



CHALLENGE EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

NOTE: Challenge Exams are given at the discretion of the faculty and the appropriate department chair.

Challenge Examinations at USM are:

- University-specific course examinations;
- Written by the course instructors or academic departments;
- Possibly provided by instructors or the department for administration through the Office for Prior Learning Assessment, but only if a written challenge exam;
- Used to determine student competency in a specific course of study at USM. Each department, in consultation with the Office for Prior Learning Assessment, determines the specific credit award, and the acceptable passing grade, which must be "C" or above;
- Timed or untimed, depending on the type of exam;
- Available to matriculated students only;
- Limited to three challenge exams per student.

Challenge Exams may include:

- An interview or an oral presentation with the faculty member,
- A performance, or a demonstration,
- Examples of completed work, or
- Specialized equipment or evaluative techniques to complete successfully.

Challenge Exams involve the following process:

- Student or faculty contacts the Office for Prior Learning Assessment to make the initial request.
- Student obtains the Challenge Exam Registration Form.
- Student contacts the appropriate faculty member and obtains his/her signature on the registration form.
- Student contacts the appropriate department chair with the challenge exam request. The student must also obtain the signature of the department chair on the registration form in order to sit for the exam.
- Faculty decides with PLA whether a specific USM department or the Office for Prior Learning Assessment will administer the challenge exam. PLA can administer only a written form of the challenge exam.
- Student and faculty or PLA establish a mutually agreeable examination date.
- The student pays the \$75 Preparation Fee for faculty compensation and administrative fee at the time s/he completes of the Challenge Examination Registration Form.
- **Student sends or delivers the Challenge Examination Registration Form to the Office for Prior Learning Assessment with the required appropriate departmental and faculty signatures and evidence of payment of the \$75 Preparation Fee. The \$75 must be paid prior to taking the exam.**
- Student sits for the challenge examination.
- Faculty evaluates the exam, completes the Transcribing for Challenge Examination Credits Form, and forwards this form to PLA. The grade of the exam must be "C" or above in order to post credits.
- When the student successfully completes the challenge exam (with a "C" or better), the student pays the Challenge Examination credit fees at \$50 per credit, **accompanied by the Challenge Exam Credit Payment Form**, to USM Student Billing.
- When these credit fees are paid, PLA will post the earned credits and the grade earned to the student's USM transcript.

Challenge Exams appear, when posted:

- As transferred credit on the student's USM transcript,
- Listed by the specific course title, number, and description,
- With the number of earned exam credits.