PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)
PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Past Learning
Career Experiences
Professional Training
Life Experiences

Frederick Community College

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Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Handbook

I. Introduction to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Prior Learning Assessment is the evaluation of college-level or experience-based learning that an individual has gained through various pathways. The assessment of prior learning is called *Prior Learning Assessment* (PLA), but can also be called *Experiential Learning* or *Credit for Prior Learning*.

PLA is becoming more prevalent within colleges and universities globally and has been noted as having a positive influence upon persistence, retention and completion. Frederick Community College prior learning pathways allow students the opportunity to earn credit for college-level learning, thus accelerating progress toward graduation.

A PLA evaluation is conducted of a student's work experiences, workplace training, professional licensure and certifications, military training and service, volunteer activities, life experiences, credits earned by standardized testing, and volunteering and community service activities which can be used to demonstrate college-level learning. Credit for Prior Learning is not awarded for experience alone, but for a combination of experience and college-level learning mastered through a variety of experiences.

Students who participate in the PLA program often save time and money and avoid having to complete courses already mastered so they complete their education goals at a faster rate.

Student who are planning to transfer from FCC to another institution should consult with the potential transfer institution regarding each institution's Transfer & PLA credit acceptance policy.

A. Pathways for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

PLA consists of several pathways to credit designed to allow students to have their experiences assessed for college level learning completely assessed. FCC offers seven (7) paths for students to earn prior learning credit.

*All faculty who assess students' prior learning are subject matter experts and have participated in professional development and trainings to become certified to provide a quality evaluation of student work.
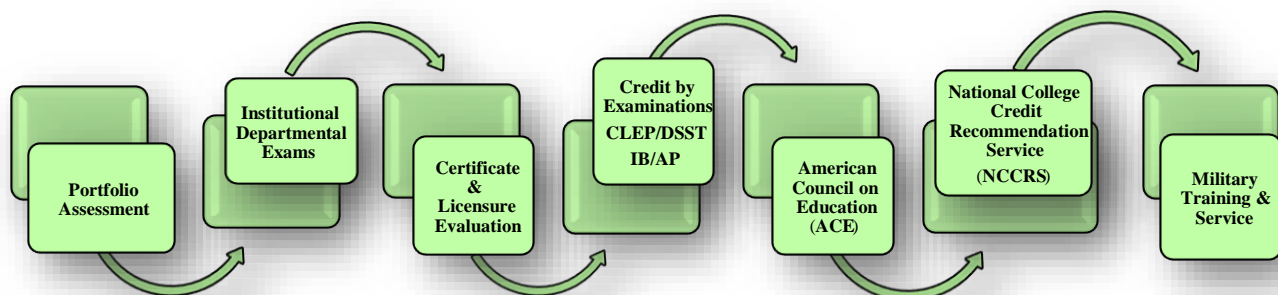
B. Is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Right for you?
- ✓ Do you have at least 3 years of post-high school experience?
- ✓ Are you comfortable writing?
- ✓ Can your work, training, and life experiences be documented and verified?
- ✓ Have you completed formal training (in class or online) as part of your employment?
- ✓ Have you completed non-credit college courses and/or workshops?
- ✓ Have you earned any college credit?
- ✓ Have you earned certificates or licensures required for professionals in your field?
- ✓ Have you participated extensively in community work or volunteer services?
- ✓ Are you a current or former member of the armed forces?
- ✓ Have you lived in a foreign country or traveled extensively since high school?

C. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Guidelines
To be eligible to earn prior learning credit, **you must be a student at FCC and must declare a major in a degree or certificate program**. If you are petitioning for 'Portfolio' or 'Institutional Departmental Exam' credit, **you must be enrolled in a minimum of three (3) credits** *(excludes the PLAC 101 course)* **in the same semester you are pursuing PLA credit, or you are completing a program through reverse transfer**.

Any credit awarded will be applied to the student's official program of study. Students should not have previously taken and received credit or attempted the course they are petitioning for credit.

1. Students may earn up to 75% required for a program of study through *all* Prior Learning Assessment pathways to credit.
2. Students must earn at least 25% of the credits required within a program at FCC (Residency Requirement).
3. A maximum of 15 credits can be earned through '***Portfolio Assessment'*** and '***Institutional Department Exams***.'

<u>NOTE:</u> *Financial Aid cannot be used to pay for Prior Learning Assessment pathways. Students planning to transfer to a 4-year bachelor degree granting institution should note that not all PLA credits could transfer. Some externally accredited programs may be eligible to participate in the PLA program. However, students completing clinical or internship courses are not eligible to receive Prior Learning Assessment credits.*

II. Seven Pathways to Earn Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Credit

A. *Portfolio Development & Assessment*
A Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio evaluation is a course-by-course review whereby students are able to use supporting evidence that describes and documents relevant knowledge gained from experiential learning and equates that knowledge to equivalent academic college-level courses. A portfolio is an organized collection of essays, supporting documentation, and other supporting artifacts demonstrating work and life experiences. Through portfolio development, students show that the knowledge gained through experience is equivalent to college-level learning and the specific course(s) learning outcomes.

Students must be able to identify and document all experiences and learning. A student's prior learning portfolio is a collection of materials or artifacts compiled to demonstrate college-level learning relevant to their academic program of study. Since students do not earn academic credit

for experience alone, students must meet the challenges of analyzing learning and finding parallels within the Frederick Community College curriculum and courses listed in the catalog.

Students will be required to enroll in and complete the Prior Learning Assessment Course (PLAC101) and will be assessed the **current tuition rate for a one-credit course**. Additionally, students who request a Portfolio evaluation will be assessed **50% of the current tuition per credit awarded**.

1. *What are the learning categories of PLA Portfolio Development & Assessment?* Prior learning is separated into three distinct categories: **formal learning**, **non-formal learning,** and **informal learning**.

o Formal learning is formal guided learning, such as classroom training or non-accredited educational courses and usually follows a structure with well-defined learning outcomes.
o Non-formal learning is acquired by participating in guided workshops or less-structured settings.
o Informal learning is referred to as experiential learning, or learning that does not have structure and is often self-guided or developed.

2. *Portfolio Development & Assessment Eligible Programs*
   All FCC programs are eligible to be considered with the exception of non-credit courses.

3. *Portfolio Development & Assessment Eligibility*
   a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC, enrolled in a minimum of three (3) credits (excludes the PLAC101 course) in the same semester you are pursuing PLA credit or you are completing a program through reverse transfer.
   b. Students **must** declare a major in a degree or certificate program.
   c. Students must have received credit for EN101 earning at least a 'C' or have the requirement waived by the PLA Coordinator.
   d. Students must have a minimum of 3 years of experiential learning outside of the classroom in one of FCC's programs.
   e. Students must identify each specific course(s) being pursued for credit.
   f. Students should not have previously taken nor received credit or attempted the course being petitioned for credit.

