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TITLE: Prior Learning Assessment Policy and Procedures

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 12, 2005

LAST REVISION: October 8, 2014

Policy No. 1.4160

Policy Statement

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a process that enables learners to translate knowledge acquired through work, military, or other certification processes sponsored by business and industry, professional organizations, or government agencies into college credit. Credit is awarded for college-level knowledge gained through these certification processes and not for the life experience itself. College-level learning is validated through PLA when learners prove their mastery of the knowledge, skills, competencies, and abilities in a specific area of study that is offered by the college.

Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) recognizes that learning takes place in a variety of situations and circumstances. Many students have significant, demonstrable learning from experiences outside the traditional academic environment. Therefore, prior learning, not life experiences, is the basis for the award of college credit. The PLA process is housed in the Division of Innovative Learning and Academic Support. Each academic department will maintain final approval for all matters related to awarding credit.

Students:

- may be awarded up to 24 credit hours (one academic year) in PLA unless restricted by a specific program of study. Any exceptions must be approved by the dean of the division.
- must hold standard admission status at BRCC.

Credit awarded for prior learning does not count as hours in residence required for graduation. Credit received through PLA at BRCC may or may not be transferable to other colleges and universities. Students are required to meet with an academic advisor and contact the college or university to which they plan to transfer upon completion of their program of study at BRCC.

One of the following methods, recommended by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the American Council on Education (ACE), will be used to assess prior learning. The learner is required to meet with a member of the Division of Innovative Learning and Academic Support to determine the best assessment method for their particular situation:

- A. Credit by Evaluation,
- B. Credit by Examination, or
- C. Portfolio Evaluation.



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A. Credit by Evaluation

1. Military Training and Experience Credit

Students who have achieved military education and training credit may apply for acceptance of these credits toward the appropriate degree. Students must be able to provide a Department of Defense (DD) Form 295 and DD Form 214 (where applicable) to apply for Military Training and Experience Credit. BRCC may award credit for military experiences based on the ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services. A student may receive college credit if:

- training parallels a discipline area offered through BRCC, and
- credit meets a program requirement or is used as elective credit.

Upon request, individuals who have successfully completed Basic Training may be awarded three (3) credit hours in kinesiology as indicated in the ACE Guide. Official documentation of military training is required.

2. Professional Certification and Training Program Credit

For courses in which professional certifications are utilized as an assessment tool, students may receive college credit for a course based on possessing such professional certification. To receive credit, the student must provide BRCC with the appropriate documentation to validate the industry certification award. The industry certification must be current and valid. As an example, training may be documented with an ACE transcript. ACE evaluates training programs offered by business, industry, and government and publishes its credit recommendations in *The National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs*. If a student has received training which appears in the guide, he or she may receive college credit if:

- training parallels a discipline area offered through BRCC, and
- credit meets a program requirement or is used as elective credit.

3. Department Credit by Evaluation

Students may apply for departmental credit by evaluation in certain courses by obtaining the appropriate form from the Division of Innovative Learning and Academic Support and by completing necessary applications and requirements of BRCC, including tuition and payment of required fees. Fees are not refundable if a student fails to obtain credit. Students may not request:

- the evaluation of a course a second time.
- the evaluation of a course while currently enrolled in the course.
- to establish credit in a previously completed course.
- to establish credit for a lower level of a course in which credit has been received.



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Certain departments have additional requirements which must be met before credit may be granted through departmental credit by evaluation. When credit is granted as outlined above, a notation of “credit by evaluation” with a grade of “P” and the number of credits will appear on the student’s transcript. These credits are not used in computing the grade point average. Credit by evaluation may not transfer to other colleges and universities. Students are required to meet with an academic advisor and should contact the institution to which they are planning to transfer for more information about whether the department credit by evaluation earned will transfer.

