



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING HANDBOOK

*Empowering students
to transform society*

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**For more information or assistance, please contact
Coordinator for Student Support Services, A302 or 942-4291 ext. 2319**

*Newman University is a Catholic, liberal art college which through its educational programs
empowers students to transform society by permeating it with Christian values.
Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 30 N. LaSalle St., Ste. 2400,
Chicago, IL 60602-2504.*

Newman University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, handicap, national or ethnic origin.

**PLEASE TAKE TIME TO READ THIS HANDBOOK THOROUGHLY
BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO PREPARE YOUR PORTFOLIO**

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CREDIT BY PORTFOLIO

*Only matriculated Newman University students are eligible to submit an application for
Experiential Learning Credit by Portfolio*

THE PROCESS

1. Read through the Newman University catalog to prepare a tentative list of courses in which you feel you have prior learning knowledge.
2. Meet with your advisor to discuss which courses will meet requirements for your specific degree program. For example, do you need upper level credit, elective credit, liberal arts credit, and so on?
3. When you are ready to begin assembling your portfolio, contact the Coordinator for Student Support Services for assistance, if needed. Student Support Services is located in the Sacred Heart Hall, A302, 942-4291 ext. 2319.
4. Obtain a syllabus from the proper school for each course for which credit is requested. The portfolio should be written based on the course objectives. A separate portfolio must be submitted for each course for which credit is requested.
5. All Experiential Learning Credit portfolios MUST follow the outline beginning on page 7 of this handbook.
6. If you are comfortable that the portfolio has enough merit to be submitted for evaluation, obtain an Application for Experiential Learning Credit from the Coordinator for Student Support Services.
7. Upon completion of the application, the application and the portfolio material MUST be submitted to the Coordinator for Student Support Services with a non-refundable \$30.00 evaluation fee. **Do not send portfolios directly to instructors.**
8. The Coordinator for Student Support Services will submit the completed portfolio to the appropriate division chair. It will be distributed to the assigned faculty member for evaluation. The faculty member will evaluate the portfolio using course objectives.
9. Please allow faculty members ample time to review portfolios (this could easily take three to six weeks). There are certain times of the academic year when it will take longer for the portfolio to go through the entire evaluation process. Therefore, **DO NOT** wait until the last minute to submit your portfolio. Get your portfolio in early to avoid unnecessary stress upon yourself.
10. The appropriate faculty member will evaluate the portfolio and it will be returned to the division chair for review. After departmental approval, the Coordinator for Student Support Services will submit the portfolio to the Provost & Vice-President for Academic Affairs for final approval. After the final approval, you will be contacted by the Coordinator for Student Support Services with the decision of the faculty member and the Provost & Vice-President for Academic Affairs. The decision will be one of the following:

A. Approved:

1. If the portfolio is approved, you will need to submit \$50.00 for every one credit hour granted. **All Experiential Learning Credit fees are to be submitted to the Coordinator for Student Support Services.**
2. The portfolio is then forwarded to the Registrar's office and the credit is noted on the student's transcript. At this time, the yellow copy of the application will be sent to the student. This decision is final.

B. Not Approved:

1. If the portfolio is not approved, the student may claim the document from the Coordinator for Student Support Services. No record of the attempted credit will be entered on your transcript. This decision is final.

C. Additional Information or Performance Needed:

1. If additional information or performance is needed, you will be contacted with information regarding the revision needed for your portfolio.
2. Once you have made the requested revision to your portfolio, return the portfolio to the Coordinator for Student Support Services to be re-evaluated. Upon resubmitting your portfolio with revision, you do NOT need to submit another \$30 evaluation fee. Again, please allow ample time for the portfolio to go through all the channels.

