



## NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

*Dr. William S. Carver, Interim President*

24 November 2020

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Members of the State Board of Community Colleges  
Community College Presidents  
Chairs of the Boards of Trustees  
Chief Academic Officers, Chief Admissions Officers, Basic Skills Directors, Business Officers, Continuing Education Officers, Customized Training Directors, Chief Financial Officers, Continuing Education Officers, Financial Aid Officers, Student Development Administrators, Public Information Officers, Registrars, & Other Interested Parties

**FROM:** Jonathan R. Harris, *NCCCS General Counsel*

**RE:** **Proposed Adoption of Subchapter 1D SBCCC 800 – Credit for Prior Learning**

The State Board of Community Colleges has initiated the rulemaking process to adopt a new subchapter into the State Board Code, **1D SBCCC 800 – Credit for Prior Learning**. The proposed subchapter will codify common processes for awarding credit for college-level learning obtained through prior learning experiences.

The individual rules in this subchapter address the following categories of credit for prior learning:

- Apprenticeships
- Certifications and licenses
- Courses listed in high school to community college articulation agreements
- Military education and training
- Standardized examinations
- Challenges exams/proficiency
- Portfolio assessment
- Public safety training courses

The proposed subchapter is published on the NC Community College System's website, [www.nccommunitycolleges.edu](http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu), under "State Board Code." For your convenience, a copy of the proposed subchapter, with the changes indicated, is attached to this memorandum.

Any member of the public has the right to submit written comments on the proposed subchapter. Please note that any person who submits a public comment on behalf of their community college should comply with their college's local process for submitting comments. **Written comments on the rule must be received by no later than 5:00 p.m. on 13 January 2021.** Any member

of the public has the right to request a hearing on the proposed rules. **Requests for a hearing must be received by no later than 5:00 p.m. on 9 December 2020.** Written comments and requests for hearing shall be directed to the following address: Jonathan Harris, 200 W. Jones Street, 5001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-5001 or by **email to publiccomments@nccommunitycolleges.edu**. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

**CC20-066**  
**E-mail Copy**

Attachments



# State Board of Community Colleges Code

## Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Form

Date: 24 November 2020

<b>Title, Chapter, Subchapter, and Rule Number of Rule Proposed to be Adopted, Amended, or Repealed</b>	Adopt 1D SBCCC 800 – “Credit for Prior Learning”
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Specify whether the SBCC proposes to adopt amend, or repeal a rule:

Adopt (new rule)	Amend (change existing rule)	Repeal (delete entire rule)
X		

<b>Rationale for proposed adoption, amendment or repeal:</b>	To codify a common process for awarding credit for college-level learning obtained through prior learning experiences other than curriculum coursework.
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<b>Proposed Effective Date of Rule</b>	February 1, 2021
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1                                   **State Board of Community Colleges Code**  
2                                   **TITLE 1. COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

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4                                   **CHAPTER D. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

5  
6                                   **SUBCHAPTER 800. CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING**

7  
8    **1D SBCCC 800.1 Definitions**

9    (a) Certification. An industry-recognized credential or designation that is obtained once  
10    the student has successfully passed a certification exam. Certification differs from  
11    licensure in that certification is a validation of specific industry-valued competencies  
12    and not a legal requirement for practicing a profession.

13   (b) College-level learning. Knowledge, skills, and competencies equivalent to those  
14    expected of a student who successfully completes the corresponding curriculum  
15    course.

16   (c) Continuing Education. Definition consistent with 1D SBCCC 300.1(a).

17   (d) Continuing Education Course. Definition consistent with 1D SBCCC 300.1(b).

18   (e) Credit for Prior Learning (CPL). Curriculum credit awarded for college-level learning  
19    obtained through prior learning experiences other than curriculum coursework. This  
20    definition does not include curriculum credit transferred from another accredited US  
21    institution of higher education.

22   (f) Credit for Prior Learning standard. A designated amount of academic credit colleges  
23    shall award for college-level learning that fulfills established criteria.

24   (g) Curriculum course. Definition consistent with 1D SBCCC 400.8.

25   (h) Curriculum Course Review Committee (CCRC). Definition consistent with 1D SBCCC  
26    400.8(h).

