PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RESOURCE MANUAL

Academic and Student Success

Effective September 2020
Contents

Introduction .............................................................................................................................................. 3

Important Facts to Know About PLA .................................................................................................... 4

Prior Learning Experiences (Pathways) Eligible for PLA Credit .......................................................... 5

Student Eligibility for Application ........................................................................................................ 6

Guidelines
   Application ............................................................................................................................................ 6
   Course Credit ....................................................................................................................................... 7
   Fees ..................................................................................................................................................... 7

Requirements by PLA Pathway
   Military and Corporate Training through ACE .................................................................................. 8
   Licensure and Professional Certification .............................................................................................. 8
   Testing/Examinations ............................................................................................................................ 9
   Workplace Experience and Education .................................................................................................. 11
   Continuing Education (CE) Articulation .............................................................................................. 12
   High School Articulation ..................................................................................................................... 13
   Non-Regionally Accredited College or University .............................................................................. 13

How to Apply .......................................................................................................................................... 15

Resources and Contacts ......................................................................................................................... 16

APPENDIX A – Process Guides (step-by-step for students, advisors, and faculty) .............................. 17

APPENDIX B – New PLA Option Approval Process ............................................................................. 28

APPENDIX C – LSC Board Policy for Prior Learning Assessment ...................................................... 29
Introduction

Lone Star College (LSC) recognizes the vast knowledge and skills of its diverse student population through prior learning assessment. The Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program gives students an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and mastery of skills through various methods. This manual provides an overview of the processes and the responsibilities of all parties in awarding academic course credit through Prior Learning Assessment.

Prior Learning Assessment is the avenue to assess learning gained outside traditional academic means. Learning may be acquired through employment or military, volunteer or corporate training, independent study, non-credit courses or other relevant experiences. PLA is the process of evaluating what the student has learned at college-level to be awarded college credit. Students benefit from PLA through reduced costs and reduced time to degree completion.

The PLA process is a collaborative effort of the Academic Affairs and Student Success divisions of Lone Star College. The program maintains its integrity by using LSC faculty to determine the award of credit. Each LSC academic program and discipline has a Curriculum Team comprised of faculty designated to develop and enhance curriculum as well as prior learning assessment options. LSC has established a detailed and specific process for the review and approval of prior learning experiences for LSC course credit (Process Guides, See Appendix A). Additionally, participating faculty conduct individual credit evaluations on a case-by-case basis. New and revised assessment options proposed by Curriculum Teams are approved by the Vice Presidents of Instruction through the LSC curriculum development process. The Lone Star College PLA website (LoneStar.edu/learning-assessment.htm) provides a comprehensive list of available course credit by assessment.

This resource manual contains PLA program policies, procedures and pathway requirements for earning credit. Students, staff and faculty that utilize this document will be able to:

- Determine Student Eligibility
- Understand PLA Credit Evaluation
- Identify Assessment Pathways and Options

As changes occur, revisions to this manual will be made available at LoneStar.edu/pla.
Important Facts to Know About PLA

1. Students must complete the LSC admissions process and all required testing prior to applying for PLA.

2. Students must have an active program status on their student account to be eligible for PLA.

3. College-level learning must be demonstrated by the prior learning experience. LSC utilizes various methods to determine the level of learning as outlined for each PLA pathway.

4. PLA credit is recorded on an unofficial transcript as credit only and does not receive a course grade or impact a student’s GPA.

5. Credit awarded through PLA by LSC will count towards LSC graduation.

6. Students may earn up to 75% of required program/certificate credits through PLA. The remaining 25% must be earned by completing coursework at LSC.

7. Prior learning credit cannot duplicate courses that have been completed or attempted.

8. PLA credit is not considered coursework and will not satisfy requirements for financial aid.

9. Each educational institution establishes their own requirements for PLA credit and therefore may not accept PLA credit awarded by LSC as transfer credit. Additionally, credit awarded by other institutions may not be eligible for PLA credit at LSC. Students should review PLA requirements at each institution when considering transfer.

10. Some PLA options require a fee for assessment.

11. PLA applications that require individual assessment or evaluation by faculty may take several weeks to complete. Students should plan accordingly when considering registration, graduation and other deadlines.

12. LSC academic advisors are available to assist students with PLA applications. Students are required to work with an advisor to apply for PLA.

13. Each LSC campus has a PLA Liaison as a resource for students and advisors that need assistance with the PLA process (see Resources – Campus Contacts, page 16).
Prior Learning Experiences (Pathways) Eligible for PLA Credit

1. **Military or Corporate Training through ACE (American Council on Education)**
   Lone Star College transfers military experience and corporate training into college credit when that experience aligns with a Lone Star College course offering. The American Council on Education (ACE) evaluates all military experience and training, and many corporate training programs, and makes recommendations for college credit. Recommendations from ACE does not guarantee credit. Many military ACE recommended experiences have been approved and are listed on the Military Crosswalk of Courses. For more information see PLA Eligibility and Requirements: Military and Corporate Training, page 8.

2. **Industry Licensure or Professional Certification**
   Many professionals hold a license or certificate in their profession. Credit may be awarded through PLA for licensures/certifications that meet the competencies of a LSC course. Many licensures/certifications have been pre-approved and only require a completed application. For more information see PLA Eligibility and Requirements: Licensure or Professional Certifications, page 8.

3. **Testing/Examination**
   Lone Star College accepts many nationally standardized tests such as CLEP, Advanced Placement, SAT, ACT, DANTES, and International Baccalaureate. Additionally, LSC faculty have developed challenge exams for many LSC courses. A student that successfully completes a challenge exam will receive credit for the course. For more information see PLA Eligibility and Requirements: Challenge Exams, page 9.

4. **Work Education and Experience**
   Many professionals have gained extensive experience and knowledge in careers related to LSC programs of study. In many cases, this experience and training is college-level course work, especially for introductory courses and areas of specialization. Students may apply for college credit through a PLA Portfolio, documenting the student’s experience and knowledge. For more information see PLA Eligibility and Requirements: Portfolio, page 27.

5. **Colleges and Universities - Non-Regionally Accredited**
   Courses completed at institutions that are NOT regionally accredited may be considered for PLA credit. The university must be recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board or listed as an accredited institution with the U.S. Department of Education. For more information see PLA Eligibility and Requirements: Non-Regionally Accredited Colleges Universities, page 13.

6. **High School and Continuing Education Articulation**
   Lone Star College partners with Independent School Districts to connect high school career and technical education (CTE) courses with college credit courses. Texas high school graduates may receive college credit for courses designated as Advanced Technical Credit (ATC). ATC courses will be offered at select Texas high schools through the 2020-2021 academic year.

   Non-credit courses completed as Continuing Education (CE) at Lone Star College may also be awarded college credit through an articulation process if an articulation agreement was in place at the time the course was completed. For more information see PLA Eligibility and Requirements: High School and Continuing Education page 12.
Student Eligibility for Application

Students must have an Active Program Status on their student account, meet all admission requirements at Lone Star College, provide all official documentation such as transcripts, licensure/certifications, and syllabi, and meet all eligibility requirements for each specific PLA Pathway (see page 5). Prior to credit being awarded, the student must meet all placement testing requirements and all prerequisites of the course being awarded.

Students that do not meet an eligibility requirement specific to a PLA Pathway may request an exception. In these instances, the campus Vice President of Instruction (VPI) reviews all documentation to determine credit eligibility.

Guidelines

Application

1. Students cannot request prior learning assessment for courses attempted or previously taken.
   a. Attempted – Course appears on LSC or transferring institution transcript as withdrawn (W) or incomplete (I).
   b. Previously Taken – Course appears on LSC or transferring institution transcript with a grade.

2. Acceptance of PLA credit toward the Honors College degree is at the discretion of the campus Honors College director.

3. Other academic institutions are not obligated to accept credit earned through Lone Star College PLA. Each institution establishes their own standards for PLA credit. It is the student’s responsibility to check with the transfer institution regarding requirements for PLA credits.

4. Students receiving benefits from Veterans Affairs (VA) must comply with VA rules and regulations. To avoid overpayment, all transcripts must be evaluated, and credit(s) applied prior to certification of courses for benefits. Students are highly encouraged to have their military transcript evaluated prior to registering for classes.

5. Students that do not meet an eligibility requirement specific to a PLA option may request an exception. In these instances, the campus Vice President of Instruction (VPI) reviews all documentation to determine credit eligibility.

6. PLA by Exam requires a PLA application for credit to be awarded.
**Course Credit**

1. Course credit is awarded only when faculty determine the prior learning experience to be comparable to a Lone Star College academic course.

2. PLA credit may not exceed 75% of a student’s certificate or associate degree coursework.

3. Credit awarded for challenge exams is not transferable and will not appear on an official transcript. Test credit is visible on the unofficial transcript and Academic Advisement Report (AAR) in a student’s account. **Exception:** Course credit for foreign language placement exams (AVANT) is transferable and appears on the official transcript.

4. PLA challenge exam credit is awarded as “TCR”, all other PLA credit is awarded as “CR”. All PLA credit contributes to fulfillment of LSC graduation requirements.

5. Letter grades cannot be given for course credit earned through PLA and therefore, does not impact a student’s GPA.

6. Credit earned through PLA cannot be removed from a student’s record or transcript once it has been awarded.

**Fees**

Fees are non-refundable and must be paid to the campus business office prior to submitting an application for evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Option</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Council on Education (ACE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Training</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge Exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>$25 per faculty assessment*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>$25 per exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Education Articulation</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Articulation</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Regionally Accredited College or University</td>
<td>$25 per college transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>$60 per portfolio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only for exam scores requiring additional faculty assessment. Visit [LoneStar.edu/pla](http://LoneStar.edu/pla) to identify exams with this requirement.
Requirements by PLA Pathway

Military and Corporate Training through ACE

The American Council on Education (ACE) uses content matter experts to evaluate military and corporate training for potential college credit matches. The organization produces a transcript with credit recommendations for employers and post-secondary institutions to review. Joint Service Transcripts must be assessed by a LSC Veterans Advisor. ACE recommended training is evaluated by LSC faculty to determine the award of credit.

