THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE

EXPERIENCED ADULT PROGRAM (EAP)

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

STUDENT PORTFOLIO MANUAL

Edited 2019

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PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

**Introduction**

The Experienced Adult Program evaluates learning that has been acquired outside a college classroom. Hundreds of nontraditional students have used his program at The College of Saint Rose to document prior learning that has been acquired through employment, professional development, seminars and in-service training, military service, volunteer activities, conference presentations, industry-recognized certifications, etc. Nontraditional adult students who have accomplished creditable college level learning are encouraged to explore the Experienced Adult Program. This manual outlines the philosophy, policies, and procedures that govern the Experienced Adult Program at The College of Saint Rose.

**Identifying College-level Learning**

Credit may be granted for verifiable college-level learning from one’s experiences but not for the experiences themselves. There is a critical difference. For example, a person who has owned and operated a daycare center for five years would not be eligible for credit for working with children or for running the center. They might, however, be eligible for credit in human growth and development or in office management. Defining college-level learning can be complex. The following criteria are offered to help define college-level learning.

1. The learning should include both a theoretical and a practical understanding of the subject area. For example, if a person traveled to a different part of the US and noticed differences in the culture of the regions, a report of their observations would not be sufficient to demonstrate college-level learning. However, if that person could relate their observations to the historical and economic development of the region, they might receive college credit.
2. The learning should be applicable outside the specific context in which it was acquired. For example, participation in a seminar which focused on the hiring and personnel policies of a specific corporation must incorporate learning about policies applicable in other types of institutions if it were to be eligible for credit.
3. The learning should fall within an area that is eligible for college credit as opposed to secondary education or non-credit continuing education. The knowledge and skills gained through experiential learning would go beyond the range of abilities of the average, traditional student.
4. The knowledge or skills must have been attained prior to, or outside of enrollment in a formal educational setting. The history of awarding credit for prior learning dates back to early World War II when the American Council on Education (ACE) began assessing knowledge and skills gained in the military. This initial assessment was followed by formalized testing in the mid-1960s and the assessment movement was led by the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), which began in the mid-1970s.
5. The knowledge or skills learned must be demonstrated through submission of a portfolio that includes a collection of evidence of the acquired learning. The portfolio may include a narrative, resume, job description, work samples, reports or articles, artwork or photographs, job performance appraisals, attestations, letters of recommendation, awards or certifications, etc.
6. The knowledge or skills must be represented in existing College of Saint Rose curricula. In other words, the learning outlined in the portfolio must align with and demonstrate that the skills in a course syllabus have been acquired outside of traditional classroom means.

**Fee Structure**

A fee is due at the time of portfolio submission. The cost is $300 for having up to 12 credits assessed; $425 for more than 12 credits. The fee is for the assessment process; not for credits.

**Eligibility and Guidelines**

1. To be eligible to participate in the Experienced Adult Program and receive credit through the Prior Learning Assessment process, a student must be a matriculated undergraduate student at The College of Saint Rose.
2. Credit may not be awarded more than once for the same body of learning. In other words, credit awarded through Prior Learning Assessment cannot duplicate credit earned through transfer credit.
3. Students who participate in the Experienced Adult Program may submit portfolios only after having earned a minimum of 15 credits through traditional classroom attendance.
4. Portfolios will be assessed by faculty within the department that oversees the area of study. For example, Huether School of Business faculty would assess prior learning in the area of business administration, management, accounting, human resources, etc.
5. Credit must be applied in an appropriate area with regard to the requirements established for the particular degree. The portfolio must be comparable in nature, content, and level to existing course content and expectations in order to be eligible for prior learning credit.

**Prior Learning Assessment – Building the Portfolio**

A portfolio in the PLA process is a written presentation that you assemble and submit to earn credit for knowledge you have that is equivalent to what would be taught in a specific course. Each portfolio addresses a course description and learning outcomes through a written narrative and a collection of evidence that supports your knowledge and background.

In consultation with your academic advisor and the Experienced Adult Program advisor, identify course(s) for which you feel you have acquired equivalent knowledge and obtain the course descriptions and syllabi. Some of these courses may be outside of your given major. A good practice is to have a conversation with the Department Chair or other faculty member who teaches the course to let them know of your intentions and to seek their advice. Be prepared to hand them your resume or a short description of the experience that led to your acquiring equivalent knowledge.

