

# Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the process through which students can earn college credit by identifying and documenting college-level learning that has been acquired through life experiences such as military and/or work experience, training, professional certification, independent study, volunteer activities, and hobbies (e.g., astronomy, history, travel, cultural and/or fine arts).

The four most common options for requesting PLA credits are the following:

- A. **Equivalency Examination** - Standardized national exams may be equated to equivalent courses. The equivalency examination must be approved by appropriate faculty and/or division chairperson. Requests for credit by equivalency exam can be submitted at any time during the semester. Examples of such examinations include the following:
  - AP – Advanced Placement Examination
  - CLEP – College-Level Examination Program
  - DSST – DANTES Subject Standardized Tests
  - IB – International Baccalaureate
- B. **Non-Collegiate-Sponsored Education Credit (NCSE)** - This evaluates learning from courses completed in non-collegiate settings (e.g., professional licenses, labor union courses, agency training programs, professional workshops, and military courses) whose course content is equivalent to offerings from a college. The non-collegiate-sponsored education credit must be approved by appropriate faculty and/or division chairperson. Examples of such education credit include the following:
  - 1. Military (e.g., Joint Services Transcript)
  - 2. American Council on Education (ACE) College Credit Recommendation Service
  - 3. Professional Licenses or Industry Certifications (nationally-or state-certified professionals)
- C. **Course Challenge / Credit by Institutional Examination (CBIE)** - Students who feel confident that their background/learning experiences have adequately prepared them in certain subject areas may challenge instructor-prepared examinations. In a Course Challenge/CBIE, students must demonstrate competency in a specific course and meet all Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs) by completing, without instruction or tutorial assistance, a comprehensive written test, performance test, special project, and/or interview in the subject matter. The credit by examination must be approved by appropriate faculty and/or division chairperson. Note: Course Challenge option is not available for all courses. Courses for which credit is awarded based on Course Challenge/CBIE do not carry grades or grade points. Request for Exam by Institutional Credit may be submitted until week 12 of instruction (fall/spring).

Credit by examination carries no credit and does not contribute towards full-time student status (required for Veterans' benefits and Financial Aid).

- D. **Portfolio-based Assessment** - Prior learning must be documented with verifiable evidence of the concepts learned, relevant skills acquired, and the achievement level attained. Testimonial statements and/or references are required from qualified individuals (content experts, such as supervisors, co-workers, or personnel staff) who must also provide their credentials and qualifications of expertise. Credit for such prior learning must be approved by appropriate faculty and/or division chairperson. Note: Courses for which credit is awarded based on Portfolio-based Assessment do not carry grades or grade points. Students must initiate requests for credit by Portfolio-based Assessment by the end of the add/drop period.

Please see your academic advisor to review procedures for [PLA detailed in policy](#)



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## Student Counseling

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