Recommendations from ACE do not guarantee credit. It is the prerogative of an institution to accept ACE recommendations for course credit. LSC may accept, deny or modify ACE recommendations in accordance with academic curriculum and LSC institutional policies. Students may review a list of military experiences and training that have been approved at LoneStar.edu/military-experience. (page under construction). LSC will review additional experiences, at the request of the student, with the submission of a transcript.

Students receiving education benefits as active duty or prior military are required by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs to have their military transcript assessed for credit. This process must be initiated by a LSC veteran affairs advisor. Community College of the Air Force is a regionally accredited, post-secondary institution; therefore, transcripts from the institution undergo traditional evaluation processes and not PLA.

LSC Veteran advisors specialize in assisting veterans with the assessment process by:

a. Assessing military transcripts.

b. Verifying requested PLA course credit does not duplicate credit previously earned, including course credit earned at other institutions.

c. Assist with completion and processing of the PLA application.

Required Documentation: Official Joint Service Transcript or ACE Transcript

For step-by-step instructions see Appendix A page 18.

Licensure and Professional Certification

Lone Star College faculty has determined equivalent course credit for many professional certifications and state licensures. Course credit is based on competencies demonstrated to obtain the certification or state license. Some license/certificates may require additional testing or other requirements. The certification or state license must be current and verifiable. If the students name differs from the name on the LSC student account, the student may need to provide documentation to verify the name change. For a list of licensures/certifications approved for PLA course credit, visit LoneStar.edu/pla-licensure.

Required Documentation: Copy of Current Texas License or Professional Certification
(Exception: The TCOLE Peace Officer License is not required to be active/current.)

For step-by-step instructions see Appendix A page 24.
Testing/Examinations

Lone Star College provides two options to earn credit through examination. Students may complete external challenge exams, such as the SAT, ACT or AP, that are standardized across the nation and widely recognized by educational institutions. LSC also provides internal challenge exams developed by faculty to assess the knowledge and skills previously learned by the student.

External Challenge Exams

Lone Star College has established equivalent course credit for minimum passing scores on nationally-recognized, college entrance and subject exams. Students are responsible for test arrangements and making sure official score reports are sent to Lone Star College. Tests may be completed at any testing location including the LSC Testing Centers.

Credit is awarded for exams meeting the minimum required score established by LSC faculty. Some exams may require additional faculty assessment. All examination scores must be recorded in the student’s account regardless of whether or not the student earned the minimum required score. Except AVANT Placement exams, credits awarded through challenge exams apply to LSC graduation requirements only and do not transfer from one institution to another. However, many institutions will accept the score directly from the testing organization. Students should inquire about credit by examination requirements at the intended institution of transfer. Courses approved by Lone Star College for PLA by external challenge exam is located at LoneStar.edu/exam-credit.

Required Documentation: Official Score Report or IB transcript/diploma received by LSC directly from the issuing organization

For step-by-step instructions see Appendix A page 21

Testing Organizations:

Advanced Placement (AP)

Rigorously developed by committees of college and AP high school faculty, the AP Exams test students' ability to perform at a college level.

- 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 https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/about-ap-exams

American College Testing (ACT)

The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in English, mathematics, reading and science. Visit www.act.org for information on testing opportunities.
**AVANT Placement**

Avant Placement is a measurement of real-world language ability in reading, writing and speaking. This exam is suitable for students that have studied a language or had exposure to a language. Students may take the placement exam for any language for which the student has not previously attempted and/or completed coursework. The AVANT exam will place the student in the appropriate level course as determined by the exam score. After successfully completing the placement course with a grade of “C” or better, the student will be awarded PLA credit for the prerequisite language courses. Example: Students that place into SPAN 2311 and completes the course with a “C”, will be awarded credit for SPAN 1411 and 1412 through PLA.

Specific Eligibility Requirements:

- AVANT scores must be in iStar **BEFORE** the student enrolls in the placement course to receive credit.
- Complete placement course with a “C” or better

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP)**

Developed by College Board, the College Level Examination Program® (CLEP) is the most widely accepted credit-by-examination program. CLEP exams may be taken at select LSC testing centers or area universities. Lone Star College testing centers charge a $15 administration fee in addition to the CLEP exam fee charged by College Board.

Visit [http://clep.collegeboard.org/exam](http://clep.collegeboard.org/exam) for more information about the CLEP exams. Students may resubmit new CLEP scores for PLA every 6 months.

**DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)**

Developed by the Department of Defense, the DSST program helps students receive college credits by examination. Visit [www.getcollegecredit.com](http://www.getcollegecredit.com) for information on available subject exams and test administration. Active duty military, veterans and their spouses may receive funding to cover examination fees. For more details, review the DSST Funding Guide at [www.getcollegecredit.com/test_takers](http://www.getcollegecredit.com/test_takers).

**International Baccalaureate (IB)**

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program is a rigorous two-year high school program. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world’s leading universities and colleges.

Students completing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma may receive up to 24 hours of college credit for the exams completed to obtain the diploma. A score of 3, 4, or 5 is accepted, dependent upon specific IB exam.

