



Pima County Community College District Administrative Procedure

AP Title:

Assessment of Prior Learning

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Sponsoring Unit/Department:

Office of the Provost

Policy Title(s) & No(s).

Assessment of Credit for Prior
Learning, BP 3.20

Legal Reference:

Cross Reference:

PURPOSE

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) recognizes that students have documentable knowledge and learning acquired outside the college classroom that are equivalent to the required competencies and learning in a Pima Community College course. Prior learning is college-equivalent learning acquired through workplace training, military training and service, professional certificates, independent study, examinations, civic activities, volunteer service, and other experiences.

SECTION 1: Acceptance of Prior Learning

Pima Community College may accept, at the discretion of faculty, Instructional Departments, and Academic Divisions, credit earned through a variety of non-traditional methods as described above. A student must have attained a high school equivalency diploma and must be accepted into Pima Community College before

any evaluation of prior learning occurs, including declaring a Program of Study (POS) in order to receive PLA credit.

- A. National Standardized Tests. Credit may be awarded for national standardized exams, such as CLEP (College Level Examination Program), AP (Advanced Placement), IB (International Baccalaureate), CIE (Cambridge International Examinations), and DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests) based on the student achieving an identified cut score. Cut scores and equivalencies are reviewed and recommended by appropriate faculty, Instructional Departments, and Academic Divisions, per the equivalencies agreed upon by the state-wide Articulation Task Force.
- B. Challenge Exams/Assessment. A challenge exam or assessment may be offered for individual courses. The assessment should be designed to verify that the student met the course outcomes and, upon successful completion of that assessment, students will receive credit for the course.
- C. Evaluated ACE/Military Training. Credits awarded from Joint Services Transcripts of military service and professional certifications/training are accepted, utilizing American Council on Education (ACE) recommended equivalencies.
- D. Non-Credit to Credit. College credit may be awarded for non-credit courses, including clock-hour courses, which have the same competencies and outcomes as credit courses. Students must have documented assessments reflecting the learning outcomes of the class in order to earn credit.
- E. Evaluated Industry Certificates and Training Programs. College credit may be awarded for professional training courses or recognized industry credentials, or other educational experiences, such as GED® (General Educational Development) which have been evaluated by an organization such as ACE or that meet industry certifications or licensure. Further, evaluation of business and industry certification and/or licensure not recognized by an organization such as ACE, NIMS, NCCER, etc. may be evaluated for credit using criteria identified and established by faculty and/or content experts. Students who attain high school equivalency via GED, high school HS diploma and/or other Arizona High School Equivalency options, may then be eligible and qualify for other types of PLA.
- F. Portfolio Evaluation. Pima may award credit earned through portfolio evaluation. Any accepted portfolio must offer detailed evidence of learning

outcomes with supporting documentation, and should include descriptions of acquired knowledge and learning, including professional experience, if appropriate.

SECTION 2: Transferability of Prior Learning

Most colleges and universities accept credit awarded for National Standardized Tests, though they do re-evaluate credit for those exams scores based on their own policies. Pima Community College will apply credit earned through National Standardized Tests for both Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC) and transfer degrees. Credit received through other types of Prior Learning Assessment is not necessarily transferable to other colleges and universities. Because of statewide policies regarding the Arizona General Education Curriculum (AGEC), Pima Community College will award credit for prior learning for AGEC courses only if all three state universities agree to accept those credits. For non-AGEC courses, if any of the three state universities agree to accept those credits, PCC will award credit for prior learning and they will apply toward transfer degrees.

SECTION 3: Grades Awarded for Prior Learning

Credits awarded for national standardized tests will be designated on a student transcript as P (Pass) grades, rather than letter grades. Credits are not awarded for cut scores below the minimum indicated in the College catalog. Credit earned via all other types of prior learning credit will be indicated on the student transcript with a grade of PLA, which does not affect the student [grade point average \(GPA\)](#).

SECTION 4: Qualifications and Allowance of Prior Learning Credits toward Degree or Certificate Completion

Students must meet all requirements and qualifications to have prior learning credits posted on their transcripts. Those qualifications are defined in the PLA Handbook for Prior Learning Assessment. ~~The College will allow a maximum of 75% of a degree or certificate to be earned through prior learning assessment.~~ Credits earned through Prior Learning Assessment do not apply toward the minimum credits required to be earned in residence at Pima Community College toward degrees and certificates. [See Administrative Procedure 3.25.02 Graduation](#). Credit will not be awarded for a lower level or prerequisite course when credit has already been earned in a higher level course within the same field, unless those specific courses are required to meet degree or prerequisite requirements.