



CENTRAL  
NEW MEXICO  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE

# Credit for Prior Learning Student Handbook

**CNM**   
Central New Mexico  
Community College

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## WELCOME

Dear Student:

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) recognizes that learning takes place outside formal educational institutions' classrooms and online courses.

Learning outside of school can create knowledge comparable to that gained in some CNM courses. Prior learning is based on a variety of experiences and can often be evaluated for credit. If it is awarded credit, it becomes Credit for Prior Learning (CPL).

Contact an academic coach or the school advisor for your declared program when considering whether you possess prior learning that may be credited toward a degree or certificate program. This individual can assist you in exploring and understanding the various assessment methods available for CPL.

## DEFINITIONS

**Assess/Assessment:** Evaluation of a student's knowledge to verify that it is college-level and meets the learning outcomes of a specific CNM course.

**Assessor:** The trained CNM faculty member evaluating the student's learning.

**Credit for Prior Learning (CPL):** The processes CNM uses to review and evaluate evidence of college-level learning in order to award academic credit in accordance with academic and administrative standards. These processes are also referred to as prior learning assessment (PLA) at other institutions.

**Evidence of Learning:** Documentation that substantiates claims of knowledge and skills. All methods of CPL assessment require some form of evidence of the student's level of knowledge.

**Prior Learning:** Knowledge gained before enrolling, or while attending, a traditional academic setting. This knowledge is typically acquired through employment, on-the-job training, community service, military service, attainment of professional credentials, independent study, or other accomplishments.

**Residency Requirement:** The minimum number of credit hours a student is required to take at CNM to be awarded an associate's degree or certificate. Residency hours must apply to the student's declared program of study.

## CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING POLICIES

### Eligibility

In order to apply for, and receive, CPL you must be an active CNM certificate or degree-seeking student.

### CPL Award

1. Your prior learning must match existing courses using course descriptions and learning outcomes for guidance.
2. CPL should only be requested for courses that are directly applicable to your declared certificate or degree program as specified in the college course catalog. If you are considering changing your program major after CPL has been awarded, be aware that the credit may no longer apply but it will still count toward maximum timeframe for financial aid.
3. You will still be required to meet the minimum academic residency requirement for any certificate or degree. CPL credits earned through challenge exams, CNM Ingenuity, Inc. training, and portfolio assessment count toward academic residency requirements. CPL credits

earned through all other methods are considered as transfer credit and do not count toward academic residency requirements.

4. Students may earn up to 75% of their required program hours through any combination of CPL methods. (See Appendix A for more details.) You may speak with a school advisor to discuss the specific requirements of your program.

### Financial Aid

At this time, financial aid does not cover the cost of CPL. However, financial aid and veterans' benefits may be affected by credit hours awarded through CPL methods. Credit hours awarded through CPL count toward the total earned hours that you have acquired and the 150% rule. You should consult with a financial aid advisor to determine how credits earned through CPL may affect you prior to requesting any credit through any of the assessment methods.

Some standardized testing may be covered through veterans' benefits or the Post-9/11 GI Bill. Active duty military and veterans should review the [CNM Licensing and Certification Tests website](#) or speak with a CNM Financial Aid Specialist to see if they are eligible.

### Application of CPL Award

Credits awarded through CPL will be applied to program requirements in the following ways:

1. CPL credits will be applied to degree or program requirements in the same manner as other credits earned at CNM. Please refer to the CPL Award section, above, for further information.
2. CNM will award credit for prior learning only for courses or programs for which there are active CNM catalog listings.
3. CNM will assign the appropriate CNM course title(s) and number(s) to the credit(s) awarded. Neutral grades of "CR" (credit), for challenge exams, portfolios, and CNM Ingenuity, Inc. (non-credit to credit), or "TR" (transfer credit), for all other assessment methods, will be utilized and will not affect your grade point average (GPA). Traditional letter grades will not be used.
4. Earned credit will be transcribed onto the student's record within 10 business days of the award.

### Transferability

CPL is granted for the purpose of satisfying CNM graduation requirements. These credits may not be accepted by other colleges or universities. You are responsible for contacting the institution to which you intend to transfer to determine that institution's policy on accepting CPL awarded at CNM.