27   (i) Curriculum program. Definition consistent with 1D SBCCC 400.3(a).

28   (j) Licensure. A legal status granted by a government entity that provides permission to  
29    practice a profession. Licensure restricts practice of the profession to individuals who  
30    have met specific qualifications in education, professional experience, and/or have  
31    successfully passed an examination.

1 (k) Prior Learning Assessment. An evaluation of whether a student has obtained the  
2 requisite level of verifiable college-level learning outside of the traditional learning  
3 environment for curriculum credit.

4 (l) Continuing Education Leadership Committee (CELC). Definition consistent with 1D  
5 SBCCC 300.5 (b)(2).

6  
7 **1D SBCCC 800.2 General Provisions**

8 (a) The purpose of this Subchapter is to guarantee that all North Carolina Community  
9 Colleges follow consistent academic conventions to ensure the integrity of the CPL  
10 process and to establish minimum standards for all NC community colleges.

11 (b) Consistent with the provisions of this Subchapter colleges are authorized to award  
12 CPL using the following prior learning methods:

13 (1) Apprenticeship

14 (2) Certifications and licensures

15 (3) Courses listed in high school to community college articulation agreements

16 (4) Military education and training

17 (5) Standardized examinations

18 (6) Challenge exams/Proficiency

19 (7) Portfolio assessment

20 (8) Public Safety Training (PST) prefix courses

21 (c) Colleges may award curriculum CPL when the documentation of prior learning meets  
22 or exceeds a demonstration of learning outcomes at the institutions' standards for  
23 awarding credit for the corresponding curriculum course. Institutions may award CPL  
24 that exceeds the minimum standards established in this Subchapter.

25 (d) Colleges may only award curriculum CPL that is directly applicable to a student's  
26 declared curriculum program of study.

27 (e) CPL for advanced courses does not negate the requirement to meet requisite learning  
28 outcomes.

29 (f) CPL may be used to fulfill program requirements except for mandatory institutional  
30 requirements. Examples may include, but are not limited to, requirements of external  
31 agencies that specifically prohibited the use of CPL to fulfill the program requirements.

- 1 (g) CPL cannot be used to satisfy the college’s institutional credit requirements, which  
2 prescribes the minimum percentage of credit hours a student must earn through  
3 instruction offered by the institution awarding the credential. No greater than seventy-  
4 five percent (75%) of the credit hours required for graduation from a curriculum  
5 program of study may be earned through CPL.
- 6 (h) Any CPL awarded by a college shall be reflected in the student’s records by the  
7 college’s Registrar Office without quality points assigned,. except for allowances for  
8 graded military credit as described in 1D SBCCC 800.6”
- 9 (i) Course Credit CPL standards approved by the CCRC shall be transferable to any  
10 college in the North Carolina Community College System.
- 11 (j) The local board of trustees shall adopt a policy governing the awarding of CPL. At a  
12 minimum, the local policy shall be consistent with standards established by this  
13 Subchapter. The local policy may include additional opportunities for students to  
14 receive CPL. Each college shall publish its CPL policy in the college’s educational  
15 catalog.
- 16 (k) Colleges shall establish a procedure that students must follow to request a prior  
17 learning assessment. This procedure shall be published in the college’s educational  
18 catalog.
- 19 (l) To be eligible to receive CPL, students must meet all of the following criteria:  
20 (1) Meet all admission requirements for their program of study.  
21 (2) Be enrolled in a curriculum program to which the credit will directly apply; and  
22 (3) Request a prior learning assessment consistent with the college’s CPL  
23 procedures and provide all documentation by the published deadlines.
- 24 (m) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to supersede limitations imposed by an  
25 accreditation, credentialing, licensure, or other external agency on the application of  
26 CPL towards credentials under their purview. In such instances, the college shall  
27 document the applicable limitations in the student’s file.

28  
29 **1D SBCCC 800.3 Apprenticeships**

- 30 (a) The NCCCS recognizes “Registered Apprenticeships” as defined by the U.S.  
31 Department of Labor.