4. *Portfolio Development & Assessment Policy*
   a. Prior to enrolling in the portfolio development course, students must meet with the PLA Coordinator for advising.
   b. Students must enroll in and successfully complete the *13 week-one credit* Prior Learning Assessment Course (PLAC101).
   c. Students will be assessed the current tuition rate for a one-credit course when enrolled in the Prior Learning Assessment Course.
   d. Students **may** use Financial Aid for the PLAC101 course **only** if the course is **listed as an (general or open) elective** for the certificate or degree program the student is enrolled in and the student has not exhausted the program's free elective requirements.

e. A letter grade will be assigned upon completion of the PLAC101 course.

f. Students will be allowed to retake the PLAC101 course for credit **up to 3 times**.

g. A discipline specific faculty advisor will work with students to complete portfolios.

h. Upon completion of a portfolio, a discipline specific faculty advisor will evaluate students' work and recommend credit.

i. Students will receive credit that is applied toward their official declared FCC program of study.

j. Students are responsible for 50% of the current tuition for any credits awarded.

k. Students must complete a Prior Learning Assessment application.

l. No more than 15 credits can be earned through 'Portfolio Assessment and Institutional Departmental Exam prior learning assessment pathways.

m. Portfolio evaluation credits will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript and does not affect a student's GPA.

5. *Portfolio Development and Assessment Process*

Students must meet with PLA Coordinator for Advising and completion of the Prior Learning Assessment Application.

Students enroll in, pay for, and successfully complete the PLAC101 course.

Students must present their completed Portfolio to the Faculty Advisor after successfully completing PLAC Course.

Faculty Advisors will evaluate the student Portfolio for credit.

Students go to Finance and pay the Portfolio Assessment fee assessed at 50% of current tuition.

Student must make payment or payment arrangements by the end of the semester in order for credit to be awarded.

Faculty Advisors will complete the evaluated Portfolio and PLA Perfect Form application.

The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded.

6. *How to translate prior learning into specific Core Learning Outcomes?*

The most effective way to begin the process of portfolio development is to obtain a syllabus for   each course you are seeking credit.

Using this as a guide, separate your narrative into three sections:

- ✓ Experiences
- ✓ Knowledge/skills acquired as a result of the experiences
- ✓ Learning outcomes as a result of experiences
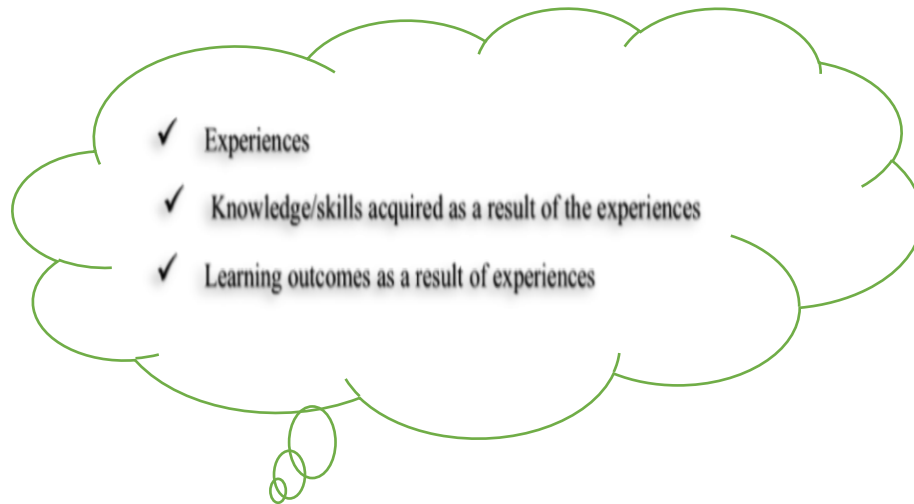
Use the four sections below to navigate your learning through an evaluation of concrete experiences, using reflective observation, examining the concepts, and applications of your experiential learning.

Concrete Experiences
Identify and describe the learning experience: the environment, your role, and your actions.
- ➢ What did you do?
- ➢ For how long did you participate?
- ➢ Who else was involved in the activity?
- ➢ What were your goals and objectives?
- ➢ What techniques, methods, or procedures did you use?

Reflective Observation
Reflect on your learning experience.
- ➢ What worked or did not work?
- ➢ Did you notice any patterns in your learning?
- ➢ What was important, significant, different, or unique?
- ➢ What relationships have you noticed?
- ➢ What can you say about your learning experiences?

Concepts
Identify what you learned.
- ➢ What knowledge and skills have you gained?
- ➢ What is the importance of learning the knowledge and skills?
- ➢ How did you apply the knowledge and skills learned?
- ➢ What evidence can you provide validating the skills and knowledge gained?
- ➢ In what other situations might you use these skills and knowledge?

Applications
How did you apply what you learned?
- ➢ How have you been able to test your learning?
- ➢ How is your learning valuable?
- ➢ How does what you learned fit into your continual plan for learning and career goals?
- ➢ What difference has this learning made in your personal, professional, mental, and moral development?

7. *What are the required components of a Portfolio?*

A portfolio consists of multiple required components. Each component plays a role in demonstrating mastery of course learning outcomes and objectives.

Each portfolio submitted must include the following major sections/documents:

a. **Title Page**-Include the equivalent course name, number, and course description for each portfolio.

b. **Reason for Petition**- Students will write a concise summary of the reasons for petitioning for portfolio credit, highlighting courses seeking credit.

c. **Course Syllabus-**Include a copy of each course syllabi for which a credit award is being requested.

d. **The Educational Goal Statement** – Gives students the opportunity to examine their personal motivation in the context of learning and application of knowledge. This document provides prior learning evaluators with insight and helps them provide appropriate feedback to facilitate life-long learning.

   In this section, students should:
   - o Explain what your long-term career and educational goals are.
   - o Explain what you have accomplished in terms of those goals.
   - o Explain what you have left to achieve.
   - o Identify the knowledge and competencies you have achieved through experiences, relative to the course objectives.
   - o Describe how your portfolio, as a demonstration of prior learning, supports your goal of attaining the major/degree you have chosen.

e. **The Autobiography** – Focuses on your professional and personal learning endeavors since high school. In writing the autobiography, you will analyze your experiences in terms of critical incidents that led to learning. This part of the portfolio helps the evaluator understand when, how, and why the learning has occurred.

f. **The Expanded Resume** – A resume allows you to highlight more detail about your responsibilities and accomplishments that have supported your learning. The resume provides the evaluator with a timeline and demonstrates the progression of learning. The resume should contain cross-references—i.e., references to sections of the narrative or documentation in which an evaluator can find further evidence of the learning in question.

g. **The Narrative** – This component is unique for every portfolio because the focus is on the core learning outcomes for a specific course. Students must address each course objective found on the course syllabus, and demonstrate that they have mastered the

objectives to the same extent as students who have completed the course. The narrative includes:

- A statement describing how prior learning relates to your certificate or degree plan.
- A detailed description of your experience integrating a discussion about what you have learned and how you have learned it, while showing that it is relevant learning.
- A detailed discussion of the learning that took place and why/how that learning relates to the course(s) or course area in question.
- Where possible, incorporate evidence from a range of sources (e.g., textbooks, interviews, syllabi, other programs, etc.).
- Please remember that you will be providing a separate narrative/portfolio for each course-learning outcome for which you will be seeking credit.
- The style of writing is important. The learning narrative is not a term paper, and is written in first person, essay form.

h. **Documentation** – Students will need to supply documentation to support the narrative.