Determination of CPL awarded at another institution and transferred to CNM will be made on a case-by-case basis. You should contact the academic school from which you are seeking credit.

## Fees

Fees charged for any method of CPL must be paid in full prior to the student's submission of the CPL application or Portfolio submission, if applicable. Visit the [CNM CPL Website](#) to verify current fees associated with a specific assessment method. CPL fees are reviewed and approved annually by the CNM Governing Board.

## CPL Appeals

You may appeal a CPL decision in writing to the academic school to which the initial CPL request was made. CPL appeals are only allowable on credit award decisions based on challenge exams or portfolios due to the following reasons: a score miscalculation, inconsistency with the CNM CPL Policy, or any written error within a challenge exam that would change the grade outcome.

You will need to complete the [Credit for Prior Learning Appeal Form](#), attach any supporting documentation for the appeal, and submit the packet to the appropriate academic school, within 10 academic calendar workdays from the original denial of credit.

## OPTIONS FOR EARNING CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

While CNM allows many options for you to earn credit for your prior learning, all methods of assessment are based on your ability to prove you have met the student learning objectives for the course(s) or program(s) for which you are seeking credit. If you need assistance in determining which method of assessment is right for you, please contact the school advisor of your declared program of study for guidance.

## Credit by Exam

### Standardized Exams

CNM awards college credit to students who earn passing scores on a variety of nationally-recognized exams. Several of these exams, for example IC3, CLEP, and DSST, are offered through one of CNM's Assessment Center locations. Click on the name of the exam below, to see which you may be able to apply toward your degree or certificate program. Standardized exams currently accepted by CNM are listed below. Passing scores are listed on the exam's policy located on the [Standardized Exams website](#). If you have already taken one of these exams, you can have the scores sent directly to the CNM Records Office. Credit will be awarded as transfer ("TR") credit.

**To find out more or to register to take a standardized exam, click on the name of the exam:**

- [Advanced Placement \(AP\) Exams](#)
- [Avant Stamp Language Exams](#)
- [Certiport® Internet and Computing Core Certification \(IC3\)](#)
- [College Level Examination Program \(CLEP\) Exams](#)
- [DSST \(DANTES Subject Standardized Tests\)](#)
- [International Baccalaureate \(IB\)](#)

### To request credit for a standardized exam that you have already taken:

1. Request that your scores be sent directly to the CNM Records Office.
  - a. To find out which exams are accepted or what score is needed to earn credit, review the appropriate exam score policy: [Advanced Placement](#), [Avant Stamp 4S](#), [DSST](#) or [IB](#).

If you have taken a CLEP exam prior to attending college and you did not have the scores submitted to CNM previously, you may order your CLEP transcript from [The College Board](#) and have it sent directly to the CNM Records Office. Active duty military personnel and veterans who used military or veteran benefits to pay for a CLEP exam will need to complete and submit the [Transcript Request Form \(Military\)](#).

### Challenge Exams

A challenge exam is equivalent to a comprehensive final. Challenge exams are developed by CNM faculty for specific CNM courses to validate that a student's prior learning meets the learning outcomes of the course being challenged. A list of current challenge exams can be found on the [CPL Challenge Exams website](#).

If an approved standardized exam exists, a challenge exam will not be offered. Please review the current list of standardized exams, such as [CLEP](#) and [DSST](#), to see if one is already available. All available exams are listed on the [CPL website](#).

The following restrictions apply to all CNM Challenge Exams:

1. To request a challenge exam, you must be a current CNM student.
2. You may attempt a challenge exam only once per course.
3. A grade of credit (CR) will be recorded for the appropriate CNM course upon successfully passing the challenge exam, during the term that the exam was taken.
4. Courses successfully challenged count toward both program and [graduation residency requirements](#).
5. The academic school that offers the class will determine if a challenge exam will be created, when one does not already exist.
6. If a standardized exam is available, a challenge exam will not be created. Please check the list of available [exams](#) to see if one is available before requesting a challenge exam.
7. If the school approves and develops a challenge exam, you will be responsible for paying the non-refundable fee, prior to taking the exam.