- 1 (b) At a minimum, colleges shall award CPL based on statewide articulation as approved  
2 by the CCRC for related instruction provided by external entities for registered  
3 apprenticeship programs. A college may award CPL for related instruction provided  
4 by external entities for which statewide articulations have not been established by  
5 the CCRC consistent with its local CPL policy.
- 6 (c) Work-based learning (WBL) course credit may be granted for the experiential  
7 portion of a Registered Apprenticeship. Documentation including completed time  
8 on task shall be provided through an Apprenticeship Agreement and shall  
9 constitute the documentational requirements of a WBL experience.

10

11 **1D SBCCC 800.4 State or Industry Recognized Credentials**

- 12 (a) The CCRC, based on recommendations from the CELC, shall have the authority to  
13 approve CPL standards for state or industry recognized credentials that document  
14 similar college-level learning as corresponding curriculum courses and, therefore,  
15 are eligible for articulated curriculum credit. Prior to approving CPL, the CCRC shall  
16 have written concurrence by two-thirds of colleges.
- 17 (b) At a minimum, colleges shall award CPL for successful completion of state or  
18 industry recognized credentials consistent with the CPL standards approved by the  
19 CCRC. A college may award CPL for state or industry recognized credentials for  
20 which statewide articulations have not been established by CCRC consistent with its  
21 local CPL policy.

22

23 **1D SBCCC 800.5 Courses Listed in High School to Community College Articulation**  
24 **Agreements**

- 25 (a) The North Carolina High School to Community College Articulation Agreement is an  
26 agreement between the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the  
27 North Carolina Community College System. The articulation agreement ensures that  
28 when a student is proficient in a high school course included in the agreement, the  
29 student can receive college credit for that course at any North Carolina community  
30 college.

- 1 (b) Colleges shall award credit to students who have completed a high school course  
2 and met the criteria as outlined in the High School to Community College Articulation  
3 Agreement.
- 4 (c) A college may award credit for successful completion of other high school courses  
5 consistent with any local high school to community college articulation agreements  
6 entered into by the college and an education entity providing secondary education.  
7

## 8 **1D SBCCC 800.6 Military Education and Training**

### 9 (a) Definitions.

- 10 (1) “United States Armed Forces” consists of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine  
11 Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard.
- 12 (2) “Military Education and Training”. Education and training that has been  
13 documented on a transcript issued by one or more branches of the Armed  
14 Forces.
- 15 (3) Military Credit Advisory Council (MCAC). A joint council of faculty and staff  
16 members from the NC Community College System and the University of North  
17 Carolina, MCAC oversees the process for establishing uniform standards for  
18 awarding Credit for Prior Learning for military training and experience. MCAC  
19 also ensures the transferability of these credits among institutions of both  
20 systems.
- 21 (4) Military Prior Learning Academic Panels. Panels of academic faculty approved  
22 by MCAC are authorized to determine standards for awarding credit for  
23 identified subject areas.

### 24 (b) Awarding of Credit.

- 25 (1) At minimum, colleges shall award Credit for Prior Learning based on military  
26 education and training consistent with the standards adopted by the  
27 appropriate Military Prior Learning Academic Panel.
- 28 (2) A college may award Credit for Prior Learning for military training and education  
29 related to occupations and/or courses for which standards have not been  
30 established by an approved Military Prior Learning Academic Panel consistent  
31 with its local Credit for Prior Learning policy pursuant to the following:

1 (A) Air Force: Community College of the Air Force transcripts are evaluated by  
2 the college registrar or designated college official as a traditional college  
3 transcript.

4 (B) Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard: Colleges should refer to  
5 recommendations from the American Council on Education for occupations  
6 and courses not currently evaluated by the Military Prior Learning Academic  
7 Panels or documented on the Community College of the Air Force  
8 transcript.

9  
10 **1D SBCCC 800.7 Standardized Examinations**

11 (a) “Standardized examination”. Any form of examination that requires all test takers to  
12 answer the same questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank of  
13 questions following established protocol and that is scored in a standard or  
14 consistent manner.

15 (b) Colleges shall award Credit for Prior Learning for the following standardized  
16 examinations consistent with the standards herein:

17 (1) Advanced Placement (AP). Advanced Placement is a program of college-  
18 preparatory courses for high school students administered by The College  
19 Board, an educational nonprofit organization. Standardized AP exams are used  
20 to assess student mastery of course content. Students receive scores on a “1”  
21 to “5” scale, with “5” being the highest.

