

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

Taken at Webster University



What is PLA?

Many adult students have gained the equivalent of college-level learning through work experiences, training on the job, military service, volunteer activities, civic involvement, travel, or in other nonacademic settings.

At Webster University, undergraduate students can have their learning evaluated for credit as part of their college degree program through prior learning assessment (PLA).

What are the benefits of PLA?

Save Time and Money

Applying PLA credit to your degree plan can significantly shorten your degree-completion process. Fees for exams or portfolio completion are considerably less than the cost of tuition.

Gain Understanding

The PLA process can help you discover and better understand the many ways you learn and the ways you can apply learning throughout your life, in your jobs, your community involvement, or other activities outside the classroom.

Develop Your Resume

You can demonstrate to employers how your prior learning adds value to your skill set.

What experience qualifies as prior learning?

Prior learning assessment documents learning, not experience. You must be able to show how your nonacademic experiences demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes for a specific course. This is done through the completion of a portfolio for that course, which is then reviewed by a faculty member to verify that the outcomes have been achieved.

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of documents that show you have mastered the outcomes of a specific course. Learn how to create your first portfolio in our course, **EDUC 1000 Educational Program Analysis**. Webster faculty will then assess the portfolio for potential college credit. After that, you may create other portfolios for additional credit.

What is the fee to submit a portfolio?

The fee for your first portfolio is covered through the completion of EDUC 1000, which is a 3-credit-hour course at our regular undergraduate rate. After that, a fee is assessed for each new portfolio that you create on your own, with the advice of your academic advisor. Please check with your advisor for the current fee rate.

Can I get credit for corporate training?

Yes, if that training shows mastery of a specific course. This can be done through the completion of a formal portfolio.

Can I get credit for military service?

Webster has transfer credit and cooperative agreements with all major armed services organizations. The Office of Military Affairs website (webster.edu/military) has an extensive list of transfer courses, as well as other information to help veterans and active duty service members apply their military experience to Webster courses.

What degree programs can I pursue at Webster using PLA credit?

All undergraduate degree programs are available when utilizing prior learning assessment. Once you are admitted, you can work with an academic advisor to determine which program is the best fit and of interest to you.

Webster has recently added a new Bachelor of Arts (BA) in General Studies, which is designed for students who need an efficient, flexible and custom-made pathway to an undergraduate degree. It is ideal for those who are interested in exploring multiple fields of study while maximizing prior learning and already-earned credits. Classes are available in a convenient, fully online format. Or blend your program by taking classes online and at one of our worldwide campuses. For more information on this degree option, visit webster.edu/generalstudies.

Is there a list of approved courses that can be applied to PLA?

Potentially, any undergraduate course can qualify for PLA if you can show mastery of the specific learning outcomes of that course.

Can PLA count toward the residency at Webster?

Yes. Courses assessed and given PLA endorsement will be placed on the student transcript as a Webster course. This would count toward residency.

Is there a limit to the number of credits I can earn through PLA?

Yes. Students may only submit nine additional portfolios for potential credit.

Can I pursue PLA if I transferred my maximum number of hours?

Yes, but seek advice from your academic advisor. It may be more beneficial to take the courses due to time constraints and your expectation toward the completion of your degree.

If awarded credit, how will it appear on my transcript?

Students given a positive approval on their portfolio will see their work placed on the transcript as a Webster course. The course will be a pass/fail and will not count in the overall GPA.

If I get credit for a required course versus an elective, how will it appear on my degree audit?

PLA courses will appear as Webster courses on the transcript whether they are a required or elective course.

If I am at an extended campus, can I participate in this program?

Yes, the EDUC 1000 Education Program Analysis courses is offered online.

Can PLA credit be transferred to another institution?

Yes, as they will be on the transcript as a Webster course. However, students should check transfer policies of the other institution for eligibility.

What if the PLA course has a pre-requisite?

Talk with your academic advisor to determine whether PLA is the right path in this case.

Is Webster University the only institution that can assess my prior learning?

No. Webster University has partnered with LearningCounts.org to provide outside assessment of prior learning. Fee structures will vary, and any credit awarded will be transferred to the university under our current transfer of credit guidelines.

Speak with your advisor to determine if this option would be beneficial to you.