

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1858

As Reported by House Committee On:
Higher Education

Title: An act relating to awarding academic credit for military training.

Brief Description: Providing for awarding academic credit for military training.

Sponsors: Representatives McCoy, Appleton, Morrell, Ryu and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Higher Education: 2/19/13, 2/21/13 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires each public institution of higher education to adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training courses or programs before December 31, 2014, and submit the policy to the Prior Learning Assessment work group for evaluation.
- Requires each public institution of higher education to provide a copy of their policy to award academic credit for military training to enrolled students who have listed prior or present military service in their application.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 18 members: Representatives Seaquist, Chair; Pollet, Vice Chair; Haler, Ranking Minority Member; Zeiger, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Fagan, Hansen, Hargrove, Johnson, Magendanz, Pedersen, Reykdal, Riccelli, Sawyer, Scott, Sells, Smith, Tarleton and Walsh.

Staff: Madeleine Thompson (786-7304).

Background:

Prior Learning Definition.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

"Prior learning" is defined as "the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience; through military training and experience; and through formal and informal education and training from in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions."

Prior Learning Assessment.

Legislation enacted in 2011 directs the Washington Student Achievement Council (Council), the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), the Council of Presidents of the four-year public baccalaureate institutions, the private independent higher education institutions, and the private career schools to collaborate to increase the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning that counts towards their major, degree, or certificate, while ensuring credit is awarded only for high quality, course-level competencies. Statute specifically charges the agencies and institutions to:

- increase the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning that counts towards their major or towards earning their degree, certificate, or credential, while ensuring that credit is awarded only for high quality, course-level competencies;
- increase the number and type of academic credits accepted for prior learning;
- develop transparent policies and practices in awarding academic credit for prior learning;
- improve prior learning assessment practices;
- create tools to develop faculty and staff knowledge and expertise in awarding credit for prior learning and to share exemplary policies and practices among institutions of higher education;
- develop articulation agreements when patterns of credit for prior learning are identified for particular programs and pathways;
- develop outcome measures to track progress on goals; and
- report progress annually.

The Council and the SBCTC jointly staff the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) work group. In 2013 the PLA work group completed a draft statewide policy for prior learning assessment that provides an operational definition and guidance on tracking credits earned through the PLA work group that would apply to public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education. In addition, the PLA work group was added to an existing reciprocity agreement between community and technical colleges. The expanded agreement allows for individual courses that meet certain requirements at the sending college to be considered to have met the requirements at the receiving college for a similar transfer degree.

Guides for Awarding Credit for Military Training.

There are three national associations that develop guidelines for acceptance of military training and experience for transfer and the award of credit:

- the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officer (AACRAO);
- the American Council on Education (ACE); and
- the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Colleges and universities in Washington use the ACE Military Guide recommendations as a starting point to evaluate the award of credit towards certificates and degrees.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Each public institution of higher education is required to adopt a policy to award academic credit to individuals for certain military training courses or programs before December 31, 2014. The individual must be enrolled in a public institution of higher education and have successfully completed any military training course or program as part of his or her military service that is:

- recommended for credit by a national higher education association that provides credit recommendations for military training courses and programs;
- included in the individual's military transcript issued by any branch of the armed services; or
- documented military training or experience that is substantially equivalent to any course or program offered by the institution of higher education.

Each public institution of higher education must:

- develop a procedure for receiving the necessary documentation to identify and verify the military training course or program that an individual is claiming for academic credit;
- provide a copy of their policy to award academic credit for military training to any enrolled students who have listed prior or present military service in their application; and
- develop and maintain a list of military training courses and programs that have qualified for academic credit.

Each public institution of higher education must submit its policy for awarding academic credit for military training to the PLA work group. The PLA work group must evaluate each policy and make recommendations.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

It is clarified that the military training must meet one of three requirements, rather than all three requirements to be considered for the policy to award academic credit for military training.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Other states are adopting policies such as this. This policy would help the state move along as it more directly addresses credits for military training. This is an outstanding bill. The proposal dovetails well with work under way through the Governor's office. It is important that the credits earned are applied towards a specific degree or pathway.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McCoy, prime sponsor; Mark San Souci, U.S. Department of Defense State Liaison Office; Scott Copeland, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; and Ted Wicorek, Veterans Legislative Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.