

# Flexible Policy, Active Promotion, and Consistent Outreach Create Momentum for CLEP® Growth



## Flexible Credit Policies Help Students Reach Their Goals

Miami Dade College (MDC) has actively offered students the opportunity to earn credit for prior learning through the College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP®) for many years. Tiffani Malvin, director of prior learning assessment, explained that based on their work and the policy developed by the Florida Department of Education, students can earn up to 75 percent of their degrees (or up to 45 credits) at the associate level through credit by exam options. MDC operates eight CLEP test centers on its campuses and centers, and the testing directors have been central in helping students take full advantage of available CLEP examination opportunities.

Silvio Rodriguez, director of test administration and program evaluation, noted that “our students and institution really do benefit from the CLEP program.” During the 2013-14 academic year, MDC awarded more than 14,600 credits. The college’s data show that CLEP students also achieved and maintained higher grade point averages over a period of five years (2009–2013). Those who took CLEP exams and earned credit had an average GPA of 3.10. The average GPA of our other students over that same time period was 2.60. That shows us that students who earn CLEP credits are committed to achieving success.

## Miami Dade College: A Profile

MDC is the largest and most diverse college in the nation. With seven campuses, two centers, and more than 165,000 students from across the world, the college offers more than 300 programs of study and several degree options, including vocational, associate, and baccalaureate. MDC features numerous continuing education classes, online credit classes through the Virtual College, the New World School of the Arts, the School for Advanced Studies, the Honors College, and dual enrollment.

## Active Promotion Keeps CLEP® Exam Opportunities “Top of Mind” with Students and Faculty

MDC consistently seeks out opportunities to keep students informed about the opportunity to earn credit for prior learning; it begins as soon as new students take their placement exams and continues throughout their MDC academic careers. Rodriguez noted, “In all of our on-campus New Student Centers, we feature CLEP materials. We use the CLEP video produced by the College Board and even make that video available on our testing website. We include messages about the opportunity to earn college credit by taking CLEP exams when we report out students’ initial placement exam scores. If they score ‘college ready,’ we include a message on the student’s score report that suggests they consider CLEP exams.”

Malvin also emphasized the importance of using available materials and creating new custom communications to reach specific students and community audiences. She noted, “We are a highlighted institution on the College Board’s CLEP website, which gives us additional visibility. Recently, MDC began to provide CLEP study guides via on-campus libraries, advising and testing teams, and offices in our New Student Centers. We’ve found that the brochures created specifically for active and former military personnel have been especially useful. We’ve recently created our own collegewide CLEP brochure. We also take advantage of every opportunity we can find to promote CLEP at various events, both on campus and externally, around the community.”

MDC is a state-funded institution that also receives funding from DANES for active military personnel to take CLEP exams. The Miami area is also home to a large population of former military members, and the college works actively to address their needs and deliver an innovative portfolio of programs and opportunities. Miami Dade College participates in the CLEP electronic score report (ESR) program to streamline processes to get CLEP exam results evaluated and posted on students’ transcripts quickly so they can plan their upcoming semester courses based on the credits they’ve earned by taking the exam and the credits they’ll need to graduate.

## Outreach Starts with Community High Schools

MDC operates New Student Centers on each of its seven campuses. Students meet with their advisers at these centers, and there are precollege advisers in each center as well. These specialists reach out to area middle and high schools and talk candidly with students about preparing for the transition to college and the options that will be available to them once they get to college. According to Rodriguez, “We are making targeted efforts to make sure new students coming into Miami Dade College, and our advising services are kept up to date by providing information to students on CLEP and on all credit for prior learning opportunities. We invite high school counselors to attend workshops so they can go back to their schools and help ensure that students at the secondary level have their needs met, which helps students while they’re in school and beyond.”

## Sharing Data to Build Program Buy-in and Promote Success

Longitudinal CLEP data certainly suggest that students who take CLEP exams are more likely to complete their degrees. The goal now is to share data effectively with internal constituencies so they can include CLEP messaging in their work with students. “We are constantly looking for ways we can help students save money, stay in school, and complete their degrees and programs of study. We use the power of our CLEP data as critical parts of those conversations with students, faculty, and staff.” said Malvin.

## CLEP by the Numbers at Miami Dade College

Number of Students Earning CLEP Exam Credits 2009–2013			
Year	Number of CLEP Exams Evaluated for Credit	Total CLEP Credits Awarded	Average Credits Earned per Exam Taken
2009	1,936	13,964	7.729
2010	1,871	14,433	7.714
2011	1,876	14,417	7.685
2012	1,999	15,398	7.703
2013	1,908	14,622	7.664

## Students with CLEP Exam Credits by Completion Classification, 2009–2013

<b>Total Students</b>	<b>9,590</b>
<b>100% Degree Completion</b>	4,297 (45%)
<b>75% Degree Completion</b>	2,160 (23%)
<b>50% Degree Completion</b>	841 (9%)
<b>25% Degree Completion</b>	619 (6%)
<b>Less than 25% Completion</b>	1,404 (14%)
<b>Data Unavailable</b>	269 (3%)

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### Miami Dade College Best Practices at a Glance

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- Develop flexible policies and practices for granting credits through CLEP exams prior to and during students' enrollment
- Make test-preparation materials available through multiple channels
- Consider precollege advising and outreach to help prospective students understand the time and financial benefits of earning credits through CLEP exams

For more information, visit [clep.collegeboard.org](http://clep.collegeboard.org).