

Earn Credit
for What You
Already Know

Prior Learning Assessment Handbook

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Purpose of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide the details necessary for continued implementation of PLA to maintain compliance while providing quality customer service and meeting the needs of students. The manual also offers recommendations for creating systems and efficiencies that support and encourage the College to offer a variety of PLA credit opportunities to students.

The manual is written for faculty and staff members who will be responsible for carrying out PLA implementation and for helping to maintain PLA integrity and quality assurance. Students are encouraged to visit <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index> for more information and to make contact with their Academic Advisor or Faculty Discipline Coordinator in their respective field of study.

Introduction to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Credit

In September of 2015, as part of a strategic initiative at the College, PCC developed a Task Force that met to review PLA policies and procedures, look at best practices from peer institutions, and marketing and communication to internal clientele at PCC. Individuals from key departments across the College were represented and involved faculty, staff, and administrators. This included a faculty co-chair of the Task Force with several sub-committees to address specific topical areas related to PLA. In April of 2016, the Task Force produced an Executive Summary with recommendations, which may be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4jk-BnBCvJbMmVZZFVwbHZEaUk/view?usp=sharing>.

Also, institutions of higher learning have been utilizing PLA for over 40 years across the country as a platform to provide students access and opportunity towards meeting their educational goals. Also, many states (i.e. Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, etc.) have legislatively mandated institutions of higher learning to address PLA policies and procedures state-wide. In addition, in May of 2016, the Arizona State Legislature passed bill 1267 which required community college districts in Arizona to create policies to award credit to current and/or former military members for prior learning.

Background and Purpose of PLA

The impetus behind development and implementation of PLA at Pima Community College (PCC) is based on the following aspects: 1) a need to provide students with access and opportunity to higher education, including attracting individuals with some college, but no degree or certificate; 2) address the growing skills gap in business and industry to develop a Career and Technical Education (CTE) workforce prepared to meet US and global economic demands; 3) to reduce the associated costs and time for students to complete a certificate or degree; 4) to help students be successful in meeting their educational goals; 5) eliminate redundancy for current and future students based on previously acquired knowledge and

learning; 6) provide a much needed service to students to demonstrate our commitment to their prior knowledge and learning; 7) to meet the needs of our military, both current and retired; and 8) to generate necessary student enrollment and growth for instructional departments, Divisions, and Pima.

Definition of PLA

Prior Learning Assessment is a set of well-established, researched, and validated methods for assessing non-collegiate learning for college credit. It is a process that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a particular field or fields and have that learning evaluated for college credit (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning - CAEL).

PLA is the awarding of college credit to current and potential students based on knowledge and learning gained outside of formal higher education. Examples include workplace training, military training and service, professional certificates, independent study, examinations, civic activities, and volunteer service. The awarding of credit is based on a thorough and rigorous demonstration of mastery of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Performance Objectives (POs), if appropriate, as evaluated by faculty and may include a student's successful completion of PLA through 1 of 6 avenues, including: 1) Challenge Exams, 2) Portfolio Assessment, 3) ACE/Military training, 4) Business and Industry training and/or certification, 5) Non-credit to credit, and 6) National Standardized Exams.

Standards and Requirements for Awarding PLA

The following standards and requirements will be adhered to when awarding college credit for prior learning that have not been previously evaluated and/or awarded college credit.

1. A PLA electronic request is not necessary for National Standardized Exams (NSE), including AP, Cambridge International, CLEP, DSST, and IB as Pima already has established NSE processes.
2. AGECE courses are currently not available for PLA, unless a NSE*.
3. Credit for all forms of PLA may be used to meet General Education courses for AAA, AAS and AGS that are not AGECE.
4. A student is not required to register for or pay tuition for the course(s) they are challenging.
5. Credit for all forms of PLA may be used to meet major requirements for non-transfer programs.
6. Credit for all forms of PLA may be used to meet electives for transfer programs as long as the course equivalency is a transferable course, but not an AGECE course.
7. A Pima faculty member and/or credentialing expert will make a decision to award or not award credit. Only full credit, not partial, may be granted for a successful student PLA request.
8. If a student does not complete the PLA process, or is denied credit, fees are not refundable.

9. There are fees associated with PLA, including \$105.00 for each Challenge Exam, and \$150 for each Portfolio Assessment. Students must pay all required fees in full prior to taking an exam or submitting PLA requests for evaluation.
10. A Challenge Exam must be taken and completed within 30 calendar days of receipt of student payment, unless extenuating circumstances require additional time for exam administration.
11. A Portfolio must be completed and submitted for faculty review and approval/denial within 60 calendar days after receipt of student payment for the assessment, unless extenuating circumstances require additional time for portfolio completion.
12. Costs associated with taking a NSE, and ordering and sending transcripts are the responsibility of the student.
13. A student may file an appeal if denied credit, and the process can be found in this handbook under the Appeals section.
14. A student must be admitted to Pima and have declared a Program of Study (POS) in order to receive PLA credit.
15. PLA credit may be awarded as equivalents for career and technical education courses, non-AGEC transferable courses, and AGECE courses when earned through NSE.
16. If a student changes their POS, it may result in a reassessment of PLA credit.
17. PLA credit is awarded only for those courses directly applicable to the declared program of study (degree or certificate) or for prerequisite and preparatory coursework.
18. PLA credit may satisfy prerequisite requirements and preparatory coursework using the same policy that applies to other transferred-in course equivalencies.
19. Credits earned through PLA do not apply toward the minimum credits required to be earned in residence at Pima, 15 credit minimum towards a degree and 6 credit minimum towards a certificate.
20. A maximum of 75% of a degree or certificate can be earned through PLA.
21. All work assessed for PLA credit must meet or exceed "C" level work, or 2.0 on a 4.0 grading scale. This means scoring at 70% or higher on a challenge exam or portfolio assessment, unless a higher grade is required for program licensure or accreditation.
22. Credit will not be granted if the score received on the exam does not meet minimum standards as defined in the Pima Catalog for the year in which the assessment was taken.
23. Credit cannot be granted for a course that is already on the student record.
24. PLA is not calculated into the student's grade point average (GPA).
25. PLA credit is noted as such on the transcript (see the PLA Transcription process).
26. The credit hours awarded for PLA are not included as part of the student's semester enrollment and cannot be considered for the purposes of financial aid.
27. If credit is denied for PLA, it will not appear on the transcript. Further, once PLA credit is posted on the transcript, it cannot be removed. The credit will remain on the transcript, but may no longer count toward degree or certificate requirements.
28. A \$49 fee must be paid by the student for a non-credit Portfolio workshop if submitting a Portfolio assessment, which will assist a student in developing a quality portfolio.
29. A complete list of available Pima courses for PLA credit will be maintained on the College website.
30. Students cannot appeal to Pima if another institution does not accept PLA credit.
31. Students cannot appeal for PLA credit to be removed from their Pima academic transcript.

*Please note that Northern Arizona University (NAU) currently accepts PLA credit. If you intend to transfer to NAU, please follow-up with an NAU Academic Advisor regarding your degree intention and the transferability of PLA.

Student Support

The College offers a wide variety of support services, information, and materials to help students make informed decisions regarding PLA to achieve their educational goals. Specific resources, including roles and responsibilities are defined below:

Student Affairs and Military and Veteran Affairs

- Advise students on PLA options and alignment to Program of Study (POS).
- Help determine if a student is eligible for PLA.
- Advise on processes for various types of PLA and assist students with electronic processes.
- Advise students that PCC PLA credit may or may not transfer to other institutions.
- Participate in PLA website creation.
- Participate in regular process review and make recommendations for improvements.

Faculty

- Faculty and/or credentialing experts review CLEP, AP, and other National Standardized Exams to make credit decisions and recommendations with Dean approval.
- Faculty develop objective, comprehensive Challenge Exams and assessment tools for select courses based on learning outcomes expected in the traditional classroom setting.
- Faculty members develop tools and resources for portfolio assessment to include:
 - portfolio templates identifying expected knowledge and skills based on course learning outcomes;
 - suggested artifacts and other appropriate documentation to verify knowledge, skills and competencies for the awarding of credit;
 - objective portfolio evaluation tool/matrix to ensure equity and consistency in grading.
- Faculty members serve as facilitators in portfolio development workshops.
- Faculty serve as subject matter experts to review portfolio submissions, evaluate documentation and make credit decisions.
- Faculty serve as subject matter experts to review national licensure and certification requirements for the purpose of making credit decisions and recommendations.
- Faculty members assist in review of ACE recommendations for awarding of credit.
- Participate in regular process review and make recommendations for improvements.

