



# **PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT Advisor Manual**

**October 2011**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Community colleges offer quality-learning environments and a wide array of courses and services for diverse communities. This versatility and comprehensiveness attracts individuals who differ in life experiences, ages, formal and informal educational backgrounds, work experiences, and educational goals.

Students who have mastered academic or technical competencies in non-traditional educational environments, including training in a corporation, licensure/certification programs, career experience, self-directed learning environments, continuing education courses, and coursework and training through military experience can earn credit for prior learning experiences. In order to maximize the community college experience, it is important to use time efficiently through correct placement in a chosen degree program. Although the awarding of credit for competencies gained outside of the traditional classroom setting is an exception to Lone Star College System's (LSCS) traditional assessment and placement of students, opportunities to earn credit for prior learning experience are available.

This manual is a guide for counselors, advisors, and faculty. A separate manual is available for students. The manual describes eligibility requirements for different types of prior learning credit available at LSCS and describes the process to apply for credit or advanced standing. Prior learning assessment (PLA) options included in this manual are: advanced standing, challenge exams (both external and internal), portfolios, licensure/certifications, military transcripts, high school articulation, continuing education, and articulated credit from non-regionally accredited colleges or universities.

No more than 50% of the credits on a certificate program or associate's degree may be earned from Prior Learning Assessment methods. No more than fifteen (15) semester credit hours may be awarded from PLA by means other than recognized evaluative examinations. Students must complete 50% of the credits of a credit certificate program or at least 18 credits of an associate's degree with Lone Star College System credit courses to meet graduation requirements.

For definitions of terms used in this document, see the glossary at the end of the manual. This manual is evolving as new situations arise. Please check for updates and revisions at <http://www.lonestar.edu/PLA>

## II. ADVISOR'S ROLE IN THE PLA PROCESS

The advisor plays a key role in working with the students to determine PLA opportunities, eligibility, costs, and benefits of each PLA option. **The advisor's signature on each PLA form is**

**acknowledgement that the student meets the criteria required for the PLA option.** The PLA liaison at each college is responsible for copying and forwarding PLA forms to the system student information services (SIS) office and for confirming that test scores associated with PLA credit are posted in iStar. PLA liaisons should also place a service indicator (SI) in iStar stating that the PLA form has been sent to SIS for processing. The SI code is S21 – PLA Tracking and other comments related to the student’s PLA application may be entered here.

### **III. RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

The curriculum and instruction department oversees the PLA process and is available to assist advisors with questions. The student information services area is responsible for transcribing credit and communication of credit awarded to students. A PLA Committee addresses specific PLA issues that may arise. The committee provides recommendations to the vice presidents of instruction for resolution.

#### **Curriculum and Instruction Department:**

- Marie Thibodeaux 832-813-6671 or [Marie.Thibodeaux@LoneStar.edu](mailto:Marie.Thibodeaux@LoneStar.edu) (advanced standing, internal & external challenge exams, portfolio credit, and military transcript evaluation)
- Christina Todd 832-813-6628 or [Christina.C.Todd@LoneStar.edu](mailto:Christina.C.Todd@LoneStar.edu) (advanced standing, internal & external challenge exams, portfolio credit, military transcript evaluation, high school articulation including advanced technical credit & continuing education articulation)
- LaKisha McDowell-Bates 832-813-6779 or [Lakisha.M.McDowell-Bates@LoneStar.edu](mailto:Lakisha.M.McDowell-Bates@LoneStar.edu) (high school articulation and Tech Prep)

#### **Student Information Services Department:**

- Priscilla Strawbridge 281 290-2886 or [Priscilla.Strawbridge@LoneStar.edu](mailto:Priscilla.Strawbridge@LoneStar.edu) (status of posting credit to transcripts)
- Jennifer Cornavaca 281- 290-2893 or [Jennifer.A.Cornavaca@LoneStar.edu](mailto:Jennifer.A.Cornavaca@LoneStar.edu) (questions regarding PLA by non-regionally accredited college or university)
- Contessa Scroggins 281-290-2897 or [Contessa.D.Scroggins@LoneStar.edu](mailto:Contessa.D.Scroggins@LoneStar.edu) (questions regarding military opportunities & impact on veterans)

**PLA Committee Members:** Cher Brock, Christina Todd, Marie Thibodeaux, and Linda Luehrs-Wolfe

### **IV. PLA GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA**

1. To be eligible to earn PLA credit, the student must meet all admissions and TSI

requirements at the colleges in the Lone Star College System and not have previously taken or attempted the course.

