

MASTER'S INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF DIVINITY



Prior Learning Portfolio Guide

Prior Learning Portfolio

Master's International School of Divinity
520 Kimber Lane
Evansville, Indiana 47715

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INTRODUCTION

A Prior Learning Portfolio must be completed by all applicants and students who seek to be awarded academic credit for learning experiences acquired outside the college classroom. This Portfolio is a comprehensive report that describes and documents all prior learning that you wish to be considered for college credit. A Portfolio is not necessary for those courses for which transfer credit is requested, such as college courses, CLEP, ACT-PEP, DANTES, or other ACE evaluated educational and training programs.

Although the Prior Learning Portfolio is only a summary of your experiences, it must be in sufficient detail to substantiate your knowledge and must be accompanied by documentation that verifies or gives specific evidence of your learning. Credit will only be awarded for documented experiences. Follow instructions carefully. Be certain to include all required documentation. It is suggested that you contact the Registrar at (812) 471-0611 for counseling before you attempt to complete the portfolio.

The procedure for completing the Prior Learning Portfolio may at first glance seem more difficult than it is in fact. Be patient. Stay focused. Carefully follow the step-by-step process.

CHOOSING PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

By submitting your Portfolio Assessment Application you are declaring that you believe your prior learning experiences will document that you qualify for the credit awarded for life-learning. However, you need not wait to enroll. You may begin your course work now. All that we require is that you **submit your Prior Learning Portfolio some time prior to concluding your program**. You will not actually be awarded credit until your Portfolio is reviewed and credit is either awarded or declined based upon an assessment of your documentation.

The Learning Areas you list on your Portfolio Assessment Application will be marked "Pending Portfolio Assessment" (PPA) on your student record. If credit is not later awarded through Portfolio Assessment, you will be required to complete additional courses prior to graduation.

UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS

Experiential Learning is any prior learning experience that was not part of a college, seminary or university course and does not in or of itself carry academic degree credit. Learning can take place in a variety of settings, including, but not limited to, the following:

- On-the-Job Training
- Military Training
- Non-academic, but structured forms of Bible study
- Conventions and conferences
- Continuing Education Courses
- Preaching and teaching
- Local church service as well as missions activities
- Community and religious volunteer service
- Personal travel

- Training programs or in-service courses
- Employment related responsibilities
- Awards, publications, or memberships

Experiential Learning Credit is academic credit that is awarded (after documentation) based on learning that is gained through work or life experiences. An institution can only award credit based on how well students demonstrate what they learned through their experiences.

Portfolio Assessment is the way students verify how they have learned or developed knowledge through their experiences. Students must demonstrate that their learning experiences were real and are able to be adequately documented.

Credit will not be awarded for life or work experience but will be based on the depth and quality of the learning that was derived from the life or work experience. Credit is awarded based on documented demonstration of the actual learning venues.

Any experiential learning credit that a student receives will appear on the official MISD transcript. Letter grades are not assigned to experiential learning credits. Instead, in the grade column on the transcript next to the course the credit was applied to, the abbreviation "PA" for Portfolio Assessment will appear.

HOW MUCH CREDIT CAN BE AWARDED?

If an applicant/student is pursuing an Associate's degree, they may earn up to fifteen (15) credits of the general knowledge requirements.

If an applicant/student is pursuing an Associate degree, they may earn up to fifteen (15) credits of the general knowledge requirements. Additionally, up to 15 more credits can be awarded at the Bachelor level (for a maximum of 30 credits - 15 & 15).

Credit for Prior Learning may not be used to replace any of the minimum core courses in an undergraduate degree program.

DUPLICATION OF CREDIT

Applicants/Students should be certain to understand that Prior Learning credit is not for the purpose of replacing required curriculum in any undergraduate degree program. The minimum core degree requirements must be fulfilled through regular course work.

FEES

Master's charges \$10 per credit for Portfolio Assessment Fee. This fee is to be paid only when the Portfolio Application is submitted. If the student later decides not to submit a Prior Learning Portfolio, appropriate additional courses will be assigned. Tuition for these additional courses will be based upon the tuition rate current at the time of assignment.

COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO

1 STEP ONE: COMPLETE AND UPDATE YOUR RESUME

If you have not already completed a detailed resume of your occupational experience and education, do so now. The resume will provide insight into your work history and establish a useful timeline of when prior learning took place. The resume should include date ranges for each different position you have held. Also include date ranges of time spent attending a college, university or seminary. The resume will help guide you in the steps to follow.

COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO

2 STEP TWO: CAREFULLY CONSIDER YOUR BACKGROUND

Review the Learning Area Descriptions that detail knowledge areas for which you wish to receive credit. These are general (rather broad) areas of knowledge that are often acquired through non-academic experience. The Learning Descriptions provide an overview of the learning outcomes. Identify those Areas that you feel you can make a plausible case to receive credit for experiential learning. Next, carefully consider your own actual experience in these Areas. That is, how long have you been doing these things; what kinds of outcomes have resulted; what other learning or training requirements have you met along the way. Your acquired knowledge and skills should mirror the Learning Descriptions. Use your resume to help remind you of past skills and knowledge acquired through experiential learning.

COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO

3 STEP THREE: PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

If you have not already done so during the Admissions or Enrollment process, use the "Portfolio Assessment Application" provided to identify each Learning Area you wish to seek credit for through Portfolio Assessment.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

Master's International School of Divinity

www.mdivs.edu

(812) 471-0611 Fax (812) 471-0877

Applicant /Student Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Your Degree Program

(Associate/Bachelor) _____ **Major** _____

On this form you will notify the Divinity School that you wish to receive academic credit through Prior Learning Portfolio Assessment. In the columns provided complete the requested information. Please type or print legibly.

Check Area	Learning Area Descriptions	Credit Max
	General Bible Knowledge of the Old Testament	5
	General Bible Knowledge of the New Testament	5
	Basic Communication (speaking and/or writing)	5
	Basic Teaching (lesson preparation, teaching, leading)	5
	Basic Business (math, English, computer, data use, records)	5
	Basic Health (physical, mental, spiritual, recreation, nutrition)	5
	<i>(Associate max is 15. Bachelor max is 15 lower & 15 upper.)</i>	
Total Credits		
Fee (\$10.00 x each credit)		\$ _____

I hereby request permission to complete a Prior Learning Portfolio to document credit-level learning for the above listed Areas. **I understand that I do not need to complete the Prior Learning Portfolio prior to enrolling.** I also understand that my Portfolio will be evaluated to determine if credit will be awarded. **If I am not awarded credit through Portfolio Assessment, I will be required to complete any necessary courses.** I understand the Portfolio Assessment fee must be submitted with my Application. I understand that once my Prior Learning Portfolio is submitted for evaluation, this fee will not be refundable. I have also read and understand the Prior Learning Portfolio Guidelines that were provided to me.

Applicant Signature

Date

Approved

Date

COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO

4 STEP FOUR: PRIOR LEARNING SUMMARY

Now that you are familiar with the Learning Areas noted above, you will seek experiential learning credit, and therefore will make a chronological list of your past experiences on the following "Prior Learning Summary" form. Your resume should help in this process. You only need to list experiences in which skills and knowledge were acquired that relate to the Area descriptions. The purpose of this exercise is to help you identify the knowledge and skills you have gained through experiential learning so that you may be awarded the proper credit. The information you include on this form will be the groundwork for your Portfolio.

Please understand the credit that is awarded will not be based on life or work experience but on the depth and quality of the learning that was derived from the experience.

PRIOR LEARNING SUMMARY

Applicant/Student Name: _____ Copy _____ of _____

Professional Position/ Activity or Experience	Time Involved	Assignments & Responsibilities	Knowledge & Skills Acquired	Possible Documentation

<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Office Use</i>

COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO

5 STEP FIVE: LEARNING BACKGROUND & OUTCOMES

A Learning Background Summary must be completed for each Area you wish to obtain credit for through Portfolio Assessment. In this summary you will explain how and where learning experiences were obtained. A narrative should be written clearly and be grammatically correct. It must be at least two double spaced typed pages in length (12pt). For every Learning Area listed on the Assessment Application, you need to show how this Area was met through learning experiences. Title the Paper Learning Background for "Area". Insert the appropriate Learning Area Description in your paper e.g. "General Bible Knowledge of the Old Testament".

Use the following as a guideline.

1. What have you learned? What skills have you acquired? If you break down the experiences which relate to this Area into learning components you may find it easier to identify what you actually learned.
2. Where did you acquire these skills and knowledge (e.g. my job)?
3. In what capacity or job position did you learn (e.g. Pastoring a Church)?

