

# Prior Learning Assessment



ATLANTA TECHNICAL COLLEGE



# TIMELINE

- PLA policy – First draft due in May, 2013
- PLA policy – Revisions due in June, 2013
- PLA Portfolio Course development in June, 2013
- PLA Portfolio rubric developed in June, 2013
- Faculty training July -August, 2013
- PLA policy adoption – Albany Tech- September, 2013
- PLA policy adoption – Athens Tech- January, 2014
- PLA policy adoption – Atlanta Tech- February, 2014
- PLA Student Outreach to potential students and community – HAPPENING NOW!
- Implementation: Kickoff - 2013-2014 School Year
  - Regional workshops (at consortium colleges).
  - Trainings offered to TCSG institutions for statewide adoption.
  - Evaluations

## What do employers think about PLA?

As an adult with a family and full time career, exploring my options for a four year degree seemed overwhelming and out of reach. When I learned I could receive academic credits for some of my prior work experience, it made my dream immediately more achievable. I was able to significantly reduce the time and money required to achieve my goal. I graduated in record time from Valdosta State University and later went back to earn a Master's degree. Without a program like Prior Learning Assessment, I might never have taken the first steps to becoming an executive. ~Donna Harris

Next Steps





# PLA Flowchart

High School Diploma  
GED Diploma  
College Transcripts  
(To be provided at the time of Application)  
Mandatory

Students are to work with  
faculty/program chair to  
determine PLA eligibility

Students align  
with identified  
PLA options

Proceed to  
registration!!

## PLA Options

College Credits

Military

Professional  
Education

Standardized  
Testing

Challenge & Exemption exams

Challenge Portfolio's

Students that do  
not qualify for  
PLA should be  
referred to other  
on-campus  
services.

**Policy, Standards and Procedures in  
Prior Learning Assessment  
For  
Athens Technical College  
Prepared by the Prior Learning Task Force**

**4/18/2014**

**Athens Technical College**  
**Policy on: Prior Learning Assessment**

The recommended *Policy, Standards and Procedures in Prior Learning Assessment* is presented to the President and Vice President of Academic Affairs of Athens Technical College (ATC) for consideration in the implementation of an official position on Prior Learning Assessment. This policy has been developed by the Prior Learning Task Force in answer to the Complete College Georgia mandate to implement actions that increase the number of Georgia residents with a post-secondary credential.

**Purpose.**

The purpose of this policy is to require ATC to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate prior learning that meets the criteria of college level learning. This learning has taken place outside of the confines of the traditional academic environment, including life learning acquired through employment experiences or training, military training, independent study, or volunteering.

The evaluation and assessment of a student's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training in non-credit or experiential settings and to establish consistent practices among all system colleges for evaluating and granting credit for such learning.

**Institutional Policy and Procedure.**

ATC shall provide students with a means for evaluation of prior learning and shall develop policies and procedures consistent with Purpose.

**Compliance with Legislation.**

ATC shall comply with the Complete College Georgia mandate to increase usage of prior learning assessment.

ATC shall grant credit for prior learning for a veteran's military training or service in compliance with ACE guidelines and program of study.

**Information Dissemination.**

ATC shall provide accessible and timely information to prospective and admitted students regarding opportunities for credit for prior learning.

**Date of Implementation:** 2013-2014 School Year

Description of Element Addressed	Where addressed	Part or Subpart
Provide for consistent, fair, and equitable treatment of students in evaluating credit for prior learning.	PLA Policy	Assessor Qualifications
ATC must develop and implement a policy regarding credit for prior learning.	Complete College GA	Shortening the time to degree
ATC must comply with legislation pertaining to granting credit for military training or experience.	TCSG Policy	IV. J. Articulation and Transfer
ATC must provide information to students about the opportunity to earn credit through prior learning assessment.	PLA Policy	Policy and Procedures
Board policies and procedures are in place for three nationally recognized examination programs that grant credit for prior learning (AP, IB, and CLEP)	TCSG Policy	IV. J. Articulation and Transfer

## Introduction

The State of Georgia is committed to fostering an educated and skilled workforce, which is essential for economic prosperity and meaningful work for its citizens. In 2012, the Complete College Georgia initiative was published and states, "College completion is an imperative for a prosperous future in Georgia, but will require significant intervention"(p.2). In response to the challenge, the Technical College System of Georgia, in conjunction with the University System of Georgia agreed to: "Reevaluate and envision anew the performance of completion-related aspects of higher education" (p. 2). Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) has been identified as one of the initiatives to achieve this goal.

