A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING A STATEWIDE PLAN FOR AWARDING COLLEGE CREDIT
102 FOR WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at http://leg.colorado.gov/.)

Making Higher Education Attainable Interim Study Committee. The bill requires an existing council charged with looking at general education courses (council) to implement a plan for determining and awarding academic credit for postsecondary education based on work-related experience.

Furthermore, state institutions of higher education (institutions) are
required to evaluate student learning from work-related experience and award appropriate academic credit for the experience. Also, institutions shall accept and transfer academic credit awarded for work-related experience as courses with guaranteed-transfer designation, unless the council creates a plan concerning awarding and transferring academic credit for work-related experience for courses with guaranteed-transfer designation.

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Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) In addition to the student rights pursuant to section 23-1-125 (1)(a), (1)(c), and (1)(d), Colorado Revised Statutes, students need additional rights for their work-related experience to be evaluated fairly for application toward a postsecondary credential;

(b) To ensure the economic vitality of Colorado, every industry needs access to a skilled workforce, every Coloradan needs access to meaningful employment, and institutions of higher education must maintain the ability to enroll qualified students and produce high-quality credentials of value;

(c) During the 2016-17 and 2017-18 academic years, high school students earned nine thousand industry credentials related to high-demand jobs and industries in Colorado. These industry credentials should be evaluated for potential application toward a postsecondary credential with transferability among two-year and four-year institutions.

(d) The commission on higher education, in collaboration with representatives from institutions of higher education, must develop a plan to align work-related experience with academic credit that counts toward a student’s postsecondary education credential;

(e) The plan must be open, transparent, and credible so students
can progress more efficiently along pathways into postsecondary education and the workforce;

(f) Industry members, especially from high workforce demand and growing industries with critical occupations and top jobs that are identified in the Colorado talent pipeline report, are important stakeholders in this process to ensure Colorado's higher education system is responsive to students and to the changing economy; and

(g) Through this work, the general assembly ensures additional pathways to career and financial success for Colorado students and workers and reduced costs to students through less time required to earn a degree.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, add 23-5-145.5 as follows:

23-5-145.5. Credit for work-related experience - plan - report - definitions - repeal. (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "COMMISSION" HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-101.1 (1).

(b) "COUNCIL" MEANS THE COUNCIL CREATED AND EXISTING PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-1-108.5, CONVENED BY THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION.

(c) "STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION" OR "INSTITUTION" HAS THE SAME MEANING SET FORTH IN SECTION 23-1-135 (2).

(d) "WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE" MEANS ANY EXPERIENCE ACQUIRED WITHIN THE PAST TEN YEARS THROUGH PAID OR UNPAID EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SELF-EMPLOYMENT, AN INTERNSHIP, A RESIDENCY, A PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, OR AN
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM, THAT MAY LEAD TO OR RESULT IN A BUSINESS
CREDENTIAL, AN INDUSTRY CREDENTIAL, A TECHNICAL CERTIFICATE, OR
A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE.

(2) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2022, THE COUNCIL, IN
COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION, SHALL CREATE, ADOPT, AND
IMPLEMENT A PLAN, REFERRED TO IN THIS SECTION AS THE "PLAN", TO
AWARD POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT, IF APPROPRIATE, FOR
LEARNING DEMONSTRATED FROM WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.

(3) THE COUNCIL, AS A PART OF THE PLAN, SHALL:

(a) DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING AND ALIGNING LEARNING
ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE TO THE KNOWLEDGE
AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR AWARDING POSTSECONDARY
ACADEMIC CREDIT;

(b) DEVELOP A PROCESS FOR ASSESSING AND ALIGNING A
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE PROGRAM THAT IS PROVIDED OR
ENDORSED BY AN INDUSTRY ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED
EXPERIENCE TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR
AWARDING POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT;

(c) IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE HOW LEARNING OR A
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OR LICENSE PROGRAM THAT IS PROVIDED OR
ENDORSED BY AN INDUSTRY ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED
EXPERIENCE WILL RESULT, IF APPROPRIATE, IN POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC
CREDIT WITH GUARANTEED-TRANSFER DESIGNATION;