Office of Enrollment Services/Registrar

- Verify all approved PLA credit is applicable to the student's declared or intended program of study.

- Verify all related electronic forms are correct and consistent with a PLA request and assessment.
- Verify that all documents, artifacts, and other evidence of experience are approved forms of documentation.
- Maintain required PLA documentation according to the standard records retention schedule.
- Document applicable prior learning credit on each student academic record.
- Participate in regular process review and make recommendations for improvements.

Student

- Meet with Academic Advisor and/or Faculty Discipline Coordinator to discuss options.
- Submit all required forms electronically and documentation to earn PLA credit.
- Participate in any required activities related to earning PLA such as taking a challenge exam, attending advising sessions, attending and paying for a portfolio development workshop (U PLA 100), and/or completing a portfolio for review.
- Pay any required fees.

Office of PLA

- Coordinate, manage, and lead PLA effort for Pima on a district-wide basis
- Ensure policies are well-defined, followed, and implemented on a consistent and comprehensive basis
- Ensure compliance to PLA requirements, while focusing on customer service and meeting the needs of students
- Provide training, support, and resources to all appropriate parties regarding PLA
- Make necessary changes and updates to policy and procedures, as needed
- Market and promote increased avenues for PLA opportunities
- Improve the depth and quality of PLA infrastructure
- Serve as a advocate for students to ensure appropriate awarding of PLA credit for previously acquired knowledge and learning

Approved PLA Assessment Methods and Procedures

PLA includes a wide variety of methods designed to assess knowledge and skills gained outside of the college classroom such as work and life experience; military training and experience; and formal and informal training and education.

- Assessment of prior learning is the responsibility of the appropriate academic subject matter or credentialing experts who are content specialists from Pima.
- The names of those making the assessment will be recorded.
- Practices used in assessing prior learning are consistent with accepted, standardized assessment methodology.
- Learning assessed for post-secondary credit shall be:
 - Linked to established learning outcomes or other criteria consistent with institutional standards for a given course;
 - Transferable to contexts other than the one in which it was learned;

- Current and relevant;
- At a standard of achievement equivalent to that of other learners engaged in studies at that level in that program or subject area;
- Assessed using a range of strategies consistent with institutional standards for a given course.

Types of PLA

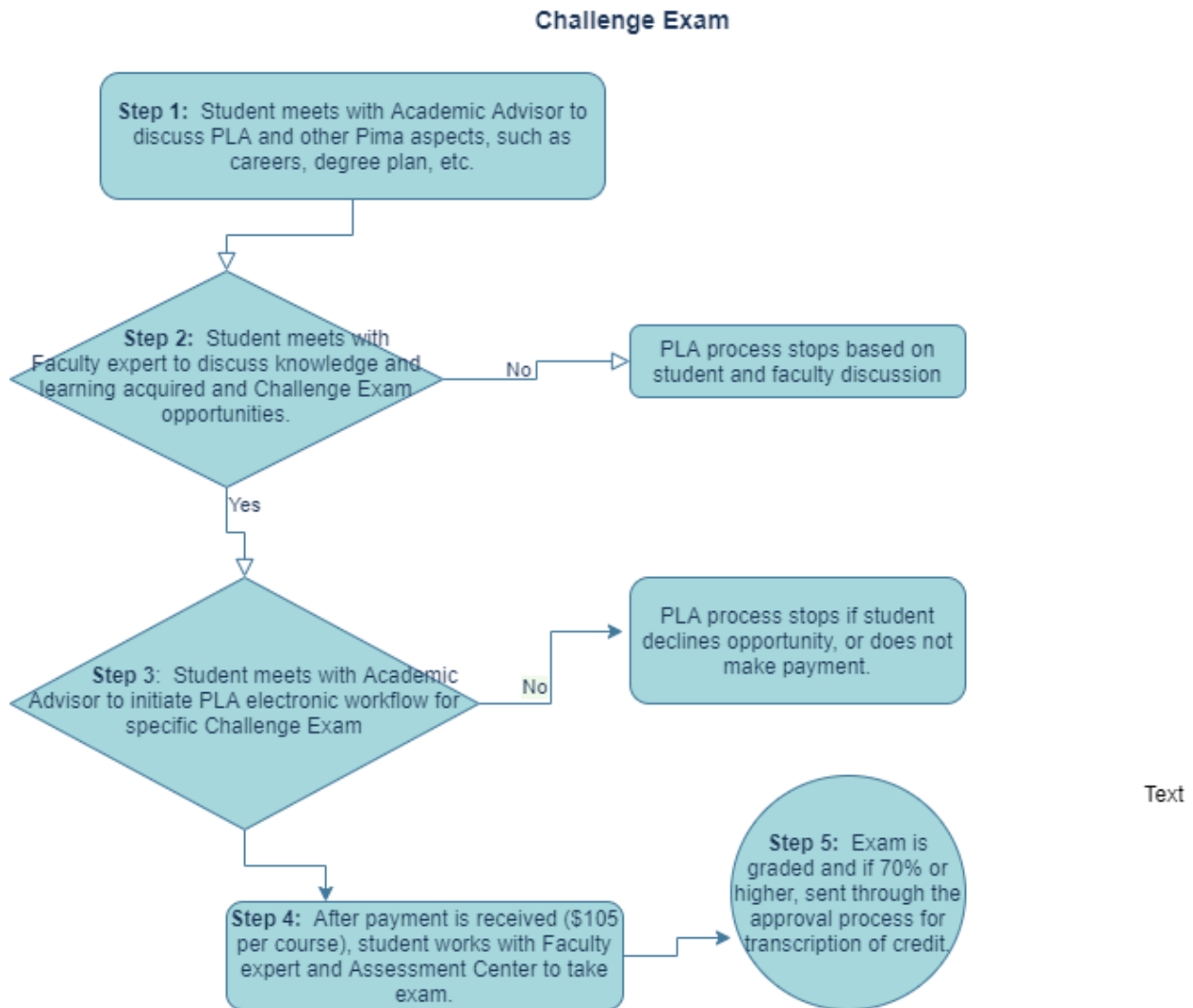
Pima offers six (6) types of credit for PLA opportunities for students, which are described below and are based on the following requirements:

- *Credit may **not** be articulated as an AGEC course, unless a National Standardized Exam (NSE).*
- *Credit may be used to meet General Education courses for AAA, AAS, AGS that are not also AGEC courses (ie, GTM 105).*
- *Credit may be used to meet major requirements for non-transfer programs.*
- *Credit may be used to meet electives for transfer programs as long as the course equivalency is a transferable course but not an AGEC course.*
- *PLA should be tied to catalog offerings; however, elective credits may be granted if credit is allowable in the stated Program of Study (POS).*
- *Credit will be awarded for demonstrated learning outcomes that are appropriate to the course, subject, or program.*
- *Learners may be awarded credit for demonstrating college-level learning that combines theory and practice, but not for experience alone.*
- *Credit may only be awarded upon the recommendation of the faculty and/or credentialing expert that are qualified as subject matter experts.*
- *Faculty and/or credentialing experts, as the content experts, will assess and recognize prior learning and will make the determination of credit awards.*
- *If credit is denied it will not appear on the transcript.*
- *No credit will be awarded for courses which the student has already earned credit except in cases where a class may be repeated for credit.*
- *Credit will not be granted for courses lower than those already on the student record. For example, a student that has already successfully completed SPA 102 will not receive credit for SPA 101 and 102.*

1. Challenge Exams - (i.e. Departmental Exam) – a challenge exam is designed to assess a student’s knowledge and understanding of course outcomes to earn college credit for each course. Examples may include a demonstration, examination, interview, performance, etc. that denote and demonstrate a student’s complete understanding of course outcomes. Upon successful completion of an assessment, verification of payment and a faculty authorized credit recommendation, students will receive credit for the course.