Also in 2012, Albany Technical College, Atlanta Technical College, and Athens Technical College as a Consortium (ATCx3) received a grant, Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT), to serve the educational and training needs of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) eligible workforce. The grant places an emphasis on developing a highly skilled workforce to fill the high wage employment needs within the state. One of the outcomes outlined in this grant is the development and implementation of PLA policy to shorten the time it takes for adult learners to obtain their education credential.

PLA denotes documentable learning that takes place outside of the traditional college environment. There are many forms of PLA, including standardized tests, recognized corporate and military training courses, and portfolio evaluations. Credit is only awarded for college-level learning and not experience.

The population of adult students pursuing college education has increased steadily over the last few years. These students have personal and professional learning experiences that potentially meet or exceed the learning outcomes of courses offered within our system. For these students, PLA is a very important initiative as it provides an opportunity to save time and money in obtaining their credential and re-entering the workforce.

Students are not the only beneficiary of PLA. Colleges have the opportunity to see increases in admission, retention, and graduation rates. Employers benefit from a greater pool of credentialed applicants. Communities benefit from greater contribution to the tax base and diminished reliance on government services. Recognition of PLA is an opportunity to create success stories.



## Table of Contents

<b>Definitions</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Prior Learning Assessment</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Terminology and forms of Prior Learning</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Mission of TCSG</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Southern Association of Colleges and Schools</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Roles and responsibilities of Athens Technical College regarding PLA</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Transcription of Accepted PLA Credit</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Standards and Procedures for Awarding Credit</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Standards for Awarding Credit for Prior Learning</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Policy and Procedures</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Portfolio-specific Standards for Prior Learning Assessment</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Student Eligibility</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Assessor Qualifications</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Student requirements for PLA</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix A - Ten Standards for Learning</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix B – Sample PLA Application in a Degree program</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendix C - Prior Learning Task Force</b>	<b>26</b>

## **Definitions of Prior Learning**

<b>Prior learning</b>	Learning that has taken place outside of the confines of the traditional academic environment, including life learning acquired through employment experiences or training, military training, independent study, or volunteering.
<b>Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)</b>	The evaluation and assessment of a student's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training.
<b>Prior Learning Recognition (PLR)</b>	The assignment of college level credit following evaluation of prior learning submissions.

## Terminology and Forms of Prior Learning

The following list provides common definitions utilized in the process of PLA. The examples of options are not meant to be all inclusive. The adoption of this PLA policy would include adoption of common definitions for communications, policies, and internal purposes.

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams	Courses developed by the College Board, taken in high school by students with advanced standing, that can be applied as college level credit if minimum scores are met.
American Council on Education (ACE) Guides	The ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training contains published credit recommendations for formal instruction programs and examinations offered by non-collegiate sources such as corporate entities and unions to the government and military.
Business, Industry, Professional Organization Training Programs	Training programs offered by employers and professional organizations may have been evaluated by ACE or the College for award of credit. Training programs may offer licensure or certifications.
Certification Crosswalk	Professional certifications recognized by the Institutions of TCSG as having college level credit equivalency.
Challenge Exams	An internal exam offered on approved courses designated by the Department Chair and Academic Dean. Successful completion results in college credit for the course challenged. Previously referred to as Exemption Exams.
Challenge Portfolio Review Credit	A document prepared by a student demonstrating areas of college level learning and technical proficiency obtained outside of the traditional college environment. The documentation used to validate the learning may include essays, job descriptions, performance evaluations, professional certificates and awards, work samples or demonstrations. A subject matter expert utilizes a rubric to determine the quality of college level learning as it relates to the course learning outcomes and standards.
College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams	Widely recognized standardized test offering credit by examination on 33 courses allowing students to demonstrate their mastery by achieving qualifying scores on college-level material in introductory subjects.

