



About Prior Learning Assessment



What Is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the process of determining whether knowledge gained outside of the traditional academic environment is at the college-level and worthy of college credit. Work, employer training programs, military service, independent study (such as open educational resources and MOOCs), non-credit courses and community service are all examples of experiences where people may have acquired college-level learning.

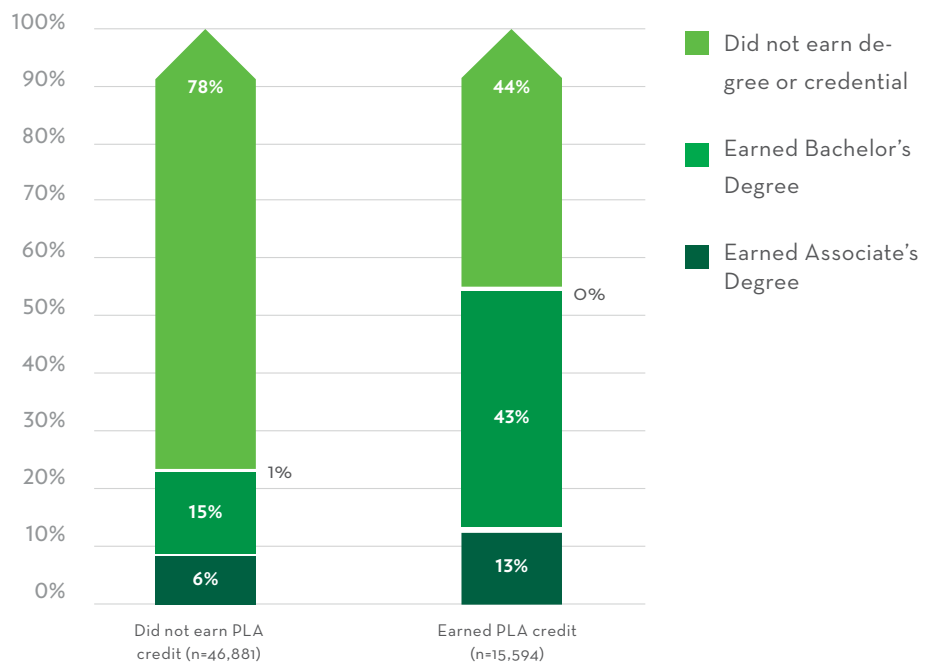
A Consistent, Academically Rigorous Way to Assess Prior Learning

CAEL is the recognized national expert on PLA, and in particular, a method known as portfolio assessment. Our PLA standards and training have been used by colleges and universities since 1974. CAEL also works with subject matter experts and faculty to assess the credit-worthiness of learning portfolios submitted through LearningCounts™, an online portfolio development service that you can offer directly to your students. The rigor of our assessments is recognized by regional accreditors, as well as academic officers in institutions throughout the United States.

PLA Students Are Motivated and Successful

In our longitudinal study of 62,475 adult students at 48 colleges and universities across the country, CAEL found that students with PLA credit are 2-1/2 times more likely to persist to graduation than students without PLA credit.

Degree Completion Rates Side-by-Side



Source: Rebecca Klein-Collins, *Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success: A 48-Institution Study of Prior Learning Assessment and Adult Student Outcomes* (Chicago, IL: The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, March 2010), 34.



Two Choices to Bring PLA to Scale

Featured Network



LearningCounts™

Give your students access to an innovative and flexible method of earning credit. Featured Network institutions

receive the benefit of a full-service PLA department.

Benefits of the LearningCounts™ Featured Network:

- CAEL-trained faculty assessors will evaluate student portfolios
- Your institution will be featured on the LearningCounts™ website
- We provide free training webinars for your advisors
- Free marketing assistance provided by our marketing team
- You simply refer students and we will support them throughout the process
- You will receive a CAEL/National College Credit Recommendation Service transcript of recommended credits
- We provide data summaries of student activities

Training

CAEL offers a variety of workshops, webinars and certification programs to train faculty and administrators in PLA. Visit cael.org/events for a current list.

Consulting

CAEL consulting helps faculty, staff and administrators better understand adult learners and the services they need.

CAEL consultants can help you:

- Form a task force with faculty representation
- Make departmental decisions relating to your PLA policy and program
- Train faculty on the value and rigor of PLA and teach them best practices in portfolio assessment
- Train advisors on how and when to direct students to PLA
- Set up a process flow for student participation and assessment
- Design an appropriate pricing structure
- Market PLA to encourage student participation and to leverage it to enroll more students

To learn more about training, consulting and/or becoming a LearningCounts™ Featured Network, please contact Scott A. Campbell at scampbell@cael.org.

Learn more at:
www.cael.org