

Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) Skills Assessment

Overview A Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) skills assessment is a structured evaluation method where a student demonstrates their mastery of specific skills or competencies through practical application. This assessment is often used to validate experiential learning in fields where hands-on proficiency is critical, such as healthcare, technology, or the arts.

Purpose The CPL skills assessment serves as a practical demonstration of the student's abilities, ensuring alignment with academic standards. It enables faculty to:

- Evaluate the student's capacity to perform tasks at a college-level standard.
- Verify the authenticity of the student's prior learning through observable evidence.
- Provide a fair and objective basis for awarding academic credit.

Suggested Rubric for Evaluation To maintain consistency and fairness, faculty should use a rubric to assess CPL skills demonstrations. Key criteria might include:

1. **Relevance:**
 - Does the skill demonstrated align with the learning outcomes of the targeted course?
 - Is the task appropriate for the level of credit being sought?
2. **Proficiency:**
 - Is the student's performance accurate, efficient, and consistent?
 - Does it meet or exceed professional or academic standards?
3. **Complexity:**
 - Does the task performed reflect the complexity of the skill as described in the course outcomes?
 - Are advanced techniques or critical thinking demonstrated?
4. **Authenticity:**
 - Is the skill demonstration clearly the result of the student's own efforts?
 - Does it incorporate personal experience or context that substantiates prior learning?
5. **Presentation and Documentation:**
 - Is the task or skill presented clearly and methodically?
 - Are supporting materials (e.g., project plans, tools used, or data) well-prepared and relevant?

Preparation Guidelines for Students To prepare for a CPL skills assessment, students should:

- Review the course's learning outcomes to identify required skills and tasks.
- Practice performing the task to ensure confidence and precision.
- Prepare any necessary tools, equipment, or materials for the demonstration.
- Document their preparation process and provide context for their performance.

Guidance for Faculty Assessors

- Clearly communicate the expectations and criteria for the skills assessment to the student in advance.
- Observe the demonstration in a controlled and distraction-free environment, ensuring fairness.
- Provide opportunities for the student to explain their process and decision-making.
- Record observations during the assessment to support grading and feedback.

Grading and Feedback

- Use the rubric to assign a score for each criterion, ensuring transparency and objectivity.
- Provide constructive feedback, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement.
- Clearly document the rationale for the decision to award or deny credit.
- Maintain all records used in the assessment for at least one year.

References and Resources Faculty can consult the following resources for additional guidance on CPL skills assessments:

1. Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
2. Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). (2021). *Standards for Assessing Learning*. Retrieved from <https://www.cael.org/>
3. Fiddler, M., Marienau, C., & Whitaker, U. (2006). *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, & Procedures*. Chicago: Kendall Hunt Publishing.
4. Schon, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York: Basic Books.
5. Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2015). *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Conclusion A CPL skills assessment provides a rigorous and hands-on approach to validating experiential learning. By following these guidelines and maintaining high standards of evaluation, faculty can ensure the process is equitable, transparent, and academically robust.