2. Check the online manual for the most current requirements and procedures.
3. Students meet with a counselor or advisor for information and to complete the appropriate form(s) for credit by PLA.
4. Fees associated with PLA are outlined in this manual and can be reviewed online <http://www.lonestar.edu/pla-fees.htm>. Students pay required fees at the college business office.
5. PLA credit is only awarded when it applies to the LSCS's program(s) of study. No more than 50% of the credits on a certificate program or associate's degree may be earned from Prior Learning Assessment methods. No more than fifteen (15) semester credit hours may be awarded from PLA by means other than recognized evaluative examinations. Students must complete 50% of the credits of a credit certificate program or at least 18 credits of an associate's degree with Lone Star College System credit courses to meet graduation requirements.
6. Semester credit hours earned through PLA are designated as "CR" on the transcript; this credit is not computed for GPA purposes and no letter grade will be given on the student's transcript. Semester hours generated by PLA are counted towards fulfillment of graduation requirements.
7. Other academic institutions may not accept PLA credit awarded through LSCS, and it is the student's responsibility to check with the receiving institution before deciding to pursue PLA credit.
8. PLA credit through portfolio, military transcripts, non-regionally accredited college or university and licensure/certification will not be awarded for core curriculum courses except for KINE 1111. Core credit may be earned through challenge examinations and articulated continuing education courses for only the core courses specified in the LSCS catalog or on the website.
9. Six hours of non-developmental LSCS course credit must be completed prior to receiving PLA credit. Exception: The six hour rule will be waived for veteran or active duty military students who are applying for KINE 1111 credit only, but the student must be currently enrolled or registered for courses at LSC. For credit by non-regionally accredited college or university, the student must complete 6 credits of non-developmental coursework at LSCS within one year of PLA application date.
10. PLA credit may not be used if the course has previously been taken or if the course has

been attempted. Student drops after official day result in a “W” posted on the transcript, making the course ineligible for PLA credit. Students dropping courses prior to official day may seek PLA credit.

11. If the student is a veteran applying for or receiving benefits, the student must comply with VA rules and regulations. To avoid overpayment, all transcripts must be evaluated and credit applied to the approved program prior to certification of courses for benefits. However, it is to the student's advantage to have his or her transcript evaluated prior to enrolling in classes.
12. Students must submit any required transcripts (i.e. high school or military) or other documentation as required.
13. Internal (departmental) challenge exams can only be attempted once. If the student attempts an exam, the information should be recorded in iStar so that other advisors can determine if the student is eligible. Each college will identify a PLA liaison who will confirm that the scores are being entered.
14. Forms are submitted for appropriate signatures as outlined in the following section.  
\*\*In exceptional circumstances, the Vice President of Instruction may choose to approve a PLA application that does not meet all eligibility requirements when he/she has been presented sufficient documentation showing that a student's prior learning matches the LSCS course's outcomes. The VPI will sign the PLA form and note the justification for the exception on that form to indicate approval in these rare occasions.
15. The PLA liaison at each college is responsible for copying and forwarding PLA forms to the system student information services office and for confirming that test scores associate with PLA credit are posted in iStar. PLA liaisons should also place a service indicator (SI) in iStar stating that the PLA form has been sent to SIS for processing. The SI code is S21 – PLA Tracking
16. The system student information services office will automatically inform students that PLA credit has been granted on the transcript by sending them an email notification.
17. Once credit is awarded, the credit cannot be removed from the student's record or transcript. The “CR” will not be included in the calculation of GPA.

## **Where PLA Forms Should Be Submitted**

1. **Advanced standing** approvals are referred to the instructional dean or department chair. No paperwork by the advisor is required.

2. Credit by **internal (departmental) challenge exam** forms are forwarded by the advisor to the instructional dean who signs the form and forwards to the LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript if the student passes the exam. Each college will identify a PLA liaison who will confirm that the scores are being entered.
3. Credit by **external exam forms** (i.e. CLEP, AP exams) are forwarded by the advisor to LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript. The exception to this is CLEP credit for PSYC 2317 and PSYC 2301 and AP credit for ARTS 1311 and ARTS 1316. Credit for these courses requires additional review by faculty. See the current catalog (Academic Policies, Procedures and Services Section: Credit by External Examination) for further information about additional faculty review. PLA forms for students requesting credit for the specific courses listed above are forwarded by the advisor to the instructional dean who signs the form and forwards to the LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript.
4. Credit for **high school articulation** forms are forwarded by the advisor to LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript.
5. Credit for **continuing education articulation** forms are forwarded by the advisor to the LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript.
6. Completed forms for **portfolio assessment** are reviewed by the advisor for basic eligibility. Student meets with a content expert in the academic division who will determine if the student qualifies to pursue portfolio credit. If portfolio review is approved for credit, the form is forwarded to instructional dean who forwards to the vice president of instruction who forwards to the LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript.
7. Completed forms for **licensure or professional certification** are forwarded by the advisor to the LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript.
8. PLA forms for credit for **military experience or course work** are forwarded to the instructional dean who signs the form after faculty review/approval and forwards to the vice president of instruction who forwards to the LSCS student information services office for posting of "CR" to the student's transcript.
  - Requests for KINE 1111 credit with a **DD214 form** showing at least six weeks of service (regardless of discharge status) can be sent directly to student information services at the system office without administrators' signatures.
  - Requests for transfer of credit from the **Community College of the Air Force**