Challenge Exams are faculty-developed tests and a complete list of all available exams may be found at: <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>. A student may retake a Challenge Exam one (1) time, provided they pay the required fee and wait a period of 1-week prior to retaking the exam. In addition, students have the right to review the graded exam, but faculty members will retain the completed exam.

Steps and Procedures for Challenge Exams



Challenge Exam

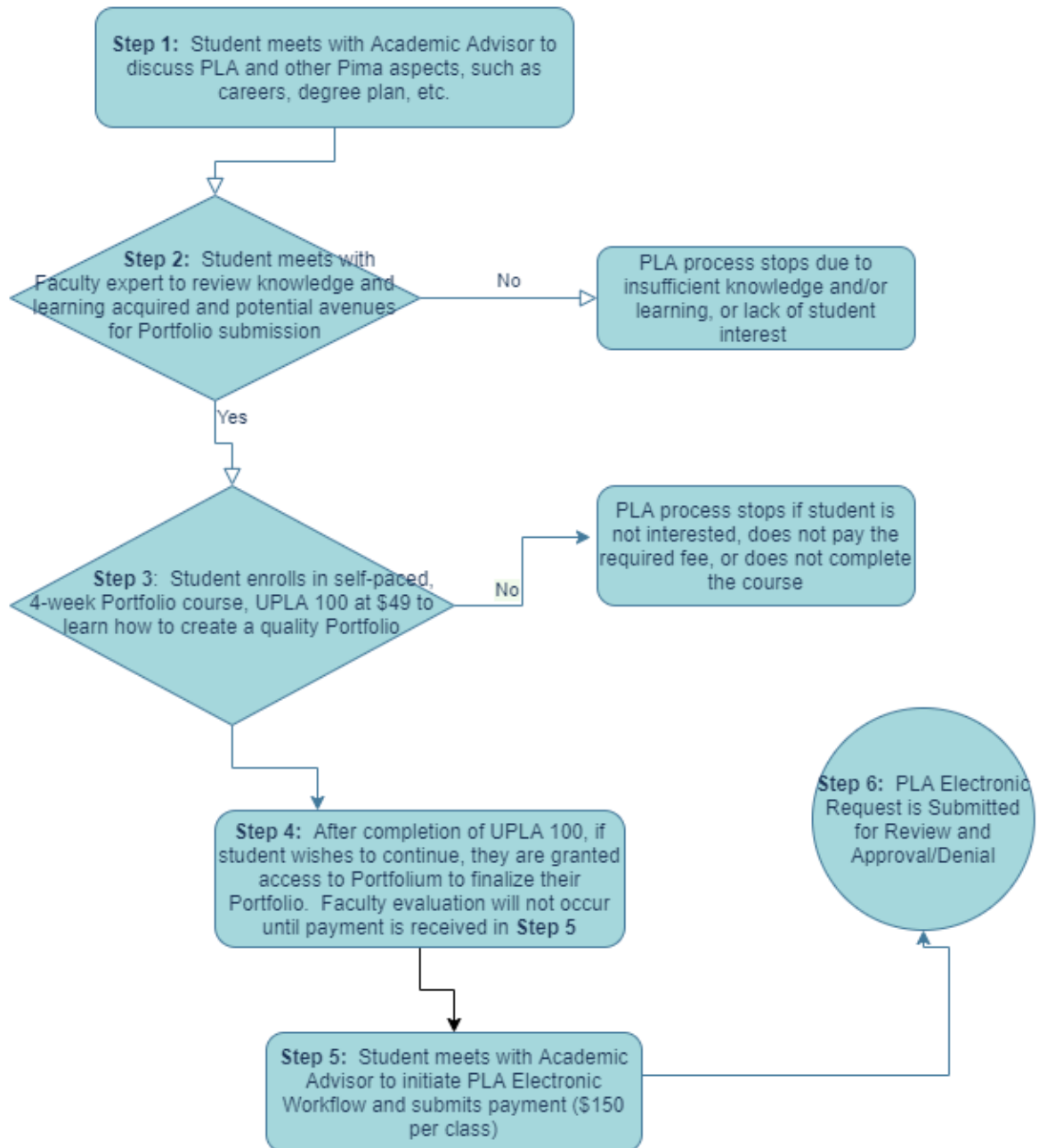
- Step 1:** Student meets with Academic Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects
- Step 2:** Student meets with the Faculty expert to discuss knowledge and learning acquired and Challenge Exam options
- Step 3:** Student meets with Academic Advisor to initiate PLA electronic workflow for specific Challenge Exam, approves the request, and pays \$105 per class/exam applied to their MyPima account
- Step 4:** After payment is received and applied to the student account, student works with the Faculty expert and Assessment Center to take the exam
- Step 5:** The Discipline Coordinator grades the exam (i.e. faculty expert) and Approves/Denies, then forwards to Dean for Review and Approval/Denial, and electronic submission to the Registrar's Office for transcription of credit.

2. Portfolio Assessment - a portfolio exam is a collection of materials and items that assess a student's knowledge and understanding of course outcomes to earn college credit by individual course. A portfolio may comprise a variety of information and materials as defined by faculty and/or a department that denote and demonstrate a student's complete understanding of course outcomes.

A student may find the required elements of a portfolio, a sample portfolio, and the required evaluative rubric, as well as the approved list of courses for Portfolio Assessment at: <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>.

Steps and Procedures for Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio Assessment



Portfolio Assessment

- Step 1:** Student meets with Academic Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects
- Step 2:** Student meets with Faculty expert to discuss knowledge and learning acquired and potential classes for Portfolio creation
- Step 3:** Student enrolls in a self-paced, 4-week, fully online course, UPLA 100 at a one-time cost of \$49 to learn how to create a quality portfolio for evaluation
- Step 4:** After completion of UPLA 100, student is granted access to Portfolium to finalize their Portfolio
- Step 5:** If student wishes to submit a Portfolio for evaluation, meet with Academic Advisor to initiate PLA Electronic Workflow and submit payment of \$150 per class
- Step 6:** PLA Electronic Workflow is initiated with Academic Advisor Submission and Approval/Denial, Student Review and Approval/Denial, Discipline Coordinator Review (i.e. faculty expert) and Approval/Denial, Dean Review and Approval/Denial, and electronic submission to the Registrar's Office for transcription of credit.

