



Date: 16 September 2024  
To: School/College Deans and Associate Deans  
From: Allison La Tarte, Vice Provost for Data, Academic Planning & Institutional Research  
Subject: Policy on Credit by Portfolio Review – New Policy for Review/Feedback

Attached please find a proposed new policy, namely the Policy on Credit by Portfolio Review. As you may recall, in fall 2023, the university undertook the process to update its existing [Policy on Credit by Exam](#). This policy was originally introduced in 2017 and was written with an undergraduate audience in mind. Increasingly graduate-level programs are interested in offering credit by exam, so most of the revisions to the policy were made with this expanded audience in mind.

As the Policy on Credit by Exam was moving through campus governance, questions were raised about other forms of credit for prior learning, and specifically credit for a learning portfolio. With the understanding that there are programs on campus for which a learning portfolio could appropriately be considered as a method for awarding credit, my office drafted the attached Policy on Credit by Portfolio Review.

We are inviting your school/college to offer your insights and feedback on/by October 18. If you will need additional time, please let me know. Please send your comments to Allison La Tarte, Vice Provost for Data, Academic Planning & Institutional Research, at [allison.latarte@wisc.edu](mailto:allison.latarte@wisc.edu). If you would prefer to meet to discuss your feedback, we're happy to do so as well. Once we receive feedback from our colleagues in the schools and colleges, we will revise as appropriate with the goal of taking the updated policy to the University Academic Planning Council for adoption in this academic year.

Thank you in advance for your time and we look forward to receiving your feedback.

**Copies**

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William Karpus, Dean, Graduate School  
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## Credit by Portfolio Review

### DEFINITIONS:

**Academic unit:** The academic and administrative home for an academic program or subject listing, also known as an academic department or department-like unit, housed within an academic division (school/college). The academic unit originates all program and curricular changes through academic governance; ensures the curriculum is appropriate and that courses are offered regularly; provides student support services such as advising; prepares all content for the Guide and assures the program and subject listing is represented accurately at all times; oversees the course evaluation process; coordinates assessment and program review; and receives allocation for program enrollment, degrees, certificates and credits in the information systems.

**Learning Portfolio:** Written work that provides evidence of college-level learning gained through experiences that are not otherwise documented as course-based, military or credit by exam. Faculty experts evaluate the portfolio and determine whether the portfolio provides adequate evidence of learning equivalent to the learning outcomes in a course offered by UW-Madison.

A learning portfolio consists of:

1. a learning narrative that documents an individual has met the student learning objectives for a single course,
2. supporting materials that provide an example of the stated learning,
3. other materials as required by the offering academic unit

The contents of a learning portfolio have been accrued through the student's non-credit learning experiences.

### SCOPE:

This policy serves degree-seeking students.

The portfolio should be considered as a method for awarding credit only after an academic unit has explored offering credit by exam.

This policy does not address transfer credit, military credit, placement exams, credit by departmental exam, third-party credit by exam such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), or retroactive credits.

### POLICY:

- I. Courses Available for Portfolio Review
  - A. A list of courses that offer portfolio review is available in Guide.
- II. Student Eligibility
  - A. To be eligible for credit by portfolio review, a student must:
    1. Be classified as a degree-seeking student; and
    2. be enrolled or eligible to enroll in the current term;
    3. Satisfy all catalog level requisites for the course; and
    4. Submit a separate portfolio for each course in which credit is sought.

### III. Credit Limitations

- A. Credits earned by portfolio do not count toward the credit residency requirements for a degree.
- B. Students may not submit a portfolio for any course they are or were previously enrolled in past the add deadline for the course.
- C. Students may not submit a portfolio for a specific course more than once.
- D. Students may not submit a portfolio for a course or course equivalent for which they have previously been awarded credit.
- E. No student may submit a portfolio for a course that is a catalog level requisite, stated or implied, for an advanced course in the same subject (or subjects if course is cross-listed) for which credit has already been earned, without approval from the academic unit offering the course. For example, if an introductory course is a requisite for an intermediate course, and the intermediate course is a requisite for an advanced course, a student may not submit a portfolio for the advanced course if they have earned credit for either the intermediate course (stated requisite) or the introductory course (implied requisite).