<b>College Level Learning</b>	<b>A college's performance measure of competencies, skills and knowledge, as outlined in program and course learning outcomes and standards that are approved by accrediting bodies.</b>
<b>Core Courses</b>	<b>General education courses developing the breadth of knowledge needed to promote intellectual inquiry and reinforce cognitive skills and affective learning opportunities for students. General education requirements typically fall into the categories of: I. Language Arts/Communications; II. Social/Behavioral Sciences; III. Natural Sciences/Mathematics; IV. Humanities/Fine Arts.</b>
<b>DSST formerly known as Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests</b>	<b>Program offering 38 standardized examinations in college subject areas to service members and civilians. ACE recommends 3 semester hours of credit per test. DANTES funds paper-based DSST testing for eligible examinees at Base Education Offices and at National Test Centers (NTC) offering the Internet-Based Testing (IBT) DSSTs.</b>
<b>Excelsior College Examination Program (ECE)</b>	<b>Formerly known as Regents College Exams or ACT/PEP Exams, these are examinations for college credit offered by Excelsior College, NY.</b>
<b>International Baccalaureate Programs (IB)</b>	<b>Internationally accepted qualification for entry into institutions of higher education in the United States. The exams, much like AP exams, cover proficiencies in core areas of study. Students must score 24 out of a possible 45 points to qualify.</b>
<b>Military Training Credit</b>	<b>Military training that has been evaluated by ACE for college level credit. Depending on the dates of duty, the schools may be reported on the DD214, Joint Services Transcript, or specific military branch transcript such as: Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) or Sailor/Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART), or Army/American Council on Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS).</b>
<b>Massive Open On-line Course (MOOC)</b>	<b>An online course offered through universities and aimed at large-scale interactive participation and open access via the web. These courses do not accumulate college credit but come with a certification of completion. Some courses have been evaluated by ACE for college level credit.</b>

## Background

This PLA policy has been developed in response to a call for education reform. Pathways to Success, a 2012 report to the U.S. Congress and the Secretary of Education, was an initiative to identify barriers, best practices, and the Federal Government's responsibility in college completion.<sup>1</sup> Addressing the needs of non-traditional students was an important challenge in this report and calls for the assessment and recognition of prior learning. Complete College America<sup>2</sup> and Complete College Georgia<sup>3</sup> mandate the implementation of a policy on PLA. The message is clear. The institutions of the Technical College System of Georgia will develop and implement opportunities for students to demonstrate the attainment of college-level learning and gain credit for that learning.

Creating an over-arching framework for prior learning assessment and recognition invites a review of existing standards, policies, and practices of TCSG and our accrediting bodies. This is an important step to affirm proper alignment of the proposed policy on PLA within the existing structure.

### Mission of TCSG Institutions

TCSG mission statement says: "The Technical College System of Georgia provides technical, academic and adult education and training focused on building a well-educated, globally competitive workforce for Georgia"<sup>4</sup>. TCSG does not have a current policy for PLA but does address some components such as recognition of military training schools in accordance with the American Council on Education (ACE), standardized exams such as CLEP, AP, and IB, and Exemption Exams under IV. J. Articulation and Transfer ([https://tcsge.edu/tcsgepolicy/docs/IV.J.Articulation\\_and\\_Transfer.html](https://tcsge.edu/tcsgepolicy/docs/IV.J.Articulation_and_Transfer.html)).

---

<sup>1</sup> Pathways to Success. (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/acsfa/ptsreport2.pdf>, p. 13).

<sup>2</sup> Complete College America. (<http://completecollege.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Complete College Georgia.

[http://www.usg.edu/educational\\_access/documents/GaHigherEducationCompletionPlan2012.pdf](http://www.usg.edu/educational_access/documents/GaHigherEducationCompletionPlan2012.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> TCSG Mission Statement. ([https://tcsge.edu/tcsgepolicy/docs/Mission\\_Statement.htm](https://tcsge.edu/tcsgepolicy/docs/Mission_Statement.htm))

### **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**

Athens Technical College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a prestigious and important affiliation. Prior to the development of PLA policy, the SACS standards for awarding credit were reviewed to ensure compliance. The 2012 edition of The Principles of Accreditation policy states:

3.4.4 - The institution publishes policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, Advanced Placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. (p. 22).