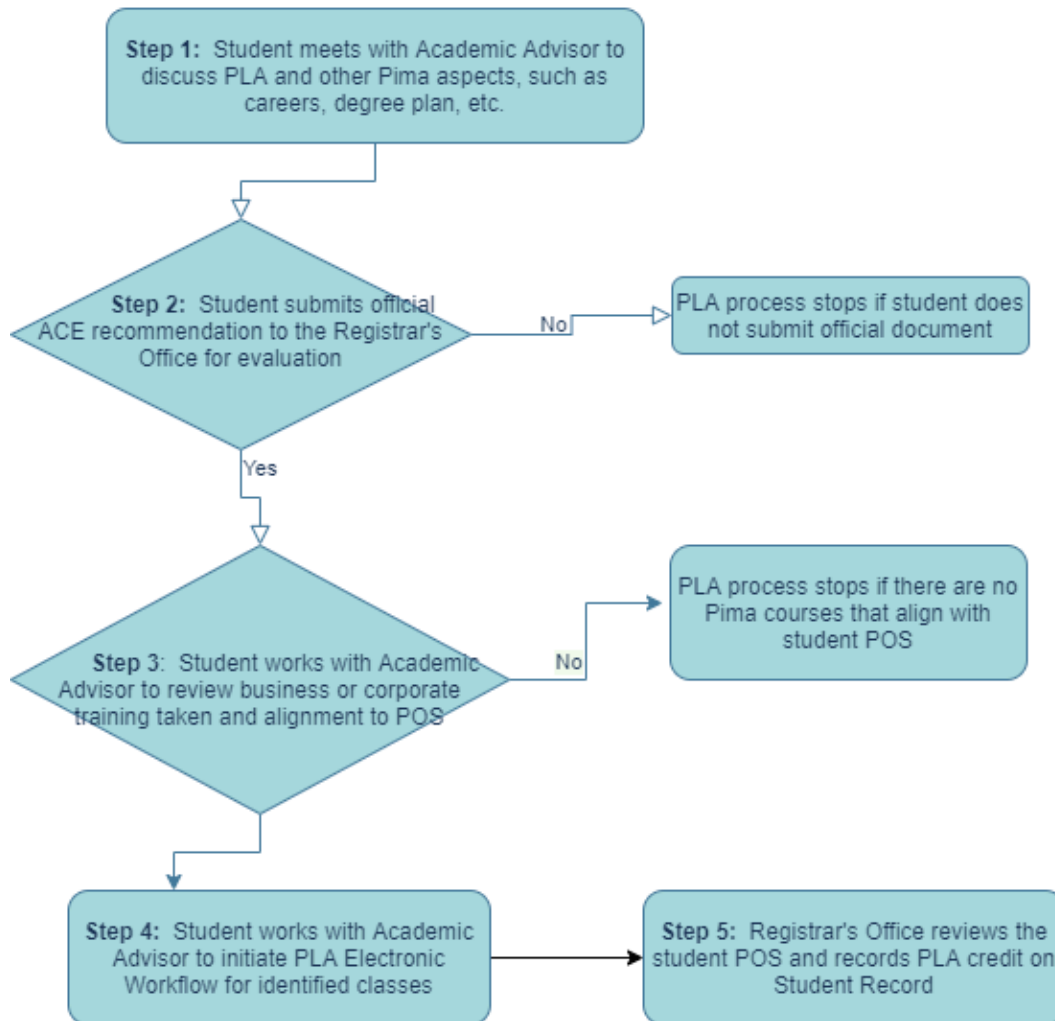
3. ACE and Military Published Guides - the American Council on Education (ACE) provides credit recommendations from transcripts of military service based on the Joint Services Transcript (JST) and professional certifications/training through the National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS) that Pima may utilize to award student credit. Also, students should consider other types of PLA, such as challenge exams and portfolio assessment, to demonstrate their acquired knowledge and learning. Credit based on recommendations from published guides will be determined by faculty and instructional departments. This includes a thorough evaluation of academic rigor and learning outcomes, including assessments, and use of an instructional “crosswalk” detailing alignment to Pima classes.

Pima accepts JST transcripts that detail courses and occupations completed in the Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy, as well as transcripts from the Community College of the Air Force, which is a regionally-accredited college. Please refer to the Veteran’s Articulation Guide for a complete list of approved military courses and occupations at:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mmrVO8QsXXTVkGMMp_WJZXm6PWZvNeTTkZW6FPxb9pE/edit?usp=sharing.

NSE exam credit may be transferred directly from the JST as long as it lists the examination name, score earned on the exam, and the date it was taken, which will be transcribed under the exam institution code.

Steps and Procedures for ACE

ACE Business or Corporate Training



ACE Business or Corporate Training

Step 1: Student meets with Academic Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects

Step 2: Student submits official ACE recommendation to the Registrar's Office for review

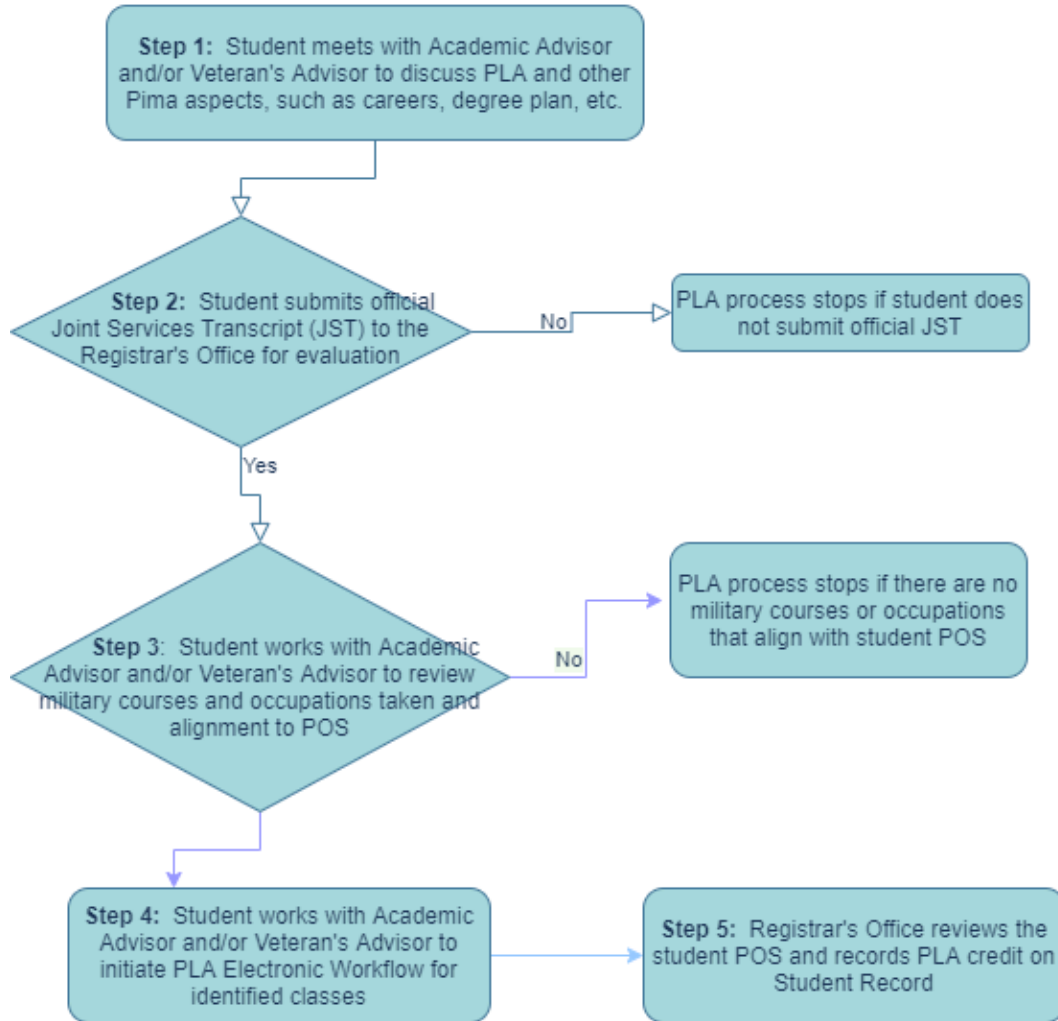
Step 3: Student works with Academic Advisor to review business or corporate training taken and alignment to POS

Step 4: Student works with Academic Advisor to initiate PLA Electronic Workflow for identified classes.

Step 5: The Registrar's Office reviews the student Program of Study (POS) and records PLA credit on the Student Record

Steps and Procedures for Military

Military Credit/Joint Services Transcript (JST)



Military Credit/Joint Services Transcript (JST)

- Step 1:** Student meets with Academic Advisor and/or Veteran's Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects
- Step 2:** Student submits official Joint Services Transcript (JST) to the Registrar's Office for review
- Step 3:** Student works with Academic Advisor and/or Veteran's Advisor to review military courses and occupations taken and alignment to POS
- Step 4:** Student works with Academic Advisor and/or Veteran's Advisor to initiate PLA Electronic Workflow for identified classes.
- Step 5:** The Registrar's Office reviews the student Program of Study (POS) and records PLA credit on the Student Record