B. Credit by Examination

1. Challenge Examination

Any student who believes he/she is qualified for college credit through previous training or noncredit coursework may request a challenge examination. The examination will be thorough and in keeping with the established goals and learning outcomes of the course(s) and the overall program. Theoretical knowledge will be tested by faculty recommendation through commonly acceptable measures (*e.g.*, written or electronic exams, etc.) with the possibility of a skills component. Both written and skills testing may be required to insure that “course rigor” is maintained and achieved. Passing grades will be determined by the individual departments. Successful completion of a challenge examination will be recorded on the permanent academic record as “credit by examination” with a grade of “P.” Grades of “P” are not used to compute the grade point average. COST: Students will be charged \$30 for each challenge examination taken.

2. Advanced Placement Credit

Advanced Placement Credit refers to college-level examinations delivered by a third-party vendor that allow students to receive college credits in certain courses. ACE has published credit recommendations for a number of national standardized examinations such as the ones listed below in the *Guide to Educational Credit by Examination*. BRCC uses these recommendations as guidelines to award credit for equivalent BRCC coursework as well as elective credit. Scores must be sent directly to the BRCC Registrar from the specific testing company before credit is awarded. All equivalency is subject to future review and possible catalog change. Types of Advanced Placement Examinations accepted by BRCC are as follows:

a. Advanced Placement (AP) Examination

Advanced Placement (AP) exams are a series of examinations developed by the College Board for AP High School classes in 7 subject areas <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse>. Students who have taken an Advanced Placement Course of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) in their secondary school and who have taken an Advanced Placement Examination of the CEEB may receive course credit with a score of 3, 4, or 5 depending on the subject. Scores must be received directly from CEEB to the BRCC Office of Enrollment Services for evaluation before credit is awarded.



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b. College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

CLEP assesses proficiency in general education through 33 tests in five subject areas including mathematics, writing, communication, and science [CLEP Subject Exams by College\CLEP BRCC Subject Examinations.lnk](#). Most CLEP examinations cover lower level and introductory knowledge in these subject areas. BRCC may award credit to individuals who have received an acceptable score on the CLEP examinations and who meet or exceed the ACE recommended scores for awarding credit on the CLEP subject examinations. The Testing Center at BRCC is certified to provide testing using the CLEP exams. Individuals may be scheduled for exams after meeting with a member of the Division of Innovative Learning and Academic Support.

Fee Schedule and Notes:

Processing fee	\$85
Per credit hour fee	\$15
Proctoring fee	\$25

- Individuals will be assessed a \$25 proctoring fee for a CLEP challenge examination taken at BRCC.
- Credit received through CLEP may not be transferable to other colleges and universities.
- *English Composition: Students pursuing credit for ENG 101 **MUST** take the English Composition with Essay. BRCC does not award credit for ENG 102 through CLEP examination.*
- *For CLEP examinations taken prior to July 1, 2001, BRCC will grant credit based on scaled scores.*

c. DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized –Test)

DANTES Subject Standardized – Test (DSST) examinations test knowledge in both lower-level and upper-level college material through 38 tests in six subject areas (Business, Humanities, Math, Physical Science, Social Studies, Technology http://getcollegecredit.com/assets/pdf/DSST_Exam_List.pdf). BRCC may award credit for DSST (formerly DANTES) Examination Program to individuals who meet or exceed the ACE recommended scores for awarding credit on the DSST subject examinations. BRCC does not award credit for ENG 102 through DSST examination. Credit received through DSST is transferable within BRCC, but may not be transferable to other colleges and universities.

d. International Baccalaureate Diploma/Certificate

Students who present an International Baccalaureate Diploma/Certificate to Enrollment Services may qualify for college credit. BRCC grants credit for college-level courses only. A grade of 5 qualifies a student to receive credit for one introductory course. No credit is awarded for English as a Second Language.



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C. Portfolio Evaluation

A portfolio is detailed documentation of college-level learning. BRCC allows learners to receive college credit through portfolio development for prior experiential learning that does not have a standardized mechanism for college credit evaluation. The documentation varies by course and may include the following: examples of documents developed or materials made (such as a machined part made at work, or during some civic engagement); a self-assessment; an essay or oral interview explaining knowledge and experience; awards and honors; and certifications showing completion of workshops or seminars offered by professional organizations, business and industry or government agencies. Preparation and content of the portfolio are the responsibility of the student. It must be sufficient in breadth and depth to validate the student's stated learning, and it must provide the evaluator(s) with qualitative evidence for evaluation. Assessment by portfolio evaluation is a process through which a student documents that college-level learning has been obtained through non-college means. Assessment by portfolio evaluation may result in the awarding of credit for one or more specific BRCC courses. The prior learning competencies and skills must be matched to an existing BRCC course. The academic department that houses the existing course will maintain final approval for the credit awarded. A fee is charged for review of the portfolio regardless of whether credit is awarded.

