

Professional Certifications and Licenses

College credits may be awarded for professional certifications and licensure earned by the student if the organization providing the training program is recognized by the American Council on Education and the appropriate Lewis University academic department determines that the certification/license is college equivalent learning.

Student Fees for PLA

- Challenge Exam Attempted / \$100
(one exam per college course)
- Prior Learning Portfolio / \$150
(an additional \$50 is charged for each additional academic subject beyond the initial portfolio)
- Review of licenses and certificates / \$ 30
- Posting Fee for PLA Credits Earned / \$30 per credit hour recorded on Lewis University transcript



School for Professional and Continuing Education

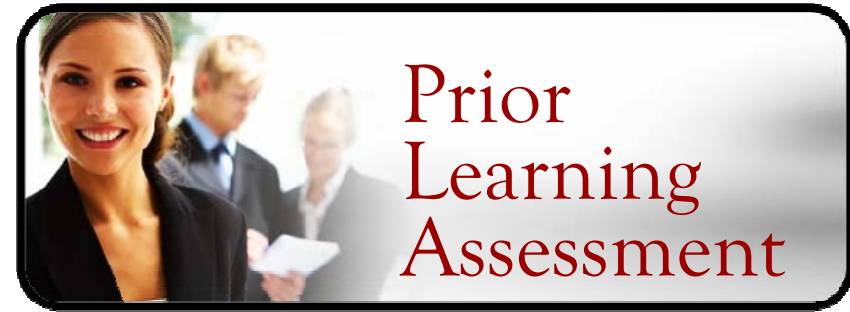
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Prior Learning Assessment

LEWIS UNIVERSITY

School for Professional and Continuing Education



According to author Janet Colvin (*Earn College Credit for What You Know. 2006*), Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a term used by colleges to describe the process of earning college credit from learning acquired through a student's work, training, volunteer experiences, and personal life. Credit is not granted on the basis of the student's experience; instead, it is granted for college-level learning which can be demonstrated and documented. At Lewis University, PLA has existed for many years and includes proficiency exams, departmental challenge exams, special licensure and credentials in a profession, and the development and submission of a Prior Learning Portfolio. PLA is designed to give adult undergraduate students the opportunity to earn college credit for in-depth learning experiences they have obtained outside the traditional college/university setting.

Prior Learning Assessment at Lewis University provides a system for working with adult students if they are enrolled in an undergraduate degree program offered by the four Colleges or in an accelerated undergraduate program delivered through the School for Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE).



PLA Benefits

- Gives validation for previous learning experiences.
- Helps save time and money in the process of earning a college degree.
- Prepares students for career advancement through documentation of skills and competencies.
- Helps students improve critical thinking and reflection skills.

(-Colvin 2006)

Key Features, Policies and Processes

- Students may pursue academic credit through PLA after they have earned 12 credit hours at Lewis; all credits pursued and earned through PLA must be completed prior to the student's last semester at the University. (CLEP General Examinations must be taken during the student's first semester of enrollment at Lewis.)
- A maximum of 30 credit hours may be earned at Lewis through PLA. Consult the specific College or degree program for specifications on how PLA credits may be applied to the major or minor.
- Credits earned through PLA must be equivalent to courses currently in the **undergraduate** curriculum at Lewis University; only one PLA method may be used to earn the appropriate number of credits for a course requirement.
- PLA credits earned are posted on a Lewis University transcript on a pass/no credit basis and do not apply to a student's grade point average or consideration for honors at graduation.
- Credits earned through PLA are not considered for meeting the 32-hour residency requirement at the University; PLA credits also do not satisfy the transfer credit hour requirement for admission into an accelerated degree program.
- The appropriate faculty in each College determine the required college equivalent learning to be demonstrated by a student for each method of PLA. A designated faculty member, i.e., content expert, evaluates a student's challenge exam, credentials, and/or Prior Learning Portfolio. Once the PLA submission is approved by the assigned faculty member, the documentation and registration form goes to the appropriate academic department chair for review and approval. The SPCE Dean (or designee) receives the final documentation and registration form to administer fee assessments and forwards notification to the Registrar.
- Students wishing to earn college credit through PLA will register for it through the School for Professional and Continuing Education. At the time of application, fees are assessed by the Business office for whichever PLA method the student is pursuing.
- All students interested in earning college credits by completing a Prior Learning Portfolio are required to attend a *free* PLA orientation session prior to registering. The orientation will include detailed information about the processes, time commitment, and other relevant details about earning credit by PLA.



Challenge Exam

A Challenge Exam is a comprehensive test developed by faculty to evaluate the student's proficiency in a particular college course. The Challenge Exam will cover information as outlined in the course module, course outline or syllabus, and the required textbook(s). A student wishing to take a Challenge Exam is advised to obtain these course materials to prepare for the exam. The exam must be completed before the student's final semester at Lewis. The student may make arrangements for an exam date by contacting the PLA Coordinator in the School for Professional and Continuing Education. A Challenge Exam may be taken only once by a student. The student is notified of the exam results by the PLA Coordinator as soon as the information is available. The student is charged the fee to take the exam at the time of application. College Departments provide Challenge Exams to the SPCE and alter or update them as necessary.