### **To Take a Challenge Exam:**

1. Review the list of available challenge exams on the [Challenge Exams webpage](#).
2. If the exam is offered in the CNM Assessment Centers, you can pay the non-refundable processing fee at the Cashier's Office or online at the [CPL Store](#) and take the receipt to the Assessment Center to take the exam.

### **To request to take a challenge exam not offered in the Assessment Centers or to request a new challenge exam be created:**

1. Contact the school that offers the course to make your request.
  - a. You may email your request online through the school's Contact Us website.
  - b. If your request is approved, you will be required to pay the non-refundable fee to take the exam. This fee must be paid at the Cashier's Office prior to taking the exam. Current fees can be found on the CPL Challenge Exams website. Students will need to present proof of payment when they take the exam.

### **Credit for Industry Certifications and Licensures**

Several CNM programs prepare students for a variety of industry-recognized credentials. If you already have a current, valid industry certification or license within your field of study, you may be able to earn credit towards your program.

### **To request credit for your industry certification or license:**

1. Review the [Credit for Industry Certifications and Licensures webpage](#) to see if your credential is already accepted by CNM.
2. If your credential(s) is listed, click on the title of it.
  - a. You will need [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to view the file.
3. Print and complete the CPL form.
4. Pay the non-refundable fee at the Cashier's Office or online at the [CNM CPL Store](#).
5. Take the completed CPL form, your government issued ID, proof of payment, your credential(s), as well as any additional required documentation, to the location listed on the form.
  - a. Most forms require that the documentation either be dropped off at the Enrollment Services Office or emailed to them as attachments, while others direct you to the academic school offering credit.
  - b. All credentials are validated through the issuing agency or organization to award credit, as approved by the academic school. Please make sure that your credential is current prior to submitting it.

\* If your credential is not listed, you may request that the academic school offering the program or course, review your credential(s). You will need to include a copy of your credential with your request.

## Credit for Military Training

Credit recommendations listed in the [American Council on Education's \(ACE\) Military Guide](#) serve as the basis for assessing military training and occupations for credit. Military training that has not been evaluated by ACE is assessed on a case-by-case basis by the academic school that offers the course.

### To request credit for your military training:

1. Make sure you have a declared major listed on your student account.
2. Submit your official transcripts directly to the CNM Records Office.
  - a. Active duty members of the armed forces can submit a Joint Services Transcript (JST). You may request your JST through the [JST website](#).
  - b. Military service members of the Air Force can submit an official transcript from the [Community College of the Air Force \(CCAF\)](#) to receive traditional transfer credit.
    - i. CCAF is an accredited college, credit awards are considered as transfer credit, rather than credit for prior learning.
3. Some occupations have already been assessed by CNM. Please check the CNM [Credit for Military Training website](#) to view currently available opportunities for earning credit towards your degree program, based on your military occupation specialty or training.
  - a. Review the list of trainings and occupations that have already been identified as equivalent to CNM courses, on the [Credit for Military Training and Occupations Form](#).
    - i. You will need [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to view the file.
  - b. If you find one or more of your trainings or occupation(s) listed *and* the course credit awarded applies to your program, print and complete the [Credit for Military Training and Occupations Form](#).
    - i. If your training(s) and/or occupation(s) are not listed, you will need to submit a [Request for Evaluation of Prior Learning](#). This will give us permission to forward your JST to the applicable school(s) to evaluate your trainings and occupations for credit that applies to your program.
  - c. Pay the non-refundable processing fee at the Cashier's Office or pay online at the [CNM CPL Store](#).
  - d. Take the completed Credit for Military form, a copy of your government issued ID, and proof of payment to the Enrollment Services Office.
    - i. You may instead submit your request for credit to [askgrad@cnm.edu](mailto:askgrad@cnm.edu) and include all required documents as attachments.