22 (A) An AP exam score determines how many credits are awarded towards  
23 specific coursework.

24 (B) Colleges shall award credit to a student who earns a score of “3” or  
25 higher on an AP exam as approved by the CCRC. Course credit is  
26 awarded based upon the academic program of study.

27 (C) A college may award credit for AP scores and courses beyond those  
28 approved by the CCRC as determined by local college policy.

29 (2) Cambridge Assessment International Education Examinations. Cambridge  
30 Assessment International Examinations are a series of internationally

1 recognized college-level examinations administered by Cambridge  
2 Assessment International Education, a unit of the University of Cambridge.

3 (A) Upon review and evaluation of student submitted documentation by the  
4 college designee, students may earn credit based on the exam(s) taken  
5 and grades(s) earned. An official grade report from Cambridge  
6 International must be provided to the college.

7 (B) Students shall earn college credit if a grade of e/E or better (which is  
8 the equivalent to a grade of C in the United States) is earned on the  
9 Cambridge International Examination.

10 (C) Using the current Cambridge translation table, course credit is awarded  
11 and listed on the student's academic record. Course credit is awarded  
12 based upon the academic program of study.

13 (D) The course credit equivalency is documented on the student record.

14 (3) College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP). The College-Level Examination  
15 Program® is a credit-by-examination program offered by the College Board, an  
16 educational nonprofit organization. The program allows students from a wide  
17 range of ages and backgrounds to demonstrate their mastery of introductory  
18 college-level material.

19 (A) If a CLEP exam in a subject is offered by the College Board, colleges  
20 shall require a student to take the CLEP exam if he or she seeks to  
21 demonstrate proficiency in the subject area by examination.

22 (B) Colleges shall award credit to a student who scores at or above the  
23 credit-granting score recommended by the American Council on  
24 Education at the time the college evaluates the student's official score.  
25 Colleges shall award the same amount of credit to a student who  
26 scores satisfactorily on the relevant CLEP exam as a student who  
27 successfully completes the related course.

28 (C) Students who perform satisfactorily on College-Level Examination  
29 Program exams shall receive a standardized code in the college's  
30 Student Information System.

1           (D) Students who did not receive a satisfactory score on a CLEP exam may  
2           retake the exam after three (3) months.

3       (4) DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST). DANTES Subject Standardized  
4       Tests are credit-by-examination tests developed by the Defense Activity for  
5       Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), a United States Department of  
6       Defense program.

7           (A) Colleges shall award credit to a student who scores at or above the  
8           credit-granting score recommended by the American Council on  
9           Education at the time the college evaluates the student's official score  
10          report. Colleges shall award the same amount of credit to a student who  
11          scores satisfactorily on the relevant DSST as a student who successfully  
12          completes the related course.

13          (B) Students who did not receive a satisfactory score on a DSST may retake  
14          the exam after three (3) months.

15       (5) International Baccalaureate® (IB) Diploma Programme. International  
16       Baccalaureate® Diploma Programme is a college-preparatory program for  
17       students age 16-19 administered by International Baccalaureate®, an  
18       international educational foundation. Standardized IB exams are used to  
19       assess student mastery of course content. Students receive scores on a "1" to  
20       "7" scale, with "7" being the highest.

21           (A) International credentials must be obtained from a recognized  
22           international institution that is validated by a US credentialing agency. A  
23           grade of (70) percent or higher must be earned for the courses being  
24           considered for credit.

25  
26       **1D SBCCC 800.8 Challenge Exams/Proficiency**

27       (a) Challenge Exam/Proficiency. A departmental or institutional exam for a community  
28       college course used to determine if a student's subject matter proficiency is equal to  
29       or greater than the corresponding proficiency the student would have achieved had  
30       he or she completed the actual course.