3.4.8 - The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. (Noncredit to credit)

3.5.2 - At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (See Commission policy "Collaborative Academic Arrangements.") (Institutional credits for a degree)



Furthermore, Sacs tells us:

“The literature on collegiate student learning is remarkably clear on what it takes to produce quality learning. An institution that takes its learning mission seriously and that views the quality of student learning as one of its core purposes:

- is clear and public about the learning outcomes to which it aspires for its students;
- uses these learning goals as well as knowledge about learning as drivers for organizing instruction;
- provides an environment which signals support for student learning at all levels; and
- promotes an atmosphere of critical reflection about teaching and learning.” (p. 7  
retrieved on 4/19/2013 from  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/handbooks/GuideForInstitutions.pdf>)

## **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy**

Athens Technical College recognizes that individuals can develop mastery of course competencies through non-traditional educational environments such as: employment, training, professional certifications, noncredit courses, and other life experiences. The term “prior learning” is utilized to describe these methods of learning. ATC accepts credit for prior learning when the equivalency is validated by academically sound and rigorous assessment.

Credit will be awarded only for demonstrable college level learning, and not for experience. The burden of proof lies with the student to demonstrate through testing or appropriate documentation, submitted to designated authorities, that the learning meets specific learning objectives and standards set forth in course syllabi and programs approved by our accrediting bodies. Learning may have been required for professional competence; is reasonably current (some learning is time sensitive); is comparable to courses offered in colleges or universities; implies a conceptual (theoretical) and practical understanding of the course(s).

Any credits awarded for PLA must be in accordance with the Standards of The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS Standard 3.4.4) and policies and guidelines of the Technical College System of Georgia.

### **Roles and responsibilities of Athens Technical College regarding PLA**

1. Policies, procedures and assessment criteria, such as minimum scores, learning outcomes and standards, will be fully disclosed;
2. Credit will be awarded for demonstrated and documented learning that meets the college-level learning outcomes and standards approved for program accreditation, and not for experience;
3. Fees charged for assessment will be based on the service provided and not the credit awarded. Fee schedules will be reviewed, updated if necessary and approved annually. Fee schedule will be made public;
4. The award of credit will be made in accordance with the Standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the policies and procedures of the TCSG, and any specific program accrediting agency.
5. Each institution must make public the appeals process.
6. Faculty and staff will receive training on the importance of PLA in student achievement;
7. Determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by trained subject matter experts. Faculty will receive training on PLA and those responsible for portfolio assessment will receive training in the assessment process.
8. Opting out of PLA acceptance must be done by official notification to the TCSG. An institution can opt out of granting PLA credit in specific programs where accreditation by organizations other than SACS may be impacted.
9. Transcription of credits will follow published and implemented procedures regarding the recording of evaluated prior learning by the awarding institution;
10. Institution will report a PLA Program Profile in their Annual Report detailing: Volume of PLA credits awarded annually; Demographic break down of those using PLA; Per program accounting of PLA awarded; Recipient success rates in retention and graduation.

11. Institution will review PLA program Policies and procedures at least every five years corresponding with each institution's SACS Ten-Year Re-Affirmation and the Five-Year Review. The review should involve evaluating all aspects of PLA policy, procedures, and portfolio audits, for consistency with state, regional and national practices.

## **Transcription of Accepted PLA Credit**

Athens Technical College accepts the credit options listed below when qualifying scores are met. They are transcribed by course identification number and course name.

AP (Advanced Placement) credit for a list of approved courses. Students with appropriate scores on AP examinations can receive credit for specific approved courses. AP credit is indicated by a “TRA, TRB, TRC, TR” on the student’s transcript.

