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Assessment of Experiential Learning

Abstract

A Program for Kean University Matriculated Undergraduate Students Pursuing an Initial Bachelor's Degree

Keywords

Assessment, Experiential Learning Program



Assessment of Experiential Learning

*A Program for Kean University
Matriculated Undergraduate Students
Pursuing an Initial Bachelor's Degree*

**Office of the Vice President
for Academic Affairs**

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INTRODUCTION

Through the Kean University Assessment of Experiential Learning program, academic credit may be granted for prior learning or work experience that is not generated by direct contact between a student and a faculty member in an academic setting. If a student prepares documented evidence that he/she possesses knowledge or skills equivalent to an undergraduate course, the student may receive academic credit.

The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs coordinates the Assessment of Experiential Learning Program. A faculty member who is knowledgeable in the subject area(s) under review conducts the actual evaluation of this non-traditional learning. The faculty assessor helps you identify what prior learning might be eligible for undergraduate credit or recognition, as well as how to relate your experiences to your education goals through the preparation of a portfolio.

Many adults believe that some of their non-traditional learning and experience is equivalent to college work, and that they should receive course credit toward a college degree. The relevant questions are: “What has been learned?” and “How does it fit with the Kean University curriculum?” The goal of this assessment procedure is to verify and assess one’s knowledge.

Since a faculty member who is knowledgeable in the appropriate subject area reviews the learning survey, it is important that you present a well documented record. Faculty members who perform the evaluation are experienced in the subject area to be evaluated and have an understanding of the philosophy of the Assessment Program. As you proceed from more standardized to the less standardized kinds of learning and training, it is necessary to provide more detail and evidence to the faculty member who makes the evaluation. The number of hours spent in any kind of learning experience of a relatively structured kind is an indispensable detail in the assessment process. Generally twelve to fifteen hours of classroom instruction, with related outside readings, are required for each semester of earned credit.

At Kean University an undergraduate matriculated student may apply for undergraduate credits through assessment of life experience/experiential learning after the completion of 12 credits at Kean but prior to the submission of a graduation application with the Office of the Registrar. A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required. Credits received through experiential learning do not count towards the minimum 32 credit residency requirement or satisfy the graduation requirement that one half of the major requirements must be taken at Kean University.

The Assessment of Experiential Learning program is designed to evaluate learning which cannot currently be assessed by examination alone; therefore, it should not be viewed as a replacement for the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). Credits for life experience are designed to eliminate duplication of learning. The process addresses the reluctance of adults to return to the classroom and be required to take courses in areas in which they already have an acquired knowledge and skill.

Kean University will not award credit simply for experiences. Rather, the University requests that you demonstrate knowledge attained as a result of your experiences and requires that your knowledge meet certain criteria, which generally includes the following:

1. **The Learning Experience is documented.** You can demonstrate to a faculty evaluator that you possess the learning you have claimed and the faculty member can objectively measure and evaluate that learning.
2. **The Learning is equivalent to the undergraduate college-level work in terms of quality.**
3. **The Learning has a subject matter or knowledge base.** You should not expect to receive college credit or recognition for mere application of a manual skill or a narrowly prescribed routine or procedure. You should understand why you are able to do what you do.
4. **The learning has a general applicability outside of the specific situation in which it was acquired.**

Although many institutions are developing methods of awarding credit for past experience, it is important to keep in mind that other institutions may not accept credit(s) awarded by this method toward a degree or for professional certification, even though the credits may appear on your Kean University transcript.

PROCEDURES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

NOTE: If you are applying for the assessment of experiential learning, you must currently be a matriculated, first-time undergraduate student at Kean University. Experiential Learning will not be granted to students pursuing a Second Degree.

