

## Supporting Documentation

In order to receive college credit for what you know and can do, there must be clear documentation for your learning. Just as students in a classroom must provide evidence of their learning in the forms of book reports, oral presentations, research papers or examination results, you must demonstrate possession of the knowledge you claim to have. **IMPORTANT: merely claiming knowledge or skills is not enough; you must demonstrate them.**

Documentation is critical to your success in earning credit through a portfolio. Make sure that the evidence presented does the job it is intended to do, namely, validate without question that you possess the college level knowledge you claim to have. Identifying the relationship between your knowledge and your sources of documentation is critical. It is possible that a specific item of documentation may be used as appropriate documentation for more than one course or more than one academic area.

Check your documentation for appropriateness:

### **Does the document:**

- Verify your knowledge? Can you explain how each piece of documentation verifies your knowledge?
- Describe your knowledge in as much detail as possible
- Focus on the contents of the course(s) you are requesting? Your documentation must directly relate to the skills and knowledge taught in the classes you are petitioning.
- Show some general application. For example, knowing the personnel procedures at one organization may be helpful, but does your documentation demonstrate that you could apply your accumulated personnel skills in more than one way?
- Demonstrate knowledge of theory and application? In many cases, people either have theoretical or practical knowledge of a given subject area. When you select your documentation, make sure you can demonstrate mastery of both.

### **Common Types of Supporting Documentation:**

- Certificates of completion for courses or workshops attended
- Official job descriptions and evaluations
- Commendations
- Magazine or newspaper articles documenting accomplishments
- Letters, on company letterhead, attesting to skills and knowledge by:
  - Employers
  - Supervisors
  - Teachers
  - Church, community or government
- Program notes from performances given or exhibits in which work was shown

- Examples of work, including:
  - Manuals and brochures – written or designed
  - Patents
  - Architectural drawings
  - Curriculum plans
  - Books or articles
  - Computer programs
  - Documents, spreadsheet and other computer-generated work
  - Poems, plays, stories, or articles
  - Paintings, sculptures, or drawings
  - Photographs
  - Audio or audio-visual tapes of performances
  - Musical arrangements
  - Clothing – designed and sewn

Regardless of the type of documentation used, remember that its chief purpose is to verify that college level knowledge has been attained.

### **Documentation Steps:**

**Identify What You Know:** Before requesting or assembling your documentation, be sure you know what learning you are trying to verify. Review the course information and the skills that match the knowledge “pieces” in the course.

**List Your Documentation Evidence:** Inventory the documentation you plan to use – certificates, transcripts, job descriptions, etc. After making an inventory, organize all the pieces in one location. Make a list of all the people who might document your knowledge and abilities. Be as thorough as possible.

Gather personal articles you have, program notes listing you as a participant in performances, or commendations you have received for outstanding work.

**Request the Documentation:** This process may take extra time. Start gathering early. Request documentation letters twice – once in person or by phone and once in writing. Explain the reason for the documentation and explain how the documentation will be useful.

Specify exactly what knowledge you want documented because only documentation that verifies learning is useful. Make sure that it is not simply a letter of recommendation. Additionally, ensure that the directness of your relationship with this individual comes across in the letter and that it is from personal observation. Letters should include:

- The length of time you worked with this person
- The particular duties you had to perform
- The level of your performance
- The “normal” requirements for the job
- Changes in responsibility you successfully mastered
- How your performance compared with that of fellow workers

**Monitor Documentation Requests:** Develop some system to keep track of documentation requests, follow ups and documents received.

**No Documentation Available:** If you have a competency that cannot be documented by the usual means, such as a language skill, faculty evaluators may assess your knowledge through an interview, oral exam, or through a written exam.