

Getting University Credit for Life Experience

Many students return to the university campus with years of experience through their work &/or professional training. To receive credit for college-level learning that has occurred outside the classroom, the student must be able to identify and articulate the knowledge learned by creating and submitting a portfolio. Under Credit for Life Experience (CLE), learning must be related directly to a course offered by La Roche University and appearing in the catalog, with the exception of courses listed as Internship, Independent Study, or Direct Research. The total number of credits awarded for life experience shall not exceed **30 credits** and **shall not be included in the last 30 credits required for residency at La Roche**. Each division may limit further the maximum number of credits to be counted towards a major.

The Credit for Life (CLE) Experience Process

1. Meet with your academic advisor to discuss your professional and personal learning experiences. He/she will help you to determine what course(s) you might earn credit for through Credit for Life Experience. Your advisor may refer you to a faculty member that teaches the specific course for which you are seeking CLE credit.
2. Contact the faculty member who is the subject matter expert (teaches the relevant course). You will want to work with that faculty member to review the course syllabus, discuss learning outcomes, etc. so that you know if you are qualified to submit a portfolio, and how best to prepare your portfolio.
3. Submit completed *Credit for Life Experience Application* to the Registrar's Office; this includes paying the CLE Application fee. This notifies the Registrar's Office that you are in the process of creating a CLE portfolio for submission.
4. Work on developing and creating your portfolio, making sure to include all of the sections and required formatting, as indicated in the guide below.
5. When completed, submit 1 copy of your portfolio to the Registrar's Office.
6. Your portfolio will be reviewed within 3 weeks; you will be notified of the decision. If awarded credit, you will be charged the \$100 per-credit fee to your student account.

What Is A Portfolio?

To gain university credit, a student must develop a Credit for Life Experience portfolio. A portfolio is an organized collection of essays and documentation demonstrating your learning through work and life experiences. Through the portfolio, you show that the knowledge you have gained through experience is equivalent to a specific university course at La Roche. To gain academic credit for experiences outside the university classroom, you must be able to identify and document your experience and learning. Since you do not earn academic credit for experience alone, you must meet the challenges of analyzing the learning and finding parallels with the La Roche curriculum.

Students can schedule a one-on-one appointment (either face-to-face or online via Microsoft Teams) with a professional tutor in the Writers' Center for portfolio creation assistance. Appointments can be made online at <https://laroche.mywconline.com>, or they can be made by stopping by Wright Library 206, calling 412-536-1230, or emailing the director at jessica.ganni@laroche.edu.

Portfolio Requirement Checklist

Your portfolio should contain the following:

- Cover Letter
- Table of Contents
- Copy of unofficial La Roche transcript that includes transfer coursework
- Résumé
- Education and Career goal statements
- Learning Narrative
- Documentation (including letters of verification, copies of certificates, etc.), that provides evidence of your experience and learning.

You may submit portfolios for multiple courses. While some components of each portfolio you submit (e.g., the resume and goals statements) will be the same, the Learning Narrative and Documentation will be specific to that course portfolio.

Portfolio Requirements in Detail

Previously submitted and approved portfolios are available for reference in the Registrar's Office.

Cover Letter

The Cover Letter should contain the following information: name, address, LRU Student ID #, e-mail address, and telephone number. It should also briefly introduce the purpose of the portfolio: what course (area) are you seeking credit for, and why.

Unofficial La Roche transcript

This can be printed through your my.LaRoche account.