follow the process for transfer of university credit. The transcript should be sent to the transcript evaluator at the respective LSC campus. When there is a question about awarding credit, requests to meet degree requirements are reviewed by discipline faculty and are documented by the transcript evaluators. If specific courses are identified to be equivalent to LSCS courses, this information should also be forwarded to Jennifer Cornavaca in student information services at the system office. The courses will be equated in iStar and automatically accepted in the future.

9. PLA forms for articulated credit from a non-regionally accredited college or university should be sent by the advisor to Jennifer Cornavaca in the student information services office.

## V. FEES

Advanced Standing	No fee
Internal challenge exam	\$25 each
External challenge exam (CLEP, AP, etc.)	No fee for processing but there is a \$25 administrative fee if assessment or additional review is needed (i.e. credit for studio art). This administrative fee also applies to the CAPE exams and the Spanish Heritage Learn exam. The fee is charged per assessment and not per course.
Portfolio credit	\$60 per assessment
Military transcript evaluation	No fee
High school articulated credit	No fee
Continuing education articulation	No fee
Articulated credit from a non-regionally accredited college or university	\$25 per college transcript

Note: Fees are non-refundable and must be paid prior to taking exam, submitting portfolio, or submitting a transcript for evaluation of credit.

## VI. PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) OPTIONS

### A. ADVANCED STANDING

Advanced standing permits the student to move to more advanced work upon review of test results, previous grades and/or interviews by the appropriate department. Advanced standing is not placed on the student's official transcript. No credit is awarded. There is no fee for this evaluation. Contact the dean of the specific subject area for more information.

### B. CHALLENGE EXAMINATIONS

#### External Challenge Examinations

LSCS has established equivalent course credit for minimum passing scores for several external challenge examination programs, including the ACT, CLEP, CAPE, AP, and IB. A listing of the external challenge examination and the corresponding course for which the student may earn college credit can be found in the LSCS catalog in the Policies and Procedures section and at <http://www.lonestar.edu/exam-credit.htm>

Students should make arrangements with testing sites to sit for the exams and should have their scores forwarded to one of the LSCS college advising offices prior to enrollment.

1. Achievement Test (ACT), <http://www.act.org/>
  2. College Level Examination Program (CLEP), examinations may be taken at Lone Star College-Tomball, Lone Star College-North Harris or at area universities. Both Lone Star College testing centers charge a \$15 administration fee, in addition to the CLEP exam fee charged by the College Board. Please contact the Lone Star College-Tomball testing center at 832-559-4245 or the Lone Star College-North Harris testing center at 281-618-5744 for more information. Scores earned on the CLEP should be submitted to the advising office four weeks prior to enrollment. Advising or admissions staff should enter the CLEP test score in iStar for all students who apply for PLA credit, regardless of whether or not the student has the minimum passing score. Go to <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/about.html> for more information about the CLEP exams.
- LSC no longer requires an interview or essay for foreign language credit based on CLEP. Foreign language credit will be awarded based on CLEP score alone.
  - Eight hours of credit will be awarded for 1411 & 1412 for a CLEP score of 50. No credit will be awarded through CLEP for 2311, 2312, & 2306.

- Retakes – Students may resubmit new CLEP foreign language scores for PLA every 6 months.
- Tracking – Any CLEP score submitted for PLA should be noted in iStar with the date taken.

### 3. Foreign language credit, CAPE assessment and course completion; Spanish Heritage Learner Exam and course completion

- CAPE assessment no longer requires interview or essay. Students will be placed in the appropriate course based on the CAPE score. If a “C” or higher is earned in the course, the student may apply for PLA credit for the lower level courses. See <http://www.lonestar.edu/pla-exam-foreign-language.htm> for more information on lower level courses. See [http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/curriculuminstruction/ForeignLangPLAGuide-Final\\_\(2\).xlsx](http://www.lonestar.edu/departments/curriculuminstruction/ForeignLangPLAGuide-Final_(2).xlsx) for additional information on foreign language credit options.
- Fee clarification – Students will pay \$25 for the CAPE exam and not for the PLA credit determination. The test fee of \$25 will be collected regardless of the number of courses credited through PLA later. The test fee will be waived for dual credit students for the initial assessment. Students will be charged \$25 for each subsequent test.
- Retakes – Students may take the CAPE exam one time per semester. If a student is currently enrolled in the course, he/she cannot take the exam after official day.
- Tracking – Any CAPE or Heritage Learner score should be noted in iStar with the date taken. PLA liaisons are responsible for confirming this is being done.
- A heritage learner of Spanish is a native speaker of Spanish or someone competent through some other life experience. The purpose of the Spanish Heritage Learner Exam is to place these students in the appropriate course.
- The Spanish Heritage Learner Exam is a written exam. The test fee is \$25 and is payable prior to testing and regardless of whether PLA credit is granted later.
- Students will be placed in the appropriate course based on the Heritage Learner exam score. If a “C” or higher is earned in the course, the student may apply for PLA credit for certain lower level courses. See <http://www.lonestar.edu/pla-exam-foreign-language.htm> for more information on lower level courses.

