

Prior Learning Assessment: College Credit for What You Know

VSCS Board of Trustees

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WHAT IS PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT?

PLA is a term for various **methods that colleges**, universities, and other education/training providers **use to evaluate** and formally recognize **learning that has occurred outside of the traditional academic environment**. It is used to grant college **credit**, certification, or advanced standing **toward further education** or training.

SOURCE: Council for Adult & Experiential Learning <https://www.cael.org/lp/pla>

PLA boosted credential completion

Adult students credential completion rates:

49%
with PLA

27%
without PLA

Using propensity score matching to control for other factors, PLA boosted adult student completion rates by:

17%
All PLA methods

30%
PLA methods excluding credit rec's for military

Yet PLA used by only about 1 in 10 adult students

11%

Adult students earned college credit for their prior learning through PLA

PLA has potential to close equity gaps in postsecondary completion

Using propensity score matching to control for other factors, PLA boosted completion rates for key adult student groups by:

24%
Hispanic adults

19%
Pell Grant recipients

14%
Black adults

25%
Adults at community colleges

The boost to completion was even higher for these groups for certain PLA methods.

Yet PLA use was lowest for adult students who were:

- Black or American Indian/Alaska Native
- Female
- Pell Grant recipients

PLA students earned credits for nearly a semester of full-time study

On average, adult students earned:

15
PLA credits

12
PLA credits through methods other than credit rec's for military

Resulting in time savings for degree earners

9 to 14 Months

Time saved by adult degree earners with 12 or more PLA credits

Adult students with PLA saved money

\$1,500 to \$10,200

Estimated adult student savings through PLA, across sectors

Institutions won, too

17.6 More Credits

Average additional course credits taken by adult PLA students

The full report, related research, and other documents can be found at the CAEL and WICHE websites: cael.org/pla-impact and wiche.edu/recognition-of-learning.

This fact sheet was revised on 12/1/2020 due to a discovery of a data matching error. Take-up rates, completion outcomes, PSM results, and additional course credits are unchanged; changes were made to the findings for average PLA credits, time savings, and cost savings. ©The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2020

PLA Boost Research

- Students save thousands of dollars
- 2x as likely to complete degree
- Students enroll in more credits

BACKGROUND

- VSCS service created in 1975 to assist non-traditional students
- Administered and supported by CCV
- National leader in the field
- +8,000 student portfolios assessed

PLA OPTIONS

Two fast options

- Credit by Examination
- CCV Course Challenge
 - Competency Based Pathways

More extensive requests

Portfolio Courses

- Focused Portfolio Development (FPD)
- Assessment of Prior Learning (APL)

Training evaluation

- Education & Training Evaluation Service (ETES)




Portfolios

- Typically enrolls adult learners (25+)
- Attracts students not served by traditional programs
- Contracted faculty make all credit award decisions
- All costs for evaluation - no charge per credit
- 100 students annually
- Credits awarded as transfer recommendations means:
 - Lower and upper-division recognition
 - Areas of Study not available in VSCS





Student Savings

- Average Assessment of Prior Learning Portfolio Award
 - 30 credits
 - +\$8,000 tuition savings
 - +1,000 hours time savings
 - Average Focused Portfolio Development Award
 - 12 credits
 - +\$3,000 tuition savings
 - +500 hours time savings
- 



Examples





Examples





Examples





PARTNERS

Faculty Evaluators

- VSCS subject matter experts
- Other Vermont colleges

Industry

- Contracted portfolio courses
- Workplace evaluations
- Professional networks

Others

- VSAC Career & Education Wellness
- External colleges (VT & beyond)



FREE RESOURCES

PLA Informational Webinar

- Overview and live Q & A

PLA Recommender

- Customized immediate response

Degree Acceleration Review

- PLA recommendation for new applicants

QUESTIONS? CONTACT MELISSA DEBLOIS



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www.ccv.edu/priorlearning



Check out The PLA Boost Study here:

<https://www.wiche.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PLA-Boost-Report-CAEL-WICHE-Revised-Dec-2020.pdf>