

Credit for Prior Learning:

TURNING



**LIFE
LEARNING
EXPERIENCE**



INTO COLLEGE CREDIT



Life Learning Experience credit must:

Be documented learning, not just experience or exposure

**Be college-level learning (may be CEUs from employment)
(Military learning experiences are considered)**

Not have resulted in previous college credit (previous college credits may be transferred in separately)

Transfer of credit and “testing out” is different from this area. The Registrar and Dean should be contacted regarding these. You may earn up to 30 credits based on Life Learning Experiences. The credits will be generally (not specifically) applied to ministry electives.

We charge \$10 per credit hour approved. That is a savings of \$1,596 per 3 hour course. There is a \$50 application fee, also.

The application for Life Learning Experiences is in three sections.

I. Request

A. Review the seven areas listed in this section.

Examples

Worksheets 1 and 2

II. Provisional Acceptance

A. After your application is reviewed, you will be notified regarding approved areas.

B. A request for you to provide a written paper or other official documentation will be made.

III. Formal Paper or Other Official Documentation

A. Write the 2 to 3 page paper per each area of acceptance or other official documentation.

B. Provide a reference letter to verify each of your requests.

Example of letter

Examples of other official documentation

SECTION I. REQUEST

Request for “Life Learning Experiences” credit

Student must be at least 25 years old. No guarantee that Prior Learning Credit can be transferred to other schools. Please see the Assessing Prior Learning Student & Evaluator Handbook for a detailed explanation.

Discussing potential credit for prior learning with a program staff member (academic advisor) is an important step toward your degree completion. The purpose of the discussion is to give an estimate of the number of hours you might earn from prior learning experiences. The section below will guide you in recalling and documenting learning experiences and will serve as a guide for the discussion.

Describe in some detail your Life Learning Experiences in one or more of the following areas:

Learning from work situations

Learning from seminars, professional licenses, and/or workshops

Learning from military schools or service

Learning from church ministry and community service

Learning from family, marital status, and children

Learning from travel, hobbies, and sports

Learning from other sources

See next page for an example on how to answer these seven areas.

Include a \$50 application fee with your submitted paper.

LIFE LEARNING EXPERIENCE APPLICATION

EXAMPLE

Full Name: Nancy Guffey, E-Mail: NancyG@yahoo.com

Work Learning: *Web Design course (non-credit) from local community college *Self-taught computer skills including the following software: MS Publisher, MS Word, MS Works, MS PowerPoint, Adobe Photo Editor *Creation and maintenance of two websites using the ForMinistry.com website profiles * Self-taught and responsible to oversee accounts payable, purchasing, payroll and income tax for church.

Seminar, Workshop Learning: *Attended three Leadership Seminars by John Maxwell *Attended a four-year Leadership Training program sponsored through our denomination *Completed several Sonlife training modules

Military Learning: none

Church Learning: *Taught Middle School S.S. from 2005-present *Served as Christian Endeavor Coordinator for 15 years (overseeing the mid-week Children's Ministry) *Taught an intensive two-year Discipleship Course to over 75 ladies from 1990-present *Teach a variety of Bible Studies from 1984-present

Family Learning: *Father was a diabetic and grew up with an understanding of that disease and its effects on an individual *Raised three daughters who are all believers and currently serving the Lord.

Hobby Learning: *Avid snow skier for most of my life: Progressed from beginner to intermediate to advanced skier. *New skills learned in the past five years include: intermediate giant slalom racing and cross country skiing.

Other Learning: Denominational Leadership *Served on the Women's Ministry Team from 2000-present *Served on the Executive Leadership Team from 2005-present (highest governing body when the National Conference is not in session) Speaking Opportunities *Key speaker at two different Women's Events (sister church)

**EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
WORKSHEET #1**

**CAREER ASSESSMENT AND
PLANNING**

The following should help you with the seven experience areas.

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE: Describe the nature of the experience, e.g., what you did, why, when where, for how long, others involved, the depth and breadth of the experience, other experiences contributing to the knowledge gained.

OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS: Describe and analyze the effects, e.g., what worked and what did not, what you learned about yourself, others, or that particular situation, what you noticed as a result of this experience.

FORMATION OF ABSTRACT CONCEPTS AND GENERALIZATIONS: Describe the underlying principles that shaped the experience(s), e.g., theories, patterns, rules, methods, beliefs, etc., and why they work.

TESTING OR APPLYING CONCEPTS IN NEW SITUATIONS: Describe how you can use or have used what you learned, e.g., how you can use this knowledge in other situations in the future, of what use is the knowledge, does it apply to other organizations, to other people.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE: Identify the sources of the learning, e.g., secure appropriate materials to verify the experience and validate the knowledge.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
WORK SHEET #2
SAMPLE QUESTIONS
FOR IDENTIFYING LEARNING

The following should help you collect your thoughts.

