



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES CREDIT APPLICATION

Application and Review Process

1. The student will download and review the Graduate Professional Experiences Credit Application (available at ship.edu/graduate/).
2. The student will consult with the department chair and graduate coordinator of their program to determine the suitability of their proposal for Professional Experiences Credit and complete the Self-Assessment Survey.
3. The student will use the Guidelines for Portfolio Preparation to prepare a detailed portfolio describing the experiences for which credit is being requested. The student should request a course outline or syllabus for the targeted course from the academic department chair for review in preparing the portfolio. The student should consult with the chair and graduate coordinator of their program to ensure their portfolio is of high quality and conforms to the requirements. The student may also wish to consult with the Associate Director for Graduate Student Success for assistance in preparing the portfolio.
4. The student will submit their completed application via email attachment to The Graduate School. The application should consist of a single .pdf file that includes the cover letter and portfolio. To ensure that any professional experiences credits are posted to the transcript prior to the end of the semester, the completed portfolio should be submitted at least two months prior to the last day of the semester.
5. The Graduate School director will ensure the completed portfolio is ready for review and send it to the appropriate department chair(s) for evaluation.
6. The department chair will direct the portfolio to the appropriate faculty member(s) for evaluation. Following evaluation, the faculty member will recommend specific course credit, if any, to the department chair. The department chair will review and forward the department's recommendation to The Graduate School director.
7. The Graduate School director will review the department's recommendation and inform the student of the professional experiences credit decision.
8. If the student's application is denied in whole or part, specific reasons for the denial will be provided to the student. If they wish to add to their portfolio, they will have one week from the decision date to submit any additional materials in support of their application to the director of The Graduate School. The director will then consult with the department chair and relevant faculty to determine if the additional materials warrant a change in the department's recommendation. The student will then be notified of the final decision.
9. If the student is awarded credit, they will pay the appropriate fee (\$80 per 3 credit class) to Student Accounts.
10. When the Application and Review Process is complete, the Registrar's Office will post any course credits to the student's transcript.



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Self-Assessment Survey

The following self-assessment survey is designed to help determine if you have professional experiences that may equate to learning outcomes you would be expected to achieve in a graduate course(s). The survey will also assist you with developing a portfolio for review and evaluation to earn course credit.

Placement of Credit

1. Have I consulted with the graduate coordinator and/or department chair of my program to identify where credit for prior professional experiences could potentially be applied?
2. Will the credit earned be useful for my academic goals in my degree program? How?
3. Do I know how many credits I would like to apply for?

Content

4. Have I reviewed the current Shippensburg University graduate catalog and found a courses or courses that seem to match my prior professional experiences?
5. Have I already taken a course that covers the same type of content? Can credit for that course instead be directly transferred to Shippensburg?
6. Can I apply my prior professional experiences into classroom equivalencies?

Resources

7. Do I have certificates from training, on-the-job experiences, or other formalized learning?
8. Do I have verification of past activities that documents my professional experiences such as company job description or evaluations?
9. Can I obtain letters to verify my professional experience claims?

Portfolio Preparation*

10. Do I have the time and ability to organize the materials?
11. Is my level of writing equivalent to graduate level expectations?
12. Can I write about my acquired knowledge of the subject matter in a way that will demonstrate the depth of my knowledge?

Personal Commitment

13. Do I understand that researching and documenting prior professional experiences will take considerable time?
14. Will I be able to pursue this project while continuing with other commitments that I am responsible for and value?

* Resources are available for portfolio preparation assistance. Contact gradschool@ship.edu for more information.



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Guidelines for Portfolio Preparation

These guidelines are designed to assist you in preparing your portfolio for review and evaluation.

1. The portfolio is to demonstrate to the evaluating professor(s)/committee that you already have the knowledge and skills to meet the outcomes of a specific course.
2. Before you develop your portfolio, you should talk with the department chair or faculty members who teach the relevant course(s) to discuss whether your prior professional experiences might qualify you for credit. Ask for a copy of the course syllabus so that you can compare your professional experiences with the specific student learning outcomes. You should use similar vocabulary in your portfolio, and where possible, follow the course outline in describing your prior learning experience.
3. Organize your portfolio so that it is user friendly. Make it easy for the evaluator to see and understand how your professional experiences qualify you to receive credit for the specific course(s) for which you are applying. Your portfolio should be neatly arranged and presented digitally as a single .pdf file.
4. Your portfolio will be reviewed and evaluated by university faculty member(s) in the program in which the course is taught, so 'best quality' is critical. The writing and appearance of the portfolio should be professional and without spelling and grammar errors. If the quality of your portfolio is below acceptable standards, it will be returned to you before being sent to the department for evaluation.
5. Be sure that scans of all documents are clear.
6. Include all materials from people, companies, or institutions you mention in the portfolio. Only supporting documents that are directly relevant to your prior professional experiences should be included. The inclusion of marginally or tangentially relevant documents may imply to the reviewing faculty that much of your professional experience is not applicable to the course(s).

