

- 3.4.8** The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**
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### **Off-Site Committee Comments**

There is insufficient information to be able to determine that the portfolio materials for CDC 3301 are compared to a designated credit experience for the purpose of deciding whether to award credit. Also, it is not clear how much credit can be earned for CDC3301. The course description does not state that the course may be repeated. However, the undergraduate catalog states on page 19 “No student shall receive credit for the same credit twice unless the course description specifically states that the course may be repeated for credit.” Specifically, the On-Site committee needs to determine if a student can receive credit for CDC 3301 when pursuing credit for two or more different experiential learning portfolios.

### **NARRATIVE**

Troy University’s inclusion in the Servicemember’s Opportunity College (SOC) requires that some consideration be given to students who request a review of their experiential learning as possibly equivalent to courses within the University’s formal academic curriculum. This review of experiential learning credit is in addition to the University’s regular review of transfer credit from regionally-accredited institutions and its acceptance of military credits following Professional Military Education/American Council on Education (PME/ACE) guidelines.

While it is possible for a student to request a review of his/her experiential activities as possible equivalencies to the University’s academic credit, the rigorous process for reviewing and receiving such credit as outlined in the institution’s Undergraduate Catalog typically has discouraged student use of this option. Since the merger of the University’s campuses into a single Troy University in August 2005 (concurrent with the adoption of a single undergraduate catalog), no students have formally engaged in the process, including the request for the University to offer CDC 3301. The process for seeking equivalent academic credit for experiential activities is outlined in the 2008-09 Undergraduate Catalog and excerpted below:

#### **Experiential Learning Credit**

#### **Cross Discipline Courses (CDC)**

#### **3301 Portfolio Development (2)**

This is a course in the preparation of an educational portfolio, a formal file or folder of information compiled by students on learning acquired through specific past experiences and accomplishments. Students are required to pre-

pare a portfolio under the guidance of the instructor. The course is required of all students prior to submission of a portfolio to the university for evaluation for experiential credit.

### **Experiential Learning Assessment (ELA) Credit**

Experiential learning assessment (ELA) is a process used by Troy University to evaluate prior college-equivalent learning attained by students outside the classroom and not transferable through any of the standard methods of accepting non-traditional credit. Each student prepares a portfolio that is a carefully organized folder documenting learning outcomes (not learning activities) for the purpose of earning credit for a specific college course or courses. The procedure for students interested in requesting assessment of prior experiential learning is as follows:

a. The student enrolls in CDC 3301 Portfolio Development for 2 semester hours of credit. The instructor for this course (1) provides an overview of the experiential learning assessment program, (2) assists in determining whether or not prior learning is appropriate or adequate to request academic credit, (3) provides the guidance necessary to prepare an educational portfolio, and (4) evaluates the portfolio to determine if the content is sufficient to approve submission for faculty assessment. NOTE: No more than 25 percent of the degree may be earned by using experiential learning assessment credit or portfolio-based credit.

b. The student prepares the portfolio, which includes

1. A statement of the student's educational goals;
2. A chronological record of the student's education and work experiences;
3. A clear statement of the knowledge and skills not learned in college for which the student desires to receive academic credit;
4. Information that links the knowledge and skills to the student's goals and educational degree program; and
5. Documented evidence that substantiates the student's claim to learning.

c. Faculty assessment.

Once the portfolio is submitted to the faculty for evaluation, the faculty member uses several methods of assessment, which include product assessment such as an original computer program, interviews, oral or written examinations, simulations, performance tests, and/or essays. The faculty member makes a recommendation to award or not award the hours of credit.

d. Fee Payment The student pays the appropriate fees for the credit awarded.

e. Credit is then posted to the student's transcript.

However, to preclude any confusion about the University's stated policy regarding experiential learning activities and their transcription as equivalent academic credit, the following sections respond to specific questions raised by the off-site committee.

***“There is insufficient information to be able to determine that the portfolio materials for CDC 3301 are compared to a designated credit experience for the purpose of deciding whether to award credit.”***

The procedures as outlined above note that the student who engages in this process is required to provide clear and documented links between his or her experiential activities and the learning outcomes in the selected classes that he or she feels would be equivalent academic credit. The faculty member teaching the CDC 3301 course is responsible for assessing these links and noting whether the learning outcomes, as well as the general content and knowledge, are comparable. An additional step in the review process, involving the approval of the college dean and Dean of Undergraduate Programs, will be added to the 2009-2010 Undergraduate Catalog as noted below. With this additional step in the approval process, the procedure for assessing, and approving, experiential learning activities and accepting them as equivalent to selected academic courses will mirror the University's existing procedures for reviewing transfer credits from regionally accredited institutions, especially when those credits will serve as equivalencies in a student's major.

