University Policy 3.04.11 — Transfer Credit and Credit for Prior Learning

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POLICY STATEMENT

Capella University recognizes relevant external learning that may be acceptable for credit toward a Capella degree or certificate program, including academic credit earned at other accredited institutions, credit based on nationally recognized examination programs, and credit based on prior learning.

Capella evaluates official transcripts from institutionally accredited or internationally recognized institutions to determine acceptance of transfer credit. Capella may accept transfer credit from some non-institutionally accredited institutions or programs on a case-by-case basis.

Capella also awards credit for acquired learning external to the university, based on nationally recognized examination programs such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), and American Council on Education (ACE)-recommended credits for learning, including business-related certifications and corporate and military training.

As a competency-based institution, Capella allows students to document their prior learning through the credit for prior learning (CPL) assessment process to demonstrate that they have mastered the competencies of one or more specific Capella courses. If mastery of the competencies is successfully demonstrated, students are awarded credit for the Capella course(s) as described in this policy and its related procedures.

Capella reserves the right to limit the number of external and prior learning credits accepted toward the requirements of specific degree and certificate programs, in conjunction with the minimum residence requirements described in university policy *3.01.09 Degree and Certificate Conferral*.

RATIONALE

Capella University acknowledges that education occurs throughout all of a student's life stages and in a variety of contexts and settings. When learning is relevant to the knowledge, skills, and competencies of a specific Capella academic program, applicants have the opportunity to provide documentation of that learning and be awarded appropriate credit to be applied toward the completion of their academic program.

DEFINITIONS

Competencies

Competencies are the defined learning outcomes for each course in each of Capella University's academic programs. Students must demonstrate these outcomes to successfully complete a course.

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)

Credit for prior learning (CPL) is an approved means of academically evaluating and assessing knowledge that is acquired prior to beginning an academic program at Capella.

Official Start Date

A student's official start date in their program is based on the start date they selected on their application and is reflected as the start of their first course in the student information system. A student may elect to change their start date if they have not participated, and this new official start date will be reflected in the student information system.

PROCEDURES

I. Transfer Credit Requirements for All Students
   A. To be considered for transfer credit, coursework must have been completed at an academic institution or program that was accredited prior to the student's withdrawal from the institution. Transfer credit will be considered if an institution or program had provisional accreditation at the time the student withdrew from the institution.
   B. Courses eligible for transfer will be evaluated using criteria such as the course credit total, department, title, level, and description of course content. In order for an external course to apply as a Capella course, it must be evaluated as having significant shared content.
   C. Credit awarded by other institutions through processes such as transfer, credit for prior learning (CPL), portfolio assessments, or credit by examination will not be accepted for transfer credit at Capella.
   D. Not all courses for which Capella may award transfer credit are offered by Capella University, but may be allowed to transfer in as general elective credit to programs that offer electives.
   E. In order to award transfer credit, some programs at Capella may require that the original coursework was taken as part of a program holding specific program accreditation.
   F. Some Capella courses are not eligible for fulfillment through transfer credit as noted in the *University Catalog* course descriptions.
   G. Students should not repeat courses accepted as transfer. Capella will honor only one instance of the course for credit toward the degree. In all cases of duplicates, Capella will recognize only the course taken at Capella, and the duplicate transfer course will be excluded.
   H. Undergraduate Transfer Credit
      1. Minimum Grade Requirement

Applicants with previous undergraduate coursework from institutions meeting Capella's qualifications for transfer credit may only be awarded transfer credit for coursework completed with a grade of "C-" (or equivalent) or better.