Documentation, artifacts, and evidence references learning as an individual.

Students can use direct and indirect documentation to support learning experiences. Direct documentation, such as a work product, is usually the strongest supporting evidence of your learning experiences and outcomes. Indirect evidence is usually described as circumstantial or inferred evidence that support experiential learning.

Examples of the types of documentation acceptable include the following…
(This is not an exhaustive list. All supporting documentation provided will be evaluated)

Direct Evidence	Indirect Evidence
Job descriptions and/or classifications	Personnel policies
Licenses and certificates	Drawings
Newspaper and magazine articles about your accomplishments	Short stories
Descriptions of training courses you have completed	Computer programs
Awards, citations, and commendations	Brochures
Programs of your performances / exhibits	Music compositions
Letters of verification/recommendations	Case Studies
Documents of Incorporation	Research reports
Performance Appraisals	Links to video and audio files
Resume/CV	Sample work products
Brochures or other published materials you have prepared	Training certificates
Links to websites that document your work	Photographs
	Models
	Diagrams
	Maps
	Personal Journals or Testimony

8. How will my Portfolio be evaluated?

Students are expected to evaluate their work and make a specific credit request. Faculty Advisors will review portfolios and recommend credit awards based on each specific course and course learning outcomes. The Faculty Advisor will make the final judgment as to the course(s) where credit will be awarded. Additionally, the following standards will be used to evaluate a student's portfolio:

- o Credit is appropriate to demonstrated core learning outcomes/competencies.
- o The supporting documentation/artifacts/evidence are adequately presented.
- o Overall writing mechanics of portfolio.
- o Portfolios are properly organized for assessment.

Upon review of your portfolio, a Faculty Advisor may make one of the following determinations:

- o **Credit is awarded without further preparation**: When a student has presented specific evidence of mastery of a body of knowledge and the student has earned a minimum of 70% or 75% for Healthcare programs only.
- o **No award of credit:** Credit award is contingent upon further preparation as there are gaps in the student's understanding, knowledge, and documentation and/or artifacts to support evidence of satisfactory college-level learning. Student earned a score of 69% or less.

A Credit award may be denied for any of the following reasons and any other issues at the discretion of the Faculty Advisor:

- o Students who fail to demonstrate and provide evidence of college-level learning.
- o Student's portfolio narratives are poorly written.
- o Student's knowledge and skills do not a match the subject area seeking credit.
- o The authenticity of the direct or indirect evidence is questionable.

The College provides a grade appeal procedure for students who wish to dispute a final course grade. Students should follow this same appeal process for disputing the results of the assessment of their prior learning. Please follow the link below for detailed information.

https://www.frederick.edu/jobs-hr/policies-and-procedures/policyproceduredocuments/complaint-policy-procedure-for-students.aspx

B. *Institutional Departmental Exam Pathway to Credit*

Frederick Community College recognizes that students come to us having obtained college-level learning in a specific subject areas and having mastered course content and learning outcomes for various courses. Students can earn college credit by taking comprehensive exams in lieu of taking the actual course. Taking an exam for credit is one of the most affordable ways to accelerate degree completion.

This option is available only if a CLEP or DSST standardized exam for the subject is not available. **Note:** *This is not a Challenge Exam, which is used for appropriate placement in a course. Please contact your Program Manager or Department Chair for more information.*

Students will be assessed **50% of the current tuition per credit** to take an Institutional Departmental Exam.

1. *Institutional Departmental Exam Eligible Programs*
   All FCC programs are eligible to be considered with the exception of non-credit courses.
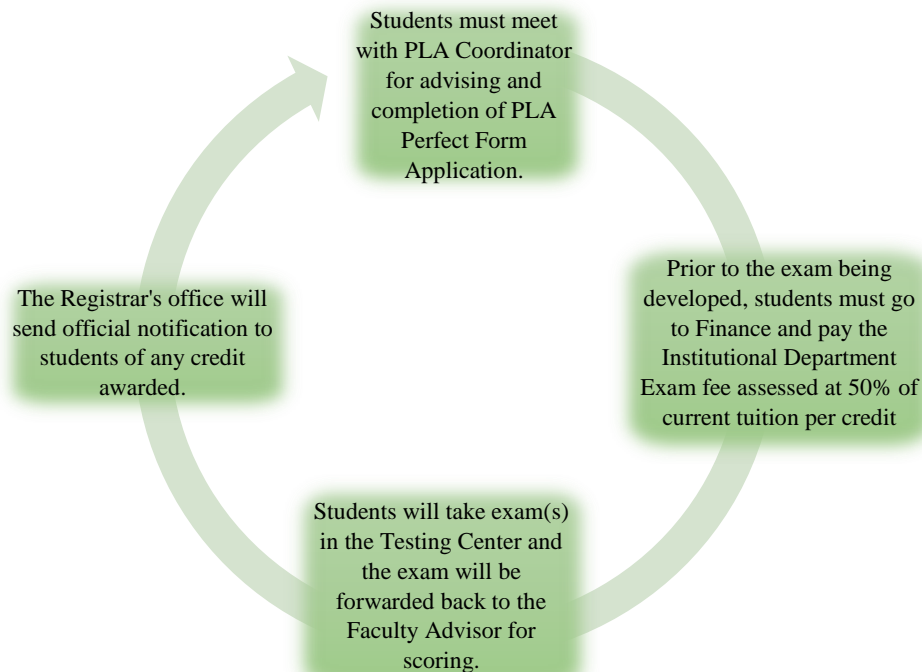
2. *Institutional Departmental Exam Eligibility*

   a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC, enrolled in a minimum of three (3) credits (excludes the PLAC101 course credit) in the same semester you are pursuing PLA credit or you are completing a program through reverse transfer.

   b. Students **must** declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

   c. Students must meet with the PLA Coordinator for advising.

   d. Students must identify the courses being pursued for credit and complete a Prior Learning Assessment application.

   e. Students should not have previously taken nor received credit or attempted the course petitioning for credit.

   f. Students are eligible to take an Institutional Departmental Exam **only** when there is no CLEP or DSST exam available for the subject petitioned for credit.

