



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GLOBAL CAMPUS

Prior Learning Assessment

Student Handbook

Effective July 1, 2020

This handbook was developed in accordance with recommendations from the 2006 CAEL-sponsored publication: *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, & Procedures* by *Morry Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, & Urban Whitaker*.

CONTENTS

GENERAL INFORMATION	2
STUDENT ELIGIBILITY	2
PLA BENEFITS FOR ADULT LEARNERS	2
PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT FEES.....	3
SPONSORED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING.....	4
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION.....	4
EXPERIENTIAL ESSAY	5
PLA SUBMISSION PROCESS.....	6
PLA CREDIT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	7
ASSESSMENT STANDARDS.....	7
ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS	7
QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES.....	8
ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS	8
BACHELOR’S DEGREE PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS	8
MASTER’S DEGREE PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS	8
PLA CREDIT PARAMETERS	8
STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES	10
PLA STAFF	10
ACADEMIC ADVISORS.....	10
FACULTY ASSESSORS.....	10

GENERAL INFORMATION

The University of Arizona Global Campus recognizes the uniqueness of each student's experience and realizes that learning takes place in a variety of environments. The Prior Learning Assessment program provides a means for awarding credit to matriculated students who bring college-level learning experiences acquired outside of a traditional university classroom setting.

Prior Learning is defined as the skills, knowledge, and competencies that people acquire from their work experience, volunteerism, community activities, travel, artistic endeavors, and hobbies.

Assessment is defined as the process by which experiential learning is identified, evaluated, and equated with an amount of college credit.

The Prior Learning Assessment program is coordinated by the Department of Prior Learning Assessment. Inquiries regarding the awarding of credit based on sponsored professional training and the evaluation of experiential learning should be made to the Department of Prior Learning Assessment. Students may earn credit through the Prior Learning Assessment program in two ways:

- Faculty evaluation of sponsored professional training; and
- Faculty evaluation of experiential essays

Students may participate in either or both components of the program based on experience, background, and need. Students must have room in their degree progress report for PLA credits, meet eligibility requirements, and be referred for enrollment in the PLA Information Center by their Academic Advisor.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Must be a fully admitted Associate, Bachelor and Master's degree seeking students
- Must satisfy the English Proficiency requirement*;
- Must successfully complete their first course at UAGC; and
- Must have room for PLA credits in their degree plan.

**English Proficiency only applies to associate and bachelor's degree students.*

PLA BENEFITS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

- Increases access to higher education,
- Individualizes process to meet students' needs,
- May satisfy prerequisites in students' career paths,
- Provides validation of life-long learning,
- Formalizes the learning process,
- Saves time, and
- Saves money.

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT FEES

Fees are based on the assessment services performed, not by the amount of credit awarded. All fees are non-refundable.

Sponsored Professional Training	
Undergraduate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$30 per credit hour assessed <i>(Compared to current cost of tuition per credit at student current degree level)</i>
Master's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$40 per credit hour assessed <i>(Compared to current cost of tuition per credit at student current degree level)</i>
Experiential Essay	
Undergraduate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$275 Access fee to the Experiential Learning Credit Workshop* • \$125 per essay assessed <p><i>*Students will receive one essay submission with access fee.</i></p>
Master's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$430 Access fee to the Experiential Learning Credit Workshop* • \$280 per essay assessed <p><i>*Students will receive one essay submission with access fee.</i></p>

SPONSORED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

College-level learning can occur in a variety of instructional settings. The University of Arizona Global Campus Prior Learning Assessment department will evaluate standardized trainings, certificate programs, and seminars in areas related to the University of Arizona Global Campus degree programs or coursework. Students who provide evidence of learning and submit all required documentation may apply for prior learning credits. The University of Arizona Global Campus faculty will evaluate the submitted documentation for evidence of college-level learning.

The University of Arizona Global Campus may award one college credit per 15 hours of formal classroom contact for sponsored professional training. Each training must be at least 15 hours in length. Credit is not awarded for several small trainings grouped together unless the trainings lead to an overall certificate or a completion program.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Students must submit the following documentation for evaluation purposes:

1. Evidence of successful completion of the prior learning (transcript, certificate, employee training record, or letter on company letterhead signed by appropriate official)
2. Evidence of length of course (number of contact hours)
3. Evidence of training content (syllabus, course description, training agenda, or training manual table of contents)
4. Contact information (current phone/email) for training instructor or work supervisor
5. Credit Rationale Paper:
 - Summarization of the training content and identification of the specific learning outcomes.
 - Explanation of how these training outcomes are equivalent to college-level outcomes.
 - Description of how the student has applied what was learned in the training to his/her professional and personal life.
 - Description of how the student will be able to apply the training knowledge and his/her skills and abilities to future situations.