(d) IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE HOW TO RECOGNIZE
CREDENTIALS EARNED BY A STUDENT AT AN AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE
PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-802 AND DETERMINE HOW CREDENTIALS
WILL TRANSFER FROM AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGES, IF APPROPRIATE, TO
PUBLIC TWO-YEAR AND FOUR-YEAR STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND

(e) PRIORITIZE THE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES ACQUIRED THROUGH WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO WORKFORCE DEMANDS AND GROWING INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED BY THE MOST RECENT COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT PREPARED PURSUANT TO SECTION 24-46.3-103, OR IDENTIFIED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COLORADO WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CREATED IN SECTION 24-46.3-101.

(4) THE COUNCIL, IN CREATING THE PLAN, SHALL CONSULT WITH AND INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS, IF APPROPRIATE, FROM:

(a) REPRESENTATIVES OF INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, FACULTY MEMBERS AND REGISTRARS;

(b) REPRESENTATIVES OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT REPRESENT STUDENTS IN COLORADO;

(c) REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COLORADO WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL;

(d) REPRESENTATIVES OF INDUSTRIES WITH HIGH WORKFORCE DEMAND AND GROWING INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED IN THE MOST RECENT COLORADO TALENT PIPELINE REPORT AND ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING THEM; AND

(e) REPRESENTATIVES SELECTED BY THE COMMISSION.

(5) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2023, THE COUNCIL, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMISSION, SHALL CREATE, ADOPT, AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE AND AWARD POSTSECONDARY ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR LEARNING ACQUIRED FROM WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE FOR ADDITIONAL WORKFORCE DEMANDS AND INDUSTRIES NOT
Addressed in subsection (3) of this section.

(6) (a) The plan must require each institution to:

   (I) Evaluate the learning acquired by a student from work-related experience and determine and award appropriate academic credit for the work-related experience consistent with standards established by the plan; and

   (II) Beginning with the 2023-24 academic year, accept and transfer within the institution and to other institutions postsecondary academic credit awarded for work-related experience as courses with guaranteed-transfer designation, unless the council, in collaboration with the commission, creates, adopts, and implements a new plan prior to the 2023-24 academic year, concerning the award and transfer of academic credit awarded for work-related experience for courses with guaranteed-transfer designation.

   (b) Each institution may also award academic credit to students for other prior learning from work-related experience toward the student’s program of study if the learning meets standards established by the institution and aligns with policies established by the commission on higher education regarding prior learning assessment.

(7) (a) During the second regular session of the seventy-third general assembly in 2022, the department of higher education shall report to the education committees of the senate and house of representatives, or any successor committees, regarding the creation, adoption, and implementation of the plans adopted pursuant to this section.
(b) This subsection (7) is repealed, effective July 1, 2022.

(8) (a) On or before March 1, 2024, and on or before March 1 of each year thereafter, the council shall report to the education committees of the senate and house of representatives, or any successor committees, regarding the implementation of this section. The report must include, at a minimum:

(I) The number of students who were awarded credits and who transferred credits to or from an institution pursuant to this section;

(II) Data regarding the age and demographics of students who were awarded credits and who transferred credits to or from an institution pursuant to this section;

(III) The implementation challenges of this section; and

(IV) Any recommended statutory revisions to this section.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 24-1-136(11)(a)(I), the reporting requirement pursuant to this subsection (8) continues until the repeal of this subsection (8).

(c) This subsection (8) is repealed, effective July 1, 2029.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-1-125, add (4.7) as follows:

23-1-125. Commission directive - student bill of rights - degree requirements - implementation of core courses - competency test - prior learning - prior work-related experience. (4.7) Prior work-related experience. Pursuant to section 23-5-145.5, the council created and existing pursuant to section 23-1-108.5, in collaboration with the commission, shall create, adopt, and
IMPLEMENT A PLAN TO DETERMINE AND AWARD POSTSECONDARY ACAD

EMIC CREDIT FOR WORK-RELATED EXPERIENCE.

SECTION 4. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 5, 2020, if adjournment sine die is on May 6, 2020); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2020 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.