Common Portfolio Assessment Policy Statements

Portfolio Assessment is a *Direct Assessment Program* according to ACCJC (2016).

* ACCJC: *A direct assessment program is an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, utilizes direct assessment of student learning or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others…Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.* (Policy on Institutional Degrees and Credits, June 2014)
* ACCJC: *Institutional policies and procedures must outline the process and standards by which direct assessment of learning is conducted and credits, certificates, and degrees are awarded* (Policy on Direct Assessment of Learning, January 2014)

Student Eligibility for Credit by Portfolio Assessment

* The student must be currently registered at the college (West Hills AP4235)
* Minimum 2.4 GPA (Fresno Pacific)
* The learner is eligible to submit a portfolio upon meeting the four criteria below: 1. Admission to Upper Iowa University as a degree-seeking student according to the procedures outlined in the Upper Iowa University Catalog. 2. Completion of a review by advisor of all previous college credit, credit by exam, and training with American Council on Education (ACE) credit recommendations. 3. Registration for at least one course, after which portfolios may be submitted at any time during your enrollment at Upper Iowa University. 4. Completion of the Request for Experiential Learning Credit Form (Exhibit 1) including advisor’s approval.

Completion of Basic Composition and English Composition II, or their equivalents, is strongly recommended prior to submitting a portfolio. (Upper Iowa University)

* Credit may be granted only to a student who is registered at the college and in good standing (Title 5 Credit by Exam language)

Maximum Units through Credit by Portfolio Assessment

* A maximum of 30 units may be awarded for Advanced Placement exams, College Level Examination Program, International Baccalaureate exams, Military or ACE credit and Prior Learning Assessment combined (Fresno Pacific)
* “Except for International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement Tests, no more than 30 semester (45 quarter) total units of credit shall be applied to the calculation of admission eligibility nor to the baccalaureate degree on the basis of passing externally developed tests” (CSU EO 1036)
* “7.0 Credit by External Exams: There is no limit on the number of external exams that can be applied to IGETC. External exams may be used regardless of when the exam was taken” (IGETC Standards)
* Associate degree candidates can earn no more than 15 credits by portfolio assessment (Penn State);
* Students can earn up to 45 undergraduate credits towards a bachelor's degree through submission of a Portfolio (Maryhurst University)
* Students may earn as many as 31 of the required 125 semester credits through the portfolio process (Linfield College)
* Students must complete 25% of the coursework at the college to confer a degree (Community Colleges of Vermont)
* “The maximum number of credits possible for the total of all portfolios submitted to Upper Iowa University is thirty (30) semester credits” (Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa)
* There is no limit to the amount of credit you can earn through prior learning assessment (Thomas Edison State University, New Jersey)
* UAF’s regional accreditation association limits CPL credit to 25% or less of the student’s total degree program. For example, if a student is enrolled in a 120-credit baccalaureate program, no more than 30 credits may be used for CPL (University of Alaska)
* Consider allowing up to residency requirement (CACCROA)
* “Most districts…restrict the number of credits students can earn…Since California Ed Cod does not articulate such limitations, colleges and districts need to lift these restrictions” (RP Group, 2016)

Fees for Credit by Portfolio Assessment

* The cost of the assessment ranged between $20 and $600 with a median of $175 (CAEL, 2015)
  + some institutions charged by the credit ($75-$150 per credit) or charged a flat rate, often with a credit limit (e.g., $648 for up to 45 credits, $363 for the first 12 credits, or $1850 with no credit limit)
* Students pay $100.00 per course for the assessment process and there are no additional fees if credit is awarded and transcribed (University of Toledo)
* Through CAEL’s LearningCounts portfolio assessment process, the fee for submitting a portfolio is $254 and $125 for each additional portfolio submitted.
* At Mary Baldwin University (Staunton, Virginia) portfolio assessment is equal to the per unit fee of enrollment.
* Amberton University (Garland, Texas) charges a $50 application fee and $200 per portfolio submitted for assessment.
* Pennsylvania State charges $390 for the assessment of each portfolio.
* At the University of Toronto, students pay $100.00 per portfolio. There are no additional fees if credit is awarded and transcribed.
* University of Alaska charges $50 per portfolio with an additional $10 transcription fee if the credit is awarded.
* the evaluation fee of $60 (nonrefundable) per portfolio with your packet and mail or deliver to your Center Advisor. When credit is granted, an invoice will be sent indicating $60 per semester credit granted, minus the portfolio assessment fee. For example, if you are awarded credit for a three semester credit course, the balance due will be $120 ($180 minus $60 paid when the portfolio was submitted) (Upper Iowa University).
* Northeast Resiliency Consortium guidelines to participating colleges: $100 – 150 per portfolio or $75 to $250 depending on the costs of PLA services.
* At Sinclair Community College (Dayton, Ohio), students pay $45 to submit a portfolio for assessment
* A flat fee of $175 is charged each time a student registers for a PLA 203A-J course. The fee is not based on the number of credits awarded (Fresno Pacific)
* Cost of Advanced Placement Exams = $94.00
* Cost of College Level Examination Program = $85.00

