



Development of Prior Learning Assessments (PLA) Policy #350.040

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE:	LAST REVISION DATE:	RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT
TBA	TBD	Office of the Provost

POLICY STATEMENT

Florida International University may develop methods to award credit for Prior Learning through the formal creation of proficiency-based Prior Learning Assessments (PLAs), such as Departmental Proficiency Examinations and Portfolio-Based Assessments for undergraduate and graduate programs. If Departments/Colleges/ Schools wish to develop a proficiency-based PLA, the appropriate designee as assigned by the Office of the Provost will facilitate the process and ensure all proposed PLA adheres to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) Standards for Assessing Learning, institutional/programmatic accreditation requirements, and all other institutional policies and procedures as noted in the PLA guidelines. Any alteration of the curriculum that relates to PLA that would traditionally require university approval must be approved through existing Faculty Senate processes with final approval by the Office of the Provost.

Transfer and Transition Services is often the first advising contact with undergraduates referencing the types of Accelerated Credit for which the student may be eligible ([FIU Policy #340.350](#)).

Undergraduate students may be awarded up to thirty (30) semester hours of upper-level credit through any combination of credits earned through PLA consistent with [FIU Policy #340.290 Transfer Credits Policy](#). Graduate students may be awarded twenty percent (20%) or less of the total required credits in a graduate program through a PLA consistent with [FIU Policy #380.085 Graduate Transfer Credits](#).

An evaluation fee may be charged through continuing education (non-credit) to the student for Departmental Proficiency Examination and/or Portfolio-Based Assessments. Any non-credit continuing education fees charged must be based on the cost for the evaluation (grading, proctoring, and coaching, if applicable) and not on the total number of credits awarded. Fees are subject to review by Academic Planning and Accountability Continuing Education and final approval by the Provost’s Office of Planning and Finance. These fees are not eligible for financial aid.

SCOPE

This policy applies to faculty when developing proficiency-based PLAs and awarding credit for prior learning in undergraduate and graduate programs.

REASON FOR POLICY

To state the conditions for awarding Credit for Prior Learning through Portfolio-Based Assessments and Departmental Proficiency Examinations to ensure consistency and transparency across university programs.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITIONS
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)	CAEL pursues work at all levels within the public and private sectors to enhance learning opportunities for adults around the world. Since 1974, CAEL has provided guidance and recommendations concerning the award of Credit for Prior Learning.
CAEL Standards for Assessing Learning	recognized as the Ten Standards for Assessing Learning (cael.org) are quality principles established by CAEL.
Credit for Prior Learning (CPL)	Academic credit that is awarded through various methods, strategies, and programs used to evaluate a student’s prior learning acquired outside of a formal college classroom, such as from work experience, corporate training, military training, professional certifications, licenses, self-study, and more. CPL is not awarded for the experience itself, but rather, for the learning acquired from the experience that is equivalent to college level learning.
Departmental Proficiency Examination	Also known as a Challenge Examination, is a method of assessment developed and evaluated by faculty with discipline expertise to measure an individual’s learning achievement against course or program learning outcomes for the purpose of awarding credit.
Faculty Assessor	A faculty member selected in collaboration with the program administrator to assess student outcomes and prior learning experiences. Faculty Assessors are experts in their discipline.
Portfolio-Based Assessment	A commonly used assessment that requires students to prepare a detailed written narrative, with supporting documentation, of their prior learning and the process of learning.



Prior Learning	Theory and knowledge acquired through life/work experiences that is evaluated for potential by discipline-specific faculty as potentially equivalent to college level coursework.
Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)	Prior Learning Assessment is a mechanism that colleges and universities use to evaluate a person’s college-level extra-institutional learning for the purposes of awarding college credit or advanced standing. The assessment process ensures that the evidence of prior learning is equivalent to college level learning outcomes and competencies that correspond to a course or set of courses at FIU.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Office of the Provost: The Office of the Provost’s designee is responsible for the oversight of approving methods of awarding credit for prior learning, including the development of new opportunities that incorporate CPL/PLA and data collection. This approval involves a variety of units described below.

Academic Planning and Accountability (APA): APA, in consultation with the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, is responsible for monitoring accreditation compliance and quality of assessment methods used for awarding credit through PLA.

Academic Planning and Accountability Continuing Education (APA-CE): APA-CE reviews the continuing education (non-credit) evaluation fees proposed by the academic unit and recommends final approval to the Provost’s Office of Planning and Finance.

Faculty: Faculty develop Departmental Examinations and Portfolio-Based Assessments to measure student achievement of the learning outcomes established by an academic program, in alignment with [FIU Policy 380.102 Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes](#).

Faculty Assessors: Faculty who complete CAEL’s “Assessing Prior Learning Workshop” or an equivalent training that has been pre-approved by the Office of the Provost’s designee will assess Portfolios and Departmental Examinations to approve the awarding of academic credit that is applicable to a course or group of courses in the appropriate major/degree program.

Transfer and Transition Services: The TTS unit is responsible for offering pre- and post-transition advising to prospective and enrolled eligible students on the CPL opportunities, including programs offering PLA. This work may include offering a preliminary evaluation of transfer credit and eligibility for CPL. The unit refers students to key resources, including academic units, and collaborates with primary stakeholders as appropriate.

Registrar’s Office: The Registrar’s Office is responsible for posting approved credits for Prior Learning on the student’s academic transcripts.



University Graduate School (UGS): UGS is responsible for reviewing and approving any prior learning assessments that apply to graduate level courses, programs, and certificates.

RELATED RESOURCES

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Principles of Accreditation, Principle 8.2 (sacscoc.org)

Related Policies

[340.290 Transfer Credits](#)

[340.350 Credits used to Accelerate Undergraduate Time-to-Degree](#)

[FIU 380.085 Graduate Transfer Credits](#)

CONTACTS

RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT

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HISTORY

Initial Effective Date: TBD

Review Dates (*review performed, no updates*): N/A

Revision Dates (*updates made to document*): TBD