In preparation of your PLA portfolio, review your resume with the Experienced Adult Program advisor with a focus on the learning your acquired and the knowledge and skills you have attained, not on the experiences themselves. Make firm decisions about which learning experiences to include in your portfolio.

**Portfolio Checklist**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * **Completed** | **Contents** | **Description** | **Reviewed by EAP Advisor** |
|  | Title Page | Title, name, ID#, contact info, date |  |
|  | Table of Contents | List the contents and page numbers |  |
|  | Goal Statement | 1. Statement of student’s educational goal 2. Statement on how prior learning assessment relates to educational goals 3. Statement on courses or outcomes being petitioned for credit |  |
|  | Course Syllabus | Provide the syllabi for each of the courses for which you are requesting credit |  |
|  | Learning Chronology | Resume, degree audit or academic transcript(s) |  |
|  | Narrative | A narrative essay that outlines your learning acquired and how it aligns with the learning objectives of the course  (Repeat for each course petitioned) |  |
|  | Documentation | Documents that verify the learning – work samples, certifications or licenses, reports or articles you’ve written, conference presentations you’ve given, awards, job descriptions, performance evaluations, letters of recommendation, attestations, etc. |  |
|  | Evaluation forms | Forms supplied by EAP Advisor for faculty to make their assessment notes |  |

The Introduction should include background information about yourself, your experiences and educational plans. It helps the faculty reviewer(s) understand the context of your request for credit.

The goal statement should demonstrate that you have achieved learning that is equivalent to a college-level course. It should identify the specific course or courses (by title and course number) for which you are seeking credit. Include portions of the course description(s) and state how your knowledge and skills align. This is a good place to include how these credits will fit into your overall academic and career goals.

Your narrative essay should go into depth about the learning you have attained. Organize your essay around the learning outcomes or course objectives identified on the course syllabus. This section should be a description of what you learned and how you learned it rather than what you did. It is necessary to document how you achieved each of the learning outcomes listed on the syllabus. Describe your knowledge in as much detail as possible. Your goal is to show that you have achieved college-level knowledge and competence, that you know how to generalize this knowledge beyond one specific situation, that you can relate your knowledge to the academic discipline, and that you understand both the theory and the application of this knowledge. Be specific about the experiences that contributed to your learning.

It will be necessary to write a narrative essay for each course for which you are seeking credit. Each essay must be supported with outside documentation to verify your learning experience. This outside documentation should be referenced in your essay and included directly following your essay.

The purpose of documentation is to verify that you have achieved the level of learning you describe. Examples of many of the ways you can verify your learning are listed below. You will include direct and indirect evidence as appropriate to the content area(s).

DIRECT EVIDENCE

Work samples

Reports or articles

Advertisement or promotional materials

Audio/visual presentations,

Programming scripts

Curriculum plans

Conference presentations

Research

INDIRECT EVIDENCE

Letters or attestations confirming your learning and experiences

Awards or commendations

Certificates or licenses

Professional development or CEUs

Letters of recommendation

Job performance evaluations

Media coverage or recognition

**Portfolio format**

Typed, double-spaced, pages numbered

Two complete copies in 3-ring binders must be turned into the EAP advisor

College-level writing is expected, carefully proof-read

Letters must be on original letterhead and signed

Table of Contents must include page numbers and each section in the order it appears

Citations or references must be accurate and relevant

**Procedure for PLA Portfolio Review**

1. Two copies of portfolio must be submitted to the EAP Advisor.
2. The EAP Advisor will review the portfolio and assign sections to faculty evaluators.
3. Faculty evaluators review the portfolio and may contact you for additional information or clarification. Or faculty evaluators assigned credit as appropriate and return portfolio along with forms to the EAP Advisor.
4. The EAP Advisor will notify the student as well as the College Registrar of credits awarded.
5. The EAP Advisor will notify the College Bursar to apply the appropriate charge to the student’s account. $300 for up to 12 credits assessed; $425 for more than 12 credits worth.