

**I. Title:**

Prior Learning Assessment Policy

**II. Policy Statement:**

The purpose of this policy is to require Alabama State University to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate prior learning that meets the criteria of college level learning, which has taken place outside of the confines of the traditional academic environment, including life learning acquired through employment experiences, state or nationally recognized credentials, or military training. Students are only allowed 30 credit hours of prior learning for undergraduate and nine credit hours for graduate students not to exceed the Central Requirements for Degrees policy, in that at least 25 percent of the credits are required in the curriculum at the university.

**III. Scope:**

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a pathway for assessing learning gained outside a traditional academic environment, which could be learning acquired through prior employment, military, corporate training, independent study, non-credit courses, or other relevant experience. PLA is a process of evaluating a student's knowledge at the college-level, derived from these experiences, to award college credit.

**Eligibility for Credit by PLA**

- Only matriculated students seeking a degree at Alabama State University are eligible to apply for a possible award of prior learning assessment credit;
- A student must be in good academic standing at Alabama State University;
- The PLA credit requested must fit within the student's degree requirements;
- A student has not previously attempted, completed, or transferred the course(s) for which PLA credit is sought into the institution from another accredited institution;
- A student has not previously failed the course(s) for which PLA credit is sought;
- PLA credit earned at ASU may or may not transfer to other institutions;

Advanced Placement (AP) Admission Standards and Advanced Placement Credit allow students with special competence to qualify for advanced placement and/or course credit on the basis of scores earned in the College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP). Alabama State University may award credit to first time freshmen entering the university who score 3, 4, or 5 on Advanced Placement Examinations.

"Transfer Credits" allows the acceptance of transfer credits through careful consideration of their previous academic record and proposed program of study at Alabama State University. An eligible transfer student may expect to receive equivalent semester hours of credit for college-level course work completed with a grade of "C" or higher at any college or university that is fully accredited by the regional accrediting association. In all major courses, core courses, and selected minors, the minimum grade of "C" is required. Junior- and senior-level courses from junior and community colleges will not be accepted as transfer credits.

**CLEP-** Alabama State University may accept satisfactory test scores for course credits from the College Level Examination Program in approved subject areas.

**DANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support)**– Undergraduate credit may be allowed for college-level courses completed for subject examinations administered by the Armed Forces Institute or institutions approved by the Armed Forces Institute.

**Joint Services Transcript (Military)** – Alabama State University may accept credits earned through formal military training.

**IV. Effective Date:**

This policy is effective upon approval by the ASU Board of Trustees.

**V. Audience:**

All ASU students, faculty, and staff are governed by the provisions set forth in the Prior Learning Assessment Policy.

**VI. Policy Management:**

- **Responsible Office:** Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and its designee (responsible for the execution of the policy)
- **Responsible Executive:** Office of Records and Registration in collaboration with Academic Deans and Department Chairs (responsible for the execution of the policy)
- **Responsible Officer(s):** Registrar, Assistant Registrar/Degree Systems Auditor, Deans, Department Chairs.

**VII. Definitions:**

**ACE Guidelines** are the American Council on Education’s Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services, which outline credit recommendations for military transcripts.

**CAEL Standards** are set by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning for how prior learning assessments should be performed and how college credit should be awarded (ex: Ten Standards for Assessing Learning and Ensuring Quality).

**Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)** is the process by which learning that has occurred outside of the traditional classroom setting that did not result in a specific certification or licensure is evaluated.

**Student Prior Learning Portfolio** is a formal communication presented by the student to the College as a petition requesting credit or recognition for self-directed learning that has taken place outside of the classroom. A typical portfolio contains documents to provide sufficient evidence that a subject matter expert can use as a basis for an evaluation to measure if certain learning objectives have been met.

**Subject Matter Expert** is a designated employee/faculty who is trained and has knowledge, experience, and expertise about a specific course or field of study.

## VIII. Procedures:

Refer to Prior Learning Assessment/Credit Guide

1. The student applying for credit for prior learning or prior learning assessment must:
  - a) Be currently enrolled in a degree-granting college at Alabama State University;
  - b) Meet with the appropriate department chair, faculty, or designated subject matter expert in the field of study for which they are requesting the PLA credit;
  - c) Complete all application materials, and indicate during the application process their intention to receive PLA credit(s). All documentation must be provided for consideration;
  - d) Students must indicate the type of credit being applied for CLEP, Advanced Placement (AP), Joint Services Transcripts (JST), and Prior Learning.
    - i. Students must submit their test scores and/or portfolio to the Office of Records and Registration.
    - ii. The office will determine that requests meet at least the minimum criteria to award credit. The test scores and/or portfolio will then be sent to the college for official evaluation.
- d) Have paid all fees, if applicable.
2. The lead faculty or designated subject matter expert will:
  - a) Assist the student with information and the evaluation of potential PLA and/or arrange for evaluation applicable to a prior learning assessment.
  - b) Verify licensure and/or certificate validity.
  - c) Ensure that the credit being awarded is consistent with CAEL Guidelines for awarding PLA.
  - d) If applicable, ensure that the credit awarded for military experience is consistent with ACE Guidelines.
3. The Dean of the academic college in which the course is housed will notify the Office of Records and Registration of the number of credit hours and area to award credit. Credits will be reflected on the student's transcript.
4. The Registrar's Office will:
  - a) Ensure that the PLA credit is officially placed on the student's transcript during the review of their Petition for PLA, which will be verified a second time upon petition to graduate.
  - b) Issue credit as "Transfer Credit" on the official transcript only after verifying that all fees have been paid for the PLA credits.
  - c) Retain the completed PLA packet/forms.

### **Document History**

*Approved by BOT: May 4, 2023*