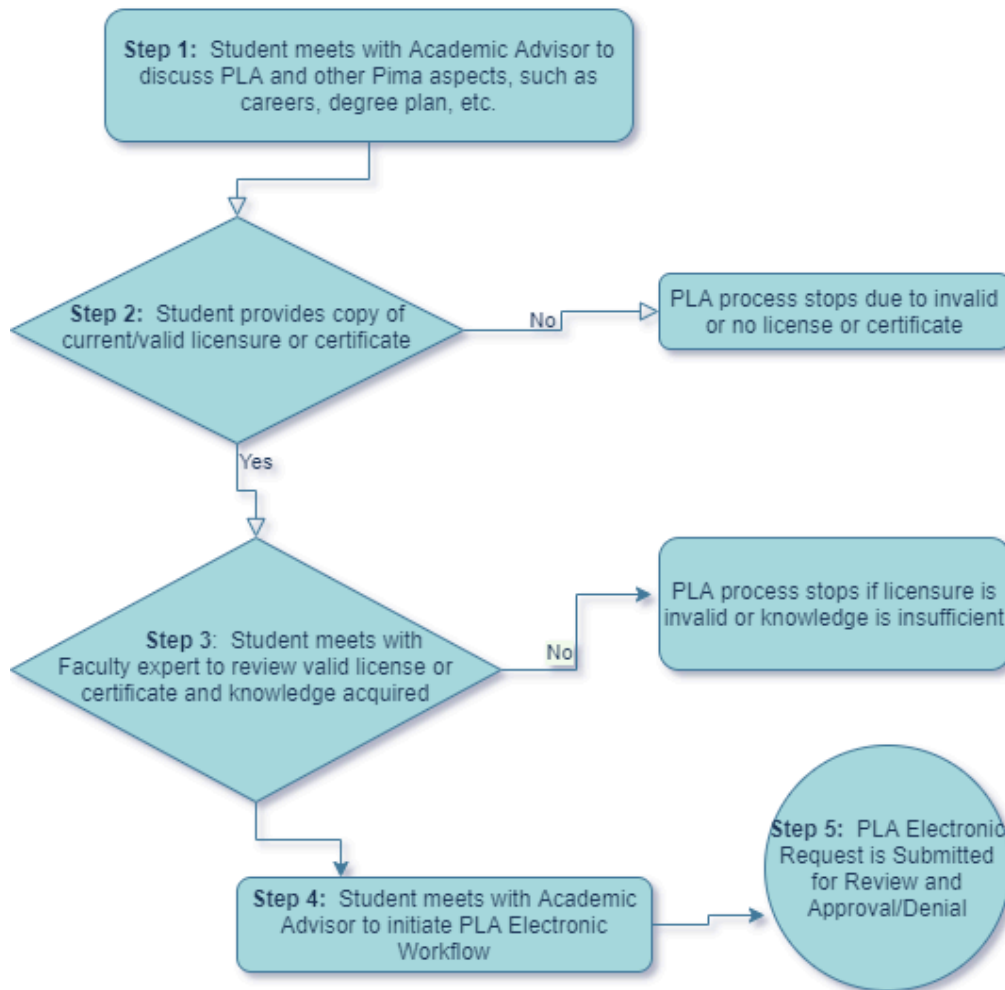
4. Business and Industry Certification and Licensure - students may come to Pima with recognized industry credentials or prior professional training courses, which have been evaluated by a recognized organization, such as the American Council on Education (ACE), National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS), National Center for

Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), and American Welding Society (AWS), etc. and may be utilized to award student's credit.

Pima may evaluate non-collegiate work-based learning and training programs that result in industry certification, professional licensure, apprenticeship completion, and other workplace skills development using criteria defined and approved by Pima faculty. This includes a thorough evaluation of academic rigor and learning outcomes, including assessments, and use of an instructional "crosswalk" detailing alignment to Pima classes. The College maintains a complete list of all accepted Business and Industry Certification and Licensure, which may be found at: <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>.

Steps and Procedures for Business and Industry

Business/Industry Licensure and Certification



Business/Industry License or Certificate

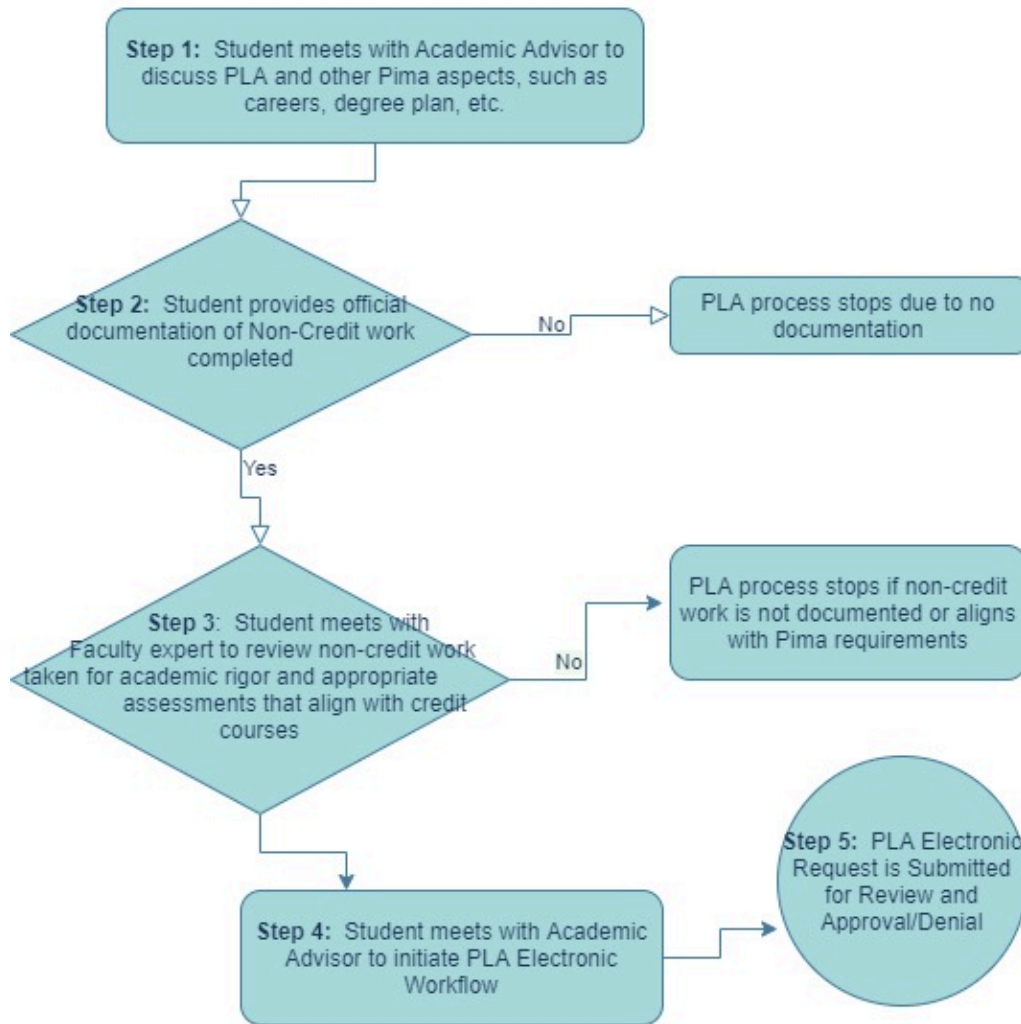
- Step 1:** Student meets with Academic Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects
- Step 2:** Student provides copy of current licensure or certification
- Step 3:** Student meets with Faculty expert to discuss knowledge and learning acquired and licensure/certification
- Step 4:** If student wishes to pursue PLA for Business/Industry licensure or certification, meet with Academic Advisor to initiate PLA Electronic Workflow (i.e. PLA Request)
- Step 5:** PLA Electronic Workflow is initiated with Academic Advisor Submission and Approval/Denial, Student Review and Approval/Denial, Discipline Coordinator Review (i.e. faculty expert) and Approval/Denial, Dean Review and Approval/Denial, and electronic submission to the Registrar's Office for transcription of credit.

5. Non-Credit to Credit - Pima may award credit for non-credit courses and training, including clock-hour courses, which have demonstrated the same competencies, academic rigor, and learning outcomes as credit courses. This includes students having documented assessments reflecting class learning outcomes in order to earn credit.

Granting credit for non-credit coursework shall be at the discretion of each instructional department based on a thorough evaluation of academic rigor and learning outcomes, including assessments, and use of an instructional “crosswalk” detailing alignment to Pima classes. A complete list of available Non-Credit to Credit courses may be found at: <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>.