Résumé

The résumé should be your professional résumé, which includes the following:

1. Name and contact information
2. Educational background/experience
3. Employment history
4. Relevant specialized training (e.g., CPR training, training in the use of specific software programs, etc.)
5. Relevant life experience (e.g., volunteer work, practical experience with software programs, managing a social organization, etc.)
6. References

Education and Career Goals Statement

Your Educational and Career Goals Statement should include:

1. Your long-term career and educational goals
2. What you have accomplished as it relates to those goals
3. How you plan to achieve your future goals

The Learning Narrative

The Learning Narrative should include the following:

1. A statement of how prior learning relates to your degree plan
2. A list of course(s) or course areas in which you are seeking credit and why (briefly). If you are submitting additional portfolios for other course(s) or course areas, please include that information even though each course area requires its own tailored portfolio.
3. A detailed description of your experience
4. A detailed discussion of the learning that took place and why/how that learning relates to the course(s) or course area in question
5. An Annotated Bibliography if sources are cited

Some general expectations to keep in mind:

- The focus of your narrative will be on the *learning experience*.
- Where possible, incorporate evidence from a range of sources (e.g., textbooks, interviews, syllabi, other programs, etc.).
- You will be attempting to persuade/argue that your learning parallels learning you would acquire in the course area(s) (i.e., you are not just describing your learning and hoping it fits).
- You should integrate theory and application—i.e., discuss what you have learned and how you have learned it, while showing that it is relevant learning.
- Please remember that you will be providing a separate narrative/portfolio for each major course area in which you will be seeking credit.

The style of writing is important. The learning narrative is not a term paper, and is written in first person, essay form. You are describing your experiences and the learning that resulted from them. You can organize your learning narrative chronologically or under subcategories, using learning outcome guidelines provided by your portfolio advisor.

In general, the length of the narrative ranges from 3-5 pages; length will vary depending upon individual experience, the number of courses being sought for credit, and the learning involved.

Documentation

Documentation is the evidence you present for each section of your portfolio, supporting your learning experiences. You can use direct and indirect documentation. Direct documentation, such as a work product, is usually the strongest supporting evidence of your learning experiences and outcomes. However, letters of verification from employers or experts who can verify your learning are also crucial.

Gear your documentation to the specific course area or subject area in which you seek credit. Label it for easy review. Make sure it is connected to the learning you are trying to demonstrate. Do not put original documents or photographs in the portfolio, as the portfolio will not be returned to you.

Examples of the types of documentation you could submit include the following:

- Job descriptions and/or classifications
- Licenses and certificates
- Newspaper and magazine articles about your accomplishments
- Descriptions of training courses you have completed
- Citations, commendations, or awards
- Statistics or data on your achievements

- Programs of your performances/exhibits
- Letters of verification from supervisor, clients, etc.
- Brochures or other published materials you have prepared
- Website links to content that you have created or developed
- Links to video performances or created video media

Portfolio Format

Follow these guidelines when organizing your portfolio:

- Make two complete copies for submission to the Registrar
- Use a three-ring, loose-leaf binder (or have it bound) for each copy of your portfolio.
- Use a table of contents and number the pages
- Make sure photocopies of documentation are legible
- On the cover of your portfolio, place a label with the following:
 - Student Name
 - Course Number and Title for submission
 - Semester of submission
 - Semester of your anticipated degree completion

Portfolio Submission

A copy of each portfolio *with the below Credit for Life Experience Application* and the appropriate fee (See Tuition & Fees for current choices), should be submitted to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar will then forward each portfolio to the appropriate evaluators for review. A portfolio evaluator from the particular discipline where credit is requested will have input in the evaluation of his/her respective area. The time for assessment of each course area is approximately three weeks. A copy of the student's completed portfolio is kept in the Registrar's Office for a minimum of one year and may be used as a reference guide for other portfolio participants.

Portfolio Evaluation and Evaluation Criteria

When an evaluator assesses a portfolio, he or she wants to see:

- Current skills and knowledge.
- Knowledge applicable in other circumstances outside the specific job or context in which it was learned.
- Learning that includes major principles applied in a given field.
- Familiarity with trends and what experts in the field have said.
- Knowledge that can be measured and evaluated.
- Poor writing will result in a negative assessment of your portfolio. You must demonstrate university-level writing skills for university-level credit. Proofread, revise and edit. Critique for organization, clarity, completeness, and technical accuracy.