Faculty Compensation:

* The compensation rates ranged between $25 and $250 per portfolio, with a median of $100 per portfolio. Some institutions reported that they pay assessors an hourly rate of $20-$33 per hour (CAEL, 2015)
* CAEL’s national faculty pool of assessors receive $60.00 for performing assessments

Duplication of Credit

* No duplication of credit will be allowed for students who complete any courses equivalent to those covered by Portfolio Assessment. (Credit cannot duplicate other course work that the student has already completed, nor can the student then enroll for credit in a course for which credit already has been granted via portfolio assisted assessment, Penn State)
* Students enroll in PLA 203 for every course in which they wish to earn up to 3 units of Prior Learning Assessment through the portfolio process. There is a different course number for each subject area: PLA-203A through PLA-203J. These topics courses may be repeated multiple times (a combined total of 10 times for a total of up to 30 units)\* (Fresno Pacific)

Grades for Credit by Portfolio Assessment

* CAEL thoughts on *not* Grading Portfolios: The main reason is so you don’t penalize students with unsuccessful portfolios. Trying is worthwhile, and it would be a shame if it dragged down a student’s grade point average. That said, in our rubric, we score portfolios on a 100 scale to make it easy to convert to a grade if desired. The grade can be an advantage for transferability. So it is an individual institution choice. But it does have to be consistent. If you award a grade, you also have to record Fs and Ds. And in general we don’t advocate for grades because you either know it or you don’t, and that is what matters for your progress toward completion.
* CAEL faculty assessors recommend credit. Assessors do not assign grades.
* “we do not give a letter grade but record it as pass/fail” (Suny Empire State College, NY)
* Consider posting grades to a transcript for prior learning or transfer credit (AACRAO)
* Students do not receive grade for credit earned through Portfolio. CPL awards non-resident credit, so the CPL will appear on the student’s transcript as transfer credit, therefore, the student will receive credit towards his or her degree, but no grade points towards his or her grade point average (Community College of Vermont)
* If it’s approved, the Registrar posts the course on the student’s transcript. There will be no grade, but rather an “EXP” notation for experiential credit. Courses noted as such are not transferrable, but count towards degree completion at NHTI (NHTI, Concord's Community College)
* “Any credit earned through portfolios is considered advanced standing credit (also known as prior learning credit), along with transfer credit and CLEP exams…learning portfolios do not receive grades; they are awarded credit hours only” (Mary Bladwin University, Virginia)
* CPL awards non-resident credit, so the CPL will appear on the student’s transcript as transfer credit, therefore, the student will receive credit towards his or her degree, but no grade points towards his or her grade point average (University of Alaska)
* “Grades for all courses will be awarded Credit or No Credit and are not included in GPA calculations. There is no guarantee that submitted PLA portfolios will earn any unit credits, since credits are assessed by students’ individual portfolio results” (Fresno Pacific)
* “If the faculty member determines that the knowledge of the subject is college-level and equal to a grade of C or better, credit will be awarded. If the knowledge is judged to be insufficient, the faculty member will deny credit.” (Columbia College)
* Advanced Placement and CLEP receive units as hours completed (0.00 for Hours Attempted, 0.00 Grade Points) (West Hills)
* For Military Credit, HE35 student records indicate hours completed (0.00 for Hours Attempted, 0.00 Grade Points) (West Hills)
* If we continue to expand credit using ACE for West Hills courses, the transcript will likely show “hours completed” for courses comparable to military school house training (West Hills discussion)
* Only award passing or proficiency (equivalent to ABC), but if portfolio is denied no transcription (equivalent to “fail” or “no pass”) (West Hills PLA Discussions, CAEL)

