

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUESTING COLLEGE EQUIVALENCY CREDIT THROUGH THE REGENTS BACHELORS OF ARTS DEGREE PROGRAM

I. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing that learning is not limited to a traditional classroom environment, the Regents Bachelor of Arts degree program provides a process to evaluate substantive life/work learning experiences for the possible award of academic credit. The focus of the portfolio process is on what has been learned, not how it has been learned.

Some general cautions regarding the utilization of this method to seek academic credit should be mentioned:

- A. The research for and preparation of a portfolio should not be considered as a "quick and easy" method to achieve credit. The preparation of a quality portfolio based upon substantive learning experiences will demand considerable time and effort.
- B. Prior learning must demonstrate an organized, specific and significant experience equivalent to a college-level course(s). General learning, vocational/technical skills or mere survival of life's many trials and tribulations will not normally be suitable for academic credit.

II. INITIAL STEPS

- A. Make a list of learning experiences with as much detail as possible. The inclusion of professional (paid) and other (unpaid) learning opportunities is encouraged. Keep in mind that a single experience could have resulted in a number of different learning opportunities, and, thus, eligible for multiple credit.
- B. Consult current Catalogs from State of West Virginia baccalaureate colleges and universities for the next step. These catalogs are available online at the college or universities' website.
- C. Match learning experiences with existing classes at state-supported colleges and universities. To accomplish this step, catalog-included course descriptions should be matched with previously identified learning experiences. An approximate match may be eligible for credit.

III. PREPARATION OF PORTFOLIO

A. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- 1. A separate portfolio for each evaluation of a college-class/ learning-experience-match is essential to a timely review of the portfolio. Each portfolio should be constructed by topic, business, communications, art, social work, etc.
- 2. The first two portions noted below (Biography, Request for Equivalent Academic Credit) should be relatively short— three to five, double-spaced, typed pages are suggested.

3. Although the substance of the learning experience will be the basis for any faculty recommendation for equivalent credit, a well-written, neat and organized portfolio will assist the evaluator. Thus, it is suggested that considerable care be used in the preparation of the final document.
4. Portfolios are to be submitted on memory drives. Each portfolio should contain your biography, resume, request for equivalent academic credit, certifications, unofficial transcripts, letter of authenticity, and other supporting documentation.
5. The Concord RBA Coordinator is willing to review and critique initial drafts of portfolios.

B. PARTS OF PORTFOLIO

1. **Biography** - Because the faculty evaluator will probably not have the opportunity to meet the RBA student, it is suggested that each portfolio begin with a short biography. Inclusion of professional experiences, interests, education and family can provide valuable insights to the faculty member.
2. **Request for Equivalent Academic Credit** - This section should describe the what, where, when, why and how of the learning opportunity. It is important to demonstrate how you meet the course objective. A description should match the catalog- included information on the equivalent course as closely as possible. There are many different ways to demonstrate knowledge within a specific field. Approaching this section with the realization that any manner of presentation is acceptable may assist preparation. Also, the more standardized the experience, the less explanation is needed. The use of terms, references and examples can quickly reflect experience.
3. **Documentation of Learning** - Any and all methods of authenticating a learning experience is appropriate. A training certificate of completion, notation on employment record, letter from an individual attesting to the learning opportunity, and/or work samples are obvious substantiation of the experience. Unusual learning experiences may necessitate unusual documentation. If no suitable documentation can be produced, an appropriate statement explaining the situation should be substituted and greater emphasis must be placed on the "Request" section. Copies of documentation material are acceptable and preferred to avoid any possible loss of valuable materials.

IV. EVALUATION OF PORTFOLIO

A. SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Students must be officially enrolled in Concord's RBA degree program prior to the submission of portfolios for faculty evaluation. Application for admission is online at www.concord.edu
2. All portfolios are submitted to the Coordinator who reserves the right to reject and return unacceptable submissions. Portfolio submission deadlines for each semester are the first week of February for spring submission and September for fall submission.

3. There is a \$300 evaluation fee per submission of portfolios. Payment must accompany the submission, payable to Concord University. Because this fee is per submission, multiple portfolios submitted simultaneously pay only one evaluation fee.
4. If credit is awarded, there is a \$10 per hour credit fee.

B. EVALUATION PROCESS

1. The Program Coordinator requests faculty to assess the portfolio. Portfolios submitted for credit from other state colleges, beyond the scope or expertise of Concord faculty, will be forwarded to the Coordinator at the state college or university appropriate to the student-identified match of learning and course offering.
2. After a thorough review of the portfolio, the faculty member recommends to the Program Coordinator the hours and level of credit to be awarded. This recommendation includes considerable flexibility:
 - a). No credit.
 - b). Less, equal, more credit than the equivalent college course.
 - c). An award of credit in a general disciplinary area or for another course.
 - d). That the learning experience be evaluated by another faculty or discipline more appropriate to the request.
4. The recommendation for an award of academic credit in a particular situation is precisely that, a recommendation. The Coordinator will append a recommendation and transmit this information to the Associate Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, who will make the actual award of credit.
5. The Program Coordinator must rely on the judgement and competence of faculty evaluators in their own disciplines, and will not recommend another award of credit unless it appears to differ substantially from similar awards for comparable learning experiences. In such cases consultations with the evaluator and other appropriate academic officials will precede the Coordinator's recommendation.

C. AWARD OF CREDIT

1. The recommended credit award must be approved by the Provost and Associate Provost. A copy of the approved award of credit is sent to the student.
2. Following approval and payment (\$10.00 per credit hour), the credit award will be entered on the student's transcript in the form the recommendation has been approved to the extent this is possible. Transcript entries will be explicitly noted as credits earned by evaluation.
3. Although it can be expected that these credits may be used to satisfy prerequisites for more advanced work, each academic department will make its own determination whether "experience" credits can satisfy prerequisites.
4. Portfolio credits are only applicable toward completion of an RBA degree and cannot be used to satisfy requirements of a "traditional" program of study.

D. RETURN OF PORTFOLIOS

1. Evaluated portfolios are retained by the Program Coordinator for about one year.
2. Portfolio holdings are reviewed annually with portfolios returned at the student's request.

If you have any questions, please contact the Concord University RBA Coordinator:
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