The following types of trainings are ineligible for prior learning credit:

- Recertification training
- Refresher training
- Company-specific training
- Skill-based training
- Internships

EXPERIENTIAL ESSAY

An experiential essay is a reflective/research paper that demonstrates understanding of the experiential learning process by aligning personal experience with the learning outcomes of at the University of Arizona Global Campus course. College-level learning or knowledge can be acquired outside the traditional college classroom setting through documented work experience, volunteerism, community activities, travel, artistic endeavors, and hobbies.

Students must have at least one year of experience in the essay topic. One artifact that documents at least one year of experience in the essay topic is required. The artifact must provide physical evidence of the learning. The artifact could be (but is not limited to) a work sample, business plan, publication, job performance report, photographs, or validation of the experience by an appropriate official.

Students applying for PLA credit through the experiential essay process must first successfully complete the five (5) modules within the Experiential Learning Credit Workshop. The Experiential Learning Credit Workshop is a self-paced module that guides students through the writing of their Experiential Essay in which students explore the concepts and process of experiential learning and are guided through the writing of an experiential essay.

The experiential essay process follows a course equivalency model: students must select a three-credit course within their degree program at the University of Arizona Global Campus and write the essay to demonstrate they have met the specific Course Learning Outcomes of that course.

After completing The Experiential Learning Credit Workshop, students will submit the experiential essay to be reviewed by a Faculty member at the University of Arizona Global Campus who will make the determination if the three (3) credits may be awarded for that course.

Additional experiential essays may be submitted at any time. The modules within the Experiential Learning Credit Workshop are only required to be completed one time. The experiential essay credits may be applied to elective, general education, or major requirements, depending on where the selected course will fit into the degree progress report of the student.

PLA SUBMISSION PROCESS

- 1.0. Student indicates an interest in pursuing credit for Sponsored Professional Training or Experiential Essay to his/ her Academic Advisor. Students also have the ability to notify the Registrar's Office about potential PLA opportunities in the Online Application during the enrollment process.
 - 1.1. Student is automatically enrolled into the PLA Information Center once they have transitioned into an Active status.
- 2.0. Once enrolled into the PLA Information Center, student thoroughly reviews the policies and procedures posted in the PLA Information Center.
- 3.0. Using the guidelines in the PLA Information Center, student gathers all required documentation in preparation for submission:
 - 3.1. For Sponsored Professional Training: student provides a Credit Rationale Paper, evidence of successful completion, length of training, training content, and instructor/supervisor contact information.
 - 3.2. For Experiential Essay: student must complete The Experiential Learning Credit Workshop, submit an acceptable essay, and obtains an artifact/evidence of the learning experience.
- 4.0. When ready to apply for PLA credit, student registers in the PLA Credit Review Center (a link within the PLA Information Center) and submits the Sponsored Professional Training or Experiential Essay documentation.
- 5.0. PLA Department reviews submission for completeness.
 - 5.1. The Admission and Matriculation Coordinator checks for credit limitations and/or duplication of credit and approves or denies the request for PLA credit.
 - 5.2. Finance Department processes payment for PLA assessment fee and student's credit card is charged.
 - 5.3. PLA Department assigns the submission to appropriate faculty member to assess for PLA credit.
 - 5.4. Faculty member with academic credentials in the course content area reviews the submission, makes a credit recommendation, and completes the rubric.
 - 5.5. If faculty member approves the submission for credit, Registrar posts the PLA credits to the student's degree progress report.
 - 5.6. PLA Department notifies the student and his/her Student Advisor of the assessment results.

PLA CREDIT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The University of Arizona Global Campus PLA program complies fully with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) standards for excellence. The University of Arizona Global Campus is accredited by WASC Senior College and University Commission, 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001, www.wascsenior.org.

ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

The University of Arizona Global Campus adheres to CAEL academic standards by using the following assessment criteria:

- Credit will be awarded for learning only, not for experience.
- College credit will only be awarded for college-level learning that meets the academic standards of the University of Arizona Global Campus.
- The process of applying for credit will be viewed as an integral part of the learning process.
- The determination of credit awards and competence levels will be made by appropriate subject matter and academic experts.
- Credit will be appropriate to the academic context in which it is accepted.

ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS

The University of Arizona Global Campus adheres to CAEL administrative standards by using the following assessment criteria:

- Transcript entries for PLA will clearly describe what learning is awarded credit. Students will not be awarded PLA credit that duplicates credit previously earned through transfer or other means. Credit will not be given twice for the same learning.
- Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment will be fully disclosed to students in the University of Arizona Global Campus Academic Catalog, the University of Arizona Global Campus website, the PLA Information Center, the PLA Corporate Information Center, and The Experiential Learning Credit experiential essay course.
- Fees charged for the assessment of prior learning will be based on services performed, not by the amount of credit awarded. Fees will be non-refundable.
- All personnel involved in the assessment process will receive initial and ongoing training and professional development.
- The Department of Prior Learning Assessment will be responsible for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the PLA program. In conjunction with the Academic Affairs and Registrars department, the Department of Prior Learning Assessment will develop and oversee the academic policies for prior learning assessment and will monitor, review, evaluate, and revise the PLA policies and procedures as needed.

