

<b>ALGONQUIN COLLEGE DIRECTIVE</b>	<b>NO. OF PAGES</b> 4	<b>DIRECTIVE NO.</b> E35
	<b>ORIGINATOR</b> PLA Coordinator	
	<b>APPROVED BY</b> VPAMC	
<b>TITLE</b> <b>PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> 2001.10.16	<b>REPLACES</b> 1995.01.01

### **PREAMBLE**

Prior learning assessment (PLA) assumes that adults may acquire college level learning through life experience such as self-directed study, paid employment, voluntary work, travel and non-college courses. In order for this learning to be credited, it must be described or demonstrated and measured as to its nature and extent, compared to course requirements and deemed equivalent and current. PLA is to be distinguished from the academic transfer process, in that PLA focuses on the evaluation of experiential learning rather than on the determination of equivalency of formal educational courses and/or programs. In PLA, a college credit is awarded; in the academic transfer process, an exemption is provided.

### **POLICY**

1. Prior learning assessment is available to persons interested in pursuing a College credential, who feel that they have acquired learning, through work and life experience, which fulfils the learning requirements of one or more College course(s).
2. To be eligible for PLA, candidates must be 19 years of age or older, or have an OSSD or equivalent.
3. Following formal acceptance to PLA, the candidate's prior learning will be assessed by appropriate academic staff. If the learning is deemed equivalent to College course requirements, credit(s) will be awarded.
4. PLA candidates will be bound by the College's residency policy which states that, for any credential, a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the hours of instruction must be earned at the College. Programs may require a residency immediately prior to graduation.

5. Candidates who receive credits through PLA must go through the regular admission process, in order to gain entrance into a College program.

### **PROCEDURES, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### 1. Orientation, Advising and Acceptance to PLA

- 1.1 Candidates seeking prior learning assessment will contact the Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator.
- 1.2 The PLA Coordinator will provide
  - assessment of eligibility
  - orientation to PLA
  - academic advising
  - access to support services
  - assistance with relevant application/registration procedure(s)
- 1.3 Candidates intending to pursue portfolio development and/or seek credit in more than three (3) courses, will attend a PLA orientation.

#### 2. Demonstration/Documentation of Prior Learning

##### 2.1 Challenge Procedures

- 2.1.1 The general requirements for successfully challenging a course through PLA will be established by each program and published in the course outlines. Challenge procedures may include written, oral, product, or performance tests or combinations of any of these according to the nature of the learning being assessed. Course outlines, required texts, and sample tests/assignments will be available for course review.

##### 2.2 Portfolio Assessment

- 2.2.1 Candidates wishing to submit portfolios for PLA are encouraged to register in the Portfolio Development Course which will be available through part-time study.
- 2.2.2 The Portfolio Development Course is subject to the tuition fee policy set by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

- 2.2.3 A portfolio to be used for prior learning assessment will be presented as a formal written document and will address the following requirements:
- analysis of learning
  - articulation of prior learning to credits requested
  - documentation of prior learning

2.2.4 Candidates whose first language is not English, may be required to demonstrate proficiency in the English language before being admitted into a portfolio course.

### 3. Assessment and Evaluation of Prior Learning

- 3.1 The assessment procedure will engage appropriate academic staff selected by the Chair and facilitated by the PLA Coordinator.
- 3.2 A formal record of the assessment process and results will be completed, available to the candidate and retained by the PLA Coordinator for two (2) years.
- 3.3 Independent learning contracts designed to complete the course requirements will be facilitated for PLA candidates who meet partial learning requirements through PLA.
- 3.4 When possible, successful PLA credits will be transcribed with a grade designation. Otherwise, a "CR" designation will be provided. Unsuccessful PLA attempts will not be recorded on the student's transcript.

### 4. Appeal Process

- 4.1 Candidates may appeal the assessment. To do so, the PLA candidate must communicate a request, in writing to the PLA Coordinator within ten (10) working days of the mailing of the assessment results. The candidate will outline the reasons why an appeal is warranted. A twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) fee will be charged, which will be refunded, if the decisions are changed in the applicant's favour.
- 4.2 Upon receiving a written request for appeal from the PLA candidate, the PLA Coordinator will organize an appeal team.
- 4.3 The Appeal team will consist of
- an appropriate Chair
  - a faculty member, who has not been the applicant's advisor or assessor and who is knowledgeable of the relevant program/course
  - a member of the college PLA team/committee

- 4.4 The PLA Coordinator will call and convene the review meeting within ten (10) working days. The parties in turn, (applicant and assessors) will be invited to attend and present their views. The deliberations of the committee will take place in-camera.
- 4.5 The Appeal team will render its decisions in writing to the applicant within ten (10) working days of the review meeting.
- 4.6 The results of the Appeal are final and binding on all parties.
5. Service Fees for PLA
- 5.1 The fee schedule for PLA services as established by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will apply.

Fees will cover:

- delivery of tests
- evaluation of test(s)
- evaluation of a portfolio and oral interview if required
- support to an independent learning contract as required

**NOTE:** PLA policies, procedures and guidelines are outlined in detail in the College PLA Manual.

### **RELATED DIRECTIVES**

Admissions Policy - E17  
Advanced Standing - E6  
The Grading System - E11  
Confidentiality of Records - E19  
Course Load - E7  
Glossary of Terms  
Exemptions - E10  
Registration - E12

*(original signed by)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice President, Academic