PRIOR LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

The LifeTrack Program adheres to the academic concept that adults can gain college-level learning from various life experiences; therefore, LifeTrack Program students may acquire college credit by demonstrating prior college-level learning. The LifeTrack Program also grants college credit for successful performance on standardized examinations.

Following the successful completion of the Foundations of Adult Learning Seminar, students who have a grade-point average of 2.0 (“C”) or better may request academic credit for prior learning by submitting one or more prior learning portfolios for evaluation. Portfolios may be submitted on a variety of life experiences such as private study, civic and volunteer activities, employment, and in-service training.

Students initiate the portfolio evaluation process by submitting a regular ASK application form (with the required evaluation fee) to the LifeTrack Program prior learning coordinator for each subject area of prior learning they wish to have evaluated. The coordinator then secures an appropriate faculty member or academic professional to evaluate the portfolio(s) and notifies the student(s) to submit the portfolio(s). Faculty evaluators will make one of four recommendations:

1. Credit should be awarded (with recommended number of semester hours and applicable area of credit or equivalent courses).
2. No credit should be awarded because the demonstrated learning duplicates academic credit which the student has been previously awarded.
3. No credit should be awarded because the demonstrated learning does not appear to be college-level learning.
4. No credit should be awarded because the evidence presented is insufficient for credit (the evaluator may also give recommendations for resubmission of the portfolio in this case).

Some students may wish to pursue credit for prior learning experiences that have been evaluated by national organizations such as the American Council on Education (ACE). These include educational experiences in formal programs and courses for professional military education and training, real estate licenses, and corporate training seminars.

Students requesting such credits initiate their requests by first contacting the LifeTrack Program prior learning coordinator to receive approval. Following approval, students submit a Modified ASK application form requesting this credit, which is normally awarded in accordance with the guidelines established by the national organization.

The credit awarded depends on the breadth and depth of the learning and the currency and applicability of the knowledge to the student’s degree plan. The Modified ASK requires documentation that will prove the experience and an essay that includes the following items: a brief chronological description of the experience, a brief description of the learning applications, and a brief analysis of the learning outcomes.
Prior learning (both through portfolios and through modified portfolios) is assessed on a "pass" basis and does not receive a letter grade. Therefore, it does not count toward a grade-point average and is awarded semester hours credit only.

Academic credit may also be awarded to students following a successful performance on standardized examinations. Most LifeTrack Program students pursue this type of academic credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) General and Subject Examinations. For a list of UA approved CLEP tests and their course equivalents, please refer to the UA catalog.

Students may receive credit for prior learning portfolios, modified portfolios, or standardized examinations only if they are in good academic standing and have a grade-point average of 2.0 ("C") or better. The University of Alabama will recognize up to forty-five (45) hours of credit for examination (CLEP or DANTES), and various types of prior learning, including prior learning through portfolio evaluation and credit recommendations through ACE.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools limits credits toward graduation to a maximum of 30 semester hours for portfolio presentations. The University of Alabama further limits credit to a maximum of 45 semester hours for all portfolio presentations, other demonstrations of prior learning through experiences, and credit by examinations (e.g., CLEP, Advanced Placement examinations, DANTES, ACE certification).

For example: Student A, who has 30 hours of portfolio evaluated credit, may receive up to 15 additional hours through CLEP or other standardized prior learning. Student B, who has 65 hours of military credit through ACE recommendation, may apply only 45 hours of those total hours toward his/her degrees plan. Student C, who has 30 hours of CLEP credit, may receive a maximum of 15 additional hours through prior learning evaluation or ACE recommendation.