Challenge and Exemption Exams. Students currently enrolled who present satisfactory evidence that they are qualified in a particular subject may receive credit by an examination developed and administered by the appropriate instructional department. Satisfactory evidence may be, but is not limited to, learning obtained through work experience, non-credit courses, course work taken at non-accredited institutions, or military courses. Approval for testing must be obtained either from the Registrar or Advisor of the course. Challenge Exams for any given course can only be taken once. A passing score will be indicated by an “EX” on the student’s transcript.\*

CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) course credit for a list of approved courses. CLEP credit will be indicated by an “TRA, TRB, TRC, TR ” on the student’s transcript. \*

DANTES (Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support) or Dantes Subject Standardized Test (DSST) course credit for a list of approved courses. Credit will be indicated by a “TRA, TRB, TRC, TR” on the student’s transcript.\*

High school credits are awarded as “AC” – articulated credits.

IB (International Baccalaureate) credit for a list of approved courses. Students with appropriate scores on IB examinations can receive credit for specific approved courses. . IB credit is indicated by an “TRA, TRB, TRC, TR” on the student’s transcript.

Massive Open On-line Course (MOOC) evaluated by ACE for college credit is recognized when it applies to a student's program of study. Transfer credit is recorded on the student's transcript with "TRA, TRB, TRC, TR".

Military credit evaluated by ACE for college credit is recognized when it applies to a student's program of study. Transfer credit is recorded on the student's transcript with "TRA, TRB, TRC, TR".

Professional credit and licensure evaluated by ACE for college credit is recognized when it applies to a student's program of study. Transfer credit is recorded on the student's transcript with "TRA, TRB, TRC, TR".

Transfer credit for a list of approved courses from other accredited higher educational institutions. Transfer credit is recorded on the student's transcript with "TRA, TRB, TRC, TR".

Challenge Portfolio assessments are available to students who have unique documentable learning experiences in their major that do not match the options listed above.\* To qualify, students must have approval from the Program Advisor and Department Dean, complete the English requirement in their program, and enroll in and pass PLA 1000 - Prior Learning Assessment. This course will teach students how to develop the appropriate documentation required for submittal to faculty assessors from the program in which they are seeking credit. (Note: This course is in the development phase and will be offered following PLA Plan approval.) Challenge Portfolio assessment credit is listed on a student's transcript with "EX".

\*Students are required to pay the non-refundable assessment fee to the Business Office, in advance of the examination.



## **Standards and Procedures for Awarding Credit**

### **Standards for Awarding Credit for Prior Learning**

1. Credit will be awarded only for those courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements at the college of enrollment and to the student's declared certificate or degree/diploma program as outlined in college publications.
2. A student may use PLA and transfer credit to fulfill all degree/diploma graduation requirements except for residency requirements. The TCSG requires that a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of graduation requirements for a particular program of study be completed at the Technical College granting the award. Contact the Registrar for specific program residency requirements.
3. PLA cannot be utilized in any case where accreditation or college policy prohibits or limits its use. A maximum of 30 credit hours of Standardized tests, Exemption and Challenge Exams, and Challenge Portfolio can be utilized toward graduation.
4. PLR may be applied toward the courses in the Associates of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, AAS-articulated degrees, diplomas, and certificate programs, unless prohibited by an agency, and only for the purpose of satisfying graduation requirements.
5. All work assessed for PLR must meet or exceed "C" level work, minimum cut-off scores on standardized test, and competency defined by course.

### **Policy and Procedures**

1. At least one credit hour must be successfully completed and transcribed on the student's records before any CPL credit is awarded.
2. Letter grades, A – F, will not be posted on the student's transcript for any of the prior learning methods. The course title, course number and semester hours will be posted on student transcripts.
3. Residency and limitation requirements of the college may impact the number of allowable PLR credit that a student may use toward graduation.

4. Awarded credit may be used to meet Guaranteed Transfer (GT) courses. The use of these credits will result in public four-year institutions reevaluating scores received on National Standardized Exams.
5. PLA credit is transferable between Institutions of TCSG so long as the credit is applicable to the declared degree/diploma program. Transferability of PLA credit to USG Institutions and other state's institutions cannot be guaranteed. If PLR is applied to the AAS the transferability and transfer guarantees may be affected. Consult your advisor and the receiving institution for details.
6. Transferability of some courses may be limited by time due to rapidly changing technology and the advance of research in a given field. Consult your advisor and the receiving institutions for details.
7. All documentation and files regarding a student's prior learning credit will be maintained by the college for 5 years after graduation or date of last attendance (V. T. TCSG Student Records Retention Schedule 0415-002).
8. A student wishing to appeal a credit for prior learning decision should follow the standard appeal procedure in place at the student's college of enrollment.
9. Prior learning is evaluated at the request of the student following procedures outlined in Student Requirements for PLA.
10. Challenge portfolios are evaluated by Program Chair for applicable college level learning and make final recommendation to Registrar for credit, if any, to be posted on student's transcript. Portfolio revision is allowable only at the recommendation of the assessor.

