



Apprenticeship Credit for Prior Learning

Registered Apprenticeship programs are designed to help an apprentice master the competencies of the given profession, and that purpose is served by granting credit and advanced standing in consideration of relevant prior experience or high school and post-secondary coursework. This memo outlines the **how** and **when** of granting credit to new apprentices.

The SPONSOR makes credit determinations

Granting credit for prior learning allows apprentices who come to you with relevant background to advance faster and complete their apprenticeship earlier.

It may also save the apprentice the time and money of repeating a course they took elsewhere.

The Apprenticeship SPONSOR makes Credit Determinations

The decision to grant credit for prior course work (RTI) or on-the-job learning (OJL) is made by the sponsor. Credit will be based on demonstration of previous skills or knowledge equivalent to those identified in the **sponsor's Standards of Apprenticeship**. Credit can be given for the related technical instruction (RTI), hours of on-the-job learning (OJL), or both. If your apprenticeship program relies on an outside instruction provider, we recommend that the Sponsor seek the instructor's recommendation to determine if credit should be given for prior coursework.

The granting of advanced standing by a Sponsor will be uniformly applied to all apprentices. Sponsors are completely within their right to require all apprentices to progress through their instructional sequence in its entirety. Even if other sponsors in the trade give credit for a high school or college program, all sponsors are not obligated to do so.

Documentation of Related Technical Instruction

The State Apprenticeship Office requires that the sponsor document the decision to grant credit in their apprenticeship program records and include the justification, such as evidence of prior coursework or a placement assessment. Please provide the documentation and justification of your decision to the State Apprenticeship Office with one or more of the following documents:

- College degree earned (attach evidence of degree)
- College, technical or high school coursework (attach copy of transcript)
- Military service (Joint Services Transcript)
- Relevant certifications
- Placement assessment (with description of test used).



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- ✓ The Apprentice **REQUESTS** credit for prior experience or education and provides documentation.
- ✓ You may **ASSESS** knowledge and skills through practical or written tests
- ✓ **COMPARE** against your Standards of Apprenticeship.
- ✓ **DOCUMENT** your decision in writing
- ✓ **NOTIFY** the Apprenticeship Office. Credit in licensed trades requires written approval from DLT.
- ✓ **COMMUNICATE** your decision to the Apprentice so they know what will be required for completion.

Documentation of On-the-Job Hours worked in the Occupation

For apprentices who come to you with prior work experience in the occupation, you may give them credit for the hours worked if you are satisfied that their work experience is relevant. RI Department of Labor and Training (DLT) will not allow you to grant credit for hours worked illegally in a licensed trade. Documentation could include:

- A letter on letterhead from the prior employer attesting to the hours worked;
- An apprentice cancellation by the previous sponsor, documenting prior experience;
- An apprenticeship work record book (including from outside Rhode Island);
- Military service (Joint Services Transcript / DD-214)

Process and Timeline

Applicants requesting credit for previous experience who are selected into the apprenticeship program will start at the beginning wage rate. The request for credit will be evaluated and a determination made by the sponsor during the probationary period, when actual on-the-job and related instruction performance can be examined. Prior to completion of the probationary period, the amount of credit to be awarded will be determined upon review of the apprentice's previous work and training/education record and evaluation of the apprentice's performance and demonstrated skill and knowledge during the probationary period. An apprentice granted credit will be advanced to the wage rate designated for the period to which such credit accrues.

Career and Technical High School Students

These same principles apply when registering a high school student as an apprentice and allowing relevant courses to fulfill part of the Related Technical Instruction required for the apprenticeship. [Note: If your Standards require a high school diploma for entry, you will need to update your entry requirements prior to registering a high school student as an apprentice.]

References: Please refer to SECTION XI - CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE in your RI Standards of Apprenticeship. – 29 CFR §§ 29.5(b)(12); 30.4(c)(8); RIGL 28-45-9(2)(xii)