

# PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) CREDIT BY PORTFOLIO

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## General Information

The Colorado [State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education](#) (SBCCOE) recognizes the value of prior learning in the achievement of academic goals. It is the policy of the Board that a student's college level learning shall be evaluated for college credit at the student's request.

The learning addressed in this policy is defined as college level knowledge or skills that have been attained outside a traditional academic environment and that have not been previously evaluated for and awarded college credit.

The knowledge and skills being assessed shall be relevant to the student's program of study and meet current program requirements. Credit must apply toward specific degree or certificate requirements and may not be used to fulfill institutional residency requirements.

PLA Credit is not awarded for experience, but for college level learning which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies that students have obtained as a result of their prior learning experiences.

## Policy Procedure

A student may apply for PLA Credit at any time as long as the student is admitted to a Colorado Community College System institution and has declared a program of study (major). **Only courses in the student's major may be awarded PLA Credit.**

PLA Credit will generally not transfer to another college or university; students should check with an institution to which they plan to transfer for that institution's policy regarding transfer of portfolio credit. Likewise, Trinidad State Junior College and the Occupational Safety and Health Technology program do not accept portfolio credits as transfer credit from other institutions. However, you may be able to submit portfolios that were previously submitted to another institution, to be awarded credit at Trinidad State, as long as they meet the requirements in this document. Check with the OSHT Program Chair to determine whether portfolios from another institution will be acceptable.

All credits awarded for prior learning by portfolio must be evaluated and meet 'C' level standards or higher for recognition under this policy. Award of credit will be as follows:

PLA/no grade

## Portfolio Assessment

As the Board recognizes that learning occurs both within formal educational settings and the community at large, the criteria for evaluation of such learning takes into consideration the educational goals which are identified by the student, as well as institutional and State

System requirements. **Evaluation of prior learning should include substantive information about the knowledge, competencies, attitudes, values, and other dimensions of personal development which the student possesses.** Credit for prior learning which has been acquired through work and life experiences is to be evaluated and substantiated through a formal portfolio assessment program which entails the following:

### Development of Portfolio

First, review the [OSH course descriptions](#) on the Colorado Community College System Common Course Numbering web site. (From the linked page, change the term, if necessary, then click Submit Search. Click O for OSH, or the appropriate letter for other applicable courses, such as H for HWE 103 Community First Aid/CPR; then click the correct prefix: OSH, HWE, etc. Select the course number for the class you want to review).

Next, do a self-assessment of how your own prior training and on-the-job experience match up with the descriptions and competencies for OSH courses in the Trinidad State OSHT program curriculum. After you have determined the course(s) for which you want to seek prior learning assessment credit, [email](#) the OSHT Program Chair with a list of courses and the supporting documentation you plan to use for each course. (See next section for examples of supporting documentation.)

After review by the OSHT Program Chair, you will be: 1) emailed an approval to proceed with your portfolio(s), 2) asked for additional details, or 3) informed that a portfolio is unlikely to be approved based on the information provided (you CAN communicate further with the OSHT Program Chair about other information that may be relevant and result in an approval to proceed with a portfolio).

If you receive approval to proceed with a portfolio, you should return to the Common Course Numbering web site ("OSH course descriptions" link above) to review the learning objectives and course outline for each class for which you will complete a portfolio. You will need to address the learning objectives in your written narrative; see "Required Components" below.

### Required Components:

Students, when developing their portfolio, are to **address each of the evaluative criteria listed below:**

- The learning must be demonstrable.
- The learning must have both a theoretical and an applied component. (See [definitions](#).)
- The learning must be college level.
- The learning must be currently applicable.
- The learning must be equated to a specific course in the college's curriculum applicable to the student's certificate or degree requirements.

### The following includes the expected minimum portfolio elements:

- A cover page and table of contents page. On the cover page, please include both your name **and your student ID number** (beginning with S); **this is required to process your portfolio**. Also include the course number and name of the course for

which you are seeking credit (e.g., OSH 114 General Industry Standards).

- A short (generally 2-7 pages, depending on the course/credit hours) written narrative of intent/relevance, explaining in detail the student's theoretical and applied learning and how it meets the learning objectives for the particular course. A separate portfolio must be completed for each course for which the student is seeking credit.

You do not have to list each course objective and then list your relevant training and experience; rather, in the narrative, be sure that all objectives have been addressed throughout.

- A copy of the student's resume.
- Documentation which supports the information in the written narrative. This supporting documentation may include:
  - certificates of completion for training courses
  - printouts of company-sponsored training records
  - letters of verification from current or previous supervisors
  - examples of student-compiled safety programs or other similar documents\*
  - any other information which supports the student's narrative

\*It is not necessary to send entire written programs; an example - for instance, one section of a program - is sufficient.

***To support information with regard to on-the-job training and experience, a letter from a supervisor or manager is REQUIRED.***

## Evaluation of Portfolio

Email completed portfolios to [osh@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:osh@trinidadstate.edu).

Initial evaluation of the portfolio will be conducted by subject matter expert(s) in the OSHT program. The evaluators will utilize the criteria delineated under the "Development of Portfolio" section above when assessing PLA Credit portfolios.

After OSHT program review and approval, the portfolio must be evaluated and approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the College Registrar. ***Only upon approval by all of these individuals will the applicable credit be awarded.***

## Processing and Evaluation Cost

The ***portfolio evaluation fee will be equivalent to \$65/credit hour.*** Once the portfolio is approved and credit awarded, you will receive a billing memorandum from the Trinidad State Business Office.

## Definitions:

- Applied Component: The experiential component of the learning described in the portfolio, which may include paid, civic, community, or volunteer work.
- Awarded Credit: Credit received for college-level learning gained from non-collegiate experiences (e.g., work and life experiences; correspondence and extension courses; civic, community and volunteer work; and participation in formal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry).

- **Earned Credit:** Credit received from the completion of college courses taken while the student is officially registered and enrolled at a college or university.
- **Portfolio:** A document which is prepared by the student and which contains rationale, information, and material that demonstrates that the student has acquired knowledge and skills equivalent to that of a student completing college classroom course work for the same identified course(s).
- **Prior Learning:** Non-college or experience-based learning that has been attained outside the sponsorship of accredited postsecondary education institutions.
- **Theoretical Component:** The training component of the learning described in the portfolio, which may include correspondence or extension courses, as well as participation in formal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry.