

# CREDIT for PRIOR LEARNING

PORTFOLIO BASED ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Institutions of higher learning have long recognized the value of life experience. Students who have worked, traveled, volunteered or otherwise expanded their world are often the brightest, most dedicated students and bring a richness to the classroom that benefits everyone. At UIS, these students can earn academic credit for their hard work. The Credit for Prior Learning program assesses learning acquired outside the classroom, allowing these knowledgeable students to shorten their time to graduation. Who says wisdom has to be its own reward?

## Advantage UIS

- **History of Success.** The Credit for Prior Learning program at UIS is more than 30 years old and has helped thousands of students translate their life experience into academic credit.
- **Prerequisites.** They're easy. 1) Be admitted to UIS, 2) have a major declared and have completed 12 credit hours in your major or have advisor approval, 3) make sure you've completed at least 60 semester credit hours (junior standing), and have substantial past experiences that can translate into college-level learning.

**Mining your past.** You might be amazed at all you've learned. This program helps you develop a portfolio that details significant learning in your history. You'll need to have good writing skills and be able to reflect on and analyze past learning. We'll show you how – enroll in AST 305/501 Prior Learning Portfolio Development to get started. The class is offered online and meets 4 credit hours of the ECCE and/or the University Requirement. Do you have college credit in your past?

**Personal interests.** Have you learned significantly from the pursuit of a personal interest? Maybe you've engaged in research on the history or intricacies of a skill or hobby? Or shared your expertise with others through teaching and mentoring? Or learned the complexities of entrepreneurship and sold your wares or services?

**Looking inward.** Think about what you've been doing in your current career. You may not have the degree, but chances are you've routinely stretched beyond your job duties. Have you completed any professional training? Received any certifications in your field? Planned and completed an individual research project or study? Make a list. You may be surprised at all you've done over the years.

**Volunteerism.** A salary is not always an indicator of value. Many volunteer positions require and hone the professional skills found in the career fields of social work, engineering, management and business, human resources, communication, and more.

**Field savvy.** Have you served in the military? Leadership, discipline, planning and execution, diplomacy, public relations, computer and technical skills, mechanical mastery, problem-solving. These skills reflect college-level learning.



### Wise Words

Lea J. Hudson  
Vice President, Marketing  
& HR Development,  
Hudson Construction, Inc.

"The program provided me the opportunity to earn credit for significant prior learning outside the classroom but also allowed me to gain a better understanding of my own abilities to learn and express that learning. This process is valuable for students who undertake projects and internships in all arenas of education."

The credit for prior learning process is another demonstration of UIS' commitment to the principle that learning is active and can be acquired in a variety of settings. Persons who have acquired college-level learning through paid employment, volunteer work, independent reading, travel or hobbies, learn to develop portfolios that detail significant learning that occurred from participating in such activities and their impact on life-long learning. Students whose portfolios reveal college-level learning consistent with their degree goals and the UIS curriculum receive college credit, to a maximum of 16 credit hours.

### Director of Credit for Prior Learning Elaine Rundle-Schwark

### Entrance Requirements

Students interested in pursuing credit through CPL should be admitted to UIS, have declared a major, and have junior standing/completed 60 semester hours of credit. They should have completed 12 hours in their major. It is also beneficial for the student to have an area of study in mind and have substantial past experiences that can translate into college-level learning. Clarifying educational goals and identifying prior experiential learning makes planning a degree easier. Students are strongly encouraged to talk with their academic program advisor and determine how their experiential learning fits into their academic program.

### Assistance for students developing their Portfolios

UIS offers a course through the Applied Study Program, AST 305/501 Prior Learning Portfolio Development seminar online or on campus (4 credit hours).

This class provides a theoretical framework for assessing experiential learning, introduces a number of issues in adult learning and development, and offers assistance in preparing the components of the portfolio. The credit for prior learning course is geared toward the further development of such academic skills as oral and written communication, reflective and critical writing, analysis and evaluation. It is offered both online and on-campus. **For undergraduate students, AST 305/501**

Prior Learning Portfolio Development counts towards the University Requirement and/or the ECCE requirement in your degree plans.

### Components of the Credit for Prior Learning Portfolio

■ **Chronological Learning Record:** a year-by-year account of 20-25 significant learning experiences (work, volunteer, independent reading, travel, hobbies, and personal) in the student's adult life with summary statements of learning

■ **Autobiographical essay:** a reflective essay of five to seven pages that focuses on the student as a learner and factors that have contributed to that development

■ **Narrative essay:** an integrative paper, of 12 to 14 pages, that clearly identifies and describes the student's learning in a particular academic area and its impact on his/her current learning

■ **Documentation:** external verification that the activity the student describes actually took place

■ **Signed request forms and waivers**

### The Assessment Process

A student's first portfolio will be submitted to the AST 305/501 seminar instructor for review. Additional portfolios are reviewed by the Portfolio Review Committee and a faculty assessor. The PRC recommends whether the portfolio requires revision or is sent on for assessment by faculty from the relevant academic program. The faculty assessor makes the final determination of credit. A maximum of an additional twelve credit hours can be granted through the CPL process after successful completion of the AST 305 class, depending on your academic program.

### Visit our website for more information on

- Prerequisites
- Eligibility
- Portfolio Information
- Assessment Information
- Portfolio Submission Forms
- Contact Information

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Credit for Prior Learning

University of Illinois at Springfield  
One University Plaza, MS BRK 482  
Springfield, IL 62703-5407  
Phone: (217) 206-6695  
Fax: (217) 206-7415  
Email: [cpl@uis.edu](mailto:cpl@uis.edu)

#### Website

[www.uis.edu/cpl](http://www.uis.edu/cpl)

*IMPORTANT* — Information effective fall 2007. Subject to change without notice. The information is not to be considered final, nor does it constitute a contract between the student and UIS. See [www.uis.edu/uiscatalog](http://www.uis.edu/uiscatalog) for current program requirements.