- Diploma exams are given at specific high schools. For more information on IB Diplomas go to [http://www.ibo.org/](http://www.ibo.org/)

Internal Challenge Exams

Internal challenge exams are developed by LSC curriculum teams (faculty) and administered through campus testing centers or within the academic departments. Curriculum teams determine which courses can be challenged by an exam, the minimum passing score, and the required competencies based on learning outcomes of a course. Students cannot pursue a challenge exam for previously taken or attempted courses.

Students are highly encouraged to consult with faculty in the department to discuss the assessment before taking the exam. The same challenge exams are used at all LSC campuses and may only be taken once. Advisors must ensure scores are in iStar regardless of whether or not the student earned the minimum passing score. Credits awarded through challenge exams apply to LSC graduation requirements only and will not transfer. Courses approved by Lone Star College for PLA by internal challenge exam are located at LoneStar.edu/challenge-exams

For step-by-step instructions on how to apply see Appendix A page 23

Workplace Experience and Education

Students that have completed workplace education/training and professional examinations evaluated by ACE must pursue prior learning assessment to request credit. ACE evaluated training is verifiable through the National Guide to College Credit for Workforce Training.

PLA by portfolio allows students to request course credit for knowledge and skills acquired through employment, workplace education and professional development. Experiences must be verifiable and demonstrate mastery of LSC course content. Credit is awarded when a learning experience clearly captures practical application of theory taught in a LSC course. PLA credit through portfolio is generally awarded only for introductory level courses. A Portfolio Development Guide with sample documents is provided at Lonestar.edu/pla-portfolio.htm

Students must interact closely with a program contact (department chair or dean) to determine whether portfolio assessment is suitable for demonstrating content mastery in a specific course. The program contact will also work closely with the student to provide direction for the development of the portfolio. In addition to documentation, students may be asked to perform a task relative to the course and/or complete an interview to assess content knowledge. Portfolios are evaluated for credit by the LSC curriculum team for the discipline or program. Fees for portfolio evaluation may be waived for military veterans by approval of the campus Vice President of Instruction.

Required Documentation: To Be Determined by Program Contact

Resumes may not act as documentation; however, they can contribute to a collection of documented evidence.

For step-by-step instructions on how to apply see Appendix A page 27
Continuing Education (CE) Articulation

Lone Star College continuing education (CE) students have an opportunity to earn college credit for completing certain non-credit courses. Students completing eligible CE courses are held to the same standards on course prerequisites, projects, class activities, exams, and all other aspects of learning as credit students. If a CE to Credit articulation agreement exists during the semester the CE course is taken, students who have earned continuing education units (CEU) with a grade of "S" may apply for articulated credit.

In most cases, CE students who register for articulated courses are 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 LoneStar.edu/ce-articulation. If a student decides to apply for CE to Credit Articulation for an exception course, prerequisite courses must be met by the time the student submits the PLA application.

**CE to Credit Articulation Agreement Types:**

**Linked CE Courses**

Linked Continuing Education courses have learning experiences identical to credit courses. Since 2005, linked courses have been identified as "combined" sections in the class search (see image below).

![Combined Section Image]

**Non-Linked Courses**

Non-linked continuing education courses have learning experiences comparable to a credit course. In addition to completing the CE course(s), students may be required to demonstrate technical skills and/or provide industry certification. Visit LoneStar.edu/ce-articulation for a complete list of agreements that permit articulation of Continuing Education Units (CEU) to semester credit hours.
Specific Eligibility Criteria
✓ CE course is linked or part of an articulation agreement at the time the student completed the course.
✓ Student passed the CE course satisfactorily.
✓ Student met all credit course prerequisites at the time he/she took the CE course.

Required Documentation: Copy of CE course history

For step-by-step instructions on how to apply see Appendix A page 15

High School Articulation

High School Articulation is an agreement between Lone Star College and an Independent School District (ISD) to award college credit for rigorous secondary coursework. Articulated credit is awarded for credit workforce (WECM) courses only. Students who intend to transfer to a 4-year institution are responsible for verifying acceptance of articulated course credits with the transferring institution. Visit LoneStar.edu/hsa for course articulation crosswalks by ISD.

Required Documentation: Official high school transcript

Specific Eligibility Criteria
✓ Student graduated from an ISD that has a high school articulation agreement with Lone Star College or an ISD that participates in the Advanced Technical Credit (ATC) program.

✓ Advisors must locate the following items on the high school transcript
  • “A” in course type column. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) and Advanced Technical Credit (ATC) require independent school districts to include the course type code “A” beside courses eligible for articulated credit. Course credit cannot be awarded without the “A”.
  • Date of graduation. Students must submit their application within 15 months of high school graduation.
  • Grade average of 80 or above. Students must demonstrate successful completion of the articulating high school course.
  • Completed an articulating course junior or senior year of high school. Credit may be awarded for freshman and sophomore level articulating courses as long as the student requests articulated credit for a Junior or Senior level course.

Non-Regionally Accredited Colleges or University

Students who transfer from an institution not accredited by one of the seven (7) regional accreditors must pursue PLA for transcript evaluation. Students must meet eligibility criteria specific to this assessment to have their transcript evaluated.

