



## Ascent College Prior Learning Assessment Policy

### General Information

The Prior Learning Assessment is an avenue for students to acquire college credit for their experience. Credit would be awarded only in areas that fall within the regular curricular offerings of our institution and are part of the degree program in which the student is enrolled. (For example, since we do not offer electrical engineering courses we cannot evaluate electrical engineering training.)

#### **Students may earn credit in two ways\*:**

1. Registrar and committee evaluation of Professional Training Documentation
2. Registrar and committee evaluation of Experiential Essays

#### Notes:

- 1) Students must successfully complete EXP200: Fundamentals of Prior Learning Assessment prior to submitting Experiential Essay requirements. No EXP200 is required for Professional Training Documentation.
- 2) Students may participate in one or both PLA components based on their need and experience

#### **Student Eligibility:**

- Must be currently enrolled in a degree program
- Must have courses available in the degree plan for PLA credits

#### **Student Cost:**

- EXP200 course - \$50 (One time cost)
- PLA Assessment Fees
  - ❖ \$35 per course assessment for Professional Training Documentation
  - ❖ \$100 per course assessment for Experiential Essays
- Transcript – School transcript policy

# PLA Submission Process

- Student completes “Request for PLA” form and files with the registrar. A different form is completed for each course
- Registrar accepts “Request for PLA” form and assesses if the student meets criteria to request PLA and indicates objectives to be used
- Student successfully completes EXP200 for Experiential Essays
- Student submits all required documentation for submission. Refer to section entitled “Documentation Required”
- Registrar reviews submission for completeness
- Registrar assigns the submission to appropriate faculty member committee to assess PLA credit
- Faculty members with academic credentials in the course content area review the submission and make a credit recommendation to Registrar
- If faculty members approve the submission for credit, Registrar posts PLA credit to the student’s degree audit as a transfer credit
- Registrar notifies the student of the assessment results. If documentation is not sufficient, student is not approved for credit. All decisions are final. Student may not continue to search for documentation to submit.

# Documentation Required

## Sponsored Professional Training

### **Professional Training Documentation (PTD)**

**Definition: Formal, structured college-level training taken in a non-college setting, such as seminars, certificate programs**

For the PTD, students are required to provide the following:

- Evidence of successful completion (transcript, certificate, employee training record, or letter on company letterhead signed by appropriate official)
- Evidence of course content (such as syllabus, course description, training manual table of contents)
- Breakdown of contact hours (number of hours in class setting for each topic). Training must be a minimum of 15 contact hours for each credit awarded
- Contact information (phone and email for training instructor or work supervisor)
- Credit rationale paper (3 page paper – explaining how this training has fulfilled the course objectives identified in the PLA Request Form and how you will apply this knowledge to future situations)

## **Experiential Essay**

### **The Experiential Essay (EE)**

**Definition: At least one year of experiential learning that aligns with course objectives of specific course requirements at Ascent College**

For the EE, students are required to complete the following:

- Experiential essay which:
  - ❖ is 5 pages long (double-spaced) for a 1 credit course, 10 pages long (double-spaced) for a 2 credit course, and 15 pages long (double-spaced) for a 3 credit course
  - ❖ describes and analyzes the experiences related to the course objectives
  - ❖ summarizes the concepts, theories, and principles learned which relate to the course objectives
  - ❖ explains how they currently apply what they have learned, and how in the future they will apply what they have learned
- Documentation: work sample, publication, or validation of experience by appropriate official

## **Staff Responsibilities**

### **REGISTRAR**

- To teach EXP200
- To provide “Request for PLA” form
- To manage the online PLA Information Page
- To recruit and train faculty members in the PLA process
- To input the PLA billing process on the student’s finance record
- To post PLA transfer credits to degree plan

### **STUDENT 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 page
- To become familiar with and remain updated on PLA policies

### **FACULTY ASSESSORS**

- To become familiar with CAEL standards for assessing experiential learning
- To attend initial and ongoing training as requested by the Registrar
- To follow PLA policies as listed in the PLA Faculty Handbook
- To assess student submissions within ten working days (2 weeks) of receipt of materials

# **CAEL Recommendation**

## **Follow the Ten Standards for Assessing Learning:**

To determine whether to award college credit to students for prior learning, follow these standards:

1. Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.
2. Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are both agreed upon and made public.
3. Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes.
4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts.
5. Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.
6. If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
7. Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available to all parties involved in the assessment process.
8. Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.
9. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.
10. Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and the state of the assessment arts.

Taken from *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, and Procedures* (Second Edition)  
By Morry Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Whitaker, 2006. Chicago, Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

Source:

<http://www.cael.org/pla.htm>