Six Ways to Earn College Credit for Prior Learning

Standardized Exam
Discover how the nationally recognized standardized tests (e.g., Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dantes Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) and Cambridge International Exam (CIE)), may earn you credits.
*Cost: Student will pay $87 per exam to CLEP or DSST. Additional test center fees may apply when taking the exam.

Portfolio Assessment
You may submit a PLA portfolio for knowledge gained through work, volunteer, military, corporate training and self-directed learning projects. To receive credit, students must submit an online portfolio that demonstrates college-level mastery of PCC course competencies.
*Cost: $125 per course plus $25 administrative fee

Challenge Exam
Demonstrate that you meet the competencies of a course by taking a Challenge/Proficiency Exam developed by PCC faculty.
*Cost: $80 per exam plus $25 administrative fee

Industry Certification
You may earn college credit for professional certifications and industry credentials.
*Cost: No charge to have professional training, licenses and transcripts reviewed

Training
You may be eligible to receive college credit for ACE-approved military or corporate trainings.
*Cost: No charge to have professional training, licenses and transcripts reviewed

Noncredit to Credit
You may receive college credit for PCC noncredit and clock-hour courses and trainings that demonstrate the same competencies, academic rigor and learning outcomes of a specific PCC credit course.
*Cost: $25 administrative fee

Learn more now

More about Pima Community College: pima.edu
PCC on social media: pima.edu/social

Learn more about how PLA can save you time and money. Visit a campus Student Services Center to meet with an academic advisor.

Prior Learning Assessment
PLA Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is PLA?
A: PLA is a way to earn credit for college-level knowledge or skills you have attained outside the traditional college classroom and have not been previously evaluated for or awarded college credit. PLA credit is not awarded for experience; it is awarded for college-level knowledge gained from experience.

Q: Who should consider PLA?
A: Consider PLA if you have extensive work, volunteer or military experience, have current certifications, licenses or industry credentials or have completed professional training programs.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements for PLA?
A: PLA credit may be awarded if the following requirements have been met:
- Applied for admission to PCC
- Declared a program of study (certificate or degree)
- Completed Prior Learning Assessment Request Form with a PCC academic advisor
- Received evaluation that knowledge/skills are college-level

Q: Are there courses/program areas where PLA cannot be evaluated?
A: Yes. Consult with an academic advisor, who can help you decide if PLA is right for you and which courses you may challenge.

Q: What is a PLA portfolio?
A: A PLA portfolio is a collection of materials that documents what you have learned, where you learned it, and how that learning equates to college-level learning. Parallels are made between stated course outcomes, as shown on course syllabi, and your learning through work, volunteering, and other experiences by way of written narratives. You may submit more than one PLA portfolio for evaluation.

Q: Are there any prerequisites for having my PLA portfolio evaluated?
A: Yes. Portfolio development requires a great deal of writing, so college-level writing skills are a necessity. You must enroll in UEEED 100, a mandatory, noncredit, online course designed to help you identify, describe and document the skills and knowledge you’ve gained through your prior learning experiences. The enrollment fee for UEEED 100 is $49.

Q: Who evaluates PLA portfolios?
A: Your PLA portfolio will be evaluated by a PCC faculty member who is a subject matter expert.

Q: How long does it take to earn PLA credit?
A: The process to earn PLA credit varies depending on the type. A portfolio assessment, depending on your work, may take 4-8 weeks, compared to a challenge exam, which could take 1-2 weeks.

Q: If I cannot demonstrate college-level knowledge/skills, will I receive a refund?
A: Any credit earned through PLA is not guaranteed. Fees paid for assessment are non-refundable.

Q: Can PLA credit be used to satisfy a previously failed course?
A: No.

Q: If I do not receive PLA credit, can I appeal?
A: Yes. You may request an appeal if you have additional information/evidence that demonstrates the assessment recommendation was not made objectively. All appeals will go to the appropriate academic dean or designee for final review and recommendation.

Q: Can PLA credit be used to satisfy College in-state residency requirements?
A: No.

Q: Does PLA credit transfer to other institutions?
A: PLA credit may transfer. Students who plan to transfer to another college or university should check with that school to be sure the PLA credit will transfer. Credit will be noted by a designation of PLA on the transcript.

Q: Can I use financial aid to pay for PLA credit?
A: No. PLA credit hours do not count as hours of enrollment for the purposes of financial aid.

Q: Does PLA credit count toward my grade point average (GPA)?
A: No.