Fee Schedule

Processing fee	\$85
Per credit hour fee	\$15
Proctoring fee	\$25

For additional information, please contact:

Division of Innovative Learning and Academic Support
310 Magnolia Building
Phone: 225-216-8228
Email: adulted@mybrcc.edu

PRIOR LEARNING POLICIES

Related to General Credit

1. No more than 24 credit hours (one academic year) is applicable toward a degree or certificate awarded through PLA. Any exceptions must be approved by the dean of the division in which the learner's program of study is based.
2. PLA credits satisfy prerequisite requirements in the same manner as their course equivalencies at the institution.
3. All PLA credit must be awarded by the semester prior to graduation.
4. A student may not apply for PLA for a course in which he/she is currently enrolled or for a course in which he/she has audited.



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5. For PLA in which a grade is not awarded, a “P” for pass is recorded on the student’s transcript.
6. BRCC accepts credit for prior learning that has been awarded by other regionally accredited institutions as per the College’s Transfer Policy. These credits have the same limitations in their use in meeting graduation requirements as do PLA credits earned at BRCC and will be used in computing the total hours of PLA for which a student is eligible.
7. A student who intends to use credit for PLA in a course in which a grade has not been awarded to meet degree requirements at another institution should check the requirements of the receiving institution.
8. Enrolled students in good academic standing must be pursuing a BRCC associate degree, diploma, or certificate to apply for Credit by Examination, Professional Certification Credit or Training Credit, or Portfolio Evaluation.
9. Students may apply for Credit by Examination, Professional Certification Credit or Training Credit, or Portfolio Evaluation only for courses directly applicable to curriculum requirements in the student’s declared program of study.

Credit by Examination

10. Students who have taken a College Board AP Credit Examination must have scored at least a college determined level (3, 4, or 5) to receive appropriate course credit. The student must request that an official transcript from the College Board be sent to the college Registrar. When Advanced Placement Credit is considered for placement purposes, the placement decision is made by the department chairs or deans.
11. A student who has not earned college-level credit in a subject area may take a credit by examination (*i.e.*, CLEP, DSST, or AP) for courses offered by BRCC.
12. A student may apply for a Challenge Examination (CLEP, DSST) only two (2) times in the same course within a five year period.
13. To apply for AP Credit or Military Training and Experience Credit, the student must have standard admission status to BRCC.
14. Course credit hours earned by AP, Military and Training Experience Credit, or Professional Certification are awarded and recorded by the college Registrar. Credit hours earned are assigned a grade of “P.” No quality points are earned and such credit does not enter into grade point average determination.
15. All work assessed for Credit by Examination or Portfolio Evaluation must meet a minimum of “C” level proficiency for the course learning outcomes and/or technical competencies. This “C” level must be determined by the faculty to maintain academic integrity and rigor.



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Credit by Portfolio Evaluation

16. A student may apply for Portfolio Evaluation only once in the same course.

APPEALS

BRCC has established a process for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) appeals. Students may challenge or appeal Professional Certification or Training Credit, Credit by Examination, or Portfolio Evaluation only.

Appeals involve the student, instructor, department chair and/or the dean of the division in which the course is housed. Appeals are not addressed beyond the division dean level. Students may challenge being denied PLA credit. The student must apply for a PLA appeal of a grade within 45 days of when the PLA was requested and/or the PLA examination was administered. Any challenge or appeal that is submitted beyond the prescribed deadline will be denied.

Source of Policy: AA

Related Policy: LCTCS

Approved by: 
Chancellor Andrea Lewis Miller

Responsible Administrator: VCAA

LCTCS Policy Reference: _____

LCTCS Guideline Reference: _____

Date: 10/08/14