Steps and Procedures for Non-Credit to Credit

Non-Credit to Credit



Non-Credit to Credit

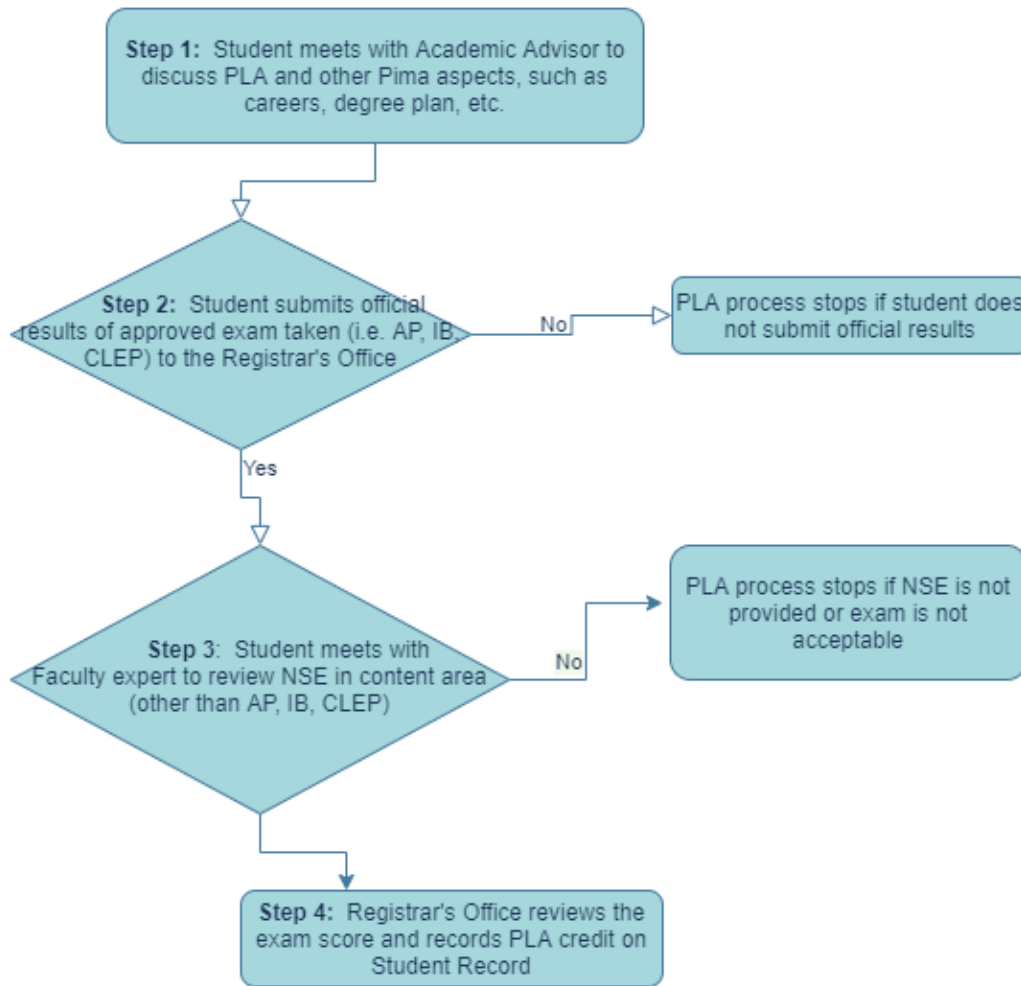
- Step 1:** Student meets with Academic Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects
- Step 2:** Student provides official copy of non-credit work completed
- Step 3:** Student meets with Faculty expert to review non-credit work taken for academic rigor and appropriate assessments that align with requested courses.
- Step 4:** If student wishes to pursue PLA for Non-Credit to Credit classes, meet with Academic Advisor to initiate PLA Electronic Workflow (i.e. PLA Request)
- Step 5:** PLA Electronic Workflow is initiated with Academic Advisor Submission and Approval/Denial, Student Review and Approval/Denial, Discipline Coordinator Review (i.e. faculty expert) and Approval/Denial, Dean Review and Approval/Denial, and electronic submission to the Registrar's Office for transcription of credit.

6. National Standardized Exams (NSE) - Pima credit may be awarded for national standardized exams, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) based on student's achieving an identified cut score. Cut scores and equivalencies are reviewed and recommended by the appropriate department faculty group and per the equivalencies agreed upon by the state-wide Articulation Task Force.

Credits earned through NSE can be applied to General Education and/or major requirements for any degree or certificate program requiring the equivalent course. The Pima catalog contains a list of all accepted NSE and scores required to earn credit for AP, CIE, CLEP, DSST, and IB, which may be found at: <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>. In addition, credit is based on the documented exam and score listed in the catalog year when the student took the exam.

Steps and Procedures for NSE

National Standardized Exam (NSE)



National Standardized Exam (NSE)

- Step 1: Student meets with Academic Advisor regarding career interests, including PLA and other Pima aspects
- Step 2: Student submits official exam results, such as AP, IB, and CLEP to the Registrar's Office for review
- Step 3: Student meets with Faculty expert to discuss and review NSE exam taken in content area, if other than AP, IB and CLEP
- Step 4: The Registrar's Office will review the exam score, and if an acceptable score, record PLA credit on the Student Record

PLA CAEL Survey Tool

Pima encourages students to complete the CAEL survey tool to gather information about your prior knowledge and learning; especially, to assist Student Affairs staff in providing you with sound advising and guidance regarding your career and educational goals. You may find the survey tool at: <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>.

If the survey has been completed, a student will be assigned an Academic Advisor to respond to their questions about PLA and alignment to their educational goals.

PLA Transcription Procedures

Earned credit for the assessment of prior learning will be documented on the student record with the following information:

- PLA method will be indicated on the transcript. For example:
 - CLEP
 - PLA for Portfolio
 - PLA for Challenge Exam
- Credit hours will be based on course equivalency and noted as PLA on the transcript.
- A grade of 'PLA' will be assigned to each course with the exception of National Standardized Exams, which will receive a grade of 'P'. Credit for training and exams evaluated by ACE or NCCRS will show as PLA based on ACE (or NCCRS) recommendations.
 - Credits will be assigned to PLA awards and will be entered accordingly on the learner's transcript.
 - Once PLA credits are posted to the transcript, they cannot be removed. If a student changes their program of study, the credit will remain on the transcript, but may no longer count toward degree or certificate requirements.
 - PLA credits cannot duplicate any previously awarded credit (to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning).

Transfer PLA Credit from other Colleges and Universities

Pima has an established policy for accepting transfer credit, AP 3.21.01 including PLA from other institutions, which may be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PkmQlqKaSZb3nzimpDM5NnsByhLgrxcM/view?usp=sharing>.

PLA Fees and Faculty Compensation

Fees and Collection

Students interested in PLA credit, including Challenge Exam and Portfolio Assessment will be required to pay the necessary fees denoted below for each class requested:

- Challenge Exam - \$80 student fee, \$25 administrative fee per class.
- Portfolio Exam - \$125.00 student fee, \$25 administrative fee per class.
- The fees for assessment are based on cost recovery.
- The fees are based on the number of classes requested, not the number of courses or amount of credit awarded.
 - Fees are published and consistently applied.
 - Fees are not charged for Business and Industry Certification and Licensure, ACE/Military credit, and NSE

Faculty Compensation

As content experts, faculty are responsible for the creation of Challenge Exams and Portfolio assessments that accurately and objectively demonstrate a student's complete knowledge and understanding of course learning outcomes, including development of appropriate rubrics and other evaluative measures. However, faculty will be compensated for evaluation of Challenge Exams and/or Portfolios based on the evaluative cost noted below and the number of classes requested, including \$31 for 1-2 credit hours, \$62 for 3-5 credit hours, and \$93 for 6-9 credit hours:

- 1-2 credit class = 1 hour (faculty member is paid for 1 hour of work totaling \$31)
- 3-5 credit class = 2 hours (faculty member is paid for 2 hours of work totaling \$62)
- 6-9 credit class = 3 hours (faculty member is paid for 3 hours of work totaling \$93)

Faculty are required to complete a PLA Assessment Evaluation Form found at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QOfMba8F8tvUzVwIz9J7kp4doUv6HVRJ/view?usp=sharing>.

