

Prior Learning Assessment Overview

This proposal will engage faculty in best practices for prior learning assessment, including:

- Determining college level learning from experience
- Discriminating between college level and pre-college level learning
- Conducting proper assessments of student learning
- Advising/guiding students in preparing evidence for assessment of learning

1. What is Prior Learning Assessment?

Assessment by some valid and reliable means, by a qualified specialist, of what has been learned through non-formal education, training or experience that is worthy of credit in a course or program offered by an institution providing the credit.

2. What are the most common forms of PLA?

- **Standardized exams** developed by the College Board (the College Level Examination Program exams, aka CLEP)
- American Council of Education's(ACE) **guides for recognizing credit** for instruction **offered by the military and employers**
- **Individualized student portfolios** prepared through a portfolio preparation course and evaluated by a trained subject matter expert

3. Do recognized external standards exist?

- Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)
- American Council on Education's Center for Lifelong Learning (ACE CLLL)

4. How does PLA benefit students?

Study by CAEL and the Lumina Foundation finds that students who complete PLA have:

Higher completion rates:

- 43% of PLA students completed a BA vs 15% of non PLA students
- 13% PLA students completed an AA vs 6% of non-PLA students

Higher persistence rates:

- 56% of PLA earners without a degree had accumulated 80 percent or more of the credits towards a degree vs 22% of non-PLA students with no degree had made similar progress

Lower time to degree:

- PLA earners with AAs saved between 1.5 and 4.5 months in earning degrees vs non-PLA students earning AAs