### IV. Credits on Student Record

- A. Credit will be posted as 'Other Credit' and will reflect the specific course for which the student earns credit.
- B. The Office of the Registrar will post credits earned through portfolio review to the student record within 10 days of receiving a completed form from an academic unit.
- C. Credits earned will be posted to the student's transcript only if the student successfully completes the requirements for awarding credits by portfolio review.
  1. If the portfolio review results in a determination that credit is not warranted, no record of the attempt will be noted on the student's transcript.
  2. The course credits will be posted to the term that corresponds with the date the portfolio review is completed.
- D. Course credit earned via portfolio review does not carry grade points and does not factor into the grade-point average.
- E. Course credit earned via portfolio review does not factor into course load which determines whether the student is full-time or part-time.
- F. Credits based upon portfolio review generally do not transfer to other institutions without reevaluation by their faculty in accordance with their academic policies.

### V. Academic Unit Requirements

- A. It is the responsibility of each academic unit to determine which courses are eligible for credit by portfolio.
  1. There is no requirement or expectation for offering portfolio review, but if portfolio review will be offered for a course, the academic unit must follow these policy guidelines.
- B. It is incumbent upon the academic unit offering credit by portfolio to confirm a student's eligibility as outlined in Section II. Once a student has been granted permission to submit a portfolio, they will be considered eligible.
- C. Faculty will determine the standards, methods, and procedures for assessment.
  1. Reviewers: reviewers must be [qualified instructors](#) and can be an individual faculty member, a team of faculty members, and/or other instructional academic staff selected by faculty of the academic unit offering credit by portfolio review.
  2. Review criteria are based on the official course learning outcomes as entered in Lumen Courses. The amount and quality of learning demonstrated by the portfolio must be equivalent to the learning expected in the campus offering of the course

meeting at a minimum the standards for a grade of C. Academic units may require a higher standard if they choose by indicating this in the proposal. Review criteria will be shared and reviewed by the Office of Student Learning Assessment.

3. The assessment is completed within 30 days of submission.
  4. If the review determines that minor adjustments to the portfolio would result in the awarding of credit, they may provide feedback to the student and allow one resubmission.
- D. The portfolio option must be available to all eligible students regardless of how they acquired the skills, knowledge, or competencies. However, credit by portfolio review is not a method of awarding credit for a for-credit experience that would be eligible for transfer credit.
- E. To grant credit, the student must demonstrate a clear mastery of the course material, and student performance must be at a sufficient level that they are well prepared for higher-level work in that field of study.
- F. If a course is cross-listed, all cross-listed units must agree on how the portfolio will be reviewed and select one academic unit to administer all reviews for the course.

#### VI. Approval to Offer Credit by Portfolio

- A. Before offering portfolio review for a specific course, an academic unit must obtain approval to do so.
1. The Lumen Exam Proposal Form must be submitted and approved prior to a student submitting a portfolio.
  2. The proposal includes a statement of the requirements for what must be included in the portfolio and an indication of the criteria that will be used to evaluate it. The criteria are based on the official learning outcomes and the requirements for what is included in the course and the portfolio will be designed to have the student demonstrate how they have met the learning outcomes.
  3. The academic unit offering the portfolio review must provide a subject matter expert who can answer questions posed by those who wish to assemble and submit a portfolio. The academic unit must also provide feedback on the portfolio explaining why or why not credit was granted.
  4. The portfolio review approval process follows the same approval steps as a course proposal where the academic unit that owns the subject listing reviews and approves, then if there are any cross-listed subjects they must review and approve. The school/college(s) then review and approve. If the course is numbered 300+ the proposal will also be reviewed by Graduate School administration. The University Curriculum Committee is the final step of the approval process.
- B. Once a course is approved for credit by portfolio, it will be added to a master list of all courses available for credit by portfolio in Guide. This process serves as one of the few avenues for awarding credit other than by offering for-credit courses.
1. Academic units are expected to review and assess all credit by portfolio review opportunities on an ongoing basis to ensure the portfolio review criteria continue to match the content of courses.
  2. Anytime a course is changed through the course change proposal process, the portfolio review criteria must be updated to ensure it remains aligned with the learning outcomes of the course.
  3. If portfolio for a course goes unused for five years, it will be removed from the approved list.