PLA Appeals Process

Students will be notified of the outcomes of their completed PLA Credit application within 30 days of submission. Students have the opportunity to appeal a credit recommendation for all methods of PLA except for National Standardized Exams. Information about how and when the student will be notified will be published at <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>, but a student can generally expect to be notified via email through PLA Electronic Workflow and their MyPima account.

A student may appeal the denial of PLA credit by drafting a written response within 30 days of receipt of the denial notification. The written response should provide specific details and additional information in order to revisit and review the original PLA request. The written appeal should be sent to the appropriate Dean that oversees the instructional department, and the Dean will have 10 business days to render a written decision, which cannot be appealed. If denied an appeal for PLA credit, a student may retake a Challenge Exam one (1) time or re-submit a Portfolio one (1) time provided they have paid the necessary fees, and waited for the required period of time (i.e. one week).

PLA Course Selection Process

On an annual basis between January - April, the approved list of Pima courses for each Division will be reviewed by appropriate instructional personnel for acceptance or denial as PLA credit opportunities for students, including identifying the type of PLA offered.

In all cases, when a new course is approved for PLA it should be updated in the PLA course matrix and will be available at <https://pima.edu/academics-programs/credit-prior-learning/index>.

If a student does not see a course approved for PLA, please contact the Instructional Department at Pima to determine if a course is available for credit.

Currently approved list of Pima courses

The current, approved list of Pima courses for PLA purposes denoted by instructional department and Division, including available PLA type may be found at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1dyS9NfxbvX64Tdz5-zcGeyTt1Zmk9GTj8p4M1wSWO/MM/edit?usp=sharing>.

PLA and Records Management

PLA credit recommendations will be placed on the student record in the Student Information System (Banner) within 30 working days of receipt of a complete and accurate electronic PLA Request Form, including appropriate documentation.

The office of Enrollment Services/Registrar will maintain any transcripts and the electronic PLA Request Form in alignment with the incoming Official Transcript records retention schedule.

Any other PLA related documents are the purview of the credit issuing unit. This may include but is not limited to:

- Challenge exam results
- Portfolio submissions
- Evaluation rubrics

The instructional department will be required to keep all appropriate and associated documents in conjunction with the record retention requirements of Pima. Currently, that noted period of time is three (3) years from Departmental approval of the PLA credit.

PLA Electronic Workflow

Pima does not utilize manual forms for the PLA approval process. The College has developed an electronic workflow process for submission of all PLA requests (except NSE), which will require each student to work with an Academic Advisor or Veteran Advisor to submit their request. The instructions for students and Pima personnel may be found below:

Please note that a student will work with their Academic Advisor, Liaison, or Veteran Advisor to complete the PLA electronic workflow process; however, it is imperative that a student visit with the instructional content expert (i.e. Discipline Coordinator, Department Head) in their chosen program of study to review their experience and background, including potential classes and types of PLA available, prior to moving forward with the submission process.

PLA Electronic Workflow Directions (VPN Access Required) - Program Advisor

1. Select the following link: https://pimaapps.pima.edu/pls/htmldb_pdat/f?p=605, which will take you to PLA workflow.
2. Login using your Pima Username and Password.
3. You will have access to My Tasks and Create Assessment.
4. Select Create Assessment to start the workflow process.

5. Enter the student's A number, Ex. A12345678.
6. Select New Assessment Button on the right.
7. Indicate Assessment Type from the dropdown menu, which will be 5 useable options, including ACE Recommended Credit/Military Experience, Challenge Exam, Industry/Certification Training, Non-Credit Mirrored Courses/Clock Hour Conversion, and Portfolio Assessment*.
8. Select the **appropriate Division** student is seeking PLA credit from (1 of 10 options). Ex. Applied Technology, which may not be the same as program listed in Banner (i.e. Machine Tool Technology).
9. Select Apply Changes on the right. Notice Status, Status Date and Created On will now be populated.
10. Select Course(s).
11. Click on Add Course.
12. Select Subject and Course and Apply Changes on the right. Add additional courses, as needed.
13. Select Return to Assessments on the left. The Course Count is now populated.
14. For ACE Recommended Credit/Military Experience and Business and Industry certification, upload appropriate documentation, by selecting document(s). Select Add Document and Edit Details. Select Choose File and Create to upload document and finalize by selecting Certificate or Military Transcript and Apply Changes. You may view the uploaded document (s) by going to My Tasks and selecting View.
15. Select Return to Assessments.
16. Go to My Tasks Tab and select Next Step.
17. Select Advisor Approved or Advisor Rejected. Select Apply Changes on the right.

*Please note that National Standardized Exams are available, but will not be used as the College already has established practices for reporting this form of PLA.

PLA Electronic Workflow Directions - Student

1. Students will receive an email after Advisor Approval and link to electronic PLA Form https://pimaapps.pima.edu/pls/htmlldb_pdat/f?p=606.
2. Login to PLA Form using your Pima Username and Password.
3. Students will click My Assessments and review acknowledgments.
4. Accept or Cancel request and Apply Changes - student will need to make payment in full for Challenge Exam and/or Portfolio Assessment through the Cashier's Office. Once payment is received, an e-mail notification will be sent to the DC/DH. **Payment is not required for ACE Recommended Credit/Military Experience and Business, Non-Credit to Credit, and Industry Certification.**

PLA Electronic Workflow Directions (VPN Access Required) - Discipline Coordinator/Department Head

1. After payment in full is made, (not for ACE Recommended Credit/Military Experience and Business and Industry Certification) the DC/DH will receive an email.
2. Select the following link: https://pimaapps.pima.edu/pls/htmlldb_pdat/f?p=605, which will take you to PLA workflow.
3. Login using your Pima Username and Password.

4. You will have access to My Tasks.
5. Select My Tasks button and Next Step. You may view the uploaded document (s) by going to My Tasks and selecting View.
6. DC/DH will Approve or Reject student PLA request. Students will receive an email when approved or rejected.
7. If approved, DC/DH will assign the PLA request to a faculty member for evaluation, which may be the DC/DH.
8. Once evaluative process is completed, the DC/DH has three options under My Tasks, including: a) Fail - student will receive an email and may appeal the decision to the respective Dean based on extenuating circumstances (process described in PLA Handbook), which is a final decision by the Dean, b) Pass/Dean approval required, and c) Pass/Dean approval not required. Please note that Departments and their respective Dean will determine if Dean approval is required.**
9. If approved, an email will be sent to the Dean.

**A student must score at the 70% or higher level on a Challenge Exam or Portfolio Assessment to receive credit.

PLA Electronic Workflow Directions (VPN Access Required) - Dean

1. Dean will receive an email from DC/DH, denoting approval.
2. Select the following link: https://pimaapps.pima.edu/pls/htmldb_pdat/f?p=605, which will take you to PLA workflow.
3. Login using your Pima Username and Password.
4. You will have access to My Tasks.
5. Select My Tasks button and Next Step. You may view the uploaded document (s) by going to My Tasks and selecting View.
6. Approve or Reject the PLA request. Students will receive an email if approved or rejected. If approved, an e-mail will be sent to the Registrar's Office.

PLA Electronic Workflow Directions (VPN Access Required) - Registrar

1. If approved, the Registrar's Office will receive an email.
2. Select the following link: https://pimaapps.pima.edu/pls/htmldb_pdat/f?p=605, which will take you to PLA workflow.
3. Login using your Pima Username and Password.
4. You will have access to My Tasks.
5. Select My Tasks button and Next Step. You may view the uploaded document (s) by going to My Tasks and selecting View.
6. Select Approve for Transcribing or Return to the DC/DH for more information and/or follow-up. If approved, the student will receive email notification.

PLA Summary

Pima will regularly monitor, review, evaluate, and revise PLA policies and practices to maintain and improve institutional standards in alignment with the scheduled Administrative Policy (AP) review period. Policies and information about PLA assessment processes, including appeal are provided in this handbook.

For additional information regarding PLA, please contact the Office of PLA at pcc-priorlearning@pima.edu, or 520-206-4802.

Appendix A: Administrative Procedure and Board Policy

The Board Policy governing PLA is “Assessment of Credit for Prior Learning”, BP 3.20 and may be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Rm-ECh-GPaj12TWleSLh1nrxrj2wuao/view?usp=sharing>.

