

## 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

### 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. Student information:

1. Students identify class for which they are requesting PLA credit.
2. Students review the PLA Student Guide which includes the portfolio process and how to determine college-level learning.
3. Students review the Portfolio Template which can be used by students to structure their portfolio and includes detailed examples of what should be included in a successful portfolio.
4. Students pay for PLA credit and submit their portfolio for review.
5. Students may earn up to 45 PLA credits.
6. Students may appeal the evaluation process.
7. Students are responsible for determining whether their PLA credits will transfer to other institutions.

b. Evaluator process:

1. Faculty Assessor is selected by the Associate Dean based on knowledge and qualifications of a subject.

2. If a full time faculty member is not available, an adjunct faculty with appropriate knowledge and qualifications may be assigned.
3. Faculty Assessor will submit the Approval of Prior Learning Credit form to the PLA Coordinator following the evaluation of the student portfolio.
4. The PLA Coordinator will submit the Approval of Prior Learning Credit Form and the PLA Student Payment Form to the Associate Dean.
5. The Associate Dean will submit a request for credit to be granted to the 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  
AGC Review/Revised and Approved, March 2019

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date

2023 - 2024