

Prior Learning Assessment

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Preface

This handbook provides necessary information for students seeking credit for their prior learning experiences as they relate to specific courses at Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC). This handbook, also available online at <http://www.atlm.edu/adultlearner>, will be revised as new courses become available for PLA by portfolio credit.

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Introduction

Atlanta Metropolitan State College is a member of the University System of Georgia's Adult Learning Consortium and has pledged to offer students, particularly adult learners, the opportunity to receive course credit for prior learning. This opportunity will allow adult learners to complete their college education faster, as well as make their education more economically feasible. Knowledge gained from various learning experiences may be equivalent to college-level skills and knowledge, and warrant academic credit. Please refer to [Georgia Opportunities for Adult Learners](http://www.georgiaonline.org/adultlearner) (<http://www.georgiaonline.org/adultlearner>) website to access various collaborative programs, services, and outreach for additional opportunities for Georgia adults.

This document describes the various assessment methods that AMSC makes available to students to receive credit for prior learning, including CLEP, DANTES/DSST, AP, IB and College administered examinations. In addition, the College also offers adult learners the opportunity to document their prior learning experiences for credit by submitting a portfolio. A special class, PLAD2000, provides specific instructions and support for assisting students in creating the Prior Learning portfolio.

The administration and faculty at AMSC believe that PLA aligns with the mission of the College: "Atlanta Metropolitan State College, a unit of the University System of Georgia, focuses on excellence, where outstanding faculty members and committed staff teach and facilitate the successful academic matriculation and holistic development of students. The College offers an affordable liberal arts education and prepares students from a diverse urban community to function in a global society."

To better meet its mission, AMSC will work with students from diverse backgrounds to evaluate their prior learning and determine if it meets the standards and requirements of college-level learning. In doing so, the College will make education cost effective and accessible, while reducing completion time.

The Council of Adult and Experiential Learning

The College follows the nationally accepted standards for experiential learning, adopted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning ([CAEL](#)) and available in *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles and Procedures*, 2nd Ed. By Fiddler, Morry, et al.

In assessing prior learning, AMSC employs the CAEL definition of PLA: "The recognition of learning gained from experiences that may be granted credit or otherwise certified; The assessment of learning attained through experiences irrespective of the time and place in which they occurred."

CAEL Standards

1. Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.
2. Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are both agreed upon and made public.
3. Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes.
4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts.
5. Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.
6. If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
7. Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available to all parties involved in the assessment process.
8. Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.
9. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.
10. Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and the state of the assessment arts.

Taken from *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, and Procedures* (Second Edition) By Morry Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Whitaker, 2006. Chicago, Kendall Hunt Publishing Company.

Prior Learning Assessment Methods

Introduction

PLA is a process through which students identify areas of relevant learning from their past experiences, demonstrate that learning through testing, portfolio assessment, and credit recommendations from nationally recognized organizations, and receive academic credit based on acceptable evaluation.

Prior learning may encompass a variety of experiences that may empower a person with knowledge in a specific field. The learning may very well have occurred outside the confines of the classroom and within the broader framework of life experiences.

A total of 20 credit hours can be earned through any combination of ACE, Advanced Placement, CLEP, DANTES/DSST, Credit by College Administered Examinations, and Portfolio Assessment.

Following is a brief description of the various prior learning assessment methods.

Advanced Placement (AP)

The College Board offers 35 examinations across 20 subject areas. Students who get above a score of 3 may obtain credit for appropriate courses. (Please review the AMSC College Catalog available at http://www.atlm.edu/downloads/2011-2012_Catalog.pdf).

American Council on Education (ACE)

The American Council on Education (ACE) is an organization that provides guidance to colleges and universities on the acceptance of credit. AMSC is a member of the USG Consortium and honors ACE credits as appropriate for the program of study for students. Students must contact their advisor and the AMSC Offices of Admissions for information on documentation of ACE credits and verification of their application to programs of study. ACE can be found online at: <http://www.acenet.edu>.

College Level Exam Program (CLEP)

The College-Level Examination Program is administered by the College Board and provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement through a program of examinations in undergraduate college courses. CLEP examinations in five general areas (Composition & Literature, Foreign Languages, History & Social Sciences, Science & Mathematics, and Business) allow students to demonstrate mastery of material taught in about 30 courses that most students take as requirements in the first two years of college. A list of the CLEP courses is provided in the following table.

