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Megan McDermott, Director of Communications

Office: 303-974-2495, Cell: 720-394-3205, Megan.McDermott@dhe.state.co.us

Colorado Commission on Higher Education approves changes for awarding college credit for military training
Update in policy addresses prior learning assessment and requirements of H.B. 17-1004

DENVER – May 4, 2018: The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) took action today to significantly expand the commission policy on prior learning assessment, which allows students to earn college credit for expertise outside the classroom. With the changes, military and veteran students can now be awarded credit for military courses, occupations and assessments conducted during their careers.

The [new policy](#) allows easier transfer of existing content knowledge through assessments such as CLEP, DSST and DLPT or through portfolio review and will evaluate the effectiveness over the next six months. More importantly, it ensures credits transfer consistently among state institutions.

“As faculty, we take seriously our charge of ensuring that students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful,” said Wayne Artis, chair of the Colorado Faculty Advisory Council. “We know that today’s students are bringing real life, relevant experience with them to college. Blending prior learning with traditional curriculum to ensure the same results is exciting.”

Background

The Commission approved a [statewide policy](#) on prior learning assessment in May, 2015. The policy was designed to ensure credits awarded for prior learning were not lost in transfer between institutions. The policy also provided transparent information to students, families and advisors. Since the policy first passed, the Commission adopted common cut scores for AP and IB exams and standardized the ability to test out of certain courses.

Since policy adoption, Colorado Department of Higher Education staff continued to work with faculty and stakeholder groups to examine additional PLA options. [H.B. 17-1004, College Credit for Military Education and Training](#), required the commission and institutions to develop policies that specifically focus on military student experiences listed on a Joint Services Transcript. The group determined where consistent transfer of prior learning can occur, including military occupations and courses, college-level assessments and language proficiency exams.

Although the policy changes were designed to help military veterans, the Commission believes it will open doors to more adult students who bring in their rich experiences and knowledge into higher education institutions. Studies show that students with PLA credit have higher persistence rates, higher graduation rates and lower time to degree than students who do not receive PLA credit, according to the Council for Adult and Experiential Education

Currently, Colorado is home to more than 400,000 veterans, many of whom are placed in college courses without appropriate recognition of college-level learning acquired while in the military. Now, through the passage of H.B. 17-1004 and this revised policy, Colorado veterans and adult students can chart an easier pathway to career and financial success.