## Credit through Community Partnerships

CNM has partnerships with organizations throughout the state. Students who work for these employers often receive training through their employment that is equivalent to courses taught at CNM. Likewise, students who have learned a Native American language through a Southwestern tribe or Pueblo are often fluent in the language and meet or exceed course learning objectives for language courses. If you have received training from one of these partners, or are a trained/native speaker who is fluent in a Native American language, you may qualify to earn credit towards your degree or certificate program.

### To request credit for training received through one of our community partners:

1. Review the CNM [Credit through Community Partnerships webpage](#) to see if your employer, tribe, or Pueblo is listed.
2. Click on the link to open the appropriate form.
  - a. You will need [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to view the file.
3. Verify that the training you received matches those listed on the form and that the credit awarded applies to your declared major.
4. Read the form to verify the requirements for earning credit.
5. Print and complete the CPL form.
6. Verify and collect all required documentation.
  - a. Some forms require additional information from your supervisor, Human Resources department, a tribal or Pueblo council member, etc. Take the form to them and explain you are requesting credit from CNM. Ask them to provide the required information as stated on the form.
  - b. If you are requesting credit based on training you received through your employer, you may need to request a transcript of your training.
7. Pay the non-refundable fee at the Cashier's Office or online at the [CNM CPL Store](#).
8. Take the completed CPL form, a government issued ID, proof of payment, and all other required documentation to the location listed on the form.
  - a. Most forms require that you submit documentation to the Enrollment Services Office. You may either drop it off in person or submit your request for credit to [askgrad@cnm.edu](mailto:askgrad@cnm.edu) by including all of the required documents as email attachments.

## Credit for CNM Ingenuity, Inc. Programs (Non-credit Training to Credit)

CNM Ingenuity, Inc. is a nonprofit that helps Central New Mexico Community College pursue cooperative ventures in technology and entrepreneurship. Several programs offered through CNM Ingenuity, Inc. are eligible for credit for prior learning. If you have completed one of these approved training programs and you would like to continue in a related CNM degree or certificate program, you may be able to earn credit.

### To apply for CNM Ingenuity, Inc. credit:

1. Review the list of eligible programs on the [Credit for CNM Ingenuity, Inc. Training Webpage](#) to see if your completed training program is listed.
2. Click on the program name to open the form.
  - a. You will need [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) to view the file.
3. If the credit you can earn for your CNM Ingenuity, Inc. training will apply to your program of study, print and complete the information.
4. Take the completed Ingenuity, Inc. CPL form, a government issued ID, and all other required documentation to the Enrollment Services Office.
  - a. You may instead submit your request for credit to [askgrad@cnm.edu](mailto:askgrad@cnm.edu) by including all of the required documents as email attachments.

### Credit by e-Portfolio Assessment

A portfolio is a collection of documents, supporting materials, and corresponding narrative that document student's ability to demonstrate their proficiency in learning objectives for a single course. Student's build their electronic portfolio in CNM's online environment, ensuring that it addresses their proficiency of a course's learning outcomes. Once complete, the e-portfolio is submitted to a trained faculty member to assess it for college-level learning and to determine credit award. Individual e-portfolios are assessed using the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) Ten Standards for Assessing Learning (see Appendix B).

### Portfolio Restrictions

- At this time, credit by e-portfolio assessment is only allowed for courses in which there is a trained faculty assessor available.
- You will have the first two weeks of a given semester to request portfolio assessment. This allows you to have at least ten (summer term) or twelve (fall and spring terms) weeks to develop and submit your e-portfolio for assessment, for courses that are currently available for portfolio assessment.
- E-portfolio assessment is completed only by trained faculty assessors.
- Students may not request nor submit a portfolio during their final term prior to graduation.
- You will be required to meet the pre-requisites of the course for which you are seeking credit before submitting the portfolio, if the pre-requisite is a required course in the program.

### How do I know if portfolio assessment is right for me?

Credit by portfolio assessment is based on David Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning that states we learn by reflecting on our experiences. Sometimes the level of knowledge gained through one's life experiences are equivalent to some courses offered by CNM and can be assessed for college-level learning.