You will need to relate your learning to the specific Learning Description you have chosen. Do this by identifying the knowledge and skills and comparing these to the Area Description. Use "I" statements such as "I know", "I can", or "I learned". The purpose of this is to show how the skills you learned can be viewed as equivalent to those gained by completing a course in that area.

Remember to write a "Learning Background Summary" for each Area of Learning you seek. Many times the same experience will be used for different Areas because different skills and knowledge were obtained that relate to more than one Area.

To receive academic credit, you must demonstrate that you have acquired specific learning skills.

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6 STEP SIX: DOCUMENTATION

You will need to provide documentation that supports the prior learning. Compile all possible documentation to show that you know what you say you know. Credit can only be given for learning components supported by good evidence, so be thorough.

One of the best types of evidence you can provide is third party verification letters. These letters are written by immediate supervisors, past employers, work associates, pastors, associates, or any other individual with firsthand knowledge of your ability and experiences. These letters should verify your prior learning but should not recommend that you be awarded college credit. Verification letters (if possible) have to be written on official letterhead, signed and dated. The individual should include:

1. Relationship to you and length of relationship
2. Qualifications for verifying your prior experiential learning
3. Identify your competencies rather than what types of tasks you have completed

Use the "Documentation Inventory" form that follows to organize your support documentation. Remember to write the corresponding inventory item number used on the form at the top right corner of each piece of documentation.

The following are sample items used to document prior experiential learning:

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Step 6, *continued*

Awards, letters of commendation
Book lists/materials read
Completed class assignments
Course description or outline
Course transcripts
Description of requirements for licensure/certification
Evidence of completion
Explanation of tasks performed
Ordination or ministry license documents
Job descriptions
License/diplomas
Membership requirements for professional organizations
Membership in professional organizations
Military separation papers
Military records
Notes taken in class
Performance Evaluations
Performance Standards for Acquiring license
Publications
Scores on licensing exams
Syllabi
Verification of enrollment letter
Work projects (proposals, reports, and schematics)

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STEP SEVEN: ORGANIZE YOUR PORTFOLIO

We prefer that the information on the provided forms be typewritten, but neat, legible printing or handwriting in ink is acceptable. The Learning Background Summary must be typewritten. Pay close attention to detail and do make certain the spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct.

The directions below should be followed carefully.

Binding: Present the Portfolio in a good quality three-ring binder large enough to adequately hold the materials.

Cover Sheet: The first page of your Portfolio should contain your name, student identification number, address, phone, email address, and degree program. The following "Honor Pledge" should be immediately behind the cover sheet.

Resume: Include a detailed occupational resume.

Separate the following documents by divider tabs in this order:

- Portfolio Assessment Application
- Prior Learning Summary
- Learning Background Summary (Each behind a separate tab)
- Documentation Inventory Form
- Support Documentation

IMPORTANT: Do NOT send original documents (such as license and ordination records). Provide only clean readable copies.

HONOR PLEDGE

MISD

520 Kimber Lane

Evansville, IN 47715-2820

www.mdivs.edu

(812) 471-0611 Fax (812) 471-0877

Student/Applicant Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Student or Applicant ID# _____

I certify that this Prior Learning Portfolio is my own work and is evidence of my personal learning. I attest that all information provided is true and correct. I understand that this Portfolio is subject to the review of Master's International School of Divinity. I also understand there is no guarantee that the credit for experiential learning I am seeking will be awarded.

Signature

Date

COMPILING THE PORTFOLIO

8 STEP EIGHT: PREPARATION FOR SUBMITTING

Congratulations! You should feel a great sense of accomplishment. You have looked back and realized, maybe for the first time, how much you have really learned and how much you have done in your life. Preparing this portfolio is not an easy process. We understand it takes a lot of time and effort and you have put a lot of thought into this work. Now it is time to see the results.

Make a complete copy of your Portfolio. Packages can get lost in the mail. Do not include originals in the portfolio mailed to the Divinity School. This Portfolio will become a permanent part of your academic record and will not be returned to you.

Package your portfolio securely and send it to:

Attn: Portfolio Assessment
Master's International School of Divinity
520 Kimber Lane
Evansville, IN 47715-2820

You should learn the result of our assessment within about two weeks.