CLEP Courses Available for Credit at Atlanta Metropolitan State College

CLEP Test	AMSC Credit College	Atlanta Metropolitan State College State Minimum Passing Score	Credit Hours Awarded
Principles of Microeconomics	ECON 2106	50	3
Financial Accounting	ACCT 2101 ACCT 2102	50	6
College Composition w/Essay	ENGL 1101	50 w/ passing Essay	3
American Literature	ENGL 2130	50	3
French	FREN 1002	50	3
	FREN 2001, 2002	50	6
Spanish	SPAN 1002	50	3
	SPAN 2001, 2002	50	9
Algebra	MATH 1111	50	3
Pre-calculus	MATH 1113	50	3
Biology	BIOL 1107, 1108	50	8
Chemistry	CHEM 1211	50	4
Western Civilization I	HIST 1111	50	3
Western Civilization II	HIST 1112	50	3
History of the United States I	HIST 2111	50	3
History of the United States II	HIST 2112	50	3
American Government	POLS 1101	50*	3
Introduction to Psychology	PSYC 1101	50	3
Human Growth & Development	PSYC 2103	50	3
Introduction to Sociology	SOCI 1101	50	3

*A passing score on the CLEP examinations in American Government and in History of the United States 1 and II does not include credit for the student's having satisfied the Georgia history requirement or the Georgia Constitution requirement.

Credit by College Administered Examination

Students currently enrolled who present satisfactory evidence that they are qualified in a particular subject may receive credit by an examination developed and administered by the appropriate instructional department. Permission must be obtained from the head of the instructional department offering the course; however, examinations will not be permitted in courses for which a student has previously taken an examination for credit or was previously enrolled at Atlanta Metropolitan State College as a regular or audit student. It is suggested that students check with their advisor and the Registrar's Office prior to requesting an examination for credit, to ensure that credit will apply toward their graduation requirements. The credit will be entered in the student's academic record; however, the grade received will not calculate in the semester or cumulative grade point average.

Students must pay the Business and Finance Office, in advance of the examination, the current non-refundable fee for credit by examination, which is the same as CLEP registration fees cost (\$85 per exam). The student will show the receipt to the faculty member conducting the examination. The instructional department is responsible for reporting the course number, title, credit hours, and fee receipt to the Registrar's Office for processing. Failing grades will be reported and posted to the student's record.

Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES)

AMSC will grant credit to military students through DANTES/DSST examinations determined to be equivalent to CLEP. The same score minimums will apply to these tests as the CLEP. CLEP credit will be indicated by a "K" on the student's transcript.

Portfolio Assessment and Feedback

If prospective students have other learning experiences that may fit courses not served under one of the above options, they may be advised to sign up for the PLA Documentation course (PLAD 2000). This two credit course teaches students how to develop a portfolio that documents their prior learning experiences, competencies, training, and certifications in a way that aligns with specific courses.

AMSC Courses Available for Credit Through Portfolio Assessment

After completing PLAD 2000, a student may submit a portfolio containing documentation for obtaining possible PLA credits for the following courses at AMSC:

- CRJU 1105 Introduction to Law Enforcement
- CRJU 1106 Introduction to Corrections
- SOCI 2293 Introduction to Marriage and the Family
- CSCI 1135 Introduction to Computers
- MUSC 1100 Music Appreciation
- RELI 2201 Introduction to Religious Studies

Portfolio feedback will be provided in writing with complete analysis of evidence presented in line with the specific learning outcomes determined by the course content, program, or the department. Certified assessors at the College (and from the Adult Learning Consortium if necessary) as well as department faculty in the specific area of expertise are charged with the responsibility of determining the competency level achieved in the portfolio. Certified assessors will evaluate the wide array of experiences that may have occurred in a person's life in the form of employment training, hobbies, community related pursuits, vocational training and award academic credits based on a portfolio or other submissions by the student.

The assessors will review all submitted portfolio submissions and will provide timely feedback for corrections and resubmissions as may apply. The assessors determine and evaluate the strength of the evidence provided to support the claim for credit. Credit can only be provided upon the recommendation of the assessor based on the evidence which must meet the required objectives of the specific course. The evidence might include but is not limited to a variety of sources: work, certification, commendations, essay, demonstrations, performances, research, training, military experience, projects and other life learning evidence.

If found satisfactory, the assessor will award appropriate credit hours and submit grade forms to the Registrar for transcription through the appropriate Division Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. If found unsatisfactory, students may resubmit a portfolio for re assessment within a time limit provided for the course, usually one semester unless extension is granted in advance.

All students who successfully complete PLA courses will receive a "K" grade with appropriate number of credit hours. All PLA records will be kept in the division record files and copies filed with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and relevant forms submitted to the Registrar's Office upon approval.

Portfolio Costs

The PLA Documentation Course has the same tuition rate as any other two-hour AMSC course. Students may qualify to use financial aid for this course, depending on the specific rules and regulations of their financial aid package.

