

Prior Learning Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

What is prior learning assessment?

Prior Learning Assessment is a process that allows students to demonstrate knowledge and skill in a particular field, and have that learning evaluated for college credit.

What is a prior learning assessment (PLA) portfolio?

A PLA portfolio is a compilation of materials that demonstrates previous college-level learning relevant to your degree plan. A portfolio consists of multiple components including, but not limited to, a resume, a learning narrative that addresses the terminal course objectives of a specific course, and supporting evidence.

How will I know what to include in my portfolio?

As you complete your first PLA portfolio, you will be registered for a non-credit, online, self-paced portfolio development course offered through LearningCounts, *Developing Your Portfolio for College Credit* course. The course will guide you through the preparation and compilation of components required for a PLA portfolio assessment.

What type of prior learning is considered appropriate to include in my portfolio?

You should include any documentation that helps demonstrate what you've learned through your experience and the knowledge obtained. This learning may have been obtained through on-the-job training, work experience, volunteer work, training courses or certifications, independent study, or other learning experiences. Common examples of supporting documentation include:

- Work products such as samples of presentations, reports, or technical or professional documents you've developed (with confidential or proprietary information removed)
- Honors or awards
- Licenses
- Certificates of completion for training
- Position descriptions
- Digital media, including (but not limited to): PowerPoint presentations, websites that you designed, games or interactive features that you created, or audio and video files that demonstrate your learning in action
- Reports or proposals
- Blueprints or artwork
- Patents obtained
- Study Abroad course descriptions or descriptions of Study Abroad work experiences
- Military training documentation
- Organizational memberships
- Evidence of volunteer work such as awards, newspaper articles, or letters of commendation

Are PLA portfolios allowed for all DeVry University undergraduate courses?

The list of courses for which PLA portfolios may be submitted can be found [here](#).

The following DeVry courses are excluded from the list of eligible courses for which a PLA portfolio may be submitted: senior project, internship, and transitional studies courses, COLL148, LAS432, and courses with a CARD prefix. Additionally, other courses for which DeVry does not accept transfer or proficiency credit are ineligible for PLA portfolios.

Can portfolios be submitted for graduate-level courses?

At this time, DeVry University is only accepting PLA portfolio submissions for undergraduate courses.

What are the eligibility requirements and writing skills needed to compile the portfolio?

Students who are the most successful with submitting prior learning portfolios are those who have strong college-level writing skills, have completed at least one online college course, have technical literacy skills, have significant professional experience in applied areas aligning with college coursework, and understand the time and detail required to complete a successful portfolio. A typical portfolio is 5-10 pages and will take you approximately 10-20 hours to research, develop and compile the necessary materials.

To submit a portfolio, you must meet the PLA eligibility requirements outlined [here](#).

Where will I find course descriptions and other information about DeVry University undergraduate courses?

The course descriptions are found in the DeVry University Undergraduate Catalog and are included in the terminal course objectives (TCOs) for each eligible course. You can ask your academic advisor or student support advisor for a copy of the TCOs. You'll want to review the course description and TCOs with your academic advisor or student support advisor and discuss if you have previous experience that may lead to a successful portfolio submission and receive guidance on next steps.

How do I apply, register and pay for the online course and each portfolio submission?

Your academic advisor or student support advisor will provide the *PLA Application* form for you to complete for your initial PLA request.

For subsequent PLA portfolios, your academic advisor or student support advisor will provide the *PLA Portfolio Request* form for you to complete.

Once approved, your academic advisor or student support advisor will provide you with information on how to register and pay for the portfolio development course, and eventually submit your portfolio to LearningCounts. Your academic advisor or student support advisor will also provide you with the *Authorized PLA Copy* of the terminal course objectives to reference as you prepare your portfolio. You will want to make a copy of this document and submit the original Authorized PLA Copy of the terminal course objectives to LearningCounts.

What is the cost of the LearningCounts course? What is the cost of each portfolio submission and review?

The cost of the *Developing Your Portfolio for College Credit* course, including development and submission of the first portfolio for review, is \$254.

After completion of this course and submission of your first portfolio, the cost to submit each additional portfolio for review is \$125.

How long does it take to complete the self-paced course including the portfolio development? Is there a time limit?

The self-paced, interactive online portfolio development course can be taken at any time on a laptop or tablet within six months from the time you pay for the course. The course consists of 8 modules that can be completed in 4-6 hours. You should expect to spend an additional 10-20 hours to research, develop and compile the materials for your portfolio.

How many portfolios can I request during the session?

LearningCounts does limit the number of portfolios that can be attempted at one time during a session. It is highly recommended that you work on no more than 1-2 portfolios at a time so that you can meet the submission deadlines. You will want to first discuss your plans with your academic advisor or student support advisor. In order to have a successful experience, you will want to discuss the courses you are currently enrolled in and the amount of time you will need to devote toward completing the number of portfolios you wish to submit during the session.

Can one portfolio be submitted to request credit for more than one DVU course?

You may receive credit for only one DeVry University course for each portfolio submitted. The *Authorized PLA Copy* terminal course objectives (TCOs) should accompany each portfolio submitted to LearningCounts.

If a DeVry University course has prerequisites, can the PLA portfolio I submit apply to the course and its prerequisites?

The prerequisite and/or co-requisite course will still need to be satisfied through proficiency credit, transfer credit, or successful completion of the course at DeVry.