3. *Institutional Departmental Exam Policy*

   a. Students will receive credit that will be applied toward their official declared FCC program of study.

   b. Students may take an examination for credit only *once*.

   c. Students will be required to pay for the exam *prior* to taking the test.

   d. Students will be charged at a rate of 50% of the normal tuition rate per credit for the exam, which is non-refundable.

   e. Students **must** receive a passing grade as defined by the program requirements.

   f. Examinations taken for credit carry no grade and do not affect the student's GPA.

   g. Students enrolled in a course for which he/she request to take an exam for credit will not be entitled to a refund.

   h. Students who fail an exam will be required to take the course(s) and pay full tuition.

   i. The Academic Department proctoring the examination will determine the standards for successful completion of an exam for credit.

   j. Faculty Advisor Subject Matter Experts will develop departmental course exams.

   k. Exams will be reviewed and approved prior to being administered and will become the 'Examination of Record.'

   l. No more than 15 credits can be earned through 'Portfolio Assessment and Institutional Departmental Exams' PLA pathways to credit.

   m. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

4. *Institutional Departmental Exam Process*

Students must meet with PLA Coordinator for advising and completion of PLA Perfect Form Application.

Prior to the exam being developed, students must go to Finance and pay the Institutional Department Exam fee assessed at 50% of current tuition per credit

Students will take exam(s) in the Testing Center and the exam will be forwarded back to the Faculty Advisor for scoring.

The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded.

C. *Certificate & Licensure Pathway*

Frederick Community College accepts many industry-standard certificates and licensures for college credit. Specific programs have certificate and licensure evaluation opportunities for credit awards. **Please contact your Program Manager for additional information.**

*FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for Certificate & Licensure evaluations and credit awards.

1. *Certificate & Licensure Eligibility*

a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC, enrolled in a minimum of three (3) credits (excludes the PLAC101 course credit) in the same semester you are pursuing PLA credit.

b. Students **must** declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. *Certificate & Licensure Policy*

a. Students should meet with the PLA Coordinator for advising and completion of a Prior Learning Assessment application.

b. Students must submit official documentation of certificates and/or licensure for review to their Program Manager and/or Department Chair for evaluation.

c. Upon evaluation, credit may be awarded.

d. Students may receive credit that is applied toward their official declared FCC program of study.

e. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. ***Certificate & Licensure Process***

Students needing assistance with earning credit for Certificates or Licensure must meet with PLA Coordinator for advising.

Faculty Advisors will review and evaluate students Certificate and/or License for potential credit award.

After the Certificate and/or License is evaluated, a copy of the evaluation and PLA application will be sent to the PLA Coordinator, Department Chair/Program Manager, and the Registrar's office.

The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded.

D. *Credit by Examination Pathways*

CLEP and DSST exams are national credit-by-examination programs providing individuals the opportunity to receive credit for college-level achievement acquired in a variety of ways. General examinations are available in many different subject areas.

*FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for CLEP or DSST evaluations and any credit awarded.

1. ***CLEP & DSST Eligibility***
   a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC.
   b. Students must declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. ***CLEP & DSST Policy***
   a. Students who wish to take a CLEP or DSST exam must meet with the PLA Coordinator.
   b. Students must review the Academic Catalog to review the list of acceptable scores for CLEP & DSST.
   c. Students must submit official score report to the Registrar's office.
   d. The Registrar's office evaluates and processes any credit awards if applicable.
   e. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. CLEP & DSST Process

Students who wish to take a CLEP or DSST exams must meet with the PLA Coordinator.	Review the Academic Catalog list CLEP & DSST exams and required scores accepted at FCC for credit and submit scores to the Registrar's office.	The Registrar's Office will review and process any credit awards if applicable.	The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded.

E. *International Baccalaureate (IB) Pathway*

Students who have engaged in college-level study in high school through an International Baccalaureate (IB) program can obtain credit toward an FCC certificate or degree. FCC will evaluate IB subject area examinations. Students may be awarded **up to 30 credits** toward the associate degree, but those planning to transfer should consult with the potential transfer institution regarding each institution's policy on required scores and credits awarded.

*FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for International Baccalaureate (IB) evaluations and credit awards.

1. *International Baccalaureate (IB) Eligibility*
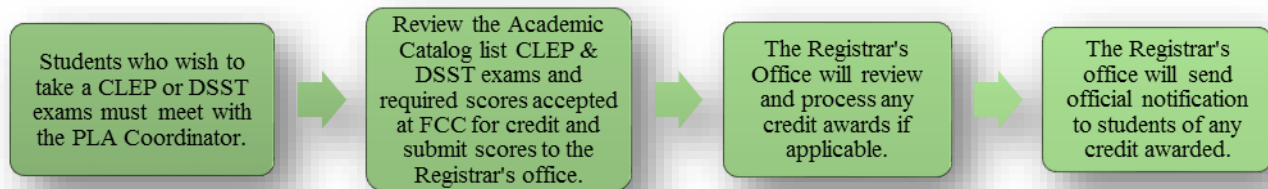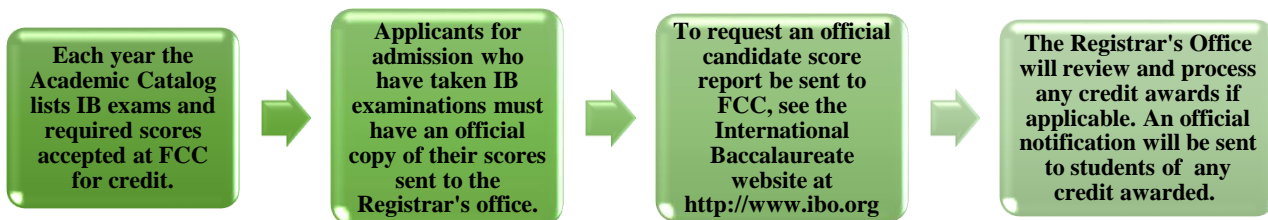 a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC.
  b. Students must declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. *International Baccalaureate (IB) Policy*
  a. Students must submit an official score report to the Registrar's office.
  b. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. *International Baccalaureate (IB) Process*

Each year the Academic Catalog lists IB exams and required scores accepted at FCC for credit.	Applicants for admission who have taken IB examinations must have an official copy of their scores sent to the Registrar's office.	To request an official candidate score report be sent to FCC, see the International Baccalaureate website at http://www.ibo.org	The Registrar's Office will review and process any credit awards if applicable. An official notification will be sent to students of any credit awarded.

F. *Advanced Placement (AP) Pathway*

Subject matter exams sponsored by the Educational Testing Service are generally administered through high schools at the culmination of AP course offerings. The program provides a practical way for high school students to receive advanced standing credit in college for college-level courses completed in high school. Students who have completed college work in high school under AP programs are eligible to receive college credit based on their exam scores.