FINAL DATES FOR SUBMITTING PORFOLIOS

If you plan to graduate in May, deadline is March 01

If you plan to graduate in August, deadline is April 15

If you plan to graduate in December, deadline is October 15

IMPORTANT FACTS TO REMEMBER

I. About the Portfolio

1. Experiential Learning Credit is a program created to provide recognition for the knowledge gained through work and/or life experience that is equivalent to the knowledge gained by taking a specific college course.
2. *Until the fees for approved portfolios are paid, they will not be entered on a transcript, and will NOT be considered as completed degree requirements.*
3. When preparing your portfolio, you must be able to describe and demonstrate what YOU KNOW and CAN DO as a result of your experiential learning.
4. Since the portfolio will be submitted as a request for university credit; it is expected that the portfolio will conform to university standards for written work. Portfolios that do not meet these standards will be returned to you.
5. Portfolios must always be submitted through the Coordinator for Student Support Services.
6. There is NO GUARANTEE that submitting Experiential Learning Credit portfolios will result in the awarding of credit.
7. In some cases, before a decision about a portfolio is made, the evaluator may contact the person submitting the portfolio for the purpose of verifying information or knowledge.
8. When submitting a portfolio, please note that all approved portfolios become property of Newman University and will NOT be returned to you. Portfolios that are not approved can be claimed from the Coordinator for Student Support Services.
9. If experiential learning credit is granted, a grade of “PASS” will be given. A grade of “PASS” is not calculated in the grade point average and for the purpose of experiential learning credit, assumes achievements at a level of “C” or better.
10. The maximum number of Experiential Learning Credit hours you may receive is 12. (Exception: registered nurses enrolling in the baccalaureate nursing program from non-NLN accredited associate degree programs may receive up to 33 hours of Experiential Learning Credit.)
11. A separate portfolio must be submitted for each course in which credit is requested.
12. All portfolios should include both a theoretical and practical understanding of the subject areas.
13. All portfolios will be evaluated by appropriate faculty using course objectives.
14. Any work or life experience considered to be valid for more than one course must be approved in advance for multiple course credit.

II. IMPORTANT DATES

1. Please allow faculty members ample time to review portfolio. (This could easily take three to six weeks.) There are certain times of the academic year when it will take longer for the portfolio to go through the entire evaluation process. Therefore, **DO NOT** wait until the last minute to submit your portfolio. Get your portfolio in early to avoid unnecessary stress upon yourself.

2. Portfolios will be accepted for evaluation from August 15 through April 30.

*** From May 1 Through August 14, students can meet with the Coordinator for Student Support Services to gain assistance in putting together portfolios, but they will NOT be able to submit them for evaluation.**

3. Students graduating the following times must submit portfolios by the dates listed below:

May.....	Last date to submit portfolios.....	March 01
August.....	Last date to submit portfolios.....	April 15
December.....	Last date to submit portfolios.....	October 15

4. When a portfolio has been submitted for evaluation, and has either been approved or the student has been contacted to submit additional information, they have two years to follow up with their portfolio (pay the credit hour fee or submit revision) or they must re-submit portfolio and pay another evaluation fee.

***At any point in the two-year period that the student wishes to complete their portfolio, they will be subject to the current rates for Experiential Learning Credit program.**

III. FEES

1. Portfolio fees as of this printing:

⇒ \$30 non-refundable evaluation fee

⇒ \$50 for every one credit hour granted

2. All portfolio fees are to be submitted to the Coordinator of Student Support Services. If paying fees by check, please make checks payable to Newman University.

ANY WORK OR LIFE EXPERIENCE CONSIDERED TO BE VALID FOR MORE THAN ONE COURSE MUST BE APPROVED IN ADVANCE FOR MULTIPLE COURSE CREDIT.

THE PORTFOLIO

The Experiential Learning Credit portfolio is a document written and compiled by a student, describing knowledge gained through work and/or life experience that is equivalent to the knowledge gained by taking a specific university course. If you have had significant prior learning, and can describe and provide independent documentation for this learning, the portfolio may be a helpful tool in completing your degree requirements.

CONTENTS OF A PORTFOLIO

All Experiential Learning Credit portfolios submitted for credit **MUST** follow the outline provided below. *(The examples that follow are taken from actual portfolios that have been submitted and approved for credit.)*

I. Course Name and Number: List the name and number of the course.

Example: **I. Course Name & Number** - Introduction to Microcomputers CIS 1003

II. Credit Hours Requested: State the number of credits you are requesting.

Example: **II. Credit Hours Requested** - 3

III. Competency Statement: Describes the learning that resulted from a particular experience.

Example A: **III. Competency Statement** - This portfolio will demonstrate competence in the skills and techniques taught in Fundamentals of Oral Communication, Speech 1013. They are listed as course objectives in the syllabus. They are as follows:

* To gain understanding of the basic concepts and skills used in effective human communication, including interpersonal communication, small group communication, and public speaking.

It is my intent to demonstrate that the experience I have gained in the pursuit of my career in Retail Management is at least the equivalent of the course, that I know the basic skills involved, that I do possess the ability to do the work and can demonstrate the skills listed above.

I would then request upon this demonstration that I be granted three credit hours in speech.

Example B: **III. Competency Statement:** Knows and can apply the principles and techniques of management and finance well enough to develop a departmental budget for a school district.

Example C: **III. Competency Statement:** Knows the basic principles and techniques of interviewing and can apply these, specifically: establishing rapport, eliciting information, and probing without creating resistance, communicating clearly.

Example D: **III. Competency Statement:** Knows the roles, functions and operating procedures of civic or community volunteer well enough to serve as a leader in the organization.

IV. Position Title or Experience: List the name(s) of the position(s) or the particular experience(s) from which you acquired your knowledge.

Example: **IV. Position Title or Experience**

4/89 to 11/91

Title: Store manager, Continental Cyclery, 3101 N. Rock Rd., Wichita, Kansas.