### 4. Advanced Placement (AP) by the College Board, Advanced Placement exams are offered at area high schools. For specific information on high schools offering this exam, call 888-225-5427 or 609-771-7300, or send an email to apexams@info.collegeboard.org . For more information go to <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>

### 5. International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma exams are given at specific high schools. For more information on IB Diplomas go to <http://www.ibo.org/>

For a list of courses that can be awarded by IB credit go to

<http://www.lonestar.edu/exam-credit.htm>

The policy for ordering IB transcripts in North America is available at

<http://www.ibo.org/graduates/transcripts/index.cfm>

### **Internal (Departmental) Challenge Examinations**

LSCS internal departmental challenge exams are developed and approved by LSCS curriculum teams and administered by the colleges' assessment centers or by the department. The same challenge exam is used at all LSCS colleges and assessment centers. The curriculum team determines which courses can be challenged, the minimum passing score, and the exit competencies based on the learning outcomes for the course.

Students should consult with a faculty advisor to discuss course content and outcomes and to determine the feasibility of taking a course challenge exam. A faculty advisor or counselor can identify if the course complements the student's degree plan. The website at <http://www.lonestar.edu/challenge-courses.htm> includes an updated list of internal departmental challenge exams that are available.

After completing the form with an advisor and paying the challenge exam fee in the business office, the student takes the PLA by Examination form and paid receipt to the division office or assessment center to make an appointment to take the exam. A challenge exam may not be taken more than one time.

After the student completes the exam, the academic department forwards the signed PLA form with the student's score noted on the application to student information services. All internal exam scores (passing and failing) should be entered in iStar.

## **C. PROCEDURES FOR CREDIT BY HIGH SCHOOL ARTICULATION**

To assess a student's eligibility for credit through high school articulation, the advisor will work with the student to complete the PLA by High School Articulation form. To do so, the advisor needs the following resources:

- The application form at <http://www.lonestar.edu/hsa>, with the top portion (above the box) completed by the student;
- An *official copy* of the student's high school transcript;
- LSCS Local and Statewide Course Articulations by ISD accessed through the aforementioned website

Note – Letters from the school district and certificates of achievement do not prove eligibility for high school articulated credit. LSCS no longer provides certificates.

Advisors will check the student’s transcript for the following indicators of articulated courses and verify eligibility for credit:

### 1. High School Transcript Coding

The student’s high school transcript is critical to the credit awarding process. This is the official document college personnel review to determine student eligibility for credit.

Texas Education Agency and Advanced Technical Credit (statewide articulation) require independent school districts to include the course type code “A” to indicate the student completed an articulated course. We cannot award credit without the “A”.

### 2. Course Eligibility Requirements

- There are several requirements the student must meet to be eligible for high school articulated credit.
- The student must graduate high school, enroll in Lone Star College, and apply for credit within 15 months of their graduation date. (36 months for nursing students)
- The student must have completed the course or sequence of high school courses with a grade of 80 or above.
- The student must have completed the course or sequence of courses in their Junior or Senior year in high school. Credit may be awarded for Freshman and Sophomore level CTE courses as long as the student is eligible for and requests articulated credit for a Junior or Senior level course.
- The course(s) sought must be a part of or related to the student’s declared major or degree plan, including electives on a degree plan.

Note: Credit will be granted in the form of CR on the student’s transcript after completing 6 semester credit hours (sch) of regular, non-developmental course work at LSCS. They have one year from the date of their application to complete the 6 sch, (10 sch for nursing students).

The student’s eligibility is signified by checking the criteria boxes on the application form.

In addition to signing and dating the form, advisors need to print their name and add their telephone extension so that they can be contacted if questions arise.

Forward the application with the attached transcript to student information services at the LSC-System Office (Priscilla Strawbridge).

Students will receive email notification of the CR being entered on their LSCS transcripts.

Suggested guidance for students seeking articulated credit:

- Articulated credit is awarded for technical (WECM) courses only. For example, the high school course Accounting I articulates to ACNT 1303, not ACCT 2401.
- If a student intends to transfer to a 4 year institution, it is his/her responsibility to check with that institution on its policies for acceptance of articulated technical credits.
- University articulation agreements exist for several AAS degrees that include articulated classes. For a list of these opportunities beyond the AAS, go to <http://www.lonestar.edu/6179>
- PLA credits do not count toward the 30 hour limit above a bachelor's degree.

