



<b>AWARDING ACADEMIC CREDIT BY PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES</b>
Policy Number: 5164
Applicable Code/Law: N/A

These procedures are organized as follows:

- I. All Types of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA): General Procedures
- II. Prior Experiential Learning (PEL): Specific Procedures
- III. Extra-Institutional Learning (EIL): Specific Procedures
- IV. Credit by Testing: Specific Procedures
- V. Course Challenge: Specific Procedures

### **All Types of PLA: General Procedures**

#### **Student Eligibility:**

*Current Enrollment:* Students must be enrolled at Shoreline Community College during the current quarter in which they would like consideration for credit for prior learning. Credit by Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) applies toward a program, certificate, degree, or independent study program in which the student is enrolled or is planning to enroll.

*Transcript Evaluation:* Students will receive the result of their requested transcript evaluations before meeting with the academic advisor to discuss the process for awarding credit by PLA. The transfer evaluation is for the purpose of verification of academic achievements, and therefore, it shall be processed for the specific degree and certificate programs students wish to complete at Shoreline Community College. If the evaluation result does not reflect acceptance of the desired transfer credits, students should consult with an academic advisor about credit by PLA. When the credit by PLA is approved by the faculty subject matter expert completing the assessment and division dean, the PLA shall overrule the result of the processed transcript evaluation.

*Meet with Academic Advisor:* Students considering credit by PLA will meet with an academic advisor to discuss the feasibility of acquiring such credit, all available PLA options, and the petition process. The academic advisor will inform the student of required documentation to be submitted and will identify the division(s) in which the credit by PLA might apply. Students

planning to transfer to four-year colleges or universities should research transferability of credit awarded via PLA before choosing to apply for credit by PLA.

**Restrictions on Credit by PLA:**

*Not for Prior Unsuccessfully Completed Courses:* Students may not petition to earn credit by PLA for a course previously taken at Shoreline Community College which they failed, for which they earned an unsatisfactory grade, or which they audited. In such circumstances, the students may pursue retaking that course.

*Transfer Colleges and Universities:* Academic credit for all types of Prior Learning will be specifically denoted on a student's transcript. Some colleges and universities may not accept credit by PLA in a transfer situation. Students are responsible for checking restrictions at their chosen transfer college or university.

*Non-duplication of Credits or Grades Earned at Another College/University:* A PLA grade shall not replace a pre-existing grade for a course. No credit by PLA will be granted if the student has already received such credit from another accredited college or university.

*Assignment of Credit and Grade:* Students will be awarded credit by PLA for the equivalent course or requirement offered at Shoreline Community College with a transcribed grade of P (Pass), which is equivalent to a 2.0 or better. Failure to attain credit will not be transcribed.

*Credit Limitation:* Within each type of PLA, there may be a limit on credits that can be awarded (see specific procedures). To receive a degree or certificate from Shoreline Community College, a student must earn at least 25 credits or 25% of the total required credits from Shoreline Community College, whichever is lower.

*One-Time Petition:* Students may only petition for credit by PLA once at this College for any particular course or requirement regardless of PLA method, and once a final decision has been rendered, they will not be allowed to petition again. They then will be required to take the course(s) in order to earn credit if they need the credit for their studies.

*No Vertical Credit:* Credit will not automatically be awarded for a course (prerequisite or lower-level course) that was bypassed once a student has taken a succeeding or higher-level course in the course series.

*No Partial Credit:* In the case where there is a course equivalent, credit by PLA is either given for an entire course or not at all.

*Unavailability of Credit by PLA in Some Courses:* Credit by PLA may not be available in every discipline or for every course. Please see details under each type of PLA.

*Disqualification Based on Fraud:* If evidence of academic dishonesty in accordance with procedures for policy 5033 Dishonesty in Academics is found during or after the PLA process, credit will not be awarded or will be retracted.

### **Responsibility for Awarding Credit by PLA:**

Division or Department Responsibility: The divisions and departments that offer the courses will set the criteria and procedures for awarding credit by PLA. These criteria and procedures shall be consistent with these college procedures for Policy 5164 and adhere to both the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) [Guidelines for Prior Learning Assessment](#) and the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' (NWCCU) [Policy on Credit by Prior Experiential Learning](#).

Such learning assessed for post-secondary credit shall be:

- linked to established learning outcomes, skills standards, or other criteria consistent with college standards for a given course. It is not linked to time spent;
- transferable to contexts other than the one in which it was learned;
- current and relevant;
- at an average level of achievement equivalent to that of other students engaged in studies in that program or subject area;
- assessed using a range of strategies consistent with college standards for a given course; and
- assessed by faculty who maintain a regular appointment with the College and who are subject-matter experts.

The document validating the credit awarded by PLA will include the faculty's name and signature. Faculty also may seek additional consultation from off-campus sources of expertise in the field, with approval of division dean.