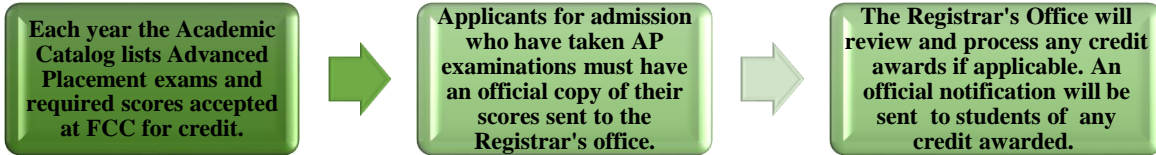****FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for Advanced Placement (AP) evaluations and credit awards.***

1. *Advanced Placement (AP) Eligibility*
   a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC.
   b. Students **must** declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. *Advanced Placement (AP) Policy*
   a. Students must submit an official score report to the Registrar's office.
   b. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. *Advanced Placement (AP) Process*

| Each year the Academic Catalog lists Advanced Placement exams and required scores accepted at FCC for credit. | → | Applicants for admission who have taken AP examinations must have an official copy of their scores sent to the Registrar's office. | → | The Registrar's Office will review and process any credit awards if applicable. An official notification will be sent to students of any credit awarded. |

G. *The American Council on Education (ACE) Pathway*

In consultation with academic departments, FCC *may* award credit for demonstrated proficiency in areas related to college-level coursework with transcripts from the American Council on Education (ACE).

ACE offers Credit Recommendation Services and is a resource that connects workplace learning with colleges and universities by helping adults gain access to academic credit for formal course evaluations acquired outside the traditional classroom setting. Credit **may be granted** for educational programs that have been completed successfully at non-college institutions and applied to a student's program of study. ACE also evaluates military training and experience.

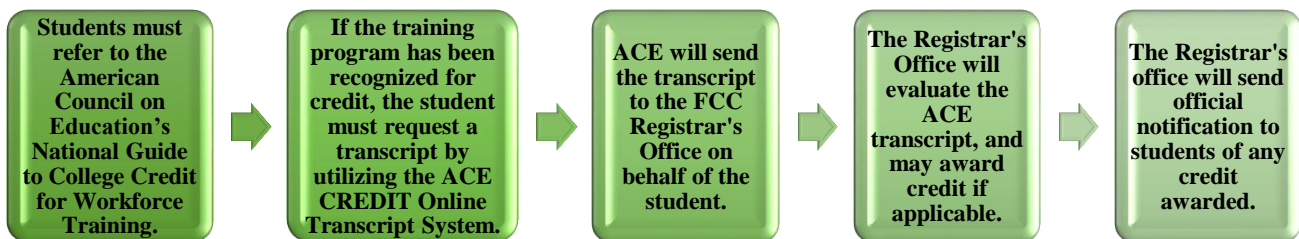**FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for the evaluation or award of ACE credits.*

1. *ACE Eligibility*
   a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC.
   b. Students must declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. *ACE Policy*
   a. Students must request an official transcript from ACE to be sent directly to the FCC Registrar's office.
   b. Students will receive credit that is applied toward their official declared FCC program of study.
   c. The Registrar's office evaluates and processes any credit awards if applicable.
   d. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. **ACE Process**

| Students must refer to the American Council on Education's National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training. | → | If the training program has been recognized for credit, the student must request a transcript by utilizing the ACE CREDIT Online Transcript System. | → | ACE will send the transcript to the FCC Registrar's Office on behalf of the student. | → | The Registrar's Office will evaluate the ACE transcript, and may award credit if applicable. | → | The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded. |

H. *The National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) Pathway*

In consultation with academic departments, FCC _may_ award credit for demonstrated proficiency in areas related to college-level coursework with transcripts from the National College Credit Recommendation Services (NCCRS).

NCCRS evaluates training and education programs offered outside of the traditional college classroom setting provided by industry, state and federal government employers, professional organizations and other agencies and translates them into college credit equivalencies.

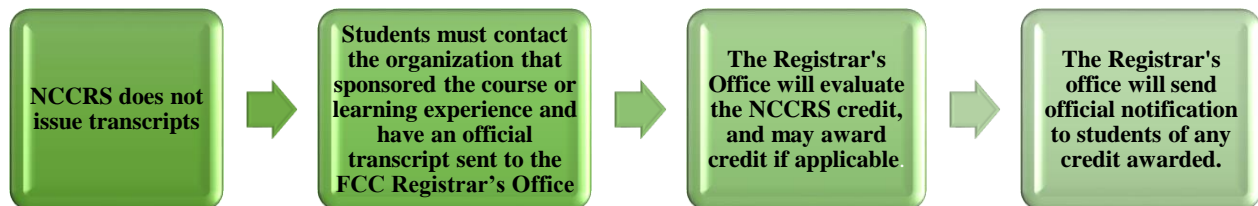**FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for the evaluation or award of NCCRS credits.*

1. *NCCRS Eligibility*
  a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC.
  b. Students must declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. *NCCRS Policy*
  a. NCCRS does not issue transcripts.
  b. Students must request an official transcript from the organization that sponsored the training be sent to the FCC Registrar's office.
  c. Students will receive credit that is applied toward their official declared FCC program of study.
  d. The Registrar's office evaluates and processes any credit awards if applicable.
  e. Credit awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. *NCCRS Process*

NCCRS does not issue transcripts	→	Students must contact the organization that sponsored the course or learning experience and have an official transcript sent to the FCC Registrar's Office	→	The Registrar's Office will evaluate the NCCRS credit, and may award credit if applicable.	→	The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded.

I. *Military Training and Service Pathway*

FCC will evaluate Military Training and Service and award credit where applicable. The Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) and Joint Services Transcripts (JST) are issued to Air Force (CCAF), Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy personnel and documents their military training, experience, and service. Some military education and/or training may be eligible for credit.

*FCC does not assess any fees or tuition for the evaluation or award of Military Training and Service credits.
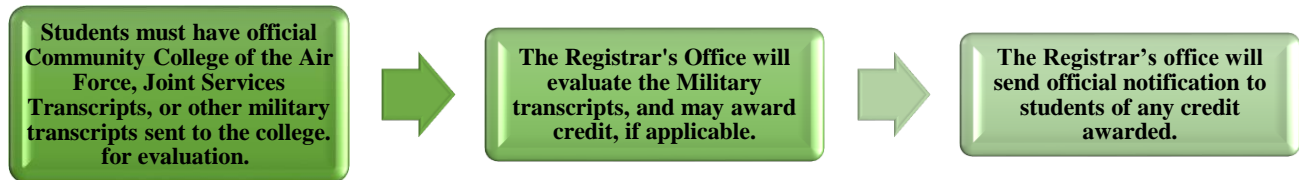
1. *Military Training and Service Eligibility*
  a. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, you must be a student at FCC.
  b. Students must declare a major in a degree or certificate program.

2. *Military Training and Service Policy*
   a. Students must request an official JST or CCAF transcript be sent directly to the FCC Registrar's office.
   b. Students will receive credit that is applied towards their official declared FCC program of study.
   c. The Registrar's office evaluates and processes any credit awards if applicable.
   d. Credits awards will be documented as 'Transfer Credit' on a student's transcript.