Required Documentation: Official Transcript from Non-Regionally Accredited College or University
Official syllabi for courses completed at Non-Regionally Accredited College or University

Specific Eligibility Criteria

✓ Accreditation of the Source Institution - One of the following must apply:
  a. The source institution is identified as a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) recognized accreditor. Verify at https://www.highered.texas.gov/institutional-resources-programs/private-postsecondary-institutions/ recognition-of-accrediting-agencies/
  b. The source institution is outside Texas but is nationally accredited by one of the agencies that the THECB recognizes
     i. The THECB List of Recognized Accreditors https://www.highered.texas.gov/institutional-resources-programs/private-postsecondary-institutions/ recognition-of-accrediting-agencies/
     ii. Database of Accredited U.S. Colleges and Universities https://ope.ed.gov/accreditation

✓ Degree Program - Students must have been pursuing an associate or bachelor degree program at the source institution. The degree must be noted on the official transcript and listed on one of the following inventories:
  a. The THECB Degree Program Search http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/programinventory/ProgSearch.cfm
  b. The Database of Accredited U.S. Colleges and Universities https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home

Once eligibility is determined, students may move forward with the assessment process. There is a $25 faculty assessment fee for each transcript submitted for evaluation. LSC course credit is awarded when faculty evaluators identify the following:
  • Student earned a grade of C or above in the course.
  • Course is equivalent to a LSC course.
  • All prerequisites for the LSC course equivalent are met.
  • Quarter hour conversions must be close to semester credit hours for the equivalent LSC course.

See the Quarter Hour Conversion Chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter Hours</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Apply

1. Determine the PLA Path that applies to your experience.

2. Review the general student eligibility and the specific requirements for your PLA Path.

3. Contact an LSC academic advisor to discuss your eligibility and complete a PLA Application. A PLA application may be accessed at on the PLA website. Students should provide all required documentation to the advisor. (NOTE: all veterans must contact an LSC Veterans Advisor (LoneStar.edu/veterans.htm).

4. The LSC Advisor will provide instructions to complete any remaining steps to the application process. Upon completion, the LSC advisor will approve and submit the application to the LSC registrar’s office for a final review and the awarding of credit. The awarding of credit will be posted to the student’s account within 10 business days of submission.

_A step-by-step Student’s Guide to PLA may be accessed at_
www.lonestar.edu/departments/academicaffairsstusuccess/Student%20Guide%20to%20PLA.pdf
Resources

Campus Contacts

Prior Learning Assessment liaisons are content matter experts that are available at each campus to assist students, advisors, and faculty. Contact your campus PLA liaison to address application and business process questions.

LSC-CyFair          Latina King
LSC-Houston North   Sheremetria Davis
LSC-Kingwood        Sagan McClure
LSC-Montgomery      Cheri-Tee Ben
LSC-North Harris    Gina Espitia
LSC-Tomball         Natalie Starks
LSC-University Park  Nathan Lynn

Email Addresses

Faculty Evaluation                           LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu
Applications requiring faculty review must be sent by an academic advisor. If the student documentation cannot be sent electronically, please contact the Manager of PLA to coordinate the evaluation.

LSC-Registrar       Registrar@LoneStar.edu
The LSC Registrar’s Office maintains completed applications and posts credits to student transcripts. Applications are processed in the order in which they are received. For status updates, please contact the registrar’s office.

Manager for Articulation and PLA            Karen.K.Vance@LoneStar.edu
PLA business processes and evaluative practices are coordinated by the Manager of Prior Learning Assessment. Please contact the manager for assistance with policies, procedures, training sessions, website updates and expansion of assessment options.

Websites

Lone Star College Prior Learning Assessment          www.LoneStar.edu/pla
LSC Academic Advising                              www.lonestar.edu/advising.htm
LSC Academic Calendar                              www.lonestar.edu/academic-calendar.htm
LSC Catalog                                       www.lonestar.edu/lscs-catalog.htm
ACE National Guide to College Credit for           www2.acenet.edu/credit/?fuseaction=browse.main
        Workforce Training
APPENDIX A – Process Guides

Process guides are provided for each PLA Pathway and may be used by students, staff and faculty. Each process guide provides step-by-step instructions to properly complete the PLA application process, ensuring eligibility is confirmed, and all requirements are met for each pathway. Each step within each pathway must be completed and/or confirmed prior to submission.

Advisors should confirm that all general eligibility and pathway requirements are met prior to submitting the PLA application. By submitting the application, an advisor is confirming that the eligibility of the student to receive the award of credit has been verified.

