

	Policy No.	Replaces	Policy
	S2002-03	EC2002-03	Senate
	Policy Name		
Prior Learning Assessment			
Approved by	Responsibility		Category
Senate	Senate		
Date Issued	Date Revised	Next Review	Related Policies, Reference
	August 2014	September 2019	

Preamble

At Capilano University our mission is to enable student success in current and continuing studies, in a chosen career, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in contributing effectively as responsible citizens in a rapidly changing and diverse global community.

To accomplish its mission, Capilano University strives to provide a dynamic and secure learning environment committed to excellence in education and to equity of access.

To ensure “equity of access” Capilano University recognizes that students may have attained significant learning at a post- secondary level from work, training and other experiences outside the formal post-secondary education system. Those who have gained such learning should be able to receive credit for that learning and build on it in pursuing further education at Capilano University.

Purpose

This policy is to provide direction regarding the assessment and recognition of credit to be granted based on prior learning experience.

Scope

This policy provides direction on the assessment and official recognition of students’ prior learning experience.

Definition

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a process whereby students receive credit for learning that’s occurred in a non-standard or non-traditional environment. It is assessment, by valid and reliable means and by a qualified specialist, of what an individual has learned outside of courses and programs at Capilano University for which the granting of transfer credit is inappropriate. Assessment will normally result in credit (assigned or unassigned) being granted to satisfy the admission or graduation requirements of a program offered by Capilano University.

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Policy Statement

Capilano University will, when requested by a student and in accordance with established evaluation procedures, assess and grant credit for learning that the student has gained through prior life and work experiences. Where that learning can be equated to the learning outcomes or objectives of a course or program at Capilano, credit will be granted.

Prior Learning will be assessed and recorded within the limits of the University residency requirements and based on the determination of individual programs.

The PLA process at Capilano University will be administered in a way that ensures that the University's assessment of prior learning is reliable, current, authentic and equitable.

Guidelines

1. The University will be guided by the Guidelines for Prior Learning Assessment developed by the Provincial PLA Steering Committee and endorsed by the British Columbia Council on Admissions & Transfer.
2. Applicants for Prior Learning Assessment must have been admitted to a program at Capilano University.
3. Capilano University will only award credit for prior learning that is directly applicable to the student's declared program of studies. Should a student change programs, all or some of the PLA credit previously awarded may no longer apply or, conversely, the student may be able to apply for additional PLA credit that was not appropriate under the previous program of studies.
4. Faculty who have expertise in the curriculum area will assess Prior Learning. The standards to be applied will be equivalent to those applied to students enrolled in the course or courses for which credit is requested.
5. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning shall receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and there shall be provision for their continued professional development.

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6. When department chairs and/or other members of the department consider what kind of credit, if any, will be granted for Prior Learning, they will be following a process similar to the one currently used when assessing courses for transfer credit and selecting one or more of the following options - Capilano University equivalent course to be identified, or unassigned number of credit hours in a subject area are to be identified. Where unassigned credit is determined the year level of unassigned credit(s) must be identified.
7. Assessment processes should relate to course, program or institutional goals. These goals need to be clear, concise and understandable to all who need to use them-learners, faculty and staff, other institutions (e.g. other colleges, universities and perhaps employers).
8. Assessment involves expert judgment based on explicit performance criteria.
9. Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, shall be fully disclosed and prominently available.
10. An applicant who disputes the results of a Prior Learning Assessment may appeal that decision under the normal appeals process.
11. The credits achieved through PLA will appear on the transcript, Should PLA credit be granted, the grade of CR (credit granted) will be assigned and it will be noted on the transcript that credit was earned through the PLA process.
12. Fees charged for assessment shall be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.

Methods of Prior Learning Assessment

The following methods of assessment may be used, independently or in combination, to determine if the PLA applicant has met the required standards:

Exams/Essays

A test/exam (written or oral) that is designed to validate the knowledge of the candidate as it relates to course requirements. The exam may be the same test or exam given to students who formally attend the course. It is limited to questions that are directly related to the learning

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objectives/outcomes of the course, not to information that would be available only by regular attendance in the classroom.

The exam could also be a standardized exam developed by someone from the department other than the assessor and could be focused around widely recognized standards (as set by a department or professional organization) that are equivalent to the course objectives.

The essay may be the same essay given to students who formally attend the course. The topic of the essay should be limited to those directly related to the learning objectives/outcomes of the course.

Simulation/Performance Assessments/Demonstrations

Simulation or actual presentation of candidate's abilities may be live, recorded, or videotaped. The demonstration may include, but is not limited to, such activities as presenting a speech, role-playing a situation, creating a document on computer, giving a musical performance, performing a lab experiment, interviewing a client, operating equipment, or completing a procedure.

Interviews

The PLA interview is focused around course objectives and may include techniques such as open-ended questions, case studies, and prepared analyses. The interview is used to clarify areas of learning, and may be used in parallel with other methods, as a sole method of assessment, and/or as a means to ensure authenticity of products.

Portfolio Assessment/ Product Assessment (work samples)

Documents or objects that have been produced by the candidate and demonstrate tangible proof of accomplishment. These may include, but are not limited to, reports, computer printouts, videos, illustrations, prototype models, or an artist's portfolio. Students may be asked to demonstrate abilities or answer questions about the portfolio by the assessor.

Appeals

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