1. Contact the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs to receive the Manual and Application.
2. Search the Kean University Undergraduate catalog to identify courses that relate directly to the learning for which you are seeking credit.
3. Confer with the appropriate Department Chairperson to discuss possibility of assessment credit. The Department Chairperson assigns a faculty assessor.
4. Meet with a faculty assessor and make a brief proposal. The assessor reviews the proposal for suitability. If the assessor feels that there is a reasonable possibility that the assessment credit will be granted, he/she suggests procedures for you to follow in order to complete the assessment.
5. If the assessor indicates a reasonable possibility that assessment credit may be granted, complete the application from the Office of the VPAA and pay the Student Accounting Office the fees for the Assessment of Experiential Learning (refer to fee schedule).
6. Prepare your materials for the assessment. Upon completion, schedule an appointment with the faculty assessor for the assessment and present your completed application for Experiential Learning along with your receipt of payment.
7. Your faculty assessor completes the official assessment form. The assessment outcome may be one of the following:
 - a. Credit awarded based on the portfolio material and other means of assessment.
 - b. Credit awarded contingent upon completion of additional work, test or credentials.
 - c. Credit award not recommended.
8. The faculty assessor sends the completed assessment materials and the recommendation for credits granted to the VPAA.
9. Upon receipt of the completed and approved assessment form, the Office of the VPAA sends the "Record of Credit Awarded" to the Registrar. The University lists these credits, without grades, on the transcript as "experiential credit."

FEES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

After the faculty assessor indicates a reasonable possibility that assessment credit may be granted, pay the following fees for the Assessment of Experiential Learning at the Student Accounting Office, 3rd Floor, Administration Building.

1. Application Fee

After an initial meeting with an assessment advisor, pay an application fee of \$250.00 for each discipline in which you are seeking credit; i.e. art, music, management science.

2. Credit Assessment Fee

The credit assessment fee is based upon the number of credits for which you seek assessment. The credit assessment fee is \$50.00 per credit.

Examples:

A request for **three credits** will cost:

Application Fee	\$ 250.00
Credit Assessment Fee	<u>150.00</u>
Total:	\$ 400.00

A request for six credits in one discipline will cost:

Application Fee	\$ 250.00
Credit Assessment Fee	<u>300.00</u>
Total:	\$ 550.00

A request for twelve credits in two separate disciplines will cost:

Application Fee	\$ 500.00
Credit Assessment Fee	<u>\$ 600.00</u>
Total:	\$ 1100

Please Note: These fees are non-refundable and payment should be made to the Student Accounting Office, 3rd floor Administration Building. A copy of your receipt of payment must be attached to your application. Your faculty assessor will not accept your completed application without proof of payment.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Autobiography

List significant life experiences since high school for which you have not received college credit: volunteer experience, non-credit courses, travel and recreational activities, independent reading, viewing and listening. Identify from the experiences specifically what you have learned, in terms of knowledge, skills and values you have acquired through these experiences.

Catalog Search

Examine the course descriptions in the Kean University undergraduate catalog and identify particular Kean University courses that relate directly to your life learning experiences. Read the course syllabus available in the library or the department office for those courses that appear to encompass your experiences. List the courses you feel are closely relate to you knowledge and skills and that you think you would like to challenge through the assessment process. Give the names of the department, as well as the exact wording of the descriptive sentences or short catalog paragraph describing the course. You may also make comments about the course and its relationship to your background. If you are largely unfamiliar with the content of a particular course, do not list that course.

Course Objective

Since a college course identifies certain skills or objectives to be achieved by a student, relate your learning experiences whenever possible to these objectives. Try to relate skills acquired and knowledge gained in the experience. Under each objective, briefly state what you are submitting as evidence for meeting the objective. This may be a written description of an experience, samples of work produced or articles of documentation.

Experience as such is no measure of learning that can be accredited toward a degree. For instance, if you work as a counselor, it is important to describe your work in detail indicating your acquired skills, professional readings, your counseling techniques and the learning you have acquired through informal instruction, staff interaction, etc. If you have extensive experience in business, describe your competence in the relatively standard terms used in business programs. Try to relate your learning to categories such as accounting, operations management, fiscal control and planning, marketing, personnel work, information processing, inventory control and purchasing, etc. Key questions here are: “Can you establish that you know those things or possess those skills for which colleges and universities award academic credit toward a degree program?” “How can the learning be directly related to specific course objectives?”

EXAMPLES OF STUDENTS EARNING CREDITS FOR LIFE EXPERIENCE

George had ten years of work experience as an assistant production control manager, assistant plant supervisor and most recently, director of materials management. He was certified in the field of Production and Inventory Management and he possessed an award for excellence from the Purchasing Management Association of New Jersey. Documentation of these achievements and a description of his work responsibilities completed the portfolio, which along with examinations in three courses, satisfied requirements for nine credits in Management Science.

Ruth's training in costume design included ninety hours of pattern drafting and forty hours of construction techniques, as well as various other sewing courses and seminars with wardrobe mistresses and costume designers. Fifteen years of work experience with ballet companies included costuming for a full-length production of *The Nutcracker*. Ruth documented her experience with letters of commendation, production programs and photographs, as well as a written account of the theory and execution of costuming for *The Nutcracker*. She received three credits in Costume Design.