Portfolio Format (required sequence of content as listed below)

1. Application Cover Letter

Indicate the course/s for which you are applying for Professional Experiences Credit and certify that all material presented is accurate and true, to the best of your knowledge (see form below). Submit this signed and dated application cover letter with your portfolio submission.

2. Table of Contents

Follow the order of contents as indicated below and number each page. List page numbers where the content begins on the Table of Contents page.



3. The Resume

The resume presents your goals and achievements to the faculty evaluator. It should also include your name, address and student I.D. number. If you do not have a professional resume, visit <https://career.ship.edu/> to schedule an appointment for assistance in creating one.

Include formal education. Provide names, dates and places where you attended college, technical programs, or other graduate schools. If you have received any awards, list and explain them.

List the jobs, informal training, and/or self-learning experiences, which apply to the course(s) to wish to have evaluated. Give the dates, places, and duration of your professional experiences. Keep them separate to make the review more reader friendly for the evaluator to follow your presentation of content.

4. Narrative: Knowledge and Skills

This section expands upon the resume and should describe *in detail* the professional experiences which have prepared you to apply for course credit. If you are applying for credit for multiple courses, you should include a separate narrative section (listed in the table of contents) for each course.

Begin your narrative by listing the course (name and course number) for which you are describing the relevant professional experiences. Provide a description of the knowledge and skills gained through the prior professional experiences, how you acquired the knowledge and skills, and how you have used the knowledge and skills.

How do the knowledge and skills relate to the graduate course objectives? To assist with supporting your claims, ask yourself these types of questions:

1. How am I better trained than those who have not had the same or similar professional experiences?
2. What special materials and/or instruments and/or software can I use?
3. How has my knowledge in these areas helped me or has been transferred and applied to other areas?
4. What relationships can I see between areas of work/industry/enterprise that I did not see before?
5. What organizational patterns are apparent to me now that I did not see before?
6. What new ideas did my prior professional experiences help me to gain?

The narrative is your opportunity to verify, with evidence, to the evaluator(s) that you have achieved the outcomes expected of someone who would take the course. If the



knowledge was gained through workshops, seminars, conferences, etc., list how long the training sessions lasted and exactly what was accomplished. If you were issued a certificate, please scan a copy to include with your portfolio. It is up to you to provide evidence to support your competencies and expertise in the selected course. Whenever possible, refer to the specific documentation of learning that you will include in the next section.

5. Documentation of Learning

The final section of your portfolio contains written documentation that verifies your professional experiences. This evidence of your expertise is critical to an effective review. You need to secure the best written documentation possible, such as:

1. Transcripts of certificate/course/workshop records, programs from schools, job training programs, or military service schools. Be specific if the training was approved by any organization or certifying body, such as the American Council on Education, a professional organization, a government body, or a union.
2. Copies of continuing education certificates or certificates of attendance at relevant workshops, seminars, institutes, or training programs. Be sure to specify if the training was approved and by whom.
3. Copies of special awards, news articles, or samples of your work.
4. Photographs or video of your work, as appropriate.
5. Letters of verification relevant to the professional experiences from supervisors, administrators, or other experts in the position to judge your work.

Letters can be used to substantiate your prior professional experiences, and they are a common form of documentation. Consider the following when obtaining letters:

1. The individual writing the letter must know you and have *first-hand* knowledge of your professional experiences as you present it in the portfolio.
2. The letter must clearly state the nature of the relationship between you and the letter writer.
3. The letter must be on official letterhead.
4. The letter must focus on the duties, responsibilities, tasks, and activities inherent in the professional experiences under consideration.
5. The letter writer should describe the activity in a similar detailed fashion as the material you include in the portfolio so that it clearly establishes the context of the professional experiences.
6. Any special accomplishments, something that resulted in a new product or process, requires documentation by persons who observed you as you developed the product or process.
7. When you request a letter of verification, make it clear that letter is for "*verification*" of professional experiences, not a letter of recommendation.



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Cover Letter

First Name _____ M.I. _____ Last Name _____
Student I.D. _____ Telephone Number () _____
E-mail Address _____ Street Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Please list the course(s) in which you are seeking Professional Experiences credits:

Course Number(s) Course Title(s)

Course Number(s)	Course Title(s)

I certify that all materials presented in this portfolio are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if credits are awarded, the credits will be posted to my transcript *after* I pay the appropriate fee (\$80 per 3-credit course).

Student Signature

Date

Include this signed cover letter with your portfolio and send the completed application via email to gradschool@ship.edu. To ensure that professional experiences credits are posted to your transcript prior to the end of the semester, the application should be received at least two months prior to the last day of the semester.