11. Every effort will be made to ensure that policies, electronic, and printed materials in the following areas are published and presented in a clear and transparent manner and made public readily available for prospective students, current students, faculty, academic administration, potential employers of students receiving credit from assessment, and the general public:

<p>A. Description of Program          B. Catalog language          C. WEB pages and other social media          D. Program definitions          E. Student qualifications          F. Expectation on student participation          G. Tuition          H. Any and all fees or other associated costs (with a clear estimation of the costs involved for the student)          I. Uses of PLA credit</p>	<p>J. Limitations of PLA credit          K. Transferability of PLA credit          L. Transcription of PLA credit          M. Appeals procedures and related information          N. Assessor qualifications          O. Marketing materials          P. Advertising          Q. Student advising</p>
--	---

**Portfolio-Specific Standards for Prior Learning Assessment**

Portfolio assessments are a unique form of prior learning assessments. They are particularly variable in their form and complex in their procedures. Unlike other forms of PLA, it places the greatest burden on the institution to develop procedures and evaluate the credit, while also making the most demands on the students to demonstrate their learning. Due to these characteristics, these standards were devised specifically for this type of PLA.

- A. Student eligibility and expectations for portfolio assessment
  - a. Applicants must be self-motivated, self-directed students with significant, demonstrable, and documentable experiential learning in the area of their major.

- b. Applicants must be approved by the Department Chair/Faculty Advisor to ensure students have realistic expectations about the process and necessary skills to successfully complete the process. Student must be advised of any limitations on hours for the portfolio.
  - c. Students must be provided with a course syllabus covering each course attempted in the Challenge Portfolio. Syllabi will include college level learning outcomes and standards.
  - d. Due to the level of documentation required, applicants must complete ENGL 1101 Composition & Rhetoric or its equivalent.
  - e. Students are required to take PLA 101 to equip them for the process of portfolio development and be prepared for extensive explanation and documentation of college level learning.
  - f. Students must be clearly informed of the breadth and depth of the work to be delivered.
  - g. Students must be clearly informed regarding acceptable types of documentation required.
  - h. Duplication of college credits is not permitted.
  - i. Applicants must be aware of the fees and costs associated with portfolio assessment.
- B. Assessor qualifications.
- a. Provide for consistent, fair, and equitable treatment of students in evaluating credit for prior learning;
  - b. Subject matter expertise must be documented through education and other credentialing appropriate to the accrediting bodies;
  - c. Demonstrated expertise teaching in the discipline;
  - d. Knowledge of degree/diploma requirements, college level learning, learning outcomes and standards;

- e. Evidence of disciplinary and reflective writing skills and the ability to mentor writing in the discipline.
- f. Possess training in portfolio assessment and assessment strategies, and the use of rubrics, and have access to guides for portfolio development;
- g. Institutional credentials sufficient to recommend award of credit.

## **Student requirements for PLA**

1. Students must be admitted as Regular degree/diploma seeking students to a TCSG institution;
2. Student must declare a program of study (major);
3. Student must consult with program advisor about the possibility and advisability of seeking credit for prior learning;
4. Student must consult with the program advisor to confirm that PLA will directly apply to the curriculum requirements of the declared major;
5. Student must register for specified prior learning opportunity, pay any required fees, and meet defined learning objectives, standards, and scores for credit to be awarded;
6. Application of credit on the student transcript will occur following one semester hour completed at the TCSG institution where admitted;
7. Student must recognize that any change of degree/diploma program will result in review of all transcribed credit, including PLA. Transfer and PLA credit must apply directly to the curriculum being studied. Any deviation may result in the loss of credit obtained utilizing PLA;
8. PLA cannot be utilized to fulfill residency requirements of the institution. The TCSG requires that a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of graduation requirements for a particular program of study be completed at the Technical College granting the award. Contact the Registrar for specific program residency requirements.
9. PLA cannot be used for courses where accreditation or college policies prohibit its use;
10. PLA cannot duplicate credit for other courses;
11. Transferability of PLA to another institution cannot be guaranteed;
12. In the event of an appeal, student must follow posted appeal process.  
Recommendations and scoring by ACE, CLEP, and other external bodies are under the auspices of the evaluation body and cannot be appealed at the college level.