## D. ARTICULATED CREDIT FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) COURSES

Students have the opportunity to earn college semester-hour credits for certain courses in Continuing Education (CE) once the student meets all admissions requirements for credit enrollment. Students must have completed 6 college level credit hours in order to be eligible to apply for articulated credit through CE.

Students completing CE articulated courses are held to the same standards on course prerequisites, projects, class activities, exams, and all other aspects of learning as credit students (see note below for exceptions). If a CE to Credit articulation agreement is in effect for the semester in which the student is enrolled in the CE course to be articulated, students who have earned CEU's with a grade of "S" may apply for articulated credit. To assess a student's eligibility for CE to credit articulation, an advisor will:

- Verify that the student passed the CE course satisfactorily
- Verify that the student met all credit course prerequisites at the time he/she took the CE course (including developmental prerequisites)
- Identify the year in which the CE course was taken:
  - ✓ If prior to 2005- use the CE to credit crosswalk at <http://www.lonestar.edu/5116.htm> to determine CE course the student took was articulated and eligible for CE to Credit PLA
  - ✓ If 2005 – summer, 2010 - Courses must have been linked. This information for courses taken during this time frame was not loaded in iStar during the conversion. Contact [Priscilla Strawbridge](#) to determine if courses were linked.
  - ✓ If fall 2010 to current – Use iStar to verify that the CE course was linked when the student took it. Directions are in section VII of this manual and PLA liaisons should have access. Contact [Priscilla Strawbridge](#) or [Marie Thibodeaux](#) for assistance.
- If the course was articulated prior to 2005 or linked from 2005 to present, continue. If not, the student is not eligible for articulated credit.
- Complete the check boxes on the CE to credit application at

<http://www.lonestar.edu/pla-forms.htm>

- Forward the application to student information services

Note: In most cases, CE students who register for articulated courses will be required to meet the same prerequisites as credit students (this includes reading, writing, and math prerequisites). Articulated courses that are the exception can be found at <http://www.lonestar.edu/5125.htm>

Students must meet the prerequisites to be eligible for CE to Credit Articulation. If a student decides to apply for CE to Credit Articulation for an exception course, prerequisites must be met by the time the student submits the PLA application.

Articulated ESOL courses: Students who successfully complete articulated CE ESOL courses do not have to apply for PLA credit before moving on to college level courses. State law and LSCS Student Success Initiative (SSI) require that all students be assessed in reading, writing, and math before enrolling in credit courses. Advisors should determine if the ESOL student has completed the appropriate testing before registering for college level courses.

## **E. WORKPLACE EDUCATION OR TRAINING BY PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT**

An advisor's role in this type of PLA is to refer students to the appropriate program contact, usually a department chair or the dean. The PLA application by portfolio is completed by the department contact if it is determined that the student is eligible to apply for PLA by Portfolio.

The awarding of credit for non-collegiate learning experiences via a portfolio is restricted to verifiable learning. LSCS will award credit only for what a person can demonstrate as a result of experiences. For example, an individual may have six years of experience working in a particular field. LSCS will not award credit simply on the basis of the six years of experience. The student must document and/or demonstrate the skills and knowledge gained from this work experience to confirm achievement of the learning outcomes for the course credit being requested. The student may be interviewed by faculty as part of the portfolio process. A resume and a reflection piece that describes student learning may also be required along with any other evidence or documentation required by the faculty or department chair. PLA credit is generally awarded only for introductory level courses.

### **Additional Procedures for Applying for Portfolio Credit**

The student reviews courses available through portfolio on the LSCS PLA website at <http://www.lonestar.edu/pla-portfolio.htm> and discusses other course options with the faculty, department chair, or dean.

- The student should apply for portfolio credit for courses in the degree or certificate program that he/she is enrolled.
- The student should review the LSCS catalog for credit course offerings that correspond to the degree plan and the knowledge and skills that he/she possesses.
- The student should review the learning outcomes for the requested courses. The outcomes are identified by the curriculum teams for each program/discipline area and are available on the LSCS course listings website at <http://research.lonestar.edu/cat/catsrch.asp>
- Once the faculty, department chair or dean is satisfied that the student can document achievement for the learning outcomes for the course, the student develops a portfolio including documents and evidence as specified by the department representative.
- A non-refundable fee of \$60 is payable prior to the faculty review of the portfolio.

## **F. CREDIT FOR LICENSURE OR PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION**

Professional certification or state licensure may be equated to college credit based upon competencies demonstrated by successfully completing the professional certification or licensure examination. In order to be eligible for this type of credit, the license or certification must be official and current. Only licensure and certification that has been approved through the curriculum process by the curriculum team will be articulated to credit. These can be found on the LSCS website at <http://lonestar.edu/course-licensure.htm> The student must provide evidence of successfully passing the professional certification exam and proof of **current or active licensure**.

