Learning the Landscape of CPL

Results from the 2024 Survey of CPL Policies and Practices at US and Canadian Postsecondary Institution

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Today’s CAEL-AACRAO Webinar

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Background on the CPL Institutional Survey

399 U.S. and Canadian undergraduate-serving institutions participated in the survey

Varied institutional characteristics are represented in the sample

- 60% comprehensive institutions
- 24% lower-division only
- 14% undergraduate only
- 61% public
- 95% U.S. institutions
Access, Benefits, Challenges, and General Administration of CPL

- Overall CPL Access in Higher Ed
- Benefits and Challenges
  - Availability of Financial Assistance
- Administrative Practices
  - Staffing
  - Quality Assurance
  - Data tracking
  - Marketing

cael.org
Defining CPL

Credit for prior learning (CPL): Assessment mechanisms colleges, universities and other education or training providers use to evaluate learning that occurred outside traditional academic environments. Used to grant college credit, certification or advanced standing toward further education or training. It may also be called prior learning assessment (PLA), recognition of prior learning and/or recognition of learning.
Does your institution currently offer any type of credit for prior learning?

- Yes, we offer CPL: 82%
- No, and our institution IS NOT considering doing so: 9%
- No, but our institution IS considering doing so: 6%
- Not yet, but our institution is in the process of adding CPL to our credit attainment options: 3%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Available (%)</th>
<th>Not Available (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized exams</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual assessments</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of noncollege education and training</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion of institutional noncredit to credit</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty developed exams</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other method</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 14: Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Staff, Faculty and/or Administrators Involved in Evaluating CPL on an Annual Basis by Institutional Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Size</th>
<th>Less than 1 FTE</th>
<th>1 FTE</th>
<th>2-4 FTE</th>
<th>5-7 FTE</th>
<th>8-10 FTE</th>
<th>More than 10 FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 - 2,499</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500 - 4,999</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 - 19,999</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000+</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11: Tracked and Reported CPL outcomes (all that apply)

- Number of learners earning CPL credits over a specific timeframe: 68%
- Number of CPL credits earned over a specific timeframe: 66%
- CPL credits earned by pathway and/or assessment mechanism: 56%
- CPL credits earned by learner demographics: 40%
- Number of CPL credits attempted over a specific timeframe: 16%
Figure 12: How Learners are Made Aware of CPL Pathways (all that apply)

- On the institution's web page: 69%
- In the catalog: 69%
- Admissions: 62%
- Faculty: 53%
- Registrar: 49%
- Student success: 34%
- Academic affairs: 33%
- At orientation: 26%
- Workforce development: 16%
- Student handbook: 14%
- Direct outreach through text or email: 13%
- Social-media posts: 10%
- CPL information session: 6%
- Other: 14%
Applications and Limitations of CPL

- Methods/pathways
- Applying CPL: credential types, credential requirements
- Credit limits
- Transcripts
- Transfer policies, rationale
Figure 2: CPL Pathways Available (all that apply)

- Evaluation of noncollege education and training: 91%
- Standardized exams: 90%
- Individual assessments: 80%
- Faculty-developed exam, not standardized at the institutional level: 65%
- Conversion of institutional noncredit to credit: 31%
Figure 4: General Applicability of CPL Credits to Program Requirements (all that apply)

- Elective requirements: 91%
- Major requirements: 90%
- General-education requirements: 87%
- Satisfying prerequisite requirements: 73%
- Concentration requirements: 72%
- Minor requirements: 65%
- Institutional-residency requirements: 14%
86% of institutions record CPL credit on the transcript

How CPL is Recorded (Top Responses)

- 54% list the number of CPL credits
- 50% show CPL credit as a specific course with a pass/fail grade
- 31% record CPL as testing or exam credits
54% of institutions do not accept CPL awarded by other colleges or universities in transfer

Reasons for not accepting CPL in transfer

- Concerns about integrity and rigor
- Lack of documentation and verification
- Institutional policy and faculty discretion
- Uncertainty about the transferability and applicability of CPL credit
- Lack of CPL transfer processes
- Accreditation and licensure requirements
- Institutional philosophy and tradition
Figure 21: Conditions Under Which CPL Awarded at Another Institution will be Accepted in Transfer Without Re-evaluation (all that apply)

- CPL evaluated by an institution with whom we have established articulation agreements: 52%
- Credits awarded through CPL apply to the credential and/or major selected by the transfer learner: 37%
- CPL evaluated by an institution whose CPL policies and practices are known and trustworthy: 33%
- Institutional CPL policy grants credit for that type of CPL credit: 31%
- CPL evaluated by a credit recommendation service: 28%
- CPL credit meets an applicable common core of courses within a particular system of higher education (e.g., Arizona GEC, Tennessee Transfer Pathways, etc.): 25%
Using Benchmark Data
Poll Question!

Based on the data presented in the report, which part of your CPL program do you feel is in most need of attention or change?

- Financial aid for CPL
- Staffing
- General policies like credit caps or other limitations
- Transfer policies
- Transcription policies
- Data tracking
- Quality assurance
- Something else....
Discussion and Q&A
CAEL’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

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Hilton New Orleans Riverside
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- Member Awards
- Launch of New Benefits
- Networking
- Promotions & Prizes

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About AACRAO

AACRAO is a non-profit, voluntary, professional association working to make higher education more responsive to learners. With a membership of more than 15,000 higher education professionals representing approximately 2,300 institutions in more than 40 countries, the association provides advocacy, research, and policy-based guidance and training to higher education professionals to smooth the path for learners at every stage of their journey.