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICIES

The University of Arizona Global Campus has implemented the following quality assurance policies regarding the awarding of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credits:

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- Students in an Associate of Arts program may apply up to 15 credits of prior learning toward degree completion.
- PLA credit cannot be used to satisfy EXP 105, ASH 101 or BUS 105.
- PLA credit cannot be used to satisfy the English Proficiency requirement.
- PLA credit will be applied to an Associate of Arts program on a course match basis.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- Students in a Bachelor's program may apply up to 30 credits of prior learning toward degree completion. (This credit amount may differ depending on the state of the student's residence. Please refer to the Academic Catalog for specific state restrictions.)
- Prior learning credits may apply up to a maximum of 50% of the requirements for an emphasis, minor or specialization.
- Prior learning credits may apply up to a maximum of 100% of the requirements for a concentration (unless the concentration is part of the major requirements).
- The content of prior learning credits must be comparable to the content of the replaced course(s).
- PLA credit cannot be used to satisfy EXP 105, ASH 101, BUS 105 or GEN 499.
- PLA credit cannot be used to satisfy the English Proficiency requirement.
- Capstone courses are not eligible for PLA credit.

MASTER'S DEGREE PROVISIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- Students in a Master's program may apply up to 6 credits of prior learning toward degree completion. (This credit amount may differ depending on the state of the student's residence. Please refer to the Academic Catalog for specific state restrictions.)
- The content of prior learning credits must be comparable to the content of the replaced course(s).
- Capstone courses are not eligible for PLA credit.

PLA CREDIT PARAMETERS

The University of Arizona Global Campus has implemented the following credit parameters regarding the awarding of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credits:

- It is the student's responsibility to provide evidence of learning.
- PLA credit will be awarded only in areas which fall within the regular curricular offerings of the University of Arizona Global Campus.
- PLA credit cannot be applied at the doctoral level.
- Students cannot submit remedial courses for PLA credit.
- PLA credit may not be counted toward the residency requirement in a degree program.
- PLA credit is posted to the transcript as credit earned (without a grade) and does not affect a student's grade point average.
- The University of Arizona Global Campus PLA credits may or may not be transferable. It is the

student's responsibility to find out if credits will transfer to an institution that the student may plan to attend in the future.

- PLA credit awarded by another regionally or approved nationally accredited institution that falls within the regular curricular offerings of the University of Arizona Global Campus may be accepted for transfer with the approval of the Registrar and the Department of Prior Learning Assessment. Such credit counts toward the 30 credit maximum applicable toward a Bachelor's degree, 15 credit maximum applicable toward an Associate degree and 6 credit maximum applicable towards a Master's degree.
- If documentation is not in English, a certified translation of all documents is required.
- Students using the services of the Prior Learning Assessment department are expected to abide by the Student Community Standards as outlined in the University of Arizona Global Campus Academic Catalog.
- Appeals/exceptions to the stated policies and procedures will be handled by the Department of Prior Learning Assessment.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

In accordance with accreditation and Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) standards, PLA credits are awarded for learning that has occurred, not experience. In an effort to uphold these standards, rubrics are used to evaluate all PLA submissions. Students must be "developed" or "highly developed" in each criterion and/or learning outcome to receive credit. If the faculty member decides the student is not "developed" or "highly developed" in each area, the student will be allowed one opportunity to demonstrate proficiency. After the faculty member reviews a submission, the rubric and assessment results are shared with the student.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

PLA STAFF

- To assist students in the PLA process
- To manage the online PLA Information Center
- To recruit and train faculty members on the PLA process
- To coordinate awarding of credits with the Registrar's Office
- To coordinate the PLA billing process with the Finance department
- To maintain the University of Arizona Global Campus standardized evaluation list
- To manage the electronic archiving of students' PLA records

ACADEMIC ADVISORS

- To provide students with information about PLA opportunities and options
- To help students follow proper procedures regarding PLA
- To refer appropriate students to the online PLA Information Center
- To be well versed in PLA policies

FACULTY ASSESSORS

- To become familiar with CAEL standards for assessing experiential learning
- To attend initial and ongoing training as requested by the Department of Prior Learning Assessment
- To assess student submissions within five working days of receipt of materials
- To complete PLA rubric(s) for each student submission