3. *Military Training and Service Process*

Students must have official Community College of the Air Force, Joint Services Transcripts, or other military transcripts sent to the college. for evaluation.	→	The Registrar's Office will evaluate the Military transcripts, and may award credit, if applicable.	→	The Registrar's office will send official notification to students of any credit awarded.

ARMY ♦ NAVY ♦ MARINES ♦ COAST GUARD

Request Official Joint Services Transcript at **https://jst.doded.mil**

AIR FORCE

Request Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) transcripts at **http://www.au.af.mil/au/ccaf/transcripts.asp**

NOTE: *Once the Registrar receives the completed Prior Learning Assessment application, with any supporting documents, and verification of payment made in full or that a payment arrangement has been made for fees and/or tuition as applicable, credit awards will be posted to the student's transcript. The exception to this criteria is standardized exams, they may post immediately to the student's transcript upon receipt.*

III. Appendix

A. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?
Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a program that helps students accelerate their progress toward graduation. Through course challenges, industry and military crosswalks, and prior learning portfolio, students can demonstrate what they have learned and petition to have their work and life experiences assessed for college credit.

What Departments offer PLA?
Many departments offer students the option of challenging a course through a variety of PLA pathways. However, not all courses may be challenged. The PLA Coordinator is your first point of contact to assess your PLA options and to provide appropriate advising.

How do I get started?
To begin the process of PLA, you should first meet with the PLA Coordinator to discuss your specific case.

Do I get credit for life and work experience?
Indirectly, yes. Academic credit results from knowledge demonstrated at the college level, and your knowledge may be a result of your work and life experiences. This knowledge may fit the equivalent of a college course taught at Frederick Community College and may meet the requirements of your degree program.

Must I be a Frederick Community College student to participate in PLA?
Yes, to be eligible to earn PLA credit through many pathways, you must be a student at FCC and you must declare a major in a degree or certificate program. However, if you are petitioning for 'Portfolio' or 'Institutional Departmental Exam' credit, you must also be enrolled in a minimum of three (3) credits (excluding the PLAC101 course credit) in the same semester you are pursuing PLA credit or you will be completing a program through reverse transfer.

How much credit am I allowed to earn through PLA?
Students may earn up to 75% (45 credits for degree options) required for a program of study through 'All' Prior Learning Assessment pathways. However, a maximum of 15 credits earned through the Portfolio and Institutional Departmental pathways can be used toward an Associate degree or certificate program.

Students must earn at least 25% (15 credits for degree options) of the credits required for a program of study at FCC. PLA pathway credit awards do not count toward the 25% credit requirement.

Can I earn a "block of credit"?
No, credits earned via PLA at Frederick Community College relate specifically to a course-by course evaluation within programs listed in our catalog and credit may be awarded based on an individual course assessment.

Will I get the academic credit I have requested?
Submission of a PLA application does not guarantee that you will receive credit. FCC faculty and staff will work with you to maximize the possibility of earning academic credit toward your program of study.

Are there any restrictions for PLA?
Yes, some externally accredited programs and specific FCC programs and courses, clinical, and internships are not eligible to receive Prior Learning credits.

Will other colleges accept PLA credit?
Although an increasing number of private colleges and public universities are accepting PLA credit, not all do. If you are planning to attend another college or university, check the institution's transfer and PLA policies. The Registrar and the PLA Coordinator at FCC can provide an explanation of your credit to the particular institution.

How long does the process take?
It depends on which PLA option you plan to use. Students must consult with the PLA Coordinator for advising related to the specific PLA options policies and procedures.

How much does PLA cost?
Fees for PLA credit are significantly less than tuition and fees for traditional courses. Financial Aid does not cover PLA credits awarded and students must pay fees and tuition on an out of pocket basis. PLA pathways such as the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST), Challenge Exams, International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), Certification and Licensure, Military Training and Service, ACE and NCCRS evaluations and credit awards **are not assessed fees or tuition cost**.

Note: All Prior Learning Assessment fees and tuition cost are out of pocket expenses. No financial aid may be used.

Institutional Departmental Exam Fees
Students will be assessed 50% of the current tuition per credit for an Institutional Departmental Exam.

Portfolio Development Course
Students will be required to enroll and complete the PLAC101 course and will be charged the current tuition rate for a one-credit course.

Portfolio Evaluation
Students petitioning for Portfolio Assessment & Evaluation will be assessed 50% of the current tuition for each credit awarded.

Does PLA credit affect my financial aid award?
No. However, the number of semester credits in which you are enrolled determines part-time or full-time status. Since you do not enroll for a PLA pathway, do not count courses you are

attempting through PLA toward part-time or full-time status. For specific information regarding financial aid, please contact the Financial Aid Office at 301.846.2480.

Can I use Financial Aid for the PLAC101 course for Portfolio Development?
Students **may** use Financial Aid for the PLAC101 course **only** if the course is **listed as an open or general elective** for the certificate or degree program the student is enrolled in **and the student has not exhausted the program's open/available elective requirements.**

How will I know if I have earned credit?
The Registrar's Office will notify you **officially** as to whether you have earned credit.

If I am granted credit, what will appear on my transcript?
The credit earned is documented on your transcript as Transfer Credit (TC), which is categorized as non-traditional credit. The PLA pathways do not affect your GPA.

Does the Grade appeal process apply to Prior Learning Assessments?
The College provides an appeal procedure for students who wish to dispute a final course grade. Students should follow this same appeal process for disputing the results of the assessment of their prior learning.

Please follow the link below for detailed information.

https://www.frederick.edu/jobs-hr/policies-and-procedures/policyproceduredocuments/complaint-policy-procedure-for-students.aspx

What is the Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator's contact information?

Dr. Renee Davis
Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Coordinator
301-846-2587
rdavis@frederick.edu

CLASS BEGINS:	CLASS ENDS:	LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW:

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

NAME:	OFFICE:
EMAIL:	PHONE:
OFFICE HOURS:	CAMPUS MAILBOX:

COURSE INFORMATION:

COURSE TITLE: PLAC101-Prior Learning Assessment: Portfolio Development		COURSE CREDITS: 1
PREREQUISITES: EN101	CO-REQUISITES:	PRE or CO-REQUISITE:
ON-CAMPUS MEETINGS:		MEETING TIMES:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Examines and applies college-level learning gained from life experiences that align with specific courses offered by the college and are related to their educational goals. Students will document experiential learning through the assembling of various components into a portfolio, demonstrating an understanding of the portfolio development process of collecting, selecting, reflecting, and projecting. The Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) portfolio development course provides a series of structured activities and strategic approaches for students to prepare petitions to submit portfolios for credit from prior learning.