Duties: Responsible for the daily operations of the Rock Rd. store. Merchandising, sales, marketing and advertising for all three Continental Cyclery locations. Responsible for all outside promotions, sales training of personnel and instructor for adult education classes.

7/86 to 4/89

Title: Assistant Store Manager, Bicycle Peddler, 500 E. Central, Wichita, Kansas.

Duties: Sales and management of retail store and service department. Directly responsible for development of plans for expansion. Responsible for computerized point of sale system. Responsible for all market research data.

Additional Experience:

- Director of Newton BMX Inc. Newton BMX was a non-profit corporation formed to negotiate contracts with cities. This allowed Bicycle Motocross Tracks to be built as public facilities on public land. Two tracks were built, one in Wichita and one in Newton. One of these tracks, Emery Park Track in Wichita, is still operational. The Newton Track is no longer in existence.
- Chairman for the Off-Road Committee of the OZ Bicycle Club. As chairman of the Off-Road Committee of the OZ Bicycle Club, I serve as a community contact in the development of mountain events and facilities. I am currently responsible for all development and coordination of mountain bike rides for the club.

V. Responsibilities: List the responsibilities you performed in regard to your position or experience.

Example: **V. Responsibilities:** I was the Manager of Continental Cyclery Rock Rd. store from January 1990 to this November. In that position I had the following responsibilities:

- Write ad copy and create store publications
- Coordinate and approve radio scripts
- Develop and implement yearly marketing plans
- Provide in-house sales training and memos
- Provide instruction for adult education classes
- Manage the daily operation of the Rock Road store
- Control inventory levels and overhead at the Rock Road location
- Provided market research and pursue ride development

Cycling is not only a vocation, but an avocation as well. I am the Off-road Chairman for the OZ Bicycle Club of Wichita. In that I am responsible for monthly presentations before the membership informing them about the Off-Road committee activities. I am involved in two major projects that are directly related to this position. One is the establishment of off-road bicycle trail at the Quivira Scout Ranch and the development of a trail on private land in and around the Sedan, Kansas, area.

VI. Relationship of Knowledge Gained to Coursework: Explain how the knowledge gained relates to the theory of the discipline for which you are requesting credit. The course description from Newman University catalog and/or the course syllabus would be very helpful in the completion of this section.

Example: **VI. Relationship of Knowledge Gained to Coursework:**

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (BSAD) 3063: Special Projects in Public Relations and Promotion.

Detailed study of planning, producing, managing, implementing and evaluating of a variety of public relations and promotional activities as they relate to selected events, situation, or organizational needs. (FALL-Even Year)

For the past several years I have been involved in a professional organization. I have, both in my hometown of Kansas City, Missouri, and in Wichita, held the office of Public Relation Chairman. In that capacity, I have been required to be involved in many things that I believe would be taught in a class such as the one described above.

It has been my responsibility to assist in promoting the local chapter of this organization in many ways; I forward press releases to various news publications announcing monthly meetings with all pertinent data and other special announcements. I have also been responsible for coordinating, writing/editing and producing the Kansas City chapter's first newsletter. As the need arose, I put together announcement cards for special events and prepared an official directory. I have, in my capacity of Public Relation Chairman, generated and had printed an Installation and Awards Banquet Program that held advertising for local business as a moneymaking project.

For a company in Kansas City where I was employed I have written articles for their quarterly newsletter. In my current position, I have been a constant contributor to the quarterly newsletter. Attached for your review are some examples of my work and back-up letters showing I did hold a Public Relation position in Kansas City and had responsibility for the publishing of the newsletter.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

VII. Achievement Measures: Identify any or all of these areas that apply:

*Life/Work Experience

*Internship

*Other Institution Course, Independent Study

* Other (Explain)

Example: **VII. Achievement Measures:** The achievement measures used for this portfolio are my life and work experience. In retail sales there are very few mileposts by which to measure one's success. There are no titles or honors in bicycle sales. You either make money or you go broke. Let it suffice to say that I was the manager of a retail store and I did not get to the level of responsibility that I had without exercising good communication skills.

Additional achievement measures would be circumstantial at best. I could make an argument that one does not get asked to speak to groups or to individuals unless you can speak. I would not be asked to speak before the Wichita Park Board about Land Access issues, unless they were fairly confident that I would be able to communicate clearly enough to justify the time I would take.

If my skills were marginal, the word would get around pretty fast and the opportunity that I now have for speaking would not be there.

VIII. Supporting Documentation: IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER WHILE COMPILING YOUR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION.

- This is conclusive evidence, from an outside source, that you have knowledge outlined in your competency statement.
- Prior learning documentation can take many forms and will depend to some extent on the kind of knowledge for which you are requesting credit.
- Documentation supports your narrative. No documentation will be evaluated for items not included in the narrative of your portfolio.
- Work samples, job descriptions and art work must be clearly labeled as belonging to you or having been produced by you.
- Upon submission, the Experiential Learning Credit portfolio becomes the property of Newman University. Do not include originals of artwork or documents you want to retain.

THE MOST DESIRABLE FORMS OF DOCUMENTATION ARE:

1. Job descriptions
2. Letters of verification from employers or expert witness.
* See examples a. and b.
3. Verification of seminar/training/conference participation
4. Continuing Education Units (CEU) credit verification
5. Work sample
 - Architectural plans
 - Art work
 - Articles written
 - Brochures/manuals designed
 - Computer plans developed
 - Licenses held
 - Musical performances/arrangements
 - Patents obtained
 - Photographs
6. Certificates and awards
7. Newspaper or magazine clippings
8. Performance evaluations

* In order to be valid, letters of verification should be typed on company or official letterhead, whenever possible. The letter should state the relationship of the verifier to you during the prior learning experience. It should verify in specific detail the skills and theoretical knowledge that you have and give appraisal of the quality of your knowledge and performance. The letter should not be a character reference, but should detail specific skills and knowledge observed. See the following samples.

Example A: VIII. Supporting Documentation. This is a good example of a letter requesting verification of your university level knowledge.

This sample letter that follows may be helpful. Take a look at it before requesting your letters of verification. Although you will surely want to revise it to fit your personality and circumstances, you need to be as specific as possible. The more specific you are, the better the letter you will receive.

Dear _____ :

As we discussed on the telephone, I am writing to ask you for a letter on my behalf for Newman University's Experiential Learning Credit program. As you know, I am hoping to earn college credits towards my degree for the knowledge acquired outside the classroom. Your letter will help me provide evidence that the knowledge I believe I possess is worthy of college credit.

Following the recommendation specified by the Experiential Learning Credit program of the university, I would like your letter to include the following:

1. A description of my position with all pertinent past and present experiences included.
2. A mention of your relationship to me, for example: supervisor, and the situation in which you have observed me. Also please include the dates of your observations and the length of time I worked for you.
3. An indication of my competence, skills, and knowledge in the following areas: (Here you want to specify what those competencies, skills, and knowledge areas are and relate to the course descriptions for which you are seeking credit.)
4. Evaluate how well I performed using adjectives as average, above average, exceptional, etc. It would be helpful if your statement included some comparison with others you have known who possess a college degree or college credits and who have held similar positions to mine.

It is important for me to add that what you write should not be a letter of recommendation, per se. Rather, the Experiential Learning Credit program requires that you verify my specific skills, competence, and knowledge and evaluate the level of my performance.

I would appreciate your sending this letter on company (organization) stationary to the Coordinator for Student Support Services, Newman University, 3100 McCormick Ave., Wichita, Kansas, 67213. I would like this letter to reach me or the University no later than (allow at least one month from the date you write letter.)

Thank you very much for agreeing to write this letter on my behalf. As I am sure you are aware, earning a college degree at this point in my life is very important to me.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Thank you once again.

Example B: VIII. Supporting Documentation. This is a good example of a letter of verification of your college level knowledge

Mr. Donald Lyons
Diamond College
Assessment Office
456 Espirit Street
Newtown, MI 04371

Dear Mr. Lyon:

I am writing to you in response to a request I received from Mrs. Barbara Ackerman. She has requested me to provide evidence of her accounting skills in connection with an assessment of prior learning to be done by your institution. I worked with Barbara several years ago when I was performing an audit of the Town of Hillsboro. At that time I was an Audit Manager with firm of Gordon & Sherman in Hillsboro and I was responsible for all field work.

Barbara, at that time, was the accountant for the Town of Hillsboro. In that capacity she performed essentially the entire accounting function for the town. As I recall, her responsibilities included:

1. Complete responsibility for maintaining the records of the town on the computer base (IBM System 32) system used by the town.
2. She, in fact, performed most of the work in connection with a conversion from a manual accounting system to the computer based system. This included solving significant problems which arose in connection with the conversion of records formerly maintained on an unsatisfactory magnetic card electronic data processing, bookkeeping machine to the IBM system.
3. Barbara had a good working knowledge of various concepts of municipal accounting.
4. Barbara was responsible for coordination of the audit performed by my firm. She prepared all of the accounting schedules that were needed in the performance of the audit. This included bank reconciliation's of all bank account and various other schedules requested.

In summary, it was obvious to me that Barbara Ackerman was performing all of the responsibilities of her position as town accountant exceptionally well. She was extremely competent in that position and in my opinion the town lost a valuable asset when Barbara left.

I believe Barbara has demonstrated skills in the accounting area which are beyond those expected of someone with her level of formal education.