### **Record Keeping:**

Enrollment & Financial Aid Services will maintain relevant records for all petitions for credit by PLA and for granted credits for at least a year after the last quarter the student is attending Shoreline Community College. Duration for record maintenance is in accordance with State of Washington guidelines, General Retention Schedule: Schedule CT04-Student Records and Support Services

### **Monitoring PLA Policy:**

Faculty Senate Council will review, monitor and re-evaluate the credit by PLA policy and procedures to ensure the quality of the credits awarded to students.

### **PLA Officer:**

The College will assign a PLA officer whose responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Provide general PLA advisement on credit by PLA
- Create publicity for the credit by PLA initiatives on the website, in brochures, and in campus publications
- Maintain a list of PLA-challengeable courses and developed crosswalks from the various

departments

- Maintain statistics and information on credit by PLA on campus, with attention paid to policy and procedural improvements
- Handle queries from students and other colleges or universities and workplaces about credit by PLA
- Conduct student workshops for credit by PLA based on student interest
- Support faculty and staff working with PLA
- Update the policy and procedures in coordination with Faculty Senate Council

### **Prior Experiential Learning (PEL): Specific Procedures**

**Definition of PEL:** Knowledge and skills acquired through experience alone, evaluated subjectively by faculty with subject matter expertise via an evaluation of a compilation of work (i.e., portfolio).

#### **Restrictions for PEL in addition to the above general PLA restrictions:**

1. *Course Eligibility:* Faculty with subject matter expertise in consultation with the program chair, if applicable, and the division dean will determine which courses are eligible or not for credit by PEL. In order for a class to qualify for credit by PEL, the College must have faculty in the subject matter who are trained as assessors; PEL credit cannot be awarded if faculty with subject matter expertise are not available. Only courses that are active, pre-existing, documented in the current catalog, in current master course outlines (MCOs), and in recent syllabi may be used for the awarding of credit by PLA. Approved courses do not have to be offered every quarter to be considered active.
2. *Credit Limitation:* Credit awarded for PEL shall not exceed 25% of the credits required for the certificate or degree.
3. *Prerequisite(s):* In preparing a PEL portfolio for review, the student may need to show experiential learning for relevant course outcomes of the prerequisite(s) as well as for the petitioned course, but credit will not necessarily be awarded for the prerequisite(s).
4. *Challenge Exam:* Credit by PEL will not be awarded if a challenge exam exists for the relevant course.

#### **Procedures for PEL**

**Required Meeting Prior to Petitioning:** Before student petitioners apply for any type of credit by PEL, they first must meet with the faculty subject-matter expert to determine the optimal approach for demonstrating knowledge, skills, and abilities in the relevant course and course learning outcomes. The result of this meeting will be completion of the PLA Petition form, which outlines the necessary costs and expectations around student responsibilities.

**Student PEL Fee:** Fees will be consistent across the campus and will be applied at the time of petition.

Students submit payment of the fee to Cashiers after the required meeting. Faculty subject-matter experts will begin portfolio review after receiving payment confirmation. Students may cancel their PLA Petition at any time during the process without transcription of their attempt, but any fees paid will not be refunded.

*Faculty Compensation:* Faculty subject-matter experts will be compensated for assessing and evaluating the petitioner's portfolio, presentation, and/or any other process for demonstrating knowledge, skills, and abilities in a program or discipline. The rate of pay for this work will be determined by the general hourly rate of pay per the current faculty agreement. Faculty hours will be officially logged. Faculty will be paid up to one hour per credit for which the student applies. Hours beyond this range must be approved in advance by the supervising unit administrator and PLA Officer.

Skills and experience attained in another country may also be eligible for credit by PEL. Students will need to initiate and pay for the relevant records to be translated by a designated Translation Service agency.

*Required documentation:* The student is responsible for providing evidence that they have met the learning outcomes for the petitioned course in the form of a portfolio. Students will have to demonstrate current theoretical, applied, and content knowledge of the course(s) in which they are attempting to earn credit by PEL. Specific portfolio content is up to the faculty subject-matter expert completing the assessment. Typical content may include:

- A current comprehensive résumé and/or a targeted résumé for the respective field;
- A list of relevant official courses taken;
- The PEL experiences for which the applicant is requesting credit;
- Verification of skill from the relevant employer(s);
- A job description from the relevant employer(s);
- A checklist from the immediate supervisor verifying the individual's competencies
- A personal essay by the applicant; and/or
- Other objective measures of course learning outcomes as may be requested by the faculty subject-matter expert such as writing sample, skill demonstration, role-play or simulation, case analysis, scenario-based testing, product creation, an interview (which may be videotaped at the student's request) with the faculty, or other reasonable assessment measures.

*Submission of Portfolio:* Portfolios must be submitted to the faculty subject-matter expert for consideration by the end of the 7th week of the quarter for a decision to be rendered by the end of the quarter. Any incomplete portfolio may be disqualified or delayed until the next quarter for consideration. If the faculty requests an addendum, the student must submit additional supporting information by the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the subsequent quarter. If the addendum is not submitted by the deadline, the student will not receive PEL credit.

*Recording of Credit:* After the credit by PEL has been approved by the faculty subject-matter expert and division dean, the division will be responsible for sending a copy of the PLA Petition form to the

student and the original copy and related documents will be forwarded to Enrollment & Financial Aid Services for transcription.

