

Alternative Credit



Colorado State University
GLOBAL CAMPUS

———— CSUGlobal.edu ————

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What is Alternative Credit?

CSU-Global provides students with alternative credit pathways toward their Bachelor's degree programs

- Credit for Prior Learning (CPL): CLEP/DSST, Straighterline, ACE & Military, CCRS, AP & IB credit, credit from other institutions and educational programs
- Prior Learning Assessment (PLA): Portfolio project creation aligned CSU-Global course outcomes
- Competency-Based Exams (CBE): Proctored exams aligned with course competencies

Vision for Alternative Credit

- Affordability
 - Cost of alternative credit can be a 90% discount from standard tuition
- Engagement
 - Many adult, non-traditional students have already learned some or even all of the knowledge of their courses through previous work/training
 - Provides choice to adult, non-traditional students who can demonstrate learning through alternative routes
- Decrease time to completion
 - Time is the enemy for adult, non-traditional students
 - Alternative credit provides options for demonstrating learning and earning credit in

Prior Learning Assessment Overview

- **What is it and who is it for?** A program launched in 2011 that allows Bachelor's degree-seeking students to earn alternative credit towards the CSU-Global 90 total allowable transfer credits.
- **Goal:** to allow non-traditional adult learners to earn credit through demonstration of prior knowledge, research & writing, and other competencies that match CSU-Global course learning outcomes.
- **Limitations:**
 - Cannot be used for the first six-credits, General Education or Capstone courses
 - 30 credits maximum - No more than 50% of coursework in the major core can come from alternative sources of credit including PLA and CBE

PLA Application Process

- **Student Application Requirements**
 - Good Academic Standing
 - Successful completion of six CSU-Global Campus credits with a cumulative GPA of 3.0
 - Below the 90 transfer credit limit
- **PLA Application**
 - List of potential targeted courses
 - Describe specific experiences that apply to each course
 - Provide current resume
- **Committee Review**
 - Each targeted course is reviewed by a committee for equivalency of work experience to course content and objectives.
- **Once approved, student can enroll in PLA390**

Portfolio Project Course – PLA390

- **What is it?** Instructor-led, one-credit, 8 week course
 - Helps ensure necessary skills for PLA Portfolio Project creation:
 - Conducting research
 - Demonstrating college level knowledge
 - Documenting professional experience for review
 - Understanding the grading rubric
 - Students work on one of their approved PLA Portfolio Projects during this course
 - Course is graded as “S”/Satisfactory or “U”/Unsatisfactory
 - Earning credit in PLA390 does not guarantee that additional credit for Portfolio Projects will be granted

Competency Based Exams (CBEs)

- **What is it and who is it for?** CBE Program launched in 2013 to provide self-motivated, independent undergraduate students the opportunity to earn alternative credit.
- **Goal:** To provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate competencies that align with standard course outcomes to help them cost-efficiently earn credit toward their Bachelor's degree.
- **How does it work?**
 - No application requirements, open to all students
 - Test Prep Study Center provided at no-cost
 - Students do not pay a fee until they are ready to take a CBE (2 attempts in 12 months). \$250 – 3 credit exam; \$150 – 1 credit exam
 - Faculty scoring of assessment - 70% or higher for passing grade
 - Credit on transcript reflected as Course #EX e.g, ORG305EX
- **Limitations:**
 - CBE credit earned count towards the 90 allowable alternative credits

Test Prep Study Center

- **Free CBE-preparation resources for students**
 - Pre-test
 - Syllabus
 - Recommended Readings
 - Content Modules
 - Content Pages
 - Practice Questions
 - Test Prep Mentor
 - Weekly interactions take place in the discussion board of the CBE Test Prep Study Center
 - Discussions are designed to keep students focused as they prepare for their CBE

The CBE Assessment

- **Exams are proctored through an external vendor**
 - Testing options
 - At home via webcam
 - Local testing center
- **Exam format**
 - 3 credit exams: 100 questions; 95 multiple choice or multiple answer, 5 short answer questions
 - 120 minutes to complete
 - 1 credit exams: 35 questions; 30 multiple choice or multiple answer, 5 short answer questions
 - 75 minutes to complete
- **CSU-Global faculty grade exams within a week of submission**
- **Students may re-take a failed exam within 12 months**

Limitations

- **CSU-Global allows for up to 90 alternative/transfer credits (actual transfer depends on degree program)**
 - Maximum of 60 non-collegiate credit (e.g., ACE, CLEP, DSST, Military)
 - Maximum of up to 30 Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credits
 - Maximum of up to 90 Competency-based Education (CBE) credit
- **Limitations**
 - No more than 50% of coursework in the major core can come from alternative sources of credit including PLA and CBE.

PLA and CBE Data

As of October 31, 2014...

- **Prior Learning Assessment Program**
 - 126 students have received passing scores on 374 portfolio projects
 - 1,123 credits have been awarded
- **Competency-Based Exam Program**
 - 72 students have passed 80 CBEs
 - 212 credits have been awarded
 - 388 registrations into Test Prep Study Centers
 - » 122 exams attempted (first attempt)
 - » 61% passed on the first attempt
 - » 71% passed on the second attempt