CORE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the completion of the course, a student will be able to:

- Examine prior learning assessment and its importance to adult learners.
- Describe the required components of prior learning portfolio development.
- Analyze personal learning gained from life experiences with core learning outcomes and objectives of specific courses offered by the college.
- Develop an inventory of prior learning.
- Identify and reflect on areas of their own learning from both formal and informal settings.
- Analyze, synthesize and apply the value of skills learned from experiences.
- Demonstrate the ability to access, evaluate, incorporate, organize, and document information.
- Demonstrate through written organization of thoughts, the correct use of grammar, style, punctuation, and spelling that experiential learning and skills equivalent to core learning outcomes of courses have been achieved.
- Develop a working portfolio of prior learning.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS:
Face to face, classroom discussions, one-on-one meetings, direct application. Activities include short lecture and small group and individual activities

COURSE ORGANIZATION:
Class will be consist of weekly homework assignments and drills to assess student progress throughout course
- Three exams will test competency throughout the course
- Project at the end of the course will use all skills and knowledge gained throughout course for final evaluation.
- Not a self-paced course

TEXTBOOK INFORMATION: Colvin, J. & CAEL (2012). Earn College Credit for What you Know. 5th Edition. Kendall Hunt Publishing Company. ISBN: 9780757596919

Additional Readings, online resources, other as determined by instructor

PROGRESS REPORT:
Students may receive some form of communication from the instructor (Student Success Alert, email, etc.) regarding their progress no later than the 5th & 10th week of a 13-week semester or 1/3 of the instructional time for shorter sessions. Students will be able to monitor their own progress via Blackboard Grade Center. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor with questions regarding their progress.

ASSESSMENT METHODS:

Tests/Papers/Projects	Point or Percentage Value	Final Grade Scale
Final Portfolio	300 points	A = 600-540 points
Weekly Discussion	150 points	B = 539-480 points
In Class Assignments/Homework	150 points	C = 479-420
		D = 419-360 points
		F = 359 or lower points
TOTAL	600 points	

CODES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT CONDUCT:
Work in this course is subject to the provisions of the FCC Code of Academic Integrity. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. As a student, it is your job to practice academic honesty at ALL times. Make sure that all sources, particularly Internet sources, get proper credit for quotations, paraphrases, and ideas. More information about this and the Code of Student Conduct are available at http://www.frederick.edu/current-students/required-communications/student-policies-procedures.aspx. **You must send your Academic Integrity Pledge to the Instructor. The form is available at:** http://courses.frederick.edu/courses/pledge/index.aspx.

STUDENT RESOURCES:
A variety of services are available to assist students in succeeding at FCC. Students can learn more about these services by visiting the Student Resources web page: http://www.frederick.edu/student-resources.aspx. Students with disabilities who are in need of accommodations or who have questions related to disabilities services should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office at 301-846-2408. Students can learn more about these services by visiting their web page: http://www.frederick.edu/student-resources/services-for-students-with-disabilities.aspx.

PARTICIPATION POLICY:
Use the following principles as a GUIDE in formulating a participation policy for your course.
  (1) The course level class participation policy is designed to support the learning process.
  (2) The course level class participation policy is designed within the framework of approved class formats such as online, hybrid and face-to-face classes.
  (3) To maintain the highest quality of academic work, the course level class participation policy encourages and expects the student to participate fully in all course activities.
  (4) In case of serious illness, emergency, religious holidays, or participation in official college functions, students remain responsible for completing the requirements of the course.
  (5) If "Class Participation" affects the grade of a student, the course syllabus identifies measurable units of class participation in course activities.
  (6) If face-to-face participation components cannot be met due to serious illness, emergency, religious holidays, or participation in official college functions, the instructor may explore make-up opportunities in different class participation formats as warranted.
  (7) At the end of the course, students are expected to complete the course evaluation. Student feedback is anonymous.

TIME COMMITMENT FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS (ON-CAMPUS):

At Frederick Community College, in all credit courses, students are expected to invest a minimum of 10 hours completing out-of-class course work.

For example, in a 3-credit course, students experience at least 37.5 hours of instructional time and should invest a minimum of 75 hours in out-of-class time preparing for the course and completing assignments. In a traditional 15-week, 3-credit course, this equates to an average minimum of 5 hours per week.

***This is a 1-credit portfolio course; Students are expected to invest a minimum of 10 hours completing out-of-class course work. Please understand this is a minimum requirement and is subject to change.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION:
All FCC students will receive and are expected to use their FCC email address for correspondence with faculty and staff at the college. Students can establish and access their FCC email accounts at the following link: http://myfcc.frederick.edu/portal.aspx. Email is an instructional tool essential to student-instructor and student-student communication. In the Blackboard environment by default, your email address is available to all students in this course. However, students are permitted to use email addresses of other students in this course only for the purpose and the duration of this course. The instructor can be expected to respond to regular student email inquiries (grades, posted assignments, and tests excluded) within the timeframe of 24 to 36 hours (9 to 15-week courses); 18 to 24 hours (5 to 8-week courses); 12 to 14 hours (J-Term or 3-week courses).

MAKE-UP DATES:
Additional class meetings may be required as make-up days for inclement weather.

TOPICAL OUTLINE:
Every effort will be made to keep to this schedule; however, the instructor reserves the right to alter or amend it as necessary.

WEEK/DATE	SUBJECT	ACTIVITY	DUE DATE
1st class	FCC Safety & Security Message (4 minute video) **REQUIRED**	http://www.frederick.edu/faculty-staff/college-safety-security.aspx	
Weeks 1-2	▪ Introduction of course and guidelines ▪ Overview of Portfolios and Prior Learning Assessment & processes/Handbook ▪ Review Course Syllabus & Core Learning Outcomes. ▪ Write a 1-page summary of reasons for petition for portfolio credit (include courses/major)	▪ **Blackboard Overview** ▪ What is Prior Learning? ▪ What is a Portfolio? ▪ Review discipline specific courses for Portfolio credit ▪ Microsoft Word Overview ▪ How to use USB/Thumb drive to protect/save work. ▪ What are Core Learning Outcomes? ▪ Write petition request summary ▪ What is a Learning Inventory (Chart & Documentation)? ▪ Develop Learning Inventory Chart & Compile Documentation	
Week 3	▪ Progress report for Learning Inventory Chart & Documentation ▪ What is an Educational Goal Statement? ▪ Educational Goal Statement ▪ **Writing Center Representative**	▪ Submit **Draft** Learning Inventory Chart and Documentation ▪ How to write an Educational Goal Statement ▪ Develop Draft Educational Goal Statement ▪ Educational Goal Statement Review	