***“Also, it is not clear how much credit can be earned for CDC3301”***

As noted in the Undergraduate Catalog, the CDC 3301 class earns two-hours credit if successfully completed by the student. This course does not serve as the equivalent academic credit for any experiential learning activities. Rather, this course is designed to assist students in the preparation of their portfolio materials as they seek approval to receive course-specific transcribed academic credit for their experiential learning activities. The successful completion of the CDC 3301 class earns two hours credit regardless of whether the student is successful in his or her efforts to gain equivalent academic credit for experiential learning activities.

***“The course description does not state that the course may be repeated. However, the undergraduate catalog states on page 19 ‘No student shall receive credit for the same credit twice unless the course description specifically states that the course may be repeated for credit.’ Specifically, the On-Site committee needs to determine if a student can receive credit for CDC 3301 when pursuing credit for two or more different experiential learning portfolios.”***

CDC 3301 is taken only once by a student as he or she prepares all of his or her materials in the request for academic credit. This information is more clearly articulated in the revision to this section which will appear in the 2009-2010 Undergraduate Catalog and which is provided below, showing the changes in red:

## Experiential Learning Credit

### Cross Discipline Courses (CDC)

#### 3301 Portfolio Development (2)

This is a course in the preparation of an educational portfolio, a formal file or folder of information compiled by students on learning acquired through specific past experiences and accomplishments. Students are required to prepare a portfolio under the guidance of the instructor. The course is required of all students prior to submission of a portfolio to the university for evaluation for experiential credit.

#### Experiential Learning Assessment (ELA) Credit

Experiential learning assessment (ELA) is a process used by Troy University to evaluate prior college-equivalent learning attained by students outside the classroom and not transferable through any of the standard methods of accepting non-traditional credit. Each student prepares a portfolio that is a carefully organized folder documenting learning outcomes (not learning activities) for the purpose of earning credit for a specific college course or courses. The procedure for students interested in requesting assessment of prior experiential learning is as follows:

- a. The student enrolls in CDC 3301 Portfolio Development for 2 semester hours of credit. **A student may enroll in CDC 3301 only once and should plan to develop all materials for receiving academic credit for experiential learning from this one-time enrollment.** The instructor for this course (1) provides an overview of the experiential learning assessment program, (2) assists in determining whether or not prior learning is appropriate or adequate to request academic credit, (3) provides the guidance necessary to prepare an educational portfolio, and (4) evaluates the portfolio to determine if the content is sufficient to approve submission for faculty assessment. NOTE: No more than 25 percent of the degree may be earned by using experiential learning assessment credit or portfolio-based credit. **Academic credit earned through experiential learning will not count toward the University's residency requirement.**
- b. The student prepares the portfolio, which includes
  1. A statement of the student's educational goals;
  2. A chronological record, **with external documentation**, of the student's education and work experiences;
  3. A clear statement of the **specific** knowledge and skills not learned in college for which the student desires to receive academic credit;
  4. Information that links the **specific** knowledge and skills to the student's goals and educational degree program;
  5. **Information that links the specific knowledge and skills of the student to specific learning outcomes of the specific courses for which the student wants to receive equivalent academic credit;** and

- 6. Documented evidence that substantiates the student's claim to learning.
- c. Faculty assessment. Once the portfolio is submitted to the faculty for evaluation, the faculty member uses several methods of assessment, which include product assessment such as an original computer program, interviews, oral or written examinations, simulations, performance tests, and/or essays. The faculty member makes a recommendation to award or not award the hours of credit. **This recommendation is made to the Dean of the College for which equivalent academic credit will be awarded for experiential learning activities and to the Associate Provost/Dean of Undergraduate Studies for final approval and confirmation of awarded credit to the University Registrar.**
- d. Fee Payment The student pays the appropriate fees for the credit awarded.
- e. Credit is then posted to the student's transcript **by the University Registrar.**

In summary, Troy University has not offered CDC 3301 since the introduction of its single Undergraduate Catalog in 2005. To address the off-site committee's concerns over clarity with regard to this class and experiential learning activities at the University, revised procedures for these will appear in the 2009-2010 Undergraduate Catalog. The University reaffirms its commitment to academic integrity and quality with regard to all University-awarded credit. Troy University respectfully finds that it is in compliance with this comprehensive standard.

3.4.8 Supporting Documentation Available Online	Location
2008-2009 Undergraduate Catalog	<a href="http://www.troy.edu/catalogs/0809undergrad_pdf/">http://www.troy.edu/catalogs/0809undergrad_pdf/</a>

