Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy

I. Policy Section

   7.0 Instruction

II. Policy Subsection

   7.15 Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

III. Policy Statement

   Grand Rapids Community College may award credit for non-traditional learning or work experiences. Grand Rapids Community College will award credit for the course if a student is able to demonstrate competency in Course Learning Outcomes for a course by submitting a portfolio to be evaluated by a subject matter expert, only if the following guidelines are met:

   • If a Challenge Exam, an AP Test, a CLEP, a Test-Out, or an Industry Recognized Credential exists for a course and is a viable option, it should be used instead of a PLA portfolio evaluation.
   • Credit must be aligned with a course and may only be awarded once for that course.
   • Credits will not be awarded for General Education courses.
   • Students have been made aware that the credit awarded by the college is typically not transferable to other institutions.

IV. Reason for the Policy

   a. Increase access to college programs and shorten the time to graduation.
   b. Eliminate unnecessary repeated learning.
   c. Recognize skills and knowledge acquired outside of traditional educational settings.
   d. Award academic credit for college level learning which leads to degrees.
   e. Comply with Higher Learning Commission Criteria for the core components of Teaching and Learning.

V. Entities Affected by this Policy
   Students
   Faculty
   Academic and Advising Center
   Student Records / Registrar's Office
   Cashier's Office

1

VI. Who Should Read this Policy

   Students
   Faculty
   Staff

VII. Related Documents

   PLA Student Guide
   Portfolio Template
   PLA forms
   Industry Recognized Credentials/Test Credit Policy 8.33
   Graduation Requirements Policy 7.20
   GRCC Catalog
   Faculty Contract

VIII. Contacts

   Policy Owner: PLA Coordinator
   Student Records / Registrar's Office

IX. Definitions

   PLA is a process of defining, documenting, measuring, evaluating, and granting credit for learning acquired through various experiences. (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2000)

X. Procedures

   a. General Information
      1. The PLA Student Guide describes the assessment process and how to determine appropriateness of PLA.
      2. Pre-Defined templates for the Prior Learning Assessment Pre-Assessment Form and the PLA Portfolio are used for the PLA Process.
      3. There is a $150 fee for each assessment (one class is one assessment).
      4. A student may earn up to 45 PLA credits.
      5. Students are responsible for determining if PLA credits will transfer to institutions outside GRCC.
      6. The Associate Dean approves Faculty Assessor assignment and EOL compensation as defined by the Faculty Association Contract.
      7. Departments have the option of assigning a Department Liaison who serves as the primary point of contact for PLA Coordinator. If no Liaison is identified, the PLA Coordinator will interface with the Department Head.

   b. Student Process
      1. Student determines PLA is appropriate for needs.
      2. Student contacts the PLA Coordinator to discuss PLA process and confirm appropriateness.

3. Student completes the Prior Learning Assessment Pre-Assessment Form and submits it to the PLA Coordinator. Recommended courses for PLA (if any) will be provided back to the student after the Pre-assessment Form is evaluated.
4. Student reviews the course objectives for recommended course(s) to confirm relevance/application.
5. Student creates the PLA Portfolio and pays assessment fee to cashier.
6. Student submits the completed PLA Portfolio, Prior Learning Assessment Information Release Form, Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Evaluation Request Form, and Prior Learning Assessment Student Payment Form to the PLA Coordinator.
7. Student will receive results of the portfolio assessment from the PLA Coordinator.

c. PLA Coordinator Process
1. Coordinator meets with students to provide guidance on PLA process and whether it is appropriate for student needs.
2. Coordinator reviews the completed Prior Learning Assessment Pre-Assessment Form and works with student to correct deficiencies.
3. Coordinator works with Department Liaison (where applicable) to determine the recommended courses (if any) for potential PLA credit.
4. Coordinator reviews the completed PLA Portfolio and works with students to correct deficiencies.
5. Coordinator works with Department Head and Associate Dean to identify appropriate Faculty Assessor.
6. Coordinator works with Faculty Assessor to complete assessment of submitted portfolio.
7. Coordinator informs the student of the Faculty Assessor's decision.
8. Coordinator submits Prior Learning Assessment Determination Form to Associate Dean and requests that previously approved EOL be awarded for assessment.
9. Coordinator submits approved Prior Learning Assessment Determination Form and Prior Learning Assessment Student Payment Form to Registrar for inclusion of credit(s) on the student transcript.

d. Departmental Liaison (where applicable)
1. Liaison reviews Prior Learning Assessment Pre-Assessment Form and works with relevant departmental faculty to identify courses for potential PLA credit.
2. Liaison submits recommended course list (if any) to PLA Coordinator.
3. For serving in this role, Faculty Liaisons are awarded two hours of College Service for their FPE. They can also use clock time spent reviewing Pre-assessment forms for their FPEs.

e. PLA Assessor
1. Faculty Assessor is recommended by Department Head and approved by Associate Dean (based on knowledge and qualifications).
2. If a full-time faculty member is not available, an adjunct faculty with appropriate knowledge and qualifications may be assigned.

3. Faculty Assessor evaluates PLA Portfolio and determines whether or not course credit should be awarded.
4. Faculty Assessor completes the Prior Learning Assessment Determination Form and returns to the PLA Coordinator.

XI. <u>Forms</u>

Prior Learning Assessment Pre-Assessment Form
Prior Learning Assessment Information Release Form
Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Evaluation Request Form
Prior Learning Assessment Student Payment Form
Prior Learning Assessment Determination Form

XII.   <u>Effective Date</u>

Fall 2012
Revised Effective date - Fall 2016

XIII.   <u>Policy History</u>

AGC Approved March 2012
AGC Review/Revised and Approved, May 2016
AGC Review/Revised and Approved, March 2019
Procedures and Forms revised 2023

XIV.   <u>Next Review/Revision Date</u>

2023-2024