Credit for Prior Learning Policy
Rationale & Discussion

Fulfilling Our Access Mission, Better Serving Adult Learners at CUNY, and Maintaining Academic Standards and Rigor

April 2019
There are 830,000 NYC residents aged 25 & up, with some college & no degree. This is 14% of the 25+ population in NYC. 61,000 are enrolled at CUNY.

### New York City Residents Aged 25 Years & Up with Some College, No Degree by County, 2017

- **New York County**, 123,952
- **Kings County**, 242,978
- **Queens County**, 243,338
- **Bronx County**, 162,270
- **Richmond County**, 57,246

**New York City Total** = 829,784

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017

### Adult Student Enrollment by Degree, Fall 2017

- **Nondegree**: 2,201
- **Certificate**: 617
- **Associate**: 26,998
- **Bachelors**: 33,833

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017
The lack of a degree constrains both the educational and earning potential of these 830,000 individuals and the degree attainment of NYC as a whole.

### Post-Secondary Degree Attainment among Adults Aged 25 & Up

**Some College & No Degree among Adults Aged 25 & Up**

*New York City by County, 2017*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Bachelors</th>
<th>Graduate/Professional</th>
<th>Some college, No degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kings County</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
<td>21.20%</td>
<td>6.20%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens County</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx County</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond County</td>
<td>19.10%</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
<td>17.50%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York County</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>9.80%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>21.50%</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>13.90%</td>
<td>43.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**
- Total Post-Secondary Degree Percentage
- Some College, No Degree

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey
Among the 50 largest U.S. cities, NYC ranks 18th in post-secondary educational attainment. With 43% of its adult population possessing a college degree, NYC exceeds the national average, but it still lags behind several cities.
Meanwhile, CUNY is losing market share among “adult” undergraduates to private, non-profit two-year institutions and private for-profit four-year institutions. In many cases, the students we are losing are getting a worse education at a higher price.
Offering credit for prior learning in a structured, rigorous manner will enable CUNY to better serve the adult and transfer student population while maintaining academic standards and rigor.

CUNY needs a clear policy based on national norms and practices to maintain standards and meet accreditation requirements.

**POLICY GOALS:**

1. Provide a systematic and comparable means through which students may be awarded credit for prior learning.

2. Assure the maintenance of uniform academic standards regarding the evaluation of experiences leading to the awarding of credit for prior learning and provide for uniform transfer of credit for prior learning among CUNY institutions.

3. Provide students with a means for evaluation of prior learning and develop institutional policies and procedures consistent with this policy.

4. Provide for oversight and periodic evaluation to protect the integrity and credibility of this program and academic credits.
Rationale

**CUNY** is an integrated institution of higher learning with significant academic policies that are university wide and have system-wide academic standards.

- has reconfirmed its commitment to assisting non-traditional, adult degree-seeking students to resume and complete their undergraduate degree.
- recognizes the needs of transfer students and is committed to improving the transfer of verified coursework and credits earned from one CUNY institution to another.
- has been recognized as a veterans friendly institution.
- recognizes that knowledge worthy of collegiate credit is acquired both within formal educational settings and in the community at large.
- recognizes that the awarding of college credit for knowledge validated through specific standardized examinations administered by recognized authorities is a national norm.
- recognizes that the awarding of college credit for knowledge acquired through life experience and validated through portfolios written by students or through other acceptable methods and assessed by recognized professions is also a national norm.
Principles of the Policy

• Students must be enrolled or eligible to re-enroll at the institution awarding the credit.

• Credit will be reviewed and validated on an individual basis using recognized or approved methods.

• Examination scores used to validate prior learning must meet or exceed the minimums recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE) and other national standards for national examinations.

• Procedures used to validate prior learning should be objective to the extent that external evaluators would reach the same conclusion.

• Institutions shall only award credit for prior learning in programs for which they are approved to offer by New York State.

• Credits for demonstrated knowledge earned through any prior learning method do not fulfill University residency requirements.

• Credit awarded for prior learning must apply towards degree requirements and once recorded at a CUNY institution the credits are transferable on the same basis as if the credit had been earned through regular study at the awarding institution.
What are the national norms and practices that have informed and guided the policy?

• As of 2017, 24 states have PLA policies that allow or require public institutions or entire postsecondary systems to award credit for prior learning.

• SUNY has had a system wide PLA policy since July 23, 1976: Credit by Evaluation-based on principles of “Quality, Equity, Integrity”

• Since 1973, NCCRS (National College Credit Recommendation Service) has been coordinating teams of faculty evaluators and subject matter experts to evaluate training and education programs offered outside of the traditional college classroom setting and translate them into college credit equivalencies.

• More than 1,500 institutions consider granting college credit based on NCCRS credit recommendations, including City College CWE, CUNY SPS, CUNY Graduate Center, CSI, Lehman, John Jay, Kingsborough, LaGuardia, York, as well as Cornell University, Fordham University, Syracuse University, many SUNY campuses and others across New York and the country. (Source: NCCRS website, ; see “More About”)
The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT®) connects workplace learning with colleges and universities. With over 35,000 programs reviewed, CREDIT is the national leader in the evaluation process.

