

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 (GRCC) awards course credit for college level learning in alternative settings. When a student is able to demonstrate competency in Course Learning Outcomes for a particular course through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) from a portfolio evaluation by a subject matter expert or a GRCC Challenge Test, the GRCC Registrar's Office will award credit for the course, if the following guidelines are met:

- There is not another way to grant the student credit for the course through an external credential, test, or exam (i.e., AP, CLEP)
- If a Challenge Test exists for a course, it should be used instead of a PLA portfolio evaluation
- Credit is evaluated for and awarded in the context of the program/degree in which they are enrolled
- Credit must be aligned with a course and may only be awarded once for the same learning within a student's program/degree
- Credit 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 decrease graduation time
- b. Eliminate unnecessary repeated learning
- c. Recognize respect for skills and knowledge acquired outside traditional classroom settings
- d. Award academic credit for college level learning which leads to degrees
- e. Comply with Higher Learning Commission Criteria: Academic Programs-Quality, Resources and Support (3-1.g)

V. Entities Affected by this Policy

Students
Faculty
Counseling
Student records / Office of the Registrar

Cashier's Office

VI. Who Should Read this Policy

All staff

VII. Related Documents

Prior Learning Assessment: Faculty Guide
Prior Learning Assessment: Student Guide
Prior Learning Assessment FAQ Sheet <http://cms.grcc.edu/pla>
GRCC Catalog Faculty Contract

VIII. Contacts

Policy Owner: PLA Coordinator
Student records / Office of the Registrar

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. Student information:

1. Students identify class for which they are requesting PLA credit
2. Students review online student guide to PLA which includes portfolio requirements and suggestions
3. Students pay for PLA credit and submit portfolio review
4. Students may earn up to 45 PLA credits
5. Students may appeal the evaluation
6. Students are responsible for determining whether their PLA credits will transfer to other institutions

b. Evaluator process:

1. Evaluator selected based on knowledge and qualifications of a subject
2. If a full time evaluator is not available, adjunct faculty with appropriate knowledge and qualifications will be assigned
3. Evaluator will submit a written evaluation to student following evaluation of portfolio
4. Coordinator will submit completed grade to Registrar's Office

XI. Forms

Student request form
Evaluation form
Student notification form
Payment form
Information release
form

XII. Effective Date

Fall 2012
Revised Effective date-Fall 2016

XIII. Policy History

AGC Approved March 2012
AGC Review/Revised and Approved, May 2016

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

Review/Revision—Winter Semester
2019