#### VII. Administration of the Portfolio Review

- A. The portfolio review must take place after the student has matriculated as a degree seeking student.
- B. The academic unit is responsible for validating the identity of the student prior to reviewing the portfolio by using a government-issued document with a photo, or the Wiscard.
- C. The academic unit must submit a Credit by Portfolio Form to the Office of the Registrar within seven business days of reviewing the portfolio for any student who makes a submission, even if the attempt is not successful.
  - 1. The Office of the Registrar will process the form and archive it with the student's record.
  - 2. The official student record serves as a record of all portfolio review attempts and will allow for the enforcement of the single attempt rule.

#### VIII. Fees

- A. The fee for each portfolio review is determined by and credited to the academic unit that offers the portfolio review. The fee amount is part of the Lumen Exam Proposal Form. Academic units may choose to waive the fee but must do so according to consistent, equitable standards.
- B. The fee must be paid prior to or at the time the portfolio is submitted for review.
  - 1. The fee is not refundable.
  - 2. The academic unit offering the review is responsible for verifying that the fee has been paid.
- C. The fee is waived for Banner, Bucky's Pell Pathway, and Pell Eligible students.
- D. The fee must be paid using the CASHNet system. The Bursar's Office will provide support with setup and reconciliation.
- E. The fee will be reviewed annually by the Office of Data, Academic Planning & Institutional Research.

Notes regarding updates to Lumen Exams form



## Lumen Exam Proposal System

### Basic Information

Type of exam being proposed:

Exam name:   
30 characters remaining

First available term:

Subject:

Course Number:

Is this course cross-listed?  
 Yes  No

### Exam Details

Type of exam being proposed: add value for: Portfolio Assessment

What are the governance approved learning outcomes of this course?

What are the required elements of the portfolio?

Describe the rubric that will be used to guide the faculty assessment and feedback.

Update "Student exam fee:" from a dropdown menu to a text field.

<b>Course-Based Credit</b>	In-Residence (at UW-Madison)
	Transfer (from another institution)
<b>Military Credit</b>	Transfer (from the Joint Service Transcript)
<b>Credit for Prior Learning</b>	Credit by Department Exam
	Retroactive Foreign Language Credit
	Third-Party Credit by Exam
	Portfolio Review

UW System Policy - Award of Credit for Prior Learning Assessment

Credit for prior learning is awarded based on assessed learning outcomes, not for experience. Credit for prior learning is documented and represents university-level achievement and competency of learning outcomes that are equitable to those assessed within a conventional university course.

Open Questions

1. Many institutions offer a workshop to students who wish to assemble a portfolio and/or have a coordinator of portfolio assessment who assists students and the faculty/instructors who will review portfolios for credit.
2. Will faculty or instructional academic staff who review portfolios be compensated?
3. Where will portfolios be kept (repository)?
4. Approval process – will this go to Dean’s Council for discussion? Yes
5. What is the involvement of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning?
6. Set expectation that academic units will report on the number of portfolio submissions, which were approved, which were not.

Notes for procedures and guidance KB

Students should be encouraged to submit a portfolio asap; not wait until degree is almost done. How long ago the experiences that the portfolio is based on may factor into the granting of credit.

If students are given an opportunity to revise, the academic unit should specify a deadline for the resubmission of the portfolio.