Process guides may also be accessed by LSC staff and faculty at (https://intranet.lonestar.edu/academicandstudent/ci/pla/default.aspx)

**PLA Pathway Process Guides:**

ACE (American Council on Education) – Military..................page 18
ACE (American Council on Education) – Non-Military..........page 19
Continuing Education to Credit.............................................page 20
External Exams........................................................................page 21
High School Articulation ......................................................page 22
Internal Exams .......................................................................page 23
Licensure/Certifications .........................................................page 24
Non-Regionally Accredited College or University..............page 25
Portfolio ....................................................................................page 27
## Prior Learning Assessment by American Council on Education (ACE): Military Experience

### Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Student submits <strong>official</strong> Joint Services Transcript to VA advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>VA Advisor</td>
<td>Conduct a review of the <strong>official</strong> transcript utilizing the Course Crosswalk for Military Training (<a href="#">page under construction</a>).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|       |                     | **For courses approved for PLA Credit:**  
|       |                     | 1. Document course matches on PLA application.  
|       |                     | 2. Review course matches and the student’s course history to ensure PLA credit will not duplicate previously completed coursework.  
|       |                     | 3. Forward all documentation to registrar@LoneStar.edu for processing and place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the form has been sent for processing.  
|       |                     | **For courses not included on LSC Course Crosswalk:**  
|       |                     | 1. Forward completed PLA application and transcript to LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu for faculty evaluation.  
|       |                     | 2. Place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the form has been sent for processing. |
| 3     | Curriculum Team     | Review the ACE course by following the PLA Faculty Review Guide for military experience. Upon completion of review and documentation, return the Faculty Evaluation form to LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu. |
| 4     | VA Advisor          | 1. Advisor will receive notice of the curriculum team decision.  
|       |                     | 2. If award was approved, documentation will be provided to the advisor for **final signature from the campus VPI.**  
|       |                     | 3. Forward all documentation to registrar@lonestar.edu. |
**Prior Learning Assessment by American Council on Education (ACE): Non-Military Experience**

**Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Student             | Verify that the American Council on Education (ACE) has recommended credit for the exam or workplace training you received.  
   - **If Yes**, request an official ACE transcript.  
   - **If No**, you are not eligible for credit through this prior learning assessment option. |
| 2     | Advisor             | 1. Verify student eligibility and sign application.  
   2. Forward PLA application and official ACE transcript to LSC-PLA@Lonestar.edu  
   3. Place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the assessment process has been initiated. |
| 3     | Curriculum Team     | 1. Determine if the completed ACE course is comparable to the requested LSC course. The course comparison must include an assessment of all learning outcomes.  
   2. Complete the Faculty Evaluation form to document the review of outcomes and the decision of the award of credit. Forward all documentation to LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu. Please copy the dean facilitator on the email. |
| 4     | Advisor             | 4. Advisor will receive notice of the curriculum team decision.  
   5. If award was approved, documentation will be provided to the advisor for final signature from the campus VPI. Following signature, forward all documentation to registrar@lonestar.edu. |
Prior Learning Assessment by Continuing Education to Credit Articulation

Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Complete a PLA application <a href="http://LoneStar.edu/pla">LoneStar.edu/pla</a> and submit to an advisor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2     | Advisor             | 1. Verify student eligibility. Student must have “active program status.”  
2. Determine whether the CE course was either in a linked or non-linked articulation agreement. Contact the campus PLA liaison if assistance is needed [LoneStar.edu/pla](http://LoneStar.edu/pla).  
Linked agreement:  
- Review the student’s course history in iStar.  
- Click on the CE course to read the course description.  
- The course description should state if the course is linked and the equivalent credit course.  
- You may also verify by conducting a class search in iStar to see if the course was a “combined” section.  
Non-linked agreement:  
- Visit the PLA website and review the CE Articulation page [LoneStar.edu/ce-articulation](http://LoneStar.edu/ce-articulation)  
- Determine if other requirements such as a demonstration of skill or industry certification is required.  
3. Confirm that the CE course was part of an articulation agreement at the time the student completed the course.  
4. Verify prerequisites have been met and the student completed the CE course satisfactorily. |
| 3     | Advisor/PLA Liaison | 1. Forward application and print out of student course history to registrar@Lonestar.edu for processing.  
2. Place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the form has been sent for processing. |
Prior Learning Assessment by External Exam

Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

Credit awarded for exam scores is generally automated. Equivalent course credit should automatically populate once a score is entered into iStar. Excluded from the automated process are (1) students enrolled in Lone Star College prior to Summer 2015; (2) exams requiring additional faculty review. In these instances, please utilize the process below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Complete a PLA application <a href="https://LoneStar.edu/pla">LoneStar.edu/pla</a> and submit to a campus advisor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2     | Advisor             | 1. Verify PLA eligibility and minimum passing score.  
|       |                     | 2. Review official score report. Enter test scores in student’s iStar record or forward to campus Student Records to enter scores.  
|       |                     | 3. Attach copy of official score report to application.  
|       |                     | *If student is applying for PSYC 2301 via CLEP exam, an additional essay is required. Student should meet with the department chair to make appropriate arrangements.* |
| 3     | If applicable, Faculty Evaluator | Provide all documents and final grade directly to advisor. Documents and grade will not be accepted by the advisor from the student. |
| 4     | Advisor/PLA Liaison | Forward application and documentation to registrar@lonestar.edu. Place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the form has been sent for processing. |

Note – The AVANT exam is a placement exam only. The student will be eligible to enroll in the appropriate course based on the exam score. Upon successful completion, with a grade of “C” or better, the student will be awarded credit for the completed course and all other lower level courses within that foreign language. This is an automated process by student records and does not require additional action by the advisor. Credit will be awarded within 3 days of posted grades. Please do not request student records to post the grade prior to the 3 day period.
# Prior Learning Assessment by High School Articulation

