



## HB 20-1002 College Credit for Prior Work Experience

*Sponsored by Reps. McLachlan and Baisley and  
Sens. Zenzinger and Story*

This bill seeks to expand opportunities for students to earn college credit for learning acquired through work, including employment, apprenticeships, internships, or self-study. The bill was supported and sponsored by the **Making Higher Education Attainable Interim Study Committee** and aligns with the Department’s R4 budget request.



Outside military training and occupations, public institutions of higher education are currently not required to evaluate work-related experience for college credit.



This bill would charge the Commission on Higher Education (CCH) to work with institutions on a plan to award postsecondary academic credit, where appropriate, for learning demonstrated from work-related experience.



The additional credit awarded to students will save them money, reduce the cost of their education, and accelerate degree completion, advancing their success and the Colorado economy.

### Background

In 2017, the General Assembly passed groundbreaking legislation to help veterans and servicemembers earn credit for college-level learning acquired in the military. In response, CCH revised its policy on prior learning assessment to expand credit awards for success in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate and other recognized exams. This new bill would further expand credit for learning that takes place outside of the classroom verified through an industry credential, examination, or other demonstrations of college-level knowledge, skills and competencies.

#### HB 20-1002 addresses statewide postsecondary attainment in two ways:

##### Credit for industry credentials and licensure

Coloradans earn thousands of industry credentials and receive hundreds of professional licenses every year. These awards confirm learning that is often aligned to the outcomes for GT Pathways (general education) or for courses in the academic major. **Students have a right for this learning to be evaluated, and where appropriate, to receive equivalent academic credit.**

##### Expanded “test out” options

Institutions of higher education are currently required by statute to give students the opportunity to “test out” of general education courses. As amended, HB20-1002 would **expand this option to all courses in the undergraduate curriculum through examination or portfolio review. Students who are successful would be awarded credit without having to pay tuition.**

Since its creation by the General Assembly in 2001, the **General Education Council** has developed a statewide general education transfer curriculum for more than 1,200 courses and created Statewide Transfer Agreements in 34 academic disciplines— **helping students graduate in less time and take fewer courses in the transfer process.** This proven, representative group would oversee the development and implementation of a plan to award transferable credit for work-based learning.

### Key Statutory Provisions

1. **Create a plan** to award students transferable college credit for work-related experiences.
2. **Expand prior learning assessment options** for students to “test out” of any course in the undergraduate curriculum free of tuition.

Meets the strategic goals of *Colorado Rises* to



Increase Credential  
Completion



Improve Student  
Success

### For More Information

Chloe Mugg, Legislative Liaison, [chloe.mugg@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:chloe.mugg@dhe.state.co.us)

Colorado Department of Higher Education <https://highered.colorado.gov/>

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development <http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/>

1600 Broadway, Suite 2200  
Denver, CO 80202

(303) 862-3001