- More than 2,300 colleges and universities accept ACE credit recommendations on the Joint Services Transcript.
- More than 400 colleges and universities are included on ACE CREDIT’s non-exhaustive partnership list, including 20 institutions in New York State, 11 in New Jersey, and 41 in Pennsylvania.
- (See chart from ACE partners list.)
National standardized exams in specific disciplines are widely used by institutions to grant college credit for students’ prior learning:

• Over 1,500 colleges and universities recognize the DSST program and award college credit for passing scores. (Source: DSST website)

• More than 2,900 U.S. colleges and universities grant credit for CLEP (Source: CLEP website)

• DANTES reports that 50,000 military members take CLEP or DSST exams annually.

• Hundreds of colleges and universities across the nation recognize UExcel exams, a credit-by-exam program offered through an alliance between Pearson and Excelsior College. At least 10 CUNY colleges are listed, including Baruch, BCC, Brooklyn, City College, CSI, LaGuardia, Lehman, Medgar, City Tech, York. (Source: UExcel website)

• The U.S. military and most federal agencies use the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) to assess foreign language proficiency. These tests are developed by faculty of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, and US military personnel are eligible to receive ACE academic credit recommendations based on their DLPT results. (Source: DLPT Fact Sheet)

• Cambridge AICE British AS-Level and A-Level exams are taken by over 175,000 students in more than 125 countries every year. (Source: Cambridge Assessment Website)
Proposed Summary of Exam Standards

**AP**: Scores of 3 or above shall be awarded credit. Colleges must determine course equivalencies. *(This is already the policy.)*

**Cambridge AICE**: Credits shall be awarded for grades of E or better. *(New)*

**CLEP**: Credit shall be awarded for 50 or better. *(New)*

**International Baccalaureate**: Colleges shall award 30 credits for an IB diploma with a score of 30 or higher or shall award credit for scores of 5 or better on higher-level IB exams. *(Existing policy.)*

**DSST Exam**: Credit shall be awarded for min score of 400 on Criterion Ref test or 45 on Norm Referenced test. *(New)*

**UExcel Exams**: Credit shall be awarded for a grade of C or better. *(New)*

**Defense Lang Proficiency Test (DLPT)**: Credits shall be awarded for a score of 3 or better. *(New)*
**Military & Portfolio Credit Standards**

**Portfolio Assessment:**
- Determined by department offering the course or through submission to the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) analysis process.
- Assessed by discipline appropriate faculty based on established rubrics
- Once awarded, it will be transferrable from one CUNY college to another
- Criteria, standards and models will be developed

**Military Training:**
- Colleges shall follow the ACE Guide to Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Forces
- Shall be applied to appropriate courses
- Establishes the documents and military transcripts that are required
## CURRENT Exam Use in CUNY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Institution</th>
<th>Advanced Placement (Board Policy)</th>
<th>Cambridge AICE*</th>
<th>College-Level Examination Program*</th>
<th>International Baccalaureate (Board Policy)</th>
<th>Defense Language Proficiency Test DLTP*</th>
<th>DANTES Subject Standardized Tests* DSST</th>
<th>UEXCEL Excelsior College*</th>
<th>Portfolio*</th>
<th>Military *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baruch College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronx CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooklyn College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough of Manhattan CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Staten Island</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUNY BA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostos CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jay College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsborough CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaGuardia CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehman College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medgar Evers College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Medicine</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guttman CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYC College of Technology</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensborough CC</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queens College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Labor&amp;Urban Studies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of Professional Studies</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York College</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If Course Credit awarded for Pathways for any of the exam, its acceptable across CUNY
Where We Are

The CAO Academic Policy Committee (APC) has drafted a *CUNY Credit for Prior Learning* policy. It incorporates continuous feedback from the APC this year— which includes seven Provosts, five Central OAA administrators and is chaired by Provost Bonne August.

The APC proposed that the policy should require that *all of CUNY shall accept* the designated exams rather than set minimum scores that each college *may accept*. Their concern is that if we say colleges “may accept,” then it is likely they may not. Accepted credits *must* count for degree requirements.

Presented the proposed policy to COPS-AA, COPs and the CAO Council for discussion. Made revisions based on their feedback to include a preamble to address academic rationale and rigor.

Hiring a nationally-recognized consultant with expertise in faculty development and methods of assessment of prior learning for credit. She will work with us to develop these initiatives at the colleges and provide support for designing models and establishing criteria and guidelines.

**Next Steps:** Meetings and discussion with the UFS Faculty Governance Leaders, the UFS Academic Affairs Committee and the CUNY Faculty Advisory Council. Presentation and meetings with University Student Senate leaders; draft Board Resolution and policy documents and implementation guidelines.