## Process for Students and Advisors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Provide advisor with an official high school transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>Verify eligibility and identify articulated courses at LoneStar.edu/course-articulation-by-school-district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>Forward application and documentation to <a href="mailto:registrar@lonestar.edu">registrar@lonestar.edu</a>. Place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the form has been sent for processing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The ATC Texas Program began sunsetting on August 31, 2018. The final school year to complete an ATC high school course will be the 2020-2021 academic year. The final high school students eligible for ATC credit will graduate in May 2024 and must apply for ATC credit within 15 months of graduation.
Prior Learning Assessment by
Internal Challenge Exam

Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Advisor             | 1. Verify eligibility and discuss internal challenge exam options with student, [Lonestar.edu/challenge-courses](http://Lonestar.edu/challenge-courses).  
2. Complete the PLA application. Provide department chair contact information if test is completed within the academic department.  
3. Send student, with their application, to pay the $25 testing fee at campus business office. Student should obtain a receipt from the business office. |
| 2     | Student             | 1. Contact a [LSC testing center](http://LSCtestingcenter) or the department chair (as instructed by advisor) to schedule testing.  
2. Pay $25 assessment fee to business office prior to taking exam.  
3. Complete the PLA application, attach receipt of payment, and turn in to the testing center/faculty when you arrive to complete the exam. |
| 3     | If applicable, Academic Department | 1. Grade exam and return the score report and PLA application to [registrar@lonestar.edu](mailto:registrar@lonestar.edu) or the campus advisor. Documentation must be delivered by faculty/staff. Score reports will not be accepted from the student. |
| 4     | Testing Center      | Keep form as documentation or route to Student Records department, as needed, for score entry. |
| 5     | Advisor, PLA Liaison or Campus Student Records | 1. Enter score for exams completed within a department – all internal exam scores (pass and fail) should be entered. |
### Prior Learning Assessment by Licensure/Certifications

#### Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Complete the top portion of the appropriate application and submit to an advisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>1. Verify license or certification student approved for credit <a href="https://www.lonestar.edu/pla-licensure">Lonestar.edu/pla-licensure</a>.&lt;br&gt;2. License or certification must be current and not expired <strong>Exception</strong>: TCOLE Peace Officer License.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advisor / PLA Liaison</td>
<td>Forward application and supporting documents to System Office – Student Records. Place a service indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the form has been sent for processing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Prior Learning Assessment by Non-Regionally Accredited College or University

#### Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Advisor</td>
<td>Verify student’s application and transcript meet the following qualifications:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Accreditation of the Source Institution</strong> – At least one of these must apply before going on to Step 1.2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A. The source institution is authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to offer an associate/bachelor’s degree program. Verify this by checking: <a href="http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/programinventory/ProgSearch.cfm">http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/programinventory/ProgSearch.cfm</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B. The source institution is from outside Texas but is approved to operate in Texas. Verify this by checking: <a href="http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/programinventory/InvSearch.cfm">http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/programinventory/InvSearch.cfm</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C. The source institution is outside Texas but is nationally accredited by one of the agencies that the THECB/Dept. of Education recognizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If none of the options in this section apply, then the student is not eligible for this type of PLA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 2</td>
<td>Advisor – (refer to A-C in section 1.1 to address 1.2)</td>
<td><strong>The Degree</strong> - Students must have been pursuing a degree program at the source institution. Using the official transcript (do not accept unofficial transcripts), is associate or bachelor degree program noted on the transcript? If not, student must get a letter from the source institution stating this information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> <em>Students pursuing a certificate program at the source institution do not qualify to apply for this credit through this PLA option.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>If no evidence is presented to confirm the student was seeking a degree program, then the student is not eligible for this PLA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.3 | Advisor | 1. **Not Eligible** - enter the reason for the denied PLA under iStar Service Indicator 21 so that future college staff will know the history of this student’s PLA inquiry.

2. **Eligible** – student must provide a course syllabus for each course considered for PLA credit. *The syllabus must contain the specific learning outcomes for the course.* Courses cannot be evaluated based on a catalog course description only.

|  | Student | 1. If eligibility is found, provide a course syllabus to the advisor for each course considered for PLA. It may be necessary to contact the institution and request the syllabus applicable to the course at the time the course was completed.

2. After all syllabi are accepted by the advisor, take the PLA application to the campus business office to pay a $25 assessment fee. Return the application and receipt for payment to the advisor. *Do not pay the $25 non-refundable fee until all syllabi have been accepted by the advisor.*

|  | Advisor | Send application with receipt, transcript and course syllabus/syllabi to [LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu](mailto:LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu) and place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining that the form has been sent for processing.

| 3 | Curriculum Team Faculty | 1. Conduct a course evaluation documented on a faculty evaluation form. (new form name?) Provide a final determination as to whether the completed course is comparable to the LSC requested course.