2. Vocational Courses
    a. Capella will review vocational courses from technical colleges and programs for transfer credit, provided the institution holds appropriate accreditation, as described in section I of this policy.
    b. Capella will accept a maximum of 18 quarter credits of approved vocational coursework as transfer credit; these credits may only be applied to Capella elective courses.
    c. Some programs may offer courses that apply specifically to a program of study. Any such vocational transfer credit used toward program requirements will be included in the 18-credit transfer maximum.
3. Developmental or remedial coursework will not be awarded undergraduate transfer credit.
4. Associate of Arts (AA) Requirements for Transfer Credit
    a. An Associate of Arts (AA) degree from a Minnesota Transfer Curriculum institution may satisfy Capella's 45-quarter-credit general education requirement provided that:
        i. The degree was granted in 1994 or later.
        ii. The degree was granted with a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher.
        iii. The degree included at least 90 earned quarter credits.
        iv. Each course meets the criteria for transfer as articulated in this policy.
    b. Applicants who do not meet all of these criteria will receive a course-by-course transfer credit evaluation to determine credit that will fulfill their general education requirements, and may be required to complete additional general education coursework.

I. Graduate Students
1. Applicants with previous graduate coursework from institutions meeting Capella's qualifications for transfer credit may only be awarded transfer credit for coursework completed with a grade of "B-" (or equivalent) or better.
2. Graduate-level courses applied toward a previous undergraduate degree will not be awarded graduate-level transfer credit.
3. Undergraduate-level courses applied toward a graduate degree program are not evaluated for graduate credit unless specified on the transcript key.
4. Development, vocational, or remedial coursework will not be awarded graduate transfer credit.

J. Transfer credit can be applied to select Capella certificate programs as determined by the school.

II. International Transfer Credit for All Students

International courses may be awarded transfer credit depending on the review by a Capella-approved third-party evaluator who will assess their equivalency to U.S. courses or degree programs. Both an official transcript (or its equivalent) and a diploma (if a degree has been awarded) must be submitted to complete the evaluation process.

III. Transfer Credit Evaluation Process for All Students

A. Applicants seeking transfer credit from each previously attended external institution must submit official transcripts from the awarding institution(s) in sealed envelopes or through secure electronic transfer.

B. The Admissions & Records Operations (ARO) department reviews applicant transcripts and evaluates them against the criteria of the associated academic program and this policy. The transfer credit evaluation includes a summary of the courses that have been accepted for transfer and awarded transfer credit toward the applicant's academic program; transfer credit is awarded for those courses.

C. Official transfer credit evaluations will be processed after the ARO department receives all official transcripts from each external institution or, for those entering undergraduate programs, after the end of the applicant's first academic quarter, whichever comes first.

D. Except in cases of administrative error, Capella does not remove transfer credit once it has been posted to a student's academic record.

E. Change Requests

1. Students may request a change of catalog, degree or certificate program, specialization, or concentration by submitting the Change Program, Specialization, or Concentration Form located on Campus. Students considering such changes should refer to university policy *2.02.07 Changing Academic Program*.
2. Students who make a change will have their previously awarded transfer credit re-evaluated and, if necessary, an advising team that specializes in the student's new degree program will be assigned. The advising team will assist the student in completing a new academic plan.

IV. Appeal of Transfer Credit Evaluation for All Students

A. Students and applicants have the right to appeal their transfer credit evaluation.

1. To appeal the results of the transfer credit evaluation, applicants or students must submit a formal appeal request to the Admissions & Records Operations (ARO) department by completing and submitting the Transfer Credit Appeal Form located on Campus. Students must submit additional information, including an extended course description and course syllabus.
2. The ARO department will review all records from prior transfer credit evaluations and may consult with appropriate academic leadership in reviewing the appeal.
3. Following review of the appeal and records of prior transfer credit evaluations, the ARO department will issue a decision and report it to the student or applicant as soon as practicable.
4. The duration of the transfer credit evaluation appeal review process is determined by the complexities of the case, but is not to exceed 90 calendar days.

B. The decision of the ARO department is final.

V. Transfer of Earned Capella Credits/Program Points for All Students

The transferability of Capella quarter credits or program points to another institution is solely at the discretion of that institution. It is the student's responsibility to contact that institution to confirm whether Capella quarter credits or program points will be accepted.

