

# ALTERNATIVE LEARNING POLICY

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A student may apply for Alternative Learning Credits for experiences incurred as a matriculated MCLA student for which they have not otherwise been awarded credit, and that either do not reasonably well fit the definitions of Internship, Independent Study, or Independent Research, or for which application for such mechanisms was not a reasonable expectation. To apply for alternative learning credit, students will create and submit a portfolio documenting said learning experiences as they relate to a specific course in the MCLA curriculum. Alternative learning credits awarded will not be included in the 45 MCLA credits required for graduation and will not count towards the final 15 credits needed to be taken at MCLA for graduation. Students at MCLA may earn a total of 15 credits for alternative learning credit, prior learning credit, and/or internships. In the rare event that a student is approved to receive 15 credits of prior learning credit and there are extenuating circumstances when an internship is required for their program of study or is deemed necessary, the Dean of Academic Affairs may grant an exception to the total 15 credit limit. This exception would only be allowed in very rare instances.

Any student seeking credit for alternative learning via portfolio should initiate the application no later than the add-drop deadline of the semester prior to graduation. To initiate the process, the student must consult with a department chair in the department for the course that will be included in the portfolio for the purpose of determining the appropriate faculty sponsor(s). In consultation with the faculty sponsor(s) and department chair (these could be the same individual), the student should draft their portfolio to include a narrative that aligns the learning objectives of the course with documentary evidence from their experience demonstrating the specific skills, abilities, and knowledge gained (examples may include photographs, logs, certifications, and a letter from a supervisor). The chair or faculty sponsor might recommend that the student enroll in ACAD 395 Experiential Credit Portfolio.

The student must submit the completed portfolio to the department chair, who will send it to the faculty sponsor. For consideration during the concurrent semester, the submission must be made no later than October 1<sup>st</sup> for the fall semester or February 15<sup>th</sup> for the spring semester. Submissions received after these deadlines would be considered for credit in the subsequent semester. The department chair will send the portfolio to the faculty sponsor(s), who will write a recommendation on the awarding of credit. The recommendation will be reviewed by the Chair and then forwarded to the Dean of Academic Affairs who will make the final decision. Portfolios will be reviewed, evaluated, and returned within four to six weeks of receipt. Students who do not receive credit, or who receive fewer credits than proposed, may revise their portfolios and resubmit for an additional review.

A per-credit fee will be assessed at the time of portfolio submission. Students are not eligible for financial aid for credits earned through the alternative learning policy. Students will not be charged additional per-credit fees for resubmission of a returned portfolio. Credit for alternative learning is never guaranteed.