amortized infrastructure cost.

6.05 Since the course challenge option applies to GT Pathways courses, students in degrees that do not contain the entire GT Pathways curriculum may not have the option to challenge all GT Pathways requirements. A list of baccalaureate degrees at Colorado institutions that have received waivers from the Commission and do not contain the full 31-credit GT Pathways curriculum is [linked on the Department's website](#).

HISTORY: CCHE Agenda Item V, A – May 8, 2015; CCHE Agenda Item IV, B – February 5, 2016; CCHE Agenda Item IV, B - June 2, 2016