## **G. COLLEGE CREDIT FOR CORPORATE TRAINING THROUGH ACE**

The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates educational and training programs offered at the workplace and makes recommendations for college credit awards. The use of ACE recommendations and acceptance of credit is the prerogative of the college. LSCS may accept, deny or modify ACE recommendations in accordance with current institutional policies and procedures.

If a student has completed ACE reviewed corporate training with an organization that is a participant in the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service, he/she will be advised by ACE to join the Registry of Credit Recommendations for a one-time fee of \$40.00. The student can then

request that a transcript be sent to the college Admissions Office (\$15.00 per transcript). For transcripts, the student must contact the ACE College Credit Recommendation Service Office at (202) 939-9434 or at [credit@ace.nche.edu](mailto:credit@ace.nche.edu).

For more information, see ACE's website at

<http://www.acenet.edu//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home> The PLA application and ACE transcript will be reviewed by a faculty expert to determine if credit is applicable.

## H. COLLEGE CREDIT FOR MILITARY TRAINING THROUGH ACE

### PLA by American Council on Education (ACE)

Lone Star College System is one of 1,800 members of the [American Council on Education \(ACE\)](#). ACE's expert evaluators review workplace training, specialized military training programs and national exams and make recommendations for college credit. The recommendations are used by colleges to help compare the applicability of previous learning to specific educational programs. The use of ACE recommendations and acceptance of credit is the prerogative of the college. LSCS may accept, deny or modify ACE recommendations in accordance with current institutional policies and procedures. For example, LSCS does not award PLA by ACE for core courses with the exception of credit for KINE 1111-Fitness for Life. DANTES exams are not currently accepted for credit.

### ACE Resources

[The ACE Military Guide Online](#) includes recommendations made by ACE's evaluators for formal service-school courses and military occupations.

The [Transfer Guide: Understanding your Military Transcript and ACE Credit Recommendations](#) provides basic information about transferring to an academic institution.

### Applying for PLA by ACE based on Military Experience

Students must complete the [PLA by ACE](#) form and submit it to the advising office along with the following official documentation.

- DD214 if applying for only KINE 1111 (Basic Training credit) **OR**
- [Army American Council on Education Registry Transcript System \(AARTS\) transcript](#) (training experiences in the Army, Army National Guard or Army Reserves) **OR**
- [Sailor/Marine American Council On Education Registry Transcript \(SMART\)](#)(training experiences in the Navy, Naval Reserves, Marines or USMC Reserves)

- [Official CLEP score report](#) (CLEP scores on military transcripts are not sufficient by themselves. See [Credit by Exam: External Challenge Examinations](#) for CLEP exams minimum passing scores accepted by LSCS.)

Students seeking credit for Air Force training must contact the Community College of the Air Force to request an official transcript. No PLA by ACE form is needed. The transcript will be evaluated as outlined in the "Transfer of Credit from Other Institutions" section in the Records, Policies, and Procedures chapter of the [catalog](#).

- A DD214 may be accepted instead of a military transcript for KINE 1111 credit only.

**To assess a student's eligibility for college credit by military ACE, an advisor will:**

1. For KINE 1111 credit only:
  - a. Verify that the student's DD214 indicates a length of service of at least 6 weeks.
  - b. Veteran students applying for KINE 1111 only do not have to complete 6 college level credits at LSC before applying but must be currently enrolled at LSC.
  - c. Complete the PLA by ACE application with the student and forward it and a copy of the DD214 to student information services for processing.
  
2. For courses other than KINE 1111:
  - a. Using the ACE reviewed transcripts, the student and advisor should look for LSCS courses that match both the credits and content of the recommendations made by ACE. No core courses can be awarded. If ACE recommends fewer credits than the relevant LSCS course, credit may be granted based on faculty review of additional ACE course information at <http://militaryguides.acenet.edu/> Multiple military courses may also be combined to earn credit for a single LSCS course. Students may be referred to the appropriate academic division to discuss their military training in more detail and to get guidance about possible credit.
  - b. Complete the PLA by ACE application with the student and forward to the relevant instructional dean(s) for signature(s). The dean will forward to the vice president of instruction for signature.
  - c. The application should be sent to student information services for processing.

## **I. ARTICULATED CREDIT FROM A NON-REGIONALLY ACCREDITED TEXAS COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY**

**STEP 1:** The student services staff member working with the student should verify that the student's application and transcript qualifies for every roman numeral section below.