Notation on Transcript for Credit by Portfolio Assessment

* CAEL recommends: No printed comments or additional notes to indicate how the credit was earned
* Fresno State Discussions (7.26.2018): Printed comments or some form of notation to indicate how the credit was earned is necessary; failing to include notation may be a violation of the articulation agreement.
* “Credit earned by demonstrated learning, knowledge, or skill acquired through experience shall be clearly identified on the student’s academic record” (CSU Executive Order 1036)
* “Credit earned via portfolio is designated on the transcript in the same manner as transfer credit” (Penn State)
* “treat all PLA as advanced standing – portfolio listed as advanced-standing credit on a student's degree program/transcript” as an Independent Study within the Credit by Evaluation section of Advanced Standing on the transcript” (Suny Empire State College, NY)
* Use a separate “PLA Transcript” recommending the course and credit that is comparable to the credit earned through PLA to aid the receiving institution in articulating the credit (Community College of Vermont)
* “The semester hours awarded will appear on your transcript on your next grade report, carrying a CR (credit) designation. Prior learning portfolios do not receive letter grades” (Mary Baldwin University, Virginia)
* Noncollegiate learning may be considered for transfer if such work is documented and submitted by means of the portfolio and will not satisfy the residency requirements for a degree. (Amberton University)
* PLA courses and credits are only available to degree completion students for undergraduate elective credit (Fresno Pacific)

Appeal Process

* Columbia College
  + “If the faculty member decides more information is needed to make a recommendation, the student will be asked to submit additional evidence” (Columbia College)
* Fresno Pacific
  + Students may submit PLA portfolios, receive instructive feedback, and then resubmit portfolios for reconsideration one time if needed. Further resubmissions are not available.
* Community College of Vermont
  + In the event you are dissatisfied with the award, or have specific questions, you may call the PLA office and speak with the director who facilitated your committee. The director will explain the process and parameters of the appeals process to you. If, after talking with the director, you are still dissatisfied with your award, you may appeal the committee’s decision. In that case, you need to notify PLA in writing within 30 days of receiving your results.
* Colorado Community Colleges
  + In the case of Challenge Exams and Portfolio Assessments, the student may submit a written request for a meeting with the PLA Credit Evaluator who denied the issuance of credit. The meeting should take place within 14 days of the student’s denial and be documented for their records. It is reasonable to establish a timeline for these appeals.
  + Portfolio evaluators may advise students to submit additional documentation, if appropriate, to further demonstrate required competencies. The Evaluator should set a specific time frame and list of requirements for the student to submit under the same evaluation. Consequences of not meeting this timeline should be clearly communicated.
  + Recommendations subsequent to appeal will stand. Students will be required to re-submit Portfolios or retest Challenge exams (according to testing policy) if they wish to be reevaluated after appeal.
  + The process of appeal should be designed to ensure that students have every opportunity to demonstrate their learning for PLA Credit evaluation.
* Mary Baldwin University
  + If you are not satisfied with your portfolio's evaluation, you have the right to request a meeting with the faculty evaluator(s) to discuss the evaluation. However, the final decision in all matters relating to the granting of academic credit rests with the faculty evaluator(s).
  + All portfolios must be submitted no less than six months prior to your planned date of graduation (Mary Baldwin University, Virginia)

Transferability (Cannot guarantee credit will transfer)

* There is no guarantee that PLA units are transferrable to another institution (Fresno Pacific)
* The Registrar posts the course on the student’s transcript. There will be no grade, but rather an “EXP” notation for experiential credit. Courses noted as such are not transferrable (NHTI, Concord's Community College)
* Transfer credit is always subject to the restrictions of the institution awarding the degree. Three common restrictions are: (1) The minimum amount of credit that must be earned “in residence” at the college (called “residency requirement”), (2) The maximum amount of transfer credit that may be applied to the degree program (3) The maximum amount of prior experiential learning credit that may be accepted at the receiving institution (Community College of Vermont)
* CPL credits apply to certificate and degree programs at UAF only. Transfer of CPL credits to other colleges or baccalaureate-granting institutions will require review by the accepting institution and is not guaranteed nor implied (University of Alaska)
* Students who know they will be transferring to another college need to be told before taking the exam that they need to verify the exam is accepted at the college – and they should find out the required score for acceptance (Ohio Board of Regents)