VI. External Learning Assessments for All Students

A. The following nationally recognized examination programs will be considered for transfer credit toward a Capella bachelor's degree program:

1. Advanced Placement (AP) examinations
   Transfer credit is awarded for the successful completion of AP examinations as outlined by the American Council on Education (ACE) recommendations. When applicable, these credits are counted toward the completion of general education requirements and/or electives. If there is no ACE recommendation for the examination, scores of 3 or higher will be awarded six quarter credits.
2. International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations
   Students who have earned an IB diploma with composite scores of 30 or higher are awarded 12 quarter credits for each higher-level examination and three quarter credits for each standard-level examination. Students who participated in an IB program but did not receive an IB diploma, or received a composite score lower than 30, are awarded 12 quarter credits for each higher-level examination on which they scored 5 or higher.
3. College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
   Transfer credit is awarded for the successful completion of CLEP examinations as outlined by ACE recommendations.
4. DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
   Transfer credit is awarded for successful completion of DSST examinations as outlined by ACE recommendations.

B. ACE-recommended credits

1. Capella awards credit for knowledge obtained through learning experiences such as military training, corporate training, and business-related certifications that have been reviewed and recommended for credit by ACE.
2. All eligible ACE credit recommendations are considered for transfer and are applied as appropriate to Capella's academic programs.

VII. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) for All Students

A. CPL is a process by which students demonstrate that they have mastered the competencies of one or more specific Capella courses. If mastery of the course competencies is successfully demonstrated, students are awarded credit for the Capella course. CPL does not fulfill Capella's credit residence requirements as described in university policy *3.01.09 Degree and Certificate Conferral*.

B. CPL Eligibility for All Students
   Capella currently awards credit for prior learning for a limited number of courses at the bachelor's and master's levels. Students should refer to the Credit for Prior Learning Center located on Campus. Students may not use credit for prior learning to replace the grade for a course they have failed at Capella. To request credit for prior learning through the CPL process, a student must:

1. Be admitted to an approved Capella program.
2. Verify with their advising team that courses for which CPL is being requested apply to the requirements outlined in their academic plan.

3. Verify with their advising team that the courses for which CPL is being requested are in alignment with Capella's credit residence requirements described in university policy *3.01.09 Degree and Certificate Conferral*.

C. Whether a request for CPL is approved or denied, Capella CPL fees are nonrefundable. Fees per credit are listed in the tuition and fees schedule located on Campus.

D. Any certification presented for CPL may only be applied to one degree level per student.

E. CPL Request Timing
All students are encouraged to submit CPL requests as early as possible. Delaying submission of a CPL request until the final quarters of a degree program may result in the loss of potential CPL. Students should plan their CPL requests carefully to ensure compliance with minimum university credit residence requirements as described in university policy *3.01.09 Degree and Certificate Conferral*.

VIII. Additional Considerations for FlexPath Students

A. All transfer and prior learning credits must be completed prior to a student's official start date in the FlexPath format. Any professional certification or external courses taken concurrently with enrollment in a program in the FlexPath format cannot be recognized in the Capella degree program.

B. FlexPath Transfer Credit Considerations
1. FlexPath students are only eligible to have courses evaluated and receive transfer credit within 12 weeks of starting their first FlexPath course.
2. FlexPath students requesting to apply transfer courses will have courses evaluated against the credit-bearing versions of the program and applied to the degree requirements as appropriate.

C. FlexPath Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Considerations
1. FlexPath students are only eligible to submit certifications for CPL within 12 weeks of starting their first FlexPath course.
2. Students may not gain credit by petition for FlexPath courses.

POLICY OWNERS
Academic Owner: Registrar
Operations Owner: Admissions & Records Operations

RELATED DOCUMENTS
University policy 2.01.01 Admission

REVISION HISTORY
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Content previously contained in university policies 3.04.02 Credit for Prior Learning and 3.04.03 Transfer of Credit