The Administrative Procedures governing PLA is “Assessment of Prior Learning”, AP 3.20.01 found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JQ2SismG42F-ttmoI85htYUNvjySxqhB/view?usp=sharing> and

“Transfer and Prior Learning Credit”, AP 3.21.01 found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PkmQlqKaSZb3nzimpDM5NnsByhLgrxcM/view?usp=sharing>.

Appendix B: Student Resources

1. ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training found at:
<https://www.acenet.edu/National-Guide/Pages/default.aspx>.
2. ACE Military Guide found at:
<https://www.acenet.edu/Programs-Services/Pages/Credit-Transcripts/Military-Guide-Online.aspx>.
3. National College Credit Recommendation Service found at:
<http://www.nationalccrs.org/>.
4. Locally evaluated industry and workplace certifications and training, such as industry certification, professional licensure, apprenticeship completion, and other workplace skills development.

Appendix C: Definitions and Glossary of Terms

1. ACE Military Guide - The Military Guide is a compilation of ACE credit recommendations for formal courses and occupations offered by all branches of the military. The guide includes all evaluated courses and occupations from 1954 to the present. <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx>.
2. ACE National Guide - The ACE National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training contains ACE recommendations for formal courses or examinations offered by various organizations including businesses, unions and government entities. <http://www2.acenet.edu/credit/?fuseaction=browse.main>.
3. ACE Recommendation - American Council on Education Credit Recommendation Service uses faculty subject matter teams to review workplace learning and connect the competencies to college level learning.

<https://clep.collegeboard.org/develop-your-clep-program/create-a-clep-policy/ace-credit-recommendations>.

4. AP - Advanced Placement is college-level studies offered in courses at the high school level. Students who test and successfully meet cut scores are awarded credit in the appropriate subject area. <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/home>.
5. Audit - A student may audit a class at Pima with the understanding they can enroll and attend the class with no intent of working for and earning credit. This includes not taking the assessments and completing the academic rigor of the course. A student may audit a class based on personal interest or for some other reason, but students enrolled under an audit status are not eligible for PLA credit, unless the academic rigor and assessments taken are documented.
6. Business and/or Industry Licensure and Certification - Students may come to Pima with recognized industry credentials or prior professional training courses, which have been evaluated by a recognized organization, such as ACE, NIMS, NCCER, etc. and may be utilized to award student's credit. Examples may include current, valid licenses and certifications in a variety of Pima instructional areas.
7. CAEL - The Council on Adult and Experiential Learning - a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that works with public and private sector partners to enhance learning opportunities for adults around the world. <https://www.cael.org/>.
8. CCAF - Community College of the Air Force. <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Barnes/CCAF/>.
9. Challenge Exam - Challenge Exams are faculty-developed tests. They assess a student's mastery of the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for the class.
10. CLEP - College Level Examination Program, which is a credit by examination program that is widely accepted by colleges and universities across the country. CLEP exams test mastery of college level material in five subject areas with 33 tests covering general education courses. <https://clep.collegeboard.org/>.
11. Corporate Training - A variety of training opportunities may be offered through business and/or corporate programs. These may include trainings that are short-term in nature, such as badges, micro-credentials, and other recognized programs that align to the course outcomes and academic rigor as determined by criteria established through appropriate instructional departments (i.e. faculty) at Pima, or may be evaluated by a recognized agency such as ACE or NCCRS.
12. Credential - A credential is a document, certification or license that proves a person's qualifications and mastery.
13. DSST - DANTES Subject Standardized Test is an exam most often taken by military members and their families. The DSST program offers 30+ exams in college subject areas such as Social Sciences, Math, Applied Technology, Business, Physical Sciences and Humanities. The tests have been evaluated for college credit by ACE. <http://getcollegecredit.com/>.

14. Faculty Evaluator - A faculty subject matter expert who is responsible for evaluating the quality and depth of knowledge and learning acquired by students for PLA credit.
15. IB - International Baccalaureate is a “non-profit educational foundation offering four programs of international education that develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world.” www.ibo.org/.
16. Instructional CrossWalk - Faculty subject matter experts evaluate a credential such as an ACE recommendation or Business and Industry certification or licensure and decide if there is an equivalency between the skills mastered for the credential and the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) of a Pima course.
17. JST - Joint Service Transcript is a transcript presenting data for the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard. The JST contains: military course completions, military occupations, College level test scores, and other learning experiences. <http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Documents/Joint-Services-Transcript-Brochure.pdf>.
18. National Standardized Exams (NSE) - Pima credit may be awarded for national standardized exams, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) based on student’s achieving an identified cut score. Cut scores and equivalencies are reviewed and recommended by the appropriate department faculty group and per the equivalencies agreed upon by the state-wide Articulation Task Force. In addition, a NSE exam in a specific content area may be approved for Pima credit based on faculty review and approval.
19. NCCRS - The National College Credit Recommendation service (the University of the State of New York). Evaluates training and education programs offered outside of the traditional college classroom setting and recommends college credit equivalencies. www.nationalccrs.org.
20. Non-Credit - Pima may award credit for non-credit courses and training, including clock-hour courses, which have demonstrated the same competencies, academic rigor, and learning outcomes as credit courses. This includes students having documented assessments reflecting class learning outcomes in order to earn credit.
21. PLA - Prior learning assessment is a set of well-established, researched, and validated methods for assessing non-collegiate learning for college credit. It is a process that allows learners to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a particular field or fields and have that learning evaluated for college credit (CAEL).
22. PLA Credit - The learning addressed in this handbook is defined as college level knowledge or skills that have been attained outside of a traditional academic environment and that have not been previously evaluated for or awarded college credit.
23. Portfolio Assessment - The process of reviewing a compilation of artifacts, narratives and demonstrations and comparing them against the Course Learning Outcomes at Pima course(s) for the purpose of awarding PLA Credit as appropriate.
24. Published Guide - The common term used to describe the compilation of credit recommendations from ACE and NCCRS.

25. Residency - The courses that a student registers for, attends and completes while enrolled at the college that will confer their degree or certificate. This includes all forms of instruction including distance and online education.
26. Standardized Test - Any form of a test which gives all test takers the same test under the same conditions. Pima routinely accepts the following tests: AP, CIE, CLEP, DSST, and IB.
27. Veteran's Articulation Guide - A summary document of ACE recommended military courses and occupations reviewed and approved by Pima faculty for college credit.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mmrVO8QsXXTVkGMMp_WJZXm6PWZvNeTTkZW6FPxb9pE/edit?usp=sharing

Appendix D: Sample Documents

1. PLA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) may be found at:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yPBYh_9FC0qz618TkruWmdEOlwq291WgR0-saXcL7BU/edit?usp=sharing.
2. A complete list of approved PLA course offerings by Instructional Division and type may be found at:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Kqt5OrNSiRztQqt_8naa75MmbK4OCpGJENt8segY-jQ/edit?usp=sharing.
3. PLA Electronic Workflow directions may be found at:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rdsGrEE4mwmhX-w5YDPfc9QSmjIpO2T3teXv1xcCK_E/edit?usp=sharing.
4. Portfolio Instructions and Requirements may be found at:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/11r9Q-Bh0LWK4nNu1YW_PFH2eH-TLFOlawzaJMSAGPP8/edit?usp=sharing.
5. The Portfolio Evaluative Rubric may be found at:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ynzrZgDtFSIW1CJxnpQa4oBIznIEB1bc/view?usp=sharing>.
6. A copy of the PLA brochure may be found at:
<https://app.luminpdf.com/viewer/5fb555ff49f2b1001287cf32>.
7. A copy of the PLA flyer may be found at:
<https://app.luminpdf.com/viewer/5fb556400db9b4001105efa8>.
8. Sample portfolios may be found at:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13-U7EoTSwWVYA502cy7kFV4rpWuRXJIE/view?usp=sharing> or
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n9Z2qlzI7aSO9tugn4nDaxPgU8Ke8l0V/view?usp=sharing>.

9. The Veteran's Articulation Guide for Pima credit can be found at:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1mmrVO8QsXXTVkGMMp_WJZXM6PWZvNeTTkZW6FPxb9pE/edit?usp=sharing.