**Appendix A - Ten Standards for Learning by the Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL)**

As the nationally recognized body on prior learning assessment and the only body recognized by all regional accreditors for PLA, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning's (CAEL) Standards for Assessing Learning have become the foundation for most PLA programs. Therefore, all PLA programs should conform to these standards.

#	Standard	Page addressed
1	<b>Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.</b>	<b>14</b>
2	<b>Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are both agreed upon and made public.</b>	<b>14</b>
3	<b>Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes.</b>	<b>21</b>
4	<b>The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts.</b>	<b>21</b>
5	<b>Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.</b>	<b>18</b>
6	<b>If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.</b>	<b>18</b>
7	<b>Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available to all parties involved in the assessment process.</b>	<b>13-22</b>
8	<b>Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.</b>	<b>3</b>
9	<b>All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.</b>	<b>21</b>
10	<b>Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and the state of the assessment arts.</b>	<b>14</b>

i Fiddler Morry, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Whitaker. *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, and Procedures*. 2nd. Chicago: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2006

**Appendix B: Sample PLA Application - Civil Engineering**

<b>General Education Core</b>			
<b>Area of Study</b>	<b>Course ID</b>	<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Type of PLA Credit Available</b>
Area I	ENGL 1101	Composition & Rhetoric	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
Area II	PSYC 1101	Intro to Psychology	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
Area III	MATH 1111	College Algebra	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
Area III cont.	MATH 1112 Or MATH 1113	College Trigonometry Pre-Calculus	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
Area IV	XXX	Humanities/Fine Art	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
Program Specific	ENGL 1105	Technical Communications	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
<b>Occupational Courses</b>			
	PHYS 1111	Introductory Physics I	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
	PHYS 111L	Introductory Physics I lab	AP/IB Credit Transfer Credit Standardized Exam
	ENGT 1000	Engineering Technology	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	DFTG 1101	CAD Fundamentals	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	DRFT 2050	Surveying I	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1111	Fundamentals of Hydrology	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1112	Fundamentals of Soil Mechanics	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1113	Engineering Economics	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1114	Intermediate Computer Aided	Transfer Credit

		Design	Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1115	Advanced Computer Aided Design	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1117	Fundamentals of Road Design	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	MEGT 2030	Statics	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	MEGT 2080*	Strength of Materials	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
<b>Specialization Courses</b>			
	CETC 1116	Surveying II	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1118	Construction Materials	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1119	GPS Surveying	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1120	Evidence and Procedures for Boundary Location	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	CETC 1121	Hydraulics and Fluid Mechanics	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	PHYS 1112*	Introductory Physics II	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam
	PHYS 1112L*	Introductory Physics II Lab	Transfer Credit Military/Corporate Credit eval. by ACE Challenge Exam

\*Prerequisites must be satisfied prior to award of PLA credit.

Note: Prospective students have significant prior learning in their major or other learning experiences that do not match the above listed, they may complete PLA 101 – Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio course\*. This course will teach students how to develop the appropriate documentation submitted to faculty assessors from the program in which they are seeking credit.

\*Course is under development.

**PLA Planning Committee**

Elizabeth Brown  
PLA Coordinator  
Albany Technical College

Phinda Hillmon  
Grant Manager  
Athens Technical College

Dan Smith  
Executive Vice President  
Athens Technical College

This PLA Policy is recognized by Athens Technical College as meeting, in part, obligations addressed in Complete College Georgia and those outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, condition B. The ATC Times Three Consortium (ATCx3) Roles and Responsibilities.

By signing below, Athens Technical College agrees to the terms and conditions outlined in this PLA Policy.

---

Dr. Flora Tydings, President  
Athens Technical College

---

---