*Appealing a Decision:* The student can appeal the PEL decision by following the College's Student Grievance Procedures--Academic Evaluation, Policy 5035.

### **Extra-Institutional Learning (EIL): Specific Procedures**

**Definition of EIL:** Knowledge and skills acquired outside the college and objectively verified through third-party certifications or industry-recognized testing/training.

**Restrictions for EIL in addition to the above general PLA restrictions:** Credit for EIL will be awarded only if a relevant crosswalk exists (see below for crosswalk definitions).

### **Procedures for EIL**

- Official Documentation: Students are responsible for obtaining and providing official documentation of certification or training. All certifications or licenses must be current and valid.
- Petition: Students will submit a request for EIL along with required documentation.
- Evaluation: To be considered for credit, the documentation will be evaluated using available crosswalks.

### **Procedures for EIL Crosswalk Development**

Faculty with subject-matter expertise, in consultation with the program chair, if applicable, and division dean will determine which EIL corresponds to the learning outcomes of Shoreline Community College's courses or program requirements and record those as a crosswalk. Crosswalks will provide consistent guidelines for awarding credit for extra-institutional learning. Faculty subject-matter experts will be compensated for developing a crosswalk according to the general hourly rate of pay per the current faculty agreement. The number of faculty hours devoted to this work will be determined in consultation with the supervising unit administrator.

### **Credit by Testing: Specific Procedures**

**Definition:** Commonly-accepted higher education equivalency exams that are documented via a transcript or other official record.

### **Restrictions for Credit by Testing, in addition to the above general PLA restrictions**

For International Baccalaureate (IB), a maximum of 45 credits may be awarded, as explained below. No credit will be awarded for Standard Level exams.

### **Procedures for Credit by Testing**

Students who complete college-level work can receive appropriate credit or placement (or both) on the basis of performance in the following standardized tests: Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB).

For AP and IB, students will be awarded college course credit based on Shoreline's course equivalencies, which adhere to the guidelines from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). For the most recent course equivalencies, see website.

For IB, in most cases, five (5) credits (or more) are granted for Higher Level (HL) subjects in which a score of 5 or higher is earned. Students who earn an IB diploma can earn an additional 15 credits towards an Associate of Arts degree distributed equally among the three distribution areas: Humanities, Natural Science, and Social Sciences.

For placement into an eligible advanced course, students present a copy of their test results to an academic advisor.

For credit, the student must ask the testing agency to send official scores to Enrollment & Financial Aid Services, who will then transcript the appropriate qualifying credit(s).

- Credit and/or placement for other standardized subject tests (not AP or IB), may be granted on a limited basis (approximately ten times within an academic year per test) at the discretion of the division dean in consultation with faculty subject-matter experts. Credit and/or advanced placement decisions shall be forwarded to Enrollment Services. If credit has been granted for another standardized test (not AP or IB) more than ten times in an academic year, faculty subject-matter experts, with approval from division dean, should propose to the Faculty Senate Council that a new standardized test be eligible for credit by testing, with crosswalk designated by the faculty subject-matter expert.
- Faculty subject-matter experts, with approval from unit administrator, can propose to the Faculty Senate Council that a new standardized test be eligible for credit by testing.

### **Course Challenge: Specific Procedures**

**Definition:** Course challenge examinations are sufficiently comprehensive to determine that students have the same knowledge and skills as those students who enroll in, and successfully complete, the course. A student should have previous training, private study, work experience, or other bona fide qualifications indicating the student has knowledge or ability equivalent to course completers.

### **Restrictions for Course Challenges in addition to the above general PLA restrictions**

Credit may be awarded only for courses for which Course Challenge examinations have been developed.

Students may take a challenge exam for credit only once in the same course, and once a decision has been rendered and the grade issued, they will not be allowed to repeat the exam(s); however, they may choose to enroll in the course.

### **Procedures for Course Challenge**

If evidence is found to validate that the student has violated the College's policy on cheating and plagiarism, a 0.0 grade may be issued for the course challenged.

Fees will be consistent across the campus and will be applied at the time of petition. The required assessment fees must be paid prior to taking the Challenge Exam.

The student can appeal the Course Challenge decision by following the college's Student Grievance Procedures-Academic Evaluation Policy 5035.

### **Procedures for Course Challenge Development**

The faculty subject-matter expert, in consultation with the program chair, if applicable, and the unit administrator, will determine whether a particular course is open to challenge exams. Only courses that are in the College's course catalog are available for challenge exam considerations.

The unit administrator, in consultation with the program chair, if applicable, will recommend a faculty subject-matter expert who is qualified to develop the exam and the assessment rubric. The faculty subject-matter expert will be compensated for this work according to the general hourly rate of pay per the current faculty agreement. The number of faculty hours devoted to this work will be determined in consultation with the division dean.

The division dean, in consultation with the program chair, if applicable, will determine who will be responsible to administer and grade the examination(s). If faculty are assigned to these duties, the rate of pay for this work will be determined by the general hourly rate of pay per the current faculty agreement.