What was the experience and when did it occur (dates)?

What was the setting and the length of your involvement?

What were your responsibilities?

A.

B.

C.

What did you have to do to fulfill your responsibilities?

A.

B.

C.

5. What did you have to know to perform your job?

6. Were you evaluated in any way? Did you evaluate yourself in any way?

7. What new knowledge did you acquire from this experience?

8. How have you applied this knowledge?

SECTION II. PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE

A. After your application is reviewed, you will be notified regarding approved areas. You will receive an email or letter from the credit evaluator informing you:

- i) of the decision,
- ii) of the possible amount of credits that may be generated, and
- iii) the academic areas of the credits (Professional/Technical; Ministerial; or Specific Course Equivalency).

Specific Course Equivalency – this is somewhat similar to “testing out” of a course. If you believe that you have learning experience equal to a specific course, you may meet with the Dean and the course instructor to determine your level of competency. Upon approval, which may require a project, you will receive credit for that specific course.

Military experience alone is good for credit. However, additional credit may be obtained for specialized training while in the military. This specialization would need to be written up for any additional credit over and above the regular credit for being in the military.

B. A request for you to provide a written paper or other official documentation will be made for each approved area.

SECTION III. FORMAL PAPER OR OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION

- A. Write the 2 to 3 page paper per each area of acceptance or other official documentation.
- B. Provide a reference letter to verify each of your requests.

Example of paper

SAMPLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE ESSAY MANAGEMENT IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Management as a concept and field of intense study is a relatively recent phenomenon. The importance and need for managerial principles became apparent soon after the industrial revolution and the ensuing upheaval of centuries-old human activities and man's view of the world. The actuality of management has become more apparent in our increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, and it is unthinkable that industry, and indeed human work life as we see it in the Western world, could exist without the guiding principles of management theory. In this paper, I will review my own development as a manager, and give selected examples of the various roles, functions and techniques I have used in achieving organizational objectives that were given to me to handle.

First I would like to review what I perceive to be my management style. In my position as Clinic Administrator, I have four supervisors report to me. Each supervisor has two to eight subordinates reporting to them. In total, I am responsible for the functioning of 20 subordinates in our department. My management style tends to lean towards the participative approach. I found over the years that individual members of a group who personally take part in the decision-making process often have a far greater commitment to the objectives and goals of the organization for which they work.

My style of management is very democratic. I enjoy working with people and I try to make all my subordinates feel they are important to the organization and that I value their judgment and abilities. I encourage my subordinates to make suggestions that would help run the department more efficiently and effectively. However, in the beginning of my position as administrator I found some subordinates a little leery of my approach. Some of them were afraid to speak up and to make suggestions. In retrospect, I realize that they felt afraid and that I was testing them. They had not experienced this type of leadership style. No one had ever asked them for their opinion or if they had any suggestions. In a sense,

some subordinates had felt protected from making bad suggestions or decisions, for someone else always assumed full responsibility. After a few months of working for me, subordinates started to feel more comfortable with my approach. There was a sense of dedication which unified the group. Human beings in general like to feel that their ideas are of value. Quite frankly, some ideas that were developed by the group were similar or better than mine. Another approach related to participative management that I have found to be successful in dealing with subordinates is management by objectives, or MBO for short. Once a year at performance evaluation time, I set up an appointment with each employee and we jointly develop specific goals and objectives. The plans for accomplishing the goals are mutually agreed upon between me and each subordinate. The expected results that are agreed upon then become a guide for their future performance. This process eliminates ineffective communication that can cause organizational problems and conflict. I meet with each subordinate twice during the year to give them interim feedback and to assess whether progress has been made. In comparison with past years, when I only met with subordinates once a year for their evaluation and had not given them any feedback during the year, the MBO concept made a big difference in the morale within the department. MBO motivated the employees and many of them expressed to me that they no longer felt "in the dark", for they were clear as to what I expected from them. In retrospect, I realize that I was inexperienced with my new position as Administrator and felt that employees, who were all friends and in some cases had been there longer than I had, would think that I was trying to tell them how to do their job.

The function of planning is in my opinion the most important of all managerial duties. Planning should tell what, when, and how something is to be done. My position as Clinic Administrator falls into the middle management category. I am responsible for intermediate range planning (six months to two years) and my boss is responsible for strategic planning (one to ten years). Working in a health care facility requires advanced planning and always looking into the future. Times are constantly changing as are health laws and regulations. With the increasing number of patients with hepatitis and AIDS, I am constantly attending lectures and seminars on how to treat these patients and what special equipment, procedures and sterilization methods are needed. I have frequent meetings with my staff to inform them and/or ask for suggestions on dealing with patients who have communicable diseases. I have invited guest lecturers to speak on topics that will help us deal with patients who have a communicable disease. Without planning and sharing of information my staff would have been reluctant to treat these types of patients. Furthermore, lack of equipment and trained personnel to deal with certain patient populations would impact adversely on our reputation in the Rochester community as a state-of-the-art clinical facility. The general population that we serve may in turn go elsewhere for their dental care.