Here is a checklist to help you determine if you should pursue portfolio assessment for credit:

- I have worked as a professional in my field for at least three to five years.
- I am able to explain and differentiate my learning from my experiences.
- I have also worked in other professions for extended periods of time.
- I have attended work-related trainings such as computer workshops or interpersonal skills trainings.
- I can demonstrate that I currently have the knowledge and skills of the course for which I am seeking credit.
- I have learned a lot of different things during my many years of working and involvement in the community.
- I am able to demonstrate the learning for which I would like to request credit.
- I have earned certifications, continuing education units (CEUs), or completed extensive professional development opportunities that keep me up-to-date in my job.
- My learning can be associated to a specific CNM course.
- I have taught others what I know or coached colleagues.
- I have knowledge in my field that is quite extensive in certain areas.

If you checked several of these, credit by e-portfolio assessment could be a good option for you. If you are still unsure, please contact the school advisor for your declared program, as long as there is a course currently listed.

#### How does portfolio assessment work?

##### **Step 1: Review course list, program requirements, and the course learning outcomes**

Review the courses for which e-portfolio assessment is available from the [Credit by e-Portfolio Assessment website](#) to see if any of your required courses are listed. Search for the course in the [Course Learning Outcomes Catalog](#) and verify you are able to document and discuss your proficiency with each thoroughly.

##### **Step2: Submit your request for e-Portfolio Assessment**

If you feel that portfolio assessment is appropriate, you will submit a request to earn credit by e-portfolio assessment by completing the School Advisor Intake Form and submitting it through the link provided; both are located under the school's list of courses on the [Portfolio Assessment website](#).

Prior to submitting your request, you must agree that you have thoroughly reviewed a completed portfolio (link provided on the website), understand the portfolio expectations, and that the fee for e-portfolio assessment is non-refundable. The school advisor will review your request. If your request is approved, you will receive instructions on how to register for the online, non-credit CPLP 2097 – Independent Study CPL e-Portfolio Course through your CNM email.

### **Step 3: Portfolio Development and Guidance**

Once you register for CPLP 2097, your student account will be charged with the e-Portfolio Assessment fee. You will have access to the CPL e-Portfolio Course, through CNM Learn. This Independent Study CPL e-Portfolio Course will guide you in the creation of your learning portfolio and submit it directly to the faculty assessor. Students enrolled in CPLP 2097 may opt to work more quickly, complete the workshop, and submit their e-portfolio for assessment prior to the submission due-date, listed on the [Credit by Portfolio Assessment website](#).

Completion of the course and portfolio takes most students approximately seven weeks. The deadline to submit ensures that the faculty assessor has at least the last 2 weeks of the term to evaluate the e-Portfolio and to schedule and complete any additional assessments that you must complete, in addition to the e-portfolio. The faculty assessor will contact you to schedule any additional assessments.

### **Step 4: Portfolio Submission and Assessment**

Your faculty assessor will have access to your e-portfolio submission and finish their assessment within two academic/work-weeks. The trained faculty assessor will review the e-portfolio using a standard e-portfolio grading rubric to determine if your prior learning meets the learning objectives for the course. The assessor will provide feedback on your work and determine whether or not credit will be granted for the course.

Some courses may require a follow-up interview, a skills-based assessment, or demonstration of knowledge. The faculty assessor will contact you to schedule these within the two-week assessment timeframe, not to include holidays, CNM closures, or weekends.

### **Step 5: Transcription of CPL Award**

If credit is awarded, your transcript will be updated to reflect course credit was granted, using the CNM course name, course number, and a neutral grade of “CR” (credit). Portfolios that do not meet the minimum requirements will not earn credit. At the discretion of the faculty assessor, one (1) resubmission of a revised portfolio will be permitted. If credit is not awarded, you will need to register to take the course.

#### **What is required in a portfolio?**

Each completed portfolio will include the following minimum components:

- Introduction – the introduction includes a brief autobiography that introduces you to the faculty assessor to help them understand the context of your learning and a summary or abstract of the information contained in the portfolio.
- Statement of Authenticity and Release Form – this document is a declaration that the information provided in your portfolio, including any required documentation, is your own.

Portfolios that do not adhere to CNM's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) will automatically be denied credit and standard procedures in the policy will be followed. In addition, you will have the opportunity to allow CNM to use your portfolio in training faculty and staff. All identifiable information will be removed or altered for training purposes.