**I. The accreditation of the source institution - do any of the following apply?**

A. The source institution is authorized by the THECB to offer an AAS. Verify this by checking [http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AAR/PrivateInstitutions/career\\_schools.cfm](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/AAR/PrivateInstitutions/career_schools.cfm)

B. The source institution is from outside Texas but is approved to operate in Texas.

Verify this by checking <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=64BDCE51-D636-526E-DA30D84E3D623495>

C. The source institution is outside Texas but is nationally accredited by one of the agencies that the THECB recognizes. These are listed below and need to be verified at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx> or by checking the Higher Education Directory.

- Association of Theological Schools
- Association of Biblical Higher Education
- Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools
- Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology
- Accrediting Council of Independent Colleges and Schools
- Council on Occupational Education
- Distance Education and Training Council
- American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE)
- National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST)

D. The source institution is a bible college, seminary, or other special purpose institution offering degrees with majors in religion or theology authorized to operate in Texas. Verify this by checking the website below, which lists the special purpose schools legally offering degrees with majors in religion or theology in Texas. Most are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, one of the other regional accreditors, the Association of Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), or the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Many are accredited by both the Southern Association and either AABC or ATS. <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=64D3DAF8-0718-ACC5-398BF5031FDD83A>

[398BF5031FDD83A](http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=64D3DAF8-0718-ACC5-398BF5031FDD83A)

If any of the above applies, proceed to the next section. If none of the options in this section applies, then the student is not eligible for this type of PLA.

**II. The degree – Students must have been pursuing an AAS or AAA award at the source institution. Using the official transcript (do not accept any unofficial transcripts), does one of the following apply?**

A. For those authorized in IA above, the degree noted on the official transcript is listed on the website given in IA.

B. For those authorized in IB above, the degree noted on the official transcript is listed

on the website given in IB.

- C. For those authorized in IC or ID above, the degree is noted on the student's transcript.

If any of the above applies, proceed to the next section. If the student's degree is not noted on the official transcript, he/she must get a letter from the unaccredited college or university stating this information. Students who were certificate majors do not qualify to apply for this credit. If none of the options in this section applies, then the student is not eligible for this PLA.

### **III. Student eligibility**

- A. Student has completed 6 credits or will complete 6 credits of non-developmental coursework within the Lone Star College System within one year of PLA application date.
- B. The student must complete the new PLA form for Articulated Credit from a Non-Regionally Accredited Texas college or university. A copy of the transcript and a course syllabus must be attached to the PLA form. An official copy of the transcript should be on file at the college the student is attending within the Lone Star College system.
- C. The student must pay a \$25 fee for each transcript submitted for evaluation of this PLA option.

Note: If a student is not eligible due to any of the reasons listed in I through III, then the student should not be asked to pay for the eligibility assessment.

**STEP 2:** Once the above have been verified by the student services staff member working with the student, PLA application with transcript, course syllabus/syllabi, and business office receipt should be submitted to the System Transcript Evaluation Office (Jennifer Cornavaca until office is in place).

**STEP 3:** The System Transcript Evaluation Office will review the transcript and course syllabus/syllabi for course equivalency and rigor. In addition to course equivalency and rigor, general guidelines on course acceptance are:

- Courses in the core curriculum will not be accepted in transfer for credit.
- Student earned a grade of C or above.
- Student meets SSI requirements for the articulated course(s) and all admissions requirements.
- The articulating college course is part of the student's degree plan (may be an elective).
- All prerequisites for college course(s) have been met.
- Quarter hour courses will be converted to semester hour credit and if the course is equivalent it will not be denied if the credit hours are close. The student will still be expected to meet the total required credit hours for graduation.

### Quarter Conversion Chart

Quarter Hours    Credit Hours

1	0.67
2	1.34
3	2.01
4	2.68
5	3.35
6	4.02
7	4.69
8	5.36

**STEP 4:** Decisions will be entered into iStar and added to articulated course list.

## VII. SAMPLE iSTAR SCREEN SHOTS FOR ARTICULATED CE COURSES

If you know the subject, course number and section, pull up the course in the schedule of classes (CE or CR) by navigating to: Curriculum Management > Schedule of Classes > Schedule Class Meetings

- Add the information for LSC01, Term, Subject, Course Number, Section (or Campus if you want to search for more than one)
- When you pull up the class, you will see if there is a link (like the one below) that says, “Combined Section”.

