



Montana University System

PLA

Prior Learning Assessment

PLA

The Director leads the Montana University System PLA initiative as part of the effort to reach out to and serve adult students. The Director works in tandem with the chair of the PLA Council.

PLA Council

Appointed by the MUS Commissioner of Higher Education the faculty-led PLA Council has oversight for implementation of PLA policy and guidelines.

Montana University System

- Bitterroot College UM
- City College at MSU Billings
- Dawson Community College
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Gallatin College MSU
- Great Falls College MSU
- Helena College UM
- Highlands College of MT Tech
- Miles Community College
- Missoula College UM
- Montana Tech of the UM
- MSU Billings
- MSU Bozeman
- MSU Northern
- UM Missoula
- UM Western

For more information:

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We exist to:

- Reach out to adult learners who may be able to demonstrate college-level learning gained outside of the traditional classroom.
- Increase higher education access, affordability, and completion throughout the MUS and the state.
- Scale up use and promote awareness of PLA.
- Extend PLA options that may help students shorten time-to-degree.
- Meet the increasing need for higher education credentials in the workforce.

PLA Educational Principles

- Learning occurs both within formal educational settings and at the initiative of the individual learner.
- The evaluation and transcribing of learning should take into consideration the degree objectives of the student as well as the learning outcomes articulated by the academic program, institutional and state system requirements. Consideration will be given to not award excess PLA credits that might not benefit a student's degree objective.
- Prior learning assessment should provide substantive information about the knowledge, competencies, skills and habits of mind gained from outside of the college environment.

Assessment Standards

- Learning has been assessed in accordance with national, state system standards and best practice.
- Prior learning may be assessed through these PLA methods:
 - 1). Standardized Tests (CLEP, DSST, UExcel, AP, and IB)
 - 2). American Council on Education (ACE) and National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)
 - 3). Faculty-Developed Assessments, including;
 - ✓ Challenge Exams, Portfolio Assessment
 - ✓ Individual Performance Assessment
 - ✓ Locally-Evaluated Industry and Workplace Education/Training Program Credit
- The learning is college-level and the learning is properly evaluated by faculty/subject matter experts.

University of Montana-Montana State University-Montana Tech-University of Montana Western-Montana State University
Billings-Northern Montana College MSU- Gallatin College MSU- Missoula College UM-Helena College UM- City College at MSU
Billings-Great Falls College MSU-Highlands College of MT Tech-Bitterroot College
Dawson Community College-Flathead Valley Community College-Miles City Community College

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education