31       (b) Challenge Exam/Proficiency Standards

- 1 (1) Each college is responsible for ensuring the validity and reliability of institutional  
2 challenge exams/proficiency.
- 3 (2) Challenge exams/proficiency may be handwritten, computer-based, oral,  
4 practical, or a combination of these administration methods.
- 5 (3) Developmental courses (as defined in 1D SBCCC 400.3(b)) supplemental  
6 courses (as defined in 1D SBCCC 400.8(b)(1)), and courses including clinical  
7 practice (as defined in 1D SBCCC 400.1(c)(2)) are not eligible for challenge  
8 exams/proficiency.
- 9 (4) Challenge exams/Proficiency that are administered for courses contained in  
10 the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (CAA) may be provided when the  
11 exam is vetted, administered, and graded by a qualified instructor in the  
12 discipline.
- 13 (c) Limitations on Students Eligible to Take Challenge Exams/Proficiency
- 14 (1) A student must meet all pre-requisite requirements before he or she is eligible  
15 to take the challenge/proficiency examination for a course.
- 16 (2) A student may only attempt a challenge exam/proficiency once.
- 17 (3) A student may not take a challenge exam/proficiency if he or she has already  
18 earned a grade for the course. A challenge exam/proficiency may not be used  
19 to supersede a grade a student already earned in the applicable course.
- 20 (4) Career and College Promise (CCP) students, a defined in 1D SBCCC 400.11,  
21 may participate in challenge/proficiency examinations to earn college credit but  
22 may not earn dual high school credit. To earn dual credit, students must enroll  
23 and successfully complete the college course.
- 24 (5) If a CLEP exam in a subject is offered by the College Board, colleges may  
25 require a student to take the CLEP exam if he or she seeks to demonstrate  
26 proficiency in the subject area by examination.
- 27
- 28 (d) Colleges shall award credit for the applicable course to a student who successfully  
29 earns a grade of "C" or higher on a challenge exam/proficiency.
- 30 (e) If the college requires the student to enroll in the course to be challenged, for  
31 practical purposes the test should be administered and graded by the first week the

1 course is offered but no later than course census. Individuals who are unsuccessful  
2 may choose to stay enrolled in the course to earn course credit.

3 (f) If the college challenge/proficiency examination occurs outside of regular course  
4 enrollment, then a standard minimum administrative fee will apply.

5 (g) For students enrolled in the course, successful challenge/proficiency examination  
6 completion may result in the student falling below full-time student status which could  
7 negatively impact their financial aid status; therefore, students should consult with  
8 their advisors beforehand to discuss various options.

9 (h) Federal Pell grant funds cannot be used to pay for challenge exams/proficiency.

10 (i) Student hours shall not be reported for budget/FTE which result from challenge  
11 exams/proficiency except that the actual time required to take the exam may be  
12 counted in membership; students shall be registered in the class consistent with 1E  
13 SBCCC subchapter 300 or 1E SBCCC Subchapter 400 (1G SBCCC 200.95).

14 (j) Challenge Exams/Proficiency are not calculated into a student's cumulative grade  
15 point average.

#### 17 **1D SBCCC 800.9 Portfolio Assessment**

18 (a) Portfolio for Life and Work Experiences. A collection of artifacts documenting  
19 competencies gained through prior learning experiences that a student formally  
20 submits to a college.

21 (b) Portfolio assessment. The evaluation of a Portfolio for Life and Work Experiences by  
22 subject matter experts designated by the local college in its local policy to determine  
23 whether a student is awarded Credit for Prior Learning.

24 (c) Colleges may award Credit for Prior Learning based on portfolio assessment  
25 as provided by their local policies.

#### 27 **1D SBCCC 800.10 Public Safety Training (PST) Prefix Courses**

28 (a) Courses in the Combined Course Library with a Public Safety Training (PST) prefix  
29 can be used for awarding prior-learning credit for industry-recognized public safety  
30 training and/or credentials.

1 (b) Consistent with 1D SBCCC 400.8(c), credit shall be considered for public safety  
2 training that meets the criteria outlined in the Public Safety Training (PST) course  
3 descriptions as listed in the Combined Course Library.

4 (c) Official documentation from the training provider shall be provided to the college that  
5 validates, at a minimum, the description and length of training.

6

7 History Note: Authority G.S. 115D-5;

8 Eff. \_\_\_\_\_.

DRAFT