The screenshot displays the iSTAR interface for course management. The breadcrumb trail at the top reads: Favorites > Main Menu > Curriculum Management > Schedule of Classes > Schedule Class Meetings. The course details are as follows:

- Course ID: 018594
- Academic Institution: Lone Star College System
- Term: 2011 Spring
- Subject Area: COSC
- Catalog Nbr: 1401
- Course Offering Nbr: 9
- CR: Computer Info Technology
- Intro to Computers

The 'Class Sections' section shows:

- Session: 1
- Class Section: 4007
- Component: Lecture
- Class Nbr: 15443
- Event ID: 000027926

The 'Meeting Pattern' section shows:

- Facility ID: MC-F F316
- Capacity: 24
- Pat: MW
- Mtg Start: 2:30PM
- Mtg End: 4:50PM
- \*Start/End Date: 01/18/2011 to 05/15/2011
- MC-F F316
- Topic ID: [empty]
- Free Format: [empty]
- Topic: [empty]
- Print Topic On Transcript: [checkbox]
- Contact Hours: [empty]
- Combined Section: [link]

The 'Instructors For Meeting Pattern' section shows:

ID	Name	Instructor Role	Print	Access	Contact	Empl Rcd#	Job Code
0127582	Fernandez,Teresa S	Prim In:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Approv		0	

## VIII. DEFINITION OF TERMS

### ***ADVANCED STANDING***

Permits the student to move to more advanced work by the equating of test results, previous grades or interviews by the appropriate department. No credit is awarded and it is not reflected on the student's transcript.

### ***AA***

Associate of Arts Degree

### ***AS***

Associate of Science Degree

### ***AAS DEGREE PROGRAM***

Associate of Applied Science Degree

### ***AAT DEGREE PROGRAM***

Associate of Arts in Teaching Degree

### ***ACE (American Council on Education)***

ACE provides many services including opportunity for earning academic credit through military service, workplace training, and other education acquired outside the formal classroom.

### ***ADVANCED TECHNICAL CREDIT (ATC, formerly Statewide Articulation)***

A state-level process that identifies commonly articulated secondary career and technical courses, requires enhancement of curriculum to align with postsecondary courses, and sets common standards for the award of college credit for these courses statewide. State-approved professional development provides training to teachers on articulated course methodology and expectations of college Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) courses. The statewide articulation process allows students who successfully complete these career and technical courses, graduate from any secondary school in the state, and meet the requirements outlined for ATC, to receive articulated credit from any participating public postsecondary two-year degree granting institution in the state that offers the corresponding college course(s).

### ***ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATE***

A program in which individuals who hold a baccalaureate degree can obtain teacher certification.

### ***ARTICULATION***

Term for the process of linking educational institutions' experiences, skills or prior knowledge to assist students in making a smooth transition from one level of education to another without

experiencing delays or duplication in learning.

### ***CE ARTICULATION***

Articulation of a continuing education course into a credit certificate or associates degree. The course must be pre-approved for articulation prior to student participation and must meet all credit course competencies and evaluative measures.

### ***CERTIFICATE***

A formal award associated with the completion of a program of study of less than two years, indicating mastery of a prescribed series of academic and technical competencies with defined employment outcomes. This award is approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, appears on the Technical Program Clearinghouse Inventory, and is subject to the Coordinating Board program evaluation process.

### ***COMMUNITY COLLEGE***

Postsecondary institutions, which offer academic and workforce programs of study leading to awards at the associate's degree or certificate level.

### ***CONCURRENT CREDIT***

See Dual Credit.

### ***CREDIT BY EXAM***

A method to provide college credit for work experience, prior knowledge, skills, training or educational work without transcript credit. This allows a student to complete undergraduate requirements in less time (through advanced placement) and at lower cost and to enrich educational experience by taking courses other than those that merely repeat previously learned material. Examples include Achievement Test (ACT), College Level Examination Program (CLEP) in specific subject areas only, Lone Star College Departmental Examinations, Advanced Placement Program by the College Board, and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program. Contact the Counseling or Advising Office for more information.

### ***DUAL CREDIT***

Simultaneously completing a high school and college course for credit at both levels. The courses can be taught at the high school or the post-secondary location. Students receive both high school and post-secondary credit upon satisfactory completion of a dual credit course.

### ***INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) DIPLOMA PROGRAMME***

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a challenging two-year high school program for students aged 16 to 19. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world's leading universities and colleges. Student may elect to take the whole Diploma (all six component areas) or may choose to aim for a certificate of Merit in a particular subject area.

### ***LOCAL COURSE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT***

The official document prepared by Lone Star College System and the participating independent school district (ISD) that specifies the competencies of courses to be articulated so that students can earn appropriate college credit.

**LSCS**

Lone Star College System that includes the following colleges: Cy-Fair, Kingwood, Montgomery, Harris, and Tomball.

***TECH PREP***

Tech Prep is an education initiative that links high school career and technical courses to college workforce courses on a 2-year associate of applied science degree (AAS) through course articulation. Collaboration between secondary, post-secondary, and business/industry result in a 6-year plan consisting of four years of high school plus two years of college preparation for the workforce.

***TECH PREP ARTICULATION***

Competency-based course articulation included in Tech Prep educational plans.

***TRANSFER***

A student who subsequently enrolls in a different postsecondary institution, usually a university or four-year college.

***UIL***

University Interscholastic League