



ALT 502 Experience Credit

Pre: ALT 103 or permission of CAS Instructional Specialist

Students present a written portfolio documenting college-level competencies acquired through educational, vocational, or personal/social experiences. A Faculty Review Committee evaluates the portfolio to determine comparability to required or elective courses in the student's program of study. All credit is evaluated on a course-by-course basis and must be approved by the Division Chair and Dean of Academic Affairs. Competencies must be demonstrated at a C level in order for the student to earn a "Pass" grade for the approved course(s).

OVERVIEW

An Experience Credit portfolio is a student-prepared written presentation describing and documenting a college-level learning experience. The portfolio provides evidence that the student has acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes equivalent to those which would be learned as the result of taking a required or elective course at North Shore Community College. In order to prepare a successful portfolio, the student should have competence in written communication at the college level and a professional attitude which elicits constructive criticism. The submitted document must be typewritten or word-processed; free of typographical errors, mis-spellings or punctuation errors; well-organized and neat. All directions and necessary forms are included in this packet.

The Instructional Specialist authorizes preparation of a portfolio and provides instruction and guidance. This includes assisting the student in the evaluation of skills; the preparation, editing and presentation of written documents; and the integration of portfolio components to create a well-stated argument for course credit. Students are referred to appropriate faculty experts to clarify any questions pertaining to required documentation.

Experience Credit is not considered residency credit. The total number of credits which may be earned by this alternative study method is 30.

EXPERIENCE CREDIT APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

The Instructional Specialist advises the student about course competency requirements, works with the student on all components of the portfolio, as needed, and evaluates the contents of the portfolio before authorizing preparation of the final draft.

Two copies of the portfolio are submitted to the Center for Alternative Studies along with a \$25.00 non-refundable service fee. If approved by the Instructional Specialist, the portfolio is then submitted to the appropriate Departmental Faculty Review Committee for an evaluation of content. The Review Committee may request additional information or require an interview. If the Review Committee approves the portfolio, it is submitted to the Department Chair, Division Chair and the Dean of Academic Affairs (or designee) for final approval. If credit is denied, an explanation for that decision is provided.

Once the portfolio is approved, the Center for Alternative Studies forwards a request for transcription of credit to the Registrar's office. The student is then billed at the rate of current

fees per credit for the credit to be awarded. Experience Credit awards are included on the student's official transcript with a grade of "P" once the student account is paid in full.

All portfolios evaluated by North Shore Community College remain on file at the Center for Alternative Studies.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FORMAL PORTFOLIO

While each of the items is referenced in the appropriate order below, the student will not necessarily complete each portion in sequential order. For example, you cannot prepare the Evaluation Report or the Table of Contents until the portfolio is completed. All necessary forms are included in the Appendix. The student may either use the actual forms or may request a diskette. The external packaging of the portfolio may take the form of a looseleaf notebook or a folder with a secure binding. The components of the portfolio should be presented in the following order.

1. REVIEW COMMITTEE EVALUATION REPORT - FORM EC5

This is attached to the cover of the portfolio. While you will need to prepare a draft of this form early in the portfolio process, you will want to delay its final preparation until all other items are completed. The SUMMARY on this form consists of a three-sentence paragraph which reflects the portfolio-documented skills, knowledge and attitudes for which a credit award is being considered. Use FORM EC4 to create this paragraph.

2. EXPERIENCE CREDIT APPLICATION - FORM EC1

The completed application is the first item inside the cover of your portfolio.

3. PORTFOLIO TITLE PAGE - FORM EC2

The title(s) of the course(s) and Academic Department responsible for the subject area, the name of the Instructional Specialist with whom you have worked, your name and date of submission are listed.

Enter the official North Shore Community College course description on this page. The description should be copied either from the current newspaper flyer or the three-year master catalogue. If the course is to be an elective, not currently included in an NSCC catalogue, the Instructional Specialist and/or faculty evaluator will assist you in developing a course description.

4. TABLE OF CONTENTS

List all the items within the portfolio. Please note that the evaluator needs to be able to quickly reference documents. You should categorize items and use page numbers and/or tabs to determine sections (e.g., the petition, resume, narrative, letters from supervisors, and samples of work).

