Background

At SUNY Oswego, it has been a long standing practice to assess prior learning for academic credit and for waivers in many academic areas. We have offered opportunities sanctioned or developed by academic departments, ensuring academic integrity while being responsive to nontraditional learners who have acquired learning outside of the classroom through various life and work experiences. As SUNY Oswego expands to serve more nontraditional students at the branch campus in Syracuse, in online and blended programs, and in other emerging ways, it is essential for the college to have a policy that provides a framework to ensure academic quality and oversight as any new prior learning assessment (PLA) is developed.

In 2016, SUNY Oswego formulated a prior learning assessment (PLA) ad hoc committee to discuss and catalog the existing methods currently in use at the college, and to draft a PLA policy for consideration by faculty assembly. In 2016/17 academic year the group created a list of currently offered PLA, presented and obtained feedback from faculty assembly and finalized a list that has been shared across campus and with students. The purpose of this document is to enable the college to entertain additional PLA methods at the departmental level, as needed, by providing a policy statement and list of implications.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy Statement

SUNY Oswego encourages faculty to explore and implement the use of prior learning assessment (PLA) to recognize college level knowledge and skills that students acquire outside of formal higher education. SUNY Oswego relies on the following policy to ensure practices consistent with academic integrity and responsive to nontraditional learners. Such learning may be derived from various life and work experiences and the term “prior learning assessment” refers to all of the processes the college uses to review and evaluate evidence of college-level learning and to award academic credit or waive requirements as indicated by academic and administrative standards. Adherence to this policy is also intended to support transparent transfer of prior learning assessment credit among institutions of higher education.

Creation and establishment of new methods of PLA at SUNY Oswego

- Evaluation of all PLA options at SUNY Oswego is done by SUNY Oswego faculty in alignment with established SUNY Oswego policies, equivalencies and course outcomes at the departmental level. Faculty / staff will develop new methods of assessment of student experiences.
- Once reviewed, the faculty will present the proposed PLA at a department meeting for consideration and approval, including a description of PLA process and designated course equivalency or waiver.
- Once approved, the department will document the new PLA and share it with the Registrar and Dean of the Division of Extended Learning for implementation. Documentation will remain on file at the departmental level as well.
- The Registrar and the Division of Extended Learning will communicate any new PLA to both faculty, advisors, college staff and new and existing students.
Student Procedure to participate in PLA at SUNY Oswego

- Students must be matriculated at SUNY Oswego before credit can be formally added to the transcript. However, SUNY Oswego will conduct an initial review of transcripts and discuss options for prior learning assessment as part of the Admissions or Transfer process. All accepted students are eligible to participate in assessment of prior learning activities.
- Students must complete a minimum of 30 program hours of credit in residence at SUNY Oswego to obtain a baccalaureate degree; credit earned through prior learning assessment does not count toward the 30 hours of residency credit.
- Prior learning must match existing courses using the course description and course outcomes for guidance. Under advisement, students may also use some prior learning assessment as elective credit.
- Students may be charged if there is a cost for assessment of prior learning. These costs vary by option and are non-refundable.
- Course credit awarded via Prior Learning Assessment will be added to the student’s transcript as transfer credit with the title “PLA” as appropriate with a grade of “T.” Attributes will be applied to each course as appropriate such as Liberal Arts, Upper Division, etc.
- Students must consult with their academic advisor or the Division of Extended Learning to determine which PLA option may help them attain their academic goals.
- Students are responsible for addressing potential acceptance of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credits in the event of transfer to another college.

Administration of PLA at SUNY Oswego –

The Division of Extended Learning will

- Collaborate with the Registrar’s Office to catalog and communicate PLA policies, opportunities and fees and will provide administrative support as needed to ensure PLA is embedded as part of the recruitment, educational planning and advisement process at SUNY Oswego.
- Be the student’s advocate and will communicate and work with Department Chairs if there is interest / need for consideration of new PLA methods and to determine course equivalencies if needed.
- Coordinate and train faculty and staff advisors about PLA opportunities for students.
- Coordinate the communication of PLA opportunities to current and prospective students.
- Collaborate with the Registrar’s Office to complete regular assessments of the program including recommendations for improvement, annual tracking reports of credits administered through PLA etc.
- Report efficacy and application of policy to Academic Policies Council and Faculty Assembly every two years.
SUNY Oswego Departmental Approval for Prior Learning Assessment Method

Please return completed form to the Registrar for formal adoption.

Course Subject __________ Course Number __________ Course Name ____________________________

Faculty Content Expert's Name ____________________________________________________________

Effective Term the PLA Method is Applied ________________________________________________

Briefly describe the method of prior learning assessment for each of the learning outcomes (as appropriate):

Describe the outcome of the prior learning assessment:

_____ Credit:

Course Subject __________ Number __________ # Credits _____ Course Title ____________________________

_____ Upper Division Credit  _____ Lower Division Credit

_____ Non Credit:

Describe Nature of PLA ________________________________________________________________

Describe Outcome of PLA ______________________________________________________________

Describe Academic Impact of PLA _________________________________________________________


Decision regarding Prior Learning Assessment

Faculty Content Expert __________________________ Date __________ ______ Accept ______ Deny

Department Chair ____________________________ Date __________ ______ Accept ______ Deny

Associate Dean _____________________________ Date __________ ______ Accept ______ Deny

Extended Learning Dean ______________________ Date __________ ______ Accept ______ Deny

2/7/18
SUNY Oswego Departmental Approval for Prior Learning Assessment Credit

Please return completed form to the Registrar for formal application to student transcript.

Student Name _______________________________ Student ID # _______________________________

Faculty Content Expert’s Name _______________________________

Term and Year PLA is applied _______________________________

Name of Approved PLA Method _______________________________

Describe the outcome of the prior learning assessment:

____ Credit: Course Subject _______ Number _______ # Credits ______ Name _______________________________

____ Upper Division Credit  __________ Lower Division Credit

____ Credit: Course Subject _______ Number _______ # Credits ______ Name _______________________________

____ Upper Division Credit  __________ Lower Division Credit

____ Credit: Course Subject _______ Number _______ # Credits ______ Name _______________________________

____ Upper Division Credit  __________ Lower Division Credit

____ Waiver Describe _______________________________

____ Other Describe _______________________________

Decision regarding Prior Learning Assessment

Faculty Content Expert _______________________________ Date ____________  ____ Accept  ____ Deny

Department Chair _______________________________ Date ____________  ____ Accept  ____ Deny

Associate Dean _______________________________ Date ____________  ____ Accept  ____ Deny

2/7/18