2. Forward evaluation results, all documentation reviewed and any additional notations to [LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu](mailto:LSC-PLA@LoneStar.edu). Please copy instructional dean on the email.
## Prior Learning Assessment by Experience: Portfolio

### Process for Students, Advisors and Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.1   | Student             | 1. Review credit course offerings in the catalog ([Lonestar.edu/Lscs-catalog](Lonestar.edu/Lscs-catalog)) to identify course(s) that potentially align with previous experience. If assistance is needed, request guidance during a meeting with a program contact.  
   2. Complete the PLA application and submit to advisor to verify general eligibility for PLA, obtain program contact (faculty, department chair or dean) information, and obtain the Guide to Portfolio Development.  
   3. Visit with a program contact (faculty, department chair or dean) from the respective academic area to determine the:  
      • Feasibility of portfolio.  
      • Acceptable documentation to demonstrate content mastery (student learning outcomes and learning objectives) for the desired LSCS course(s) utilizing the Guide for Portfolio Development. |
| 1.2   | Student             | 1. Upon completion of the portfolio, pay a non-refundable $60 portfolio review fee to campus business office. Attach receipt to the application.  
   2. Submit application, receipt and portfolio to advisor/campus PLA Liaison. |
| 2     | Advisor             | 1. Verify that the student met with a program contact (faculty, department chair or dean) to review expectations.  
   2. Complete the PLA application and verify signatures, receipt for assessment fee and PLA eligibility.  
   3. Forward all documents with portfolio to [LSC-PLA@Lonestar.edu](mailto:LSC-PLA@Lonestar.edu).  
   4. Place a Service Indicator (S21) in iStar explaining the portfolio assessment process has been initiated. Faculty review may take several weeks. |
EXHIBIT B

New PLA Option Proposal
Approval Process for Faculty and Staff

**INITIATE**
An inquiry to develop a new PLA course option may be received from internal or external stakeholders. The inquiry should be directed to one of the following primary contacts:

- **Workforce** – Director of Workforce Development
- **Military** – Exec. Director of Veterans Services
- **All others** - Manager of PLA

1. The primary contact will gather information for the proposed PLA and provide the documentation to the curriculum team chair.

2. Curriculum team chair will coordinate with the primary contact and the curriculum team members for a complete assessment of the proposed PLA option.

**DOCUMENT**

1. The primary contact and/or curriculum team chair will gather any remaining information needed for a complete assessment (must include learning outcomes, exam content, license requirements, etc.).

2. The curriculum team will complete a full assessment including the learning outcomes crosswalk and coversheet. A crosswalk template is available on the LSC Intranet PLA webpage or from the PLA Manager at LSC-PLA@Lonestar.edu.

3. Following assessment, the curriculum team will determine if the proposed PLA option is comparable to the LSC course(s). Approval is at the sole discretion of the curriculum team faculty members.

4. The curriculum team chair will send the completed Learning Outcomes Crosswalk and Coversheet to the primary contact.

**APPROVE**

1. If the proposed PLA option is approved to move forward by the curriculum team, the primary contact will send the proposal (completed crosswalk with coversheet) to the PLA Department for compliance review.

2. The Manager of PLA will review to ensure all outcomes are documented and the crosswalk and coversheet are completed properly. Following review, the Manager of PLA submits all documentation to Curriculum Management.

3. Curriculum Management will upload all documents into the curriculum management system, Kuali, to begin the final approval process. Approval, through Kuali, is required by all curriculum team members, the LSC Educational Program Council and the Vice Presidents of Instruction.

1. Upon completion of the Kuali process, the Manager of PLA will (as required):
   - Notify primary contact and/or curriculum team.
   - Ensure all PLA websites are updated
   - Notify all campus PLA Liaisons. *Campus liaisons will disseminate information to their campus as appropriate.*
Appendix D – LSC Policy

LONE STAR COLLEGE SYSTEM BOARD POLICY MANUAL
Fifth Edition

Section V. Instruction
Part C. Academic Achievement
Sub-Chapter 2. Prior Learning Assessment

V.C.2. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Credit Students may obtain Prior Learning Assessment credit. Approved methods include receiving recognized scores on the ACT, SAT, College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations, International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program examinations, Advanced Placement (AP) Program examinations, Avant language proficiency assessments, and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests. Students may also receive PLA credit under American Council on Education equivalency guides including for military transcripts, high school articulation agreements, the College’s challenge examinations, portfolio reviews, skill performance examinations, industry certification or licensure, or by successfully completing one or more dual credit courses.

Depending on the subject and course level, to receive PLA credit a student must score between 46 and 55 or higher on a CLEP examination, at least 3 on an AP examination, or at least 3, 4, or 5 on an IB examination.

The College grants up to 24 semester credit hours for the completion of an IB Diploma program with a minimum score of 4 on all exams. The College also grants from 1 to 5 semester credit hours (dependent upon the related course hours) for successfully completing a dual credit course or for receiving a required score on an IB examination, CLEP examination, or AP examination. PLA credit may not exceed 75% of a student’s overall certificate or associate degree coursework.

Except for courses that are part of an approved early college education program established under the Texas Education Code or any other early college program that assists a student in earning a certificate or an associate degree while in high school, the College grants course credit for a dual credit course only if the course is (1) in the core curriculum of the institution of higher education that offered it; (2) a career and technical education course; or (3) a foreign language course.

LSCS Policy Manual Section adopted by the Board of Trustees on November 1, 2018