5. EXPERIENCE CREDIT PETITION -- FORM EC3

You are now ready to create a draft of the petition, Form EC3. On one comprehensive form, it tells the general area(s) of learning and the specifics of the learning. It states

where the applicable learning took place from early stages onward, when, and how. Most importantly, it states your competencies in relation to a course at NSCC and identifies the evidence you will be presenting.

In Part 1, you will detail the dates of applicable work, education, volunteer or personal/social experiences. In Part 2, you will list the competencies which will be described in detail in the narrative and documented throughout the portfolio. Evaluators prefer "can do" statements to vague, wordy sentences: i.e., "can identify..., analyze..., evaluate..., conduct..., etc.;" rather than "to understand..., to learn..., etc."

Part 3 of the Petition Form outlines time spent attaining the skills and competencies you have listed.

Documentation presented consists of

Required materials:

- Resume
- Narrative
- Letter(s) from employer(s), supervisor(s), reference(s).

Student selected materials:

- Job description/classification(s)-Certificates
- Newspaper clippings
- Civil Service Examination Data-Bibliographies /resource lists
- Products of work/live performance
- Papers, reports, proposals produced
- List of activities
- Outlines of experiences
- Other
- Tapes, presentations, photographs
- Schedules of time spent
- Official forms/records
- Evaluations, promotion records
- Tapes, presentations, photographs

You now need to select the materials you will use. Keep in mind that in your narrative you will need to supply background data that elaborates on the activities in which you were involved and how you acquired competencies through those experiences. The selected documentation should verify college-level learning.

6. EDUCATIONAL PLAN VALIDATION

This section of your portfolio should include:

1. Your completed Program of Study sheet
2. Copies of official college transcripts

7. RESUME

The resume, a required document, is your opportunity to present skills, knowledge, and attitudes in the way you choose. This will assist you in organizing and demonstrating previous experiences and learning. If you have never prepared a resume and are unfamiliar with the format, college resources are available to guide you. Your resume must be current and verify the competencies listed on your petition.

8. NARRATIVE

The narrative should detail and more broadly describe the statements made on the Petition and Summary sheets. It should demonstrate how you acquired college-level skills, knowledge and attitudes while you were developing professional expertise over a

period of time. You should indicate the level of expertise at the beginning and end of the related experience.

The narrative must be well written and professionally presented. English grammar, spelling and punctuation must be correct. Documents with typographical errors will not be accepted. The narrative must reference the direct/indirect evidence contained in other sections of your portfolio.

The narrative length varies depending upon the type of knowledge which is being verified. The student and Instructional Specialist investigate specific departmental requirements regarding content and length. Two or three pages may be sufficient when extensive documentation is presented. A much lengthier narrative may be required in subject areas in which communication and human relations skills predominate. Content, not length, is important. The Review Team should be able to readily identify what, when, how and with whom competencies were acquired.

9. LETTERS OF REFERENCE

A letter from your employer/supervisor is a required document in your portfolio. This letter should be from an individual who has directly supervised your work or volunteer activities. This letter should describe your responsibilities and accomplishments from another's point-of-view and should address specific skills as well as your level of competence. Letters, on company stationery, should be addressed to the Instructional Specialist or the Faculty Review Chairperson. Letters that are written for purposes other than this portfolio and letters from family and friends are not acceptable.

10. STUDENT-SELECTED DOCUMENTATION

The list of optional items on the Experience Credit Petition is intended to serve as a guide for further documentation that can be included to support your narrative. You should select appropriate items such as job descriptions, performance appraisals, additional letters of reference, reports, certificates, recognition awards and samples of work. The documentation must objectively verify the competencies or skills, knowledge and attitudes identified in the narrative.

11. STUDENT SUMMARY WORKSHEET - FORM EC4

The Summary Worksheet is used to prepare the Review Committee Evaluation Report (Form EC5). The first sentence describes the skills, knowledge and attitudes which are equivalent to those which would be achieved by taking the regular college course. The second sentence identifies the required and selected supporting documentation to be provided. The third sentence indicates the length of time spent in the total learning experience in weeks, months or years.

Now you are ready to complete the top section of the Review Committee Evaluation Report (Form EC5) by combining the three sentences constructed on Form EC4 to form one simple, well-constructed statement.

12. STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION

Now that you have completed your portfolio, we are interested in your evaluation of what you learned. We would like you to review the process of your experience in putting together the portfolio. What has happened? Since you began the development of your portfolio, what has proven to be your most formidable obstacle and what proved to be

easy? What have you learned about yourself and what recommendations would you make to the Center for Alternative Studies about the procedure of portfolio writing?

13. RELEASE FORM - FORM EC6

The student uses the Release Form to provide or deny permission for the Center for Alternative Studies to use the portfolio as a sample for other students. Restrictions as to use may be indicated.

Your portfolio format can serve as a helpful guide for students who want to consider this credit option in the future. However, if you do not wish to have your portfolio or portions of the portfolio displayed for any reason -- such as the contents are too personal, the material confidential or whatever -- please indicate that you do not want us to use the portfolio in its entirety or any portion thereof.

14. CHECK SHEET - FORM EC7 This is your assessment of your portfolio, by which you indicate that all portions of the portfolio are completed.

EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

The student is required to conduct an inventory of his/her non-college learning, to identify college-level competencies relating to a particular course and program area, and to prepare a narrative describing the manner in which the learning was acquired. This narrative, in conjunction with letters of recommendation, documentation of the experience, any appropriate samples of work, a resume, and the completion of forms particular to the process, constitute a completed portfolio.

The portfolio is evaluated on the following basis:

A. Completeness of its component parts -- 30%

- Required Forms
 - EC5: Review Committee Evaluation Report
 - EC1: Evaluation Credit by Portfolio Application
 - EC2: Evaluation Credit by Portfolio Title Page
 - EC3: Evaluation Credit by Portfolio Petition
 - EC6: Release Form
- Table of Contents
- Educational Plan Validation
- Resume
- Narrative
- Letters of Reference
- Documentation to be entered as evidence of competencies
- Student Self-Evaluation

B. Presentation: Overall appearance and organization -- 30%

As in any other college written work, the principles of correct English usage must be employed. The format must be clear, spelling and punctuation correct, and there should be no typographical errors.

C. Clarity of narrative -- 30%

Effectiveness of writing in describing how experiential learning occurred, identifying skills, knowledge and attitudes, analyzing the student's growth and level of learning.

D. Documentation -- 10%

Must reflect the student's skills as related to specific academic areas.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST

1. Explains the Portfolio Preparation packet.
2. Evaluates the initial draft.
3. Reviews the final portfolio to determine that:
 - the package is well-organized, neat, and complete
 - all forms are filled out accurately
 - grammar, punctuation, spelling and typing are correct
 - the narrative clearly describes the competencies according to the standards of the respective department
 - the narrative references supporting evidence.
4. Accepts formal Experience Credit application with \$25.00 application fee.
5. Accepts two (2) copies of the portfolio.
6. Distributes copies to appropriate academic offices for review.
7. Notifies student of evaluation results as approved/denied.
8. Requests transcription of approved credit from the Registrar.
9. Informs student when credit is received.

The STUDENT

1. Reviews Experience Credit Portfolio Preparation packet and determines whether Experience Credit is a realistic alternative.
2. Prepares draft of portfolio for review by Instructional Specialist.
3. Completes formal application for Experience Credit and submits this, along with \$25.00 non-refundable application fee.
4. Submits 2 copies of the final portfolio.
5. Once portfolio has been approved, pays the Business Office fees due per credit for credit awarded. In cases of non-payment, financial delinquency rules apply in accordance with college policy

The FACULTY REVIEW TEAM reviews the portfolio to determine that the presentation is cohesive and the content of the portfolio reflects that 90% of the departmental course objectives have been achieved. A performance level of C or better is required in order for the student to receive the Experience Credit “Pass” grade.

CREDIT AWARD

Once the final portfolio has been reviewed and approved by the Instructional Specialist, the Director of the Center for Alternative Studies, the Faculty Review Team, Department Chair, Division Chair, and the Academic Dean, the signed petition is returned to the Center for Alternative Studies. A Registration/Transcription form is then completed by CAS and is sent to the Registrar’s office, where the credit is processed. When the student’s account is paid in full, the appropriate Experience Credit will show as a “P” grade on the student’s official NSCC transcript.