Week 4	▪ Progress report for Educational Goal Statement ▪ What is an Autobiography?	▪ Submit Learning Inventory Chart with documentation (**final**) ▪ Submit Educational Goal Statement **(final)** ▪ Review & Develop an Autobiography
Week 5	▪ Autobiography Development ▪ **Expanded Resume Writing Workshop**	▪ Submit Draft Autobiography ▪ **Career Services Coordinator** ▪ **Career Coach Overview** ▪ Create an expanded Resume
Week 6	▪ Progress report for Autobiography ▪ Expanded Resume Review ▪ What is a Learning Narrative? ▪ How to create Learning Narratives?	▪ Submit Autobiography (final) ▪ Submit Draft Expanded Resume ▪ Review Learning Narrative(s) for course Core Learning Outcomes ▪ Create Learning Narrative(s) for each course Core Learning Outcomes
Week 7	▪ Progress report for Expanded Resume ▪ Learning narrative(s) Workshop	▪ Submit Expanded Resume (final) ▪ Create Learning Narrative(s) for each course Core Learning Outcomes
Week 8	▪ Compile learning narrative(s) for each course Core Learning Outcomes ▪ Begin Review of Portfolio Contents	▪ Submit Draft Learning Narrative(s) for each course Core Learning Outcomes ▪ **Meet with Faculty Advisor**
Week 9	▪ Compile learning narrative(s) for each course Core Learning Outcome(s) ▪ Review Portfolio Contents	▪ Submit Learning Narrative(s) for each course Core Learning Outcomes ▪ Finalize & Compile completed Portfolio(s)
Week 10-11	▪ Portfolio Review ▪ Finalize & Compile completed Portfolio(s) ▪	▪ Finalize & Compile completed Portfolio(s) ▪ Complete "Prior Learning Assessment Application" ▪
Week 12-13	▪ **Meet with Faculty Advisors** ▪ Complete portfolio (electronically)	▪ **Submission of Final Portfolio(s) (electronically)**
NOTE: Your instructor reserves the right to make changes to this outline as needed.		

D. Prior Learning Assessment Course 101 (PLAC101)

Category	Unsatisfactory 1	Satisfactory 2	Mastery 3	Score
Course Learning Outcomes, Objectives or Competencies	Student **does not** address Course Learning Outcomes, Objectives or Competencies	Student supports mastery **of at least 70%** of the Course Learning Outcomes, Objectives or Competencies	Student demonstrates mastery of **ALL** Course Learning Outcomes, Objectives or Competencies	
College-level Experiential Learning/Experiences	Student **does not demonstrate** any understanding	Student demonstrates **understanding** and provides **limited** concrete examples.	Student demonstrates **mastery** and supports **understanding** with concrete examples throughout the portfolio.	
Alignment between Academic Construct and Theory and Practice	Student **does not demonstrate** any understanding.	Student demonstrates a **balance between** application and theory as appropriate to the course, but provides **limited concrete examples**	Student **references** broad theoretical or conceptual links that are related to the learning **supported** by **sufficient concrete examples.**	
Reflective Thinking	Student **does not demonstrate** any evidence of reflection.	Student **demonstrates** reflective thinking and provides **some examples, linked** to the portfolio.	Student **demonstrates** reflective thinking and application throughout the portfolio, **linking it well** to the student learning and the portfolio overall.	
Written organization of thoughts, and the correct use of grammar, style, punctuation, and spelling	Student work **is poorly written and difficult to follow.**	Student's writing **is focused and well organized**. No errors.	Student's writing is at a **high level**, with focus on the topics being discussed. Makes appropriate use of citations.	
Artifacts/Documentation	**No** Artifacts/Documentation provided.	Artifacts/Documentation **provide enough evidence** to support a credit award.	Artifacts/Documentation are presented so that **each piece** relates to the narrative and is appropriate to **support mastery** of the Course Learning Outcomes, Objectives or Competencies	
Completed Portfolio	Portfolio is missing required content and does not meet the criteria to support a credit award.	Portfolio content satisfactorily relate and detail the student's learning experiences in support of a credit award.	Portfolio content succinctly narrates and describes the significance of the student's learning experiences in support of a credit award.	
Total:				

E. Portfolio Assessment & Development Course Rubric

Category	Objective	Meets/Does not Meet	Score
Origin of Experiential Learning			
Validity: **Narratives and Documentation to support learning experiences**	Portfolio content succinctly narrates and describes the significance of the student's relevant learning experiences and supplies relevant documentation as evidence.		
Evidence of Learning (Core Learning Outcomes/Competencies)			
Evidence (overall)	Student provides evidence of learning from experience.		
Accuracy: Evidence properly formatted and aligned with specific learning outcomes	Student demonstrates adequate and appropriate evidence of each Core Learning Outcome (CLO) for the discipline specific course syllabus. Student has developed a portfolio that is formatted proficiently, addressing all required sections and CLOs.		
Reliability: **Evidence aligns with personal experiences and incorporates reflective thinking**	Student demonstrates reflective thinking and application throughout the portfolio, linking it well to the student learning and the portfolio overall. The student's learning is representative of direct experiences and understanding of the topic		
Model: Evidence aligned with academic construct and theory	Student demonstrates appropriate use of academic theory integrated in the portfolio supported by sufficient concrete examples.		
Portfolio Quality			
Breadth/Depth of Portfolio	Student demonstrates depth and breadth of discussion related to the targeted course core-learning outcomes.		
Narratives/Content	The portfolio narratives effectively summarize the main points, critical details, and outcomes achieved through the student's experiences. The portfolio narrative clearly demonstrates the student experiential learning and its relevance to the targeted course.		
Material Sources	All sourced material is correct, complete, and verifiable.		
Documentation	Documentation/Artifacts is effective evidence of the student's experiential learning and is linked well throughout the portfolio. Significance and Relevance is clear.		
Written organization, sentence structure, mechanics and portfolio presentation	Student portfolio is well organized, structured, free of punctuation, spelling and grammatical errors and uses the appropriate format aligned with core learning outcomes and progresses in logical and persuasive order. Portfolio is complete and clear.		
Total Points			

NOTE: Students must earn 14-21 points (420-600 point equivalency as noted on the course syllabus grading scale) either in the satisfactory and mastery columns or a combination of both columns to earn a passing grade for the PLAC 101 course. Any points earned in the unsatisfactory column will result in a non-passing grade for the course.

Point System:

0= evidence not provided 1= evidence insufficiently demonstrated 3 = evidence inconsistently demonstrated 5 = evidence minimally demonstrated 7 = satisfactory portfolio content/evidence 10 = exemplary portfolio content/ evidence	**Minimum score of 7 is required in any category** Total points possible: 100 Minimum to pass: 70% (75% for Healthcare programs only)

F. Prior Learning Assessment: Portfolio Cover Page

Student Name (print): _____ ID# _____

Assessor Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Portfolio submitted as credit for:

Course Number _____ Credits _____

Course Title: _____

Portfolio Contents (must be in the following order)

- ✦ Title/Cover Page
- ✦ Reason for Petition (summary)
- ✦ Course Syllabus
- ✦ The Educational Goal Statement
- ✦ The Autobiography
- ✦ The Expanded Resume
- ✦ The Narrative
- ✦ Documentation

Summary of Evaluation

The student documented competencies in at least 70% of the course content per the course
learning objectives.   ____Yes   _____ No

If no, please explain:

_____
_____

Comments from the Portfolio Evaluator:

_____
_____