When a student submits the portfolio for assessment, the cost is based on the number of credit hours assigned to each course. The table below designates cost per credit hours. The student then submits the receipt for payment to the PLA Counselor who will submit the portfolio to the appropriate assessors. Students must pay this cost for each assessment for which they apply.

# Credit Hours	Cost
4 - 6	\$300
3	\$250
2	\$200
1	\$150

PLA Policies of Atlanta Metropolitan College

- I. Courses covered by CLEP, Departmental Examination, and DANTEs assessment methods of earning credit will not be eligible for credit through the portfolio process.
- II. A student may obtain a total of 20 credit hours through a combination of CLEP, DANTEs, Credit-By-Examination, and portfolio assessment.
- III. All students who successfully complete PLA courses will receive a "K" grade with appropriate number of credit hours.
- IV. Students are required to complete PLAD 2000 Prior Learning Documentation Course in preparation for developing portfolio(s) for credit evaluation, preferably prior to their last semester.
- V. Prospective students who meet the following criteria are eligible to participate in PLA: (1) Adults, (2) Non-traditional Student (at least 25 years old), and (3) other demonstrable learning experience outside a traditional college curriculum.

PLA Grade Appeal Process

If a student wants to appeal the grade awarded for a PLA course, the student has the right to appeal the grade. The appeal process must be initiated within one semester (fall, spring, summer) immediately following the semester in which the grade was assigned. The students must take the following steps: These steps are also outlined in the College Catalog under Grade Appeal Process.

Step 1. Within the first semester immediately following the assignment of a final grade, the student who wishes to appeal the grade must meet with the assessor virtually or face to face. At this meeting, the student and assessor must make every effort to resolve the disagreement and arrive at a mutual consensus. Note: If the assessor is not on campus, the appropriate Division Dean (DD) will contact the assessor.

Step 2. If, after Step 1, a student wishes to further pursue a change of grade, the student must make a written appeal to the appropriate Division Dean within twenty working days of the meeting with the assessor. Supporting documentation should be attached.

Step 3. The DD may meet with the student and assessor individually or jointly to review the student's appeal and to review any materials needed to form an objective decision and discuss options for resolution.

Step 4. The DD will make a decision and submit that decision in writing to the assessor and student within ten (10) working days.

Step 5. If the student wishes to further appeal the decision of the DD, he or she may seek redress from the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The VPAA will review the student's original written appeal, supporting documentation and the decision of the DD before rendering a decision.

Step 6. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will provide a written decision to the student within ten days.

Step 7. If, after Step 6, the student still wishes to appeal his or her grade, the student has ten (10) working days in which to make a written appeal to the President. The judgment of the President will be considered the final and binding decision on the matter.

Please complete all information below before submitting the application for credit.

Name:	AMSC ID: 932 - ____ - ____
(first) (middle) (last)	
Major:	Academic Advisor:
	(first) (last)
AMSC Email:	Date:
Address:	Telephone:
(street, apartment, box)	(home) / (cell)
	Best times to call:
(city, state, zip)	

Information about the course for which you are seeking credit:

Course prefix & number:	
Course Title:	
Is this course required for your major?	
Have you satisfied prerequisites (or equivalents) for this course?	
Is this course a prerequisite for other courses in your major?	
Will you need to transfer credit for this course to another university?	
AMSC Core Curriculum Area for this course: A, B, C, D, E, or F?	
See the Core at: http://www.atlm.edu/about-amc/college-catalog.aspx	
<u>Notes - Add any other relevant information about the course.</u>	

Please describe the work or volunteer experience, training, courses, or other things you have done that you believe have met the requirements of the course listed above.

List each of the course objectives for the course for which you are seeking credit. After the objective, identify any artifacts (documents, Web pages, audio or video files, or other materials) that correspond to the objective support your application for credit. For each of the artifacts that provide support for your prior learning, write a caption that will briefly describe the connections between the artifacts and the objectives:

Objective 1	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 2	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 3	
Artifact	
Caption	

Objective 4	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 5	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 6	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 7	
Artifact	
Caption	

Objective 8	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 9	
Artifact	
Caption	
Objective 10	
Artifact	
Caption	

Please provide any further notes that you believe will help support your claims for credit.

Veterans and Current Military Service Members

College Credit for Prior Learning in the Military

Military personnel may receive credit for prior learning through a variety of assessment methods. Veterans and army personnel seeking more information regarding prior learning assessment. A special Military Service Members Advisor, Michelle Chapman, has been appointed by the College to assist military personnel. Ms. Chapman can be reached at the contact information provided below.

Contact the Atlanta Metropolitan State College [Adult Learner](http://www.atlm.edu/adultlearner.aspx) (www.atlm.edu/adultlearner.aspx) link for other opportunities for military personnel.

Contact Information

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