Is college credit granted for LearningCounts *Developing Your Portfolio for College Credit* course?

The course offered by LearningCounts is a non-credit course.

Is a grade assigned for PLA portfolios attempted? If so, do the grades count in my GPA?

The portfolio will be evaluated as Pass or Fail. Proficiency credit will be granted for PLA portfolios that receive a Pass evaluation. The corresponding DeVry University course will be posted to your student record with a proficiency credit designator.

Applying the proficiency credit to your student record is done between LearningCounts and DeVry. There is no need for you to request a transcript or documentation from LearningCounts.

PLA portfolios that are evaluated as Fail will be maintained in your student record and will not appear on your transcript. You may attempt a PLA portfolio for each course twice. If a passing score is not obtained after two PLA attempts, the credit for the course must be earned through proficiency credit, transfer credit, or successful completion of the course at DeVry.

Pass or Fail PLA portfolio recommendations do not impact your GPA.

How long will the portfolio assessment process take?

Approximately 2 weeks after you submit your portfolio, you should receive an email informing you if your portfolio has received a Pass or Fail evaluation.

Will the portfolio assessor provide feedback or request that I include more information prior to the final credit recommendation?

The role of the portfolio assessor is to review your PLA portfolio once you submit it and to provide extensive feedback with the credit recommendation outcome. Therefore, it's important that when you submit your PLA portfolio to LearningCounts to have it evaluated, you include specific details in the 5-10 page paper you write (the learning narrative) that demonstrates your learning and expertise that directly relates to the terminal course objectives of the course. You should provide as much information and supporting documentation as possible to substantiate your learning narrative.

Will I receive feedback on what was submitted successfully within my portfolio and what areas could use improvement?

Yes. When the PLA portfolio review is complete, you will receive detailed, qualitative feedback showing the strengths and weaknesses of the portfolio you submitted.

Once final determination is received and if no credit is recommended, may I appeal the decision?

LearningCounts has an appeal process that allows you to appeal a decision within 7 days. If the evaluation of a portfolio is Fail, you will receive documentation outlining areas of strengths and weaknesses in the portfolio. If you appeal and the appeal is then denied, you have the opportunity to submit the fee to resubmit a portfolio for the same course and provide additional documentation of learning based on the feedback you received. Please keep in mind that the appeal process is facilitated by LearningCounts rather than by DeVry University.

What is the maximum number of credits that can be awarded via PLA?

It depends on the residency requirements of your academic program. Credit for a PLA portfolio is treated as proficiency credit and does not count toward the residency requirement for graduation. You will want to talk to your academic advisor or student support advisor to determine if you have already satisfied the DeVry University residency requirement for your program or if you have enough required DeVry University coursework remaining to satisfy the residency requirement if PLA credit is awarded.

Can I submit a portfolio for a course that I previously completed at another school and for which DeVry has not granted transfer credit?

A portfolio is based on what you've learned through your previous experience and the knowledge obtained. For knowledge obtained through previous courses completed at another university or college that weren't accepted as transfer credit at DeVry, you will want to first speak with your academic advisor or student support advisor about other proficiency credit options at DeVry University, such as CLEP or challenge exams.

Can I submit a portfolio for a course that I previously failed?

A portfolio may not be submitted for a DeVry University course that you have previously attempted regardless of the grade or designator assigned to the attempt. A portfolio may not be submitted for a course in which you are currently enrolled. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are not enrolled in a course for which you intend to seek PLA credit. If you pay for such a course, DeVry will not refund the tuition at a later date. Additionally, a portfolio may not be submitted for a DeVry course that you previously attempted that has since been revised in content and is now considered to be equivalent to another DeVry course.

What happens if I paid the fee to submit a PLA portfolio while enrolled at DeVry but was unable to complete and submit it before my semester was over, and I have not yet enrolled in future classes?

You have 6 months from the date of payment for the portfolio assessment to complete your portfolio. If your portfolio receives a Pass with a credit recommendation within that time period, it will appear on your transcript as proficiency credit. However, in order to submit additional portfolios, you will need to be enrolled and attending classes at DeVry.

If I enrolled in but never began the self-paced LearningCounts *Developing Your Portfolio for College Credit* course, am I eligible for a refund?

LearningCounts does not refund the cost of the course.

Can financial aid be used to pay for the self-paced *Developing Your Portfolio for College Credit* non-credit course or for a portfolio submission?

Charges for the non-credit course and PLA portfolio are not eligible for certain types of financial assistance including, but not limited to, federal financial aid, state grants, institutional scholarships and grants, and/or veteran's benefits.

Are other prior learning credit options available at DeVry University?

Yes. You may also be eligible for transfer credit for previously completed college coursework, or for proficiency credit based on professional certifications or completion of external standardized exams. More details can be found on the DeVry University website under [Prior Learning Credit](#).

Who do I contact if I have questions about PLA?

| | |
|---|--|
| Prospective DeVry students interested in PLA | Katrina Douthit College Credit Specialist (312) 499-2365 moreinfo@learningcounts.org |
| Enrolled DeVry students interested in PLA | Please contact your academic advisor or student support advisor |
| General student PLA questions | studenthelp@learningcounts.org |
| Student technology support 24/7 assistance for LearningCounts non-credit course or PLA portfolio submission | http://onlinecoursesupport.com/learningcounts/ |