Don served as an apprentice machinist for one year and served as a machinist's mate in the Navy for four years. He earned three credits in machine metals on the basis of this work experience and a written examination. He was also granted twelve additional credits in Technology on the basis of his performance on the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) examination.

Shirley worked for more than a year with a committee of citizens appointed by her mayor to investigate the needs of senior citizens and make recommendations for improvement of their status. Her experiences included the design and use of questionnaires, as well as a study of legal restrictions and funding possibilities. Because of her research experience and knowledge of the problems of senior citizens in the community, Shirley challenged Methods of Social Research and the Sociology of Aging; The faulty assessor required additional reading before the final awarding of six credits.

Ann worked for five years as a free-lance newspaper correspondent, covering public events and contributing feature stories as well as reviews. She taught fiction writing, wrote a book for young people and received an award for creative writing. Ann's documentation included letters from employers and an extensive portfolio of published articles. The assessor also required a written essay to supplement the portfolio for credit in Advanced Composition. Ann earned a total of twelve credits in Journalism and Composition.

EXAMPLES OF ARTICLES OF DOCUMENTATION FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Work Experience

Awards
Evidence of adopted suggestions
Explanation of performed tasks
Explanation of company or organization ranking, rating or classification system
Job description
Letters of commendation
Letters of corroboration from superiors, peers, clients
Licenses
Membership in professional or trade organizations
Membership requirements for professional or trade organizations
Performance standards for license acquisition
Scores on licensing examinations
Work samples

Community Service Activities

Awards	Clients served
Commendations	Letter of corroboration from clients, fellow volunteers and supervisors
Newspaper and magazine articles	

Non-Credit Courses and Training

Assignments	Number of clinical or practicum hours
Course descriptions and outlines	Number of didactic hours
Certificates	Syllabi
Course objectives or learning outcomes	Time spent on outside assignments
Diplomas	Transcripts
Evidence of course completion	

Special Accomplishments

Audiovisual presentations	Pictures painted
Books published	Programs from performances
List of books read	Proposals written
Music written	Speeches given
Patents obtained	Writing samples



APPLICATION FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Kean ID Number: _____

Name _____
Last First M.I. Maiden name

Home Mailing address _____
Street Apt#

City State Zip

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Employer:

Employer Address: _____

Applicant's Signature

Date

For assessment in the following Kean University Undergraduate course(s):

Course Code Course Title Name of the Faculty Assessor

Number of credits requested: _____

***To be completed by the Faculty Assessor:**

Number of Credits granted _____

Signature of Faculty

Date

***Please return to VPAA K-107**

PART I. FORMAL EDUCATION

Previous Formal Education

Graduated from _____ High School. Year: _____

GED High School Equivalency Certificate _____ No _____ Yes Year _____

Colleges Attended:

(Students must arrange to have official transcripts sent to Kean University)

PART II. ACADEMIC RELATED EXPERIENCES

(To be completed only if you are having your academic related experiences evaluated)

Dates of Attendance

College/University

A copy of a transcript showing your academic history must be attached.

PART III. WORK AND/OR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

List dates of employment or formal volunteer experience

1) Dates From To Position Title Name/Title of Supervisor
(Mo/Yr) (Mo/Yr)

Employer Name (*Firm/Organization*) Address

2) Dates From To Position Title Name/Title of Supervisor
(Mo/Yr) (Mo/Yr)

Employer Name (*Firm/Organization*) Address

3) Dates From To Position Title Name/Title of Supervisor
(Mo/Yr) (Mo/Yr)

Employer Name (*Firm/Organization*) Address

4) Dates From To Position Title Name/Title of Supervisor
(Mo/Yr) (Mo/Yr)

Employer Name (*Firm/Organization*) Address

PART IV. TRAINING EXPERIENCES

1. Make payment to the Student Accounting Office, 3rd floor, Administration Building.
2. When completed, return this application with payment receipt to your faculty assessor
3. The assessor will send the completed and approved application to the VPAA.
4. The VPAA will forward the completed application to the Office of the Registrar.

TEAR OFF AND BRING TO STUDENT ACCOUNTING WITH PAYMENT

Application for payment for assessment of Experiential Learning

COST CENTER: 14-19710-4901

NAME: _____

ID NO. _____