EXTERNAL CREDIT PROGRAM

External Credit Program – Graduate (*renamed from Work/Life Experience Credit)*

Benedictine University recognizes that students may have learning opportunities prior to enrollment in a graduate degree program at Benedictine University or non-traditional learning experiences which are part of their educational pathway. Students have an opportunity to provide materials (i.e. exam scores, certificates, portfolios, transcripts, etc.) to demonstrate competencies within subject areas that align with graduate-level learning that may satisfy degree requirements or place them in the appropriate level of coursework based on acquired knowledge.

External credit may only be applied toward a student's degree requirements as identified by graduate programs with Program Director or Department Chair review and approval. A maximum of 12 semester hours total of External Credit may be used towards degree requirements if approved by the Program Director or Department Chair. Students enrolled in joint partnership programs are not eligible for external credit consideration.

External credit cannot be used to satisfy University degree residency requirements, is not included as part of a student's semester enrollment and will not be calculated in a student's GPA. External credit cannot duplicate any previously earned or awarded credit either as presented by transcript or enrolled coursework at Benedictine University and any external credit presented on another institution's transcript will not be accepted. Students are required to submit any official documents for the external credit programs to Benedictine University. Students must be enrolled in classes to post external credit awards to their academic record and once posted, awarded credit may not be removed. Benedictine University reserves the right to apply fees to student accounts where applicable or determined by the Department for external credit programs.

In some cases, students may earn credit through more than one external credit program. Benedictine University reserves the ability to determine how external credit shall be granted and if the student may earn credit through more than one means.

Approved External Credit Programs

Proficiency and Placement Credit Awards by Department

Proficiency and placement credit awards are determined individually by departments as described in the academic program section of the catalog and students should request information through advisors.

Proficiency credit may be awarded for equivalent completed coursework including coursework completed at the Baccalaureate or Master's level, if applicable, as reviewed by the Department or Program Chair.

Proficiency credit awards are subject to faculty review and must be approved by the department prior to being submitted on a Petition for External Credit form to the Office of the Registrar. The department reserves the right to make equivalency decisions for students.

Work/Life Experience Credit

Benedictine University recognizes students may have learned competencies or graduate-level learning through experiences outside of a classroom through professional work experience, military experience or certificate-based training or programs. Consideration for work/life experience credit should align with a course in Benedictine University's catalog and attained with the same degree of competence in a subject area (grade of "B" or higher). Programs such as post-secondary education programs, professional development, industry-based training, non-degree certificate programs at another institution may be reviewed by faculty to determine learning outcomes and potential course credit awards.

Military Training and Service

Graduate students may earn graduate-level credit for advanced military training or advance military school credit in accordance with the recommendations of the American Council on Education (ACE). Coursework submitted on the Joint Services Transcript (JST) will be considered for transfer credit and is not subject to the External Credit fee.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Portfolios

If approved by the Graduate Program, students may petition for Benedictine University course credit by submitting a portfolio that meets academic standards specified by that Program. Not all courses are eligible for portfolio-based credit; it is at the discretion of the respective Program Director or Department Chair to determine which of the Program's courses, if any, are eligible for credit of this kind. Special Topics courses are not eligible for portfolio-based credit. In order to earn credit, a student's portfolio must demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes specified in the syllabus of the portfolio-eligible course. Program Directors oversee the evaluation of portfolios utilizing a rubric that evaluates the student's progress on the course's learning outcomes. Only portfolios that demonstrate sufficient mastery of the course's learning outcomes can earn credit. The awarded credits are based on each course's standard credit award as indicated in the catalog. Students are limited to no more than 9 total credits of awarded PLA credit; however, Departments may determine a lower maximum of awarded credit.

Credit Recommendation Agencies

Students may utilize published guides for potential credit acceptance from several approved external services including but not limited to American Council on Education (ACE), Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), National College Credit Recommendation Services (NCCRS). Students who utilize these services should submit official transcripts or documentation for external credit consideration and potential review. Acceptance and credit awards are determined by the Program Director or Department Chair.

Approved Training Experiences and Certificate-Based Learning Opportunities

Benedictine University recognizes students may have achieved competencies or graduate-level learning through training programs or a credentialled certificate. These include post-secondary education programs, professional development, industry-based training, and non-degree certificate programs at another institution and may be reviewed by Program Directors or Department Chairs to determine learning outcomes and potential course credit awards. Program Director or Department Chair review and approval of certificate programs are encouraged to pre-determine credit awards before accepting a certificate program under the provisions of the work/life experience credit acceptance program. Programs currently approved include:

ACEND-accredited Dietetic Internship (or ISSP) external to BenU;

External dietetic interns who hold the RDN credential;

Supervised nursing clinical practice experiences as approved by the Department.