Prior Learning is an alternative education or experience-based learning that has been attained outside the sponsorship of an accredited postsecondary education institution. Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) includes learning acquired from work experiences, community and volunteer extension courses, and participation in informal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry. Credit for prior learning is awarded for college-level learning experiences which entails knowledge and skills. Credit for prior learning will not be awarded for professional experiences without supporting documentation.

Prior learning assessment methods include Advanced Placement Examinations (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB), General Certificate of Education Examinations (A-Level), Global Assessment Certificate Examinations; DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST); military courses; portfolio review; credit by examination; technical competence; and vertical course credit.

The University of Idaho recognizes that some non-traditional students may have gained technical expertise through professional and/or occupational experience. For those programs (e.g., Career-Technical Education, Industrial Technology) that award academic credit for technical competency, the student must submit a portfolio that documents trainings, credentials and related on-the-job experiences. Documentation to provide evidence of technical competency can include but not be limited to: certificates, transcripts, licenses, letters of reference, curriculum vitae/resume. Regardless of the content of the portfolio, a small committee of experts comprised of members of the respective program, evaluate the candidate’s portfolio for both the quality of the professional experience for gaining technical competency and for the quantity of academic credits to be awarded.

Faculty, as the content specialists, will assess and recognize prior learning and will make the determination of credit awards, with external advice as necessary. Credit may be granted only upon the recommendation of faculty who are appropriately qualified to assess the prior learning.

Credit will be awarded at the undergraduate level based on demonstrated learning outcomes within the subject, course, or programs offered by the University. The number of credits to be granted will be determined based on the University’s requirements for academic credit. Credit for prior learning is limited to 25% of the minimum number of credits needed for a baccalaureate degree.