The next function I would like to discuss is staffing. In my position of Clinic Administrator I am responsible for staffing within the Department of General Dentistry. The role of the Personnel Manager at Eastman Dental Center is to assist supervisors and managers in carrying out their personnel responsibilities according to established policies and procedures. In this capacity, the Personnel Manager coordinates all the personnel functions to ensure that they are performed in accordance with the above policies. When our department is looking for a new employee I notify our Personnel Manager as to what position is open and what qualifications are needed to fill the position. The position is then posted within the institution and advertised locally in the community. Resumes are screened by the Personnel Manager and then given to me for review and consideration. After careful review of the resume, I set up an appointment for an interview. The interview is probably the most widely used personnel technique in the selection process.

In my role as administrator/manager, I feel I am an effective leader. I delegate a great deal of my authority to my supervisors, while I retain ultimate responsibility. My subordinates respect my judgment and work is divided and assigned on the basis of participatory decision making. For example, at my monthly staff meetings, subordinates take turns in setting up an agenda. The agenda is then submitted to me for review and additions. The person organizing the agenda conducts the meeting and I act as a facilitator. My subordinates enjoy this type of format and I feel that the participative approach gives them experience in conducting meetings and a “feel” for the group process.

In reviewing and reflecting on Fayol’s list of managerial functions, I realize that over the past ten years as Clinic Administrator and as Director of a Dental Assisting School, I have gained considerable experience and skill in all aspects of management. I can easily identify with each of the functions listed. As with any skill, managerial skills can be developed with ordinary practice and through trial and error on the job. I have made many errors in the past as a manager, but I continue to grow and learn from my mistakes. I plan to continue to develop my managerial skills through formal education, management development programs, and supplemental readings.

Examples of other official documentation

We recognize that not all prior experiential learning can be best demonstrated through a paper. Therefore, students are encouraged to explore with their evaluators alternative methods that might be better suited for demonstrating their prior learning. The following are some other common forms of documentation. However, this list is by no means exhaustive and the student should be as creative as possible in coming up with the method(s) most suited for the documenting of his or her prior learning.

Expert Testimony: Your documentation could include letters of reference from people who know you and your work and who know what college-equivalent learning in your field consists of; they could then attest, on their authority, that you have gained college-equivalent learning in this area. An un-credentialed but practicing teacher, for instance, might included in her portfolio letters of reference from her principal and co-teachers, people excellently placed to say that she has knowledge of curriculum planning or child development at least equivalent to that gotten in a college course. Note that the letters of reference attest to the fact and the quality of the learning, not to the fact that a particular experience was had.

Annotated Resource List: College-equivalent learning is learning that makes use of the distilled, analytically- and experientially-tested experience of other people that is codified as theory. Experiential college-equivalent learning tends, by definition, to be experience-rich and theory-poor; even so, for prior learning to be college-equivalent it must reach beyond your own experience to make use of the experience of others. An annotated resource lists shows how and how deeply you did this. In it you would list the sources of the theoretic understandings you gained: books, texts, journal articles, manuals, or any other written sources; mentorships, workshops, interviews, formal or informal apprenticeships, and other personal contacts; indeed, you could list there any recognizable medium for the transmission of theoretic understanding. The “annotated” part of this list means that in a short paragraph – three or four sentences – you describe the resource and the nature of its usefulness to you.

Objects Produced: Documentation often includes examples of work produced. A person seeking assessment of prior learning in writing would include a copy of the book she wrote or sample of the newsletter he edited; a painter would include photographs or slides of paintings made; a studio musician would include tapes of work done. But note: the objects alone aren’t sufficient to establish that you have gained college-equivalent learning. Learning is a process, not an outcome. While outcomes – objects produced, or changes made in the self and the world – are an important part of the educational process, they can’t be viewed in isolation from it. For this reason they can’t serve as the sole record of that process.

Performance Evaluation: Occasionally it is more appropriate to observe the person while engaged in the activity for which he or she is requesting credit (e.g. providing counseling, de-bugging a computer program, navigating software programs, playing an instrument, preaching a sermon, etc.). But note: as with objects produced, performances alone aren’t sufficient to establish that you have gained college-equivalent learning. Learning is a process, not an outcome. While the ability to perform is an important part of the educational process, it can’t be viewed in isolation. For this reason most performance evaluations can not serve as the sole record of the learning that has taken place.



Ready to Earn Your Degree?

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