- Résumé – your résumé will help the assessor understand the relevance of your experience.
- Learning Narrative – through your learning narrative, or personal story, you will use collegiate-level writing, critical thinking, application and reflection, to demonstrate that your learning fulfills the course student learning outcomes/competencies, as listed in the [CNM Learning Outcomes Catalog](#).
- Documentation of Learning – the documents/materials you include in your portfolio that demonstrate the knowledge and skills you discuss and reference in your learning narrative for each course learning outcome. You may already have several pieces of evidence that show you meet the learning outcomes.
- Reference / Works Cited Page – If you reference the work of someone else in your portfolio, you will need to include a reference page. Proper use of citations and references will be required of all submitted portfolios.

#### [What types of materials can I include in my portfolio?](#)

There are several types of materials to help show you have met the student learning outcomes for a course. Keep in mind, some forms of evidence may be more relevant to a specific course than others. You may already have evidence of learning from your prior experience(s). Some courses may require a skill demonstration or an interview in addition to the submission of the portfolio.

Here are a few examples of acceptable types of evidence of learning:

- Reports, memos, spreadsheets, or databases you created
- Recorded speeches you gave
- A website you created or designed
- A research article you wrote or were directly involved with
- News articles you wrote
- Letters of reference from a supervisor or satisfied customer, job descriptions, or performance evaluations
- Professional recognitions, awards, or honors
- Certificates of achievement or completion
- Photos, illustrations, art work

#### [Which courses allow portfolio assessment?](#)

Portfolios are allowed only for courses for which there is a trained faculty assessor; however, all requests will be considered. Courses for which portfolio assessment is currently available are listed on the [Portfolio Assessment website](#).

If a course for which you would like to pursue portfolio assessment is not listed, submit a [Request for Portfolio Assessment](#), select “Other” from the list of options, and include the course information in the comments box. Please include the course name, course number, and course title. You will receive a reply within 10 business days. Please note that portfolio development may not be allowed until the following term for new course requests only.

**To request credit by portfolio assessment for a course listed:**

1. Go to the CNM [Credit for Portfolio Assessment website](#).
2. Scroll down to view the courses list, by the school that offers the course.
3. Click on **School Advisor Intake Form**, complete the information, and save the form.
4. From the same drop-down box, click on **submission request** and complete the information. You will upload your completed School Advisor Intake Form before submitting your request to the school.
5. You will receive an email response within 10 business days.
  - a. If approved, you will also receive additional information for registering the CPL e-Portfolio Course.

If you are still unsure if portfolio assessment is appropriate for you, please contact the school advisor for your declared program.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A – CPL Award Limits Based on Program Hours

<b>If your program required credit hours for degree/certificate are:</b>	<b>You must earn this number of residency credit hours:</b>	<b>And, you may earn up to this many credit hours through CPL:</b>
3 - 12	3	0 - 9
13 - 24	6	7 - 18
25 - 36	9	16 - 27
37 - 48	12	25 - 36
49 - 60	15	34 - 45

## Appendix B – Ten Standards of Assessment<sup>1</sup>

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

1. Credit or competencies are awarded only for evidence of learning, not for experience or time spent.
2. Assessment is integral to learning because it leads to and enables future learning.
3. Assessment is based on criteria for outcomes that are clearly articulated and shared among constituencies.
4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels are made by appropriate subject matter and credentialing experts.
5. Assessment advances the broader purpose of equity and access for diverse individuals and groups.
6. Institutions proactively provide guidance and support for learners' full engagement in the assessment process.
7. Assessment policies and procedures are the result of inclusive deliberation and are shared with all constituencies.
8. Fees charged for assessment are based on the services performed in the process rather than the credit awarded.
9. All practitioners involved in the assessment process pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.
10. Assessment programs are regularly monitored, evaluated and revised to respond to institutional and learner needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Marienau, C., Younger, D. (2017). *Assessing Learning: Quality Standards and Institutional Commitments* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed). Chicago, IL: Kendall Hunt.