

**2015 – 2016
Credit for Prior Learning
(Prior Learning Assessment)
CPL Student Manual**



A State College of the
University System of Georgia

September 9, 2015

The Office of Academic Affairs
Dalton State College

Our Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) (also known as Prior Learning Assessment or PLA) program provides an opportunity to prove that you have already mastered certain skills or knowledge. If you are able to demonstrate competency in CPL areas, you could earn college credit. For example, have you been working in accounting for years? Perhaps you can demonstrate competency in accounting enough to meet the requirements of an accounting course. Or if you had advanced mathematics in high school, you might prove your competency in college algebra. Dalton State College adheres to CAEL's Ten Standards of Assessment for PLA. CAEL defines PLA as follows: "The recognition of learning gained from experiences that may be granted credit or otherwise certified... The assessment of learning attained through experiences irrespective of the time and place in which they occurred" (*Assessing Learning*, 2nd edition, By Morry Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Whitaker, p.12).

Dalton State College recognizes and respects the learning that can take place outside the formal classroom. We see the value in reflecting on experiences and thoughtful consideration of events that enhance our lives and our learning. To this end, DSC offers various means of earning course credit outside of the traditional classroom setting. Learning that comes through this reflection on experiences may be referred to as experiential learning. These experiences may either come through a more formalized program such as continuing education credits or employer-sponsored programs, or less formal means such as starting a business on your own or exploring the world of computing and web design on your own. If you can demonstrate college-level learning by meeting the published objectives for a course, then we can help you by giving you credit for that course. If you are interested in exploring CPL options, please contact Andy Meyer in the Office of Academic Affairs to find out what options might work best for you.

Advantages of CPL:

CPL can help you reduce your time to earning a degree.

CPL can help reduce expenses in your program.

CPL reduces repetitive learning and keeps you from taking courses in areas you may already be an expert in or have mastered.

We would like to work with you in order to help you receive college-level credits for things you have learned through your experiences and your reflections upon those experiences. We have a team of assessors who are experts in their disciplines who have been trained in helping students reflect upon their experiential learning and determine which learning would allow students to demonstrate that they meet the course objectives for specific DSC courses. Our trained assessors can help you with

business, math, biology, education, computer science, criminal justice, communication, nursing, and electronics. We are also part of a larger consortium of USG schools that have assessors trained in other fields.

There are several ways to gain credit for your prior learning. We recognize a number of nationally accepted standardized tests such as AP, CLEP, ACE, and DSST. We also have a number of departmental challenge exams - if you can demonstrate competencies in the course objectives, then you can receive credit for the course. Your job training certifications may also reflect college level learning. Another option is portfolio development. In this option you can create a portfolio that may show your mastery of a course's objectives and receive course credit.

How can you earn the credit?

You earn credit by first being admitted as a Dalton State College student. Once admitted, the registrar will evaluate your previous transcripts and award transfer credits where appropriate. Once you have this information, contact our CPL advisor (ameyer@daltonstate.edu) to discuss the options available for you to receive course credit for prior learning. Your options may include a portfolio, training certifications, a CLEP exam, or a departmental challenge exam for a particular subject. All CPL credit is tied to specific course objectives, and credit hours awarded will be identical to the credit hours awarded in the traditional class.

Portfolio Development

Portfolio development is a process through which students meet with a trained advisor to identify areas of prior learning that apply to specific course objectives, document that learning, and then submit their materials for assessment by a trained assessor. If the assessor considers the portfolio to demonstrate learning that meets course objectives, then the student will be awarded academic credit for that DSC course. Students who chose the portfolio option are required to take a two credit hour portfolio building course (CPLD 2000). This course is offered online and will help students effectively document their prior learning so that credit may be awarded. Please contact Andy Meyer to register for this course.

Nationally Accepted Standardized Tests

The majority of students taking standardized tests will take CLEP tests. These tests, offered through the College Entrance Examination Board, involve the completion of a standardized exam prepared by CLEP. Other exams include DSST exams and AP tests. The exams are available through the college's testing center. The student must purchase test materials for each test taken. The award of credit is governed by the following regulations:

Up to 30 hours of CLEP/DSST credit may count toward a degree at Dalton State College. Such credit will be recorded on the student's record in the same manner as transfer credit with the symbol "K" assigned.

No credit will be awarded on the basis of an examination taken more than twice after initial enrollment.

Credit will be given for courses for which a pre-requisite is a requirement only after such pre-requisite(s) have been satisfied.

Test cost is \$80; test administration fee is \$25. Total cost = \$105.

For a more detailed explanation of CLEP from the Dalton State Testing Center [click here](#). Below are the for which courses Dalton State currently awards CLEP credit for.

CLEP Test	Dalton State Credit	Dalton State Minimum Passing Score	Credit Hours Awarded
Principles of Microeconomics	ECON 2106	55	3
Financial Accounting	ACCT 2101 ACCT 2102	55	6
College Composition w/Essay	ENGL 1101	50 w/ passing Essay	3
English Literature	ENGL 2120	55	3
American Literature	ENGL 2131	55	3
French	FREN 1002	50	3
	FREN 1002, 2001, 2002	65	9
Spanish	SPAN 1002	50	3
	SPAN 1002, 2001, 2002	65	9

Algebra	MATH 1111	50	3
Precalculus	MATH 1113	50	3
Calculus	MATH 2253	50	4
Biology	BIOL 1107, 1108	50	8
Chemistry	CHEM 1211	50	4
Western Civilization I	HIST 1111	50	3
Western Civilization II	HIST 1112	50	3
History of the United States I	HIST 2111	50*	3
History of the United States II	HIST 2112	50*	3
American Government	POLS 1101	50*	3
Introduction to Psychology	PSYC 1101	50	3
Human Growth & Development	PSYC 2103	50	3
Introduction to Sociology	SOCI 1101	50	3

Please contact Dalton State College's Testing Center for more information.

Departmental Challenge Exams

Departmental Challenge Exams can be taken for some courses with the approval of the department chair and appropriate instructors. These exams allow you to demonstrate your mastery of the course objectives. If you meet the course objectives, you will be awarded course credit. Please talk to the department chair to discuss if a challenge exam is available for your course of interest.

CPL by Portfolio Assessment

If prospective students have other learning experiences that may fit courses not served by departmental examination or by national standardized examination, they may be advised to consider prior learning assessment by portfolio. Students will then be advised to sign up for the PLA Documentation course (PLAD 2000). This course will

teach students the skills needed in order to develop appropriate documentation for the courses for which they hope to earn CPL credit. The CPL Documentation course is a two credit hour course offered online and is taught by a CPL counselor. During this course they work on documenting their learning and by the end of the semester, they should have a portfolio ready to submit to a discipline specific faculty assessor. PLAD 2000 is a two credit hour class, and this credit may be used toward your degree. It is also available as a free workshop for those who do not need the course credit.

Courses available for CPL credit by portfolio

In theory, any course in the Dalton State College curriculum could be eligible for CPL credit. However, students should be aware that some courses are more or less relevant to their learning experiences and to their degree program. Individual departments determine which courses, if any, are available for CPL credit by portfolio.

Courses NOT available for CPL credit by portfolio

Due to the amount of work involved in portfolio development, the courses covered by CLEP, DSST, departmental examination, and courses for which the student has already registered are not eligible.

CPL Portfolio Development

Students use the portfolio development process to document their how their prior experience has resulted in college-level learning. This process results in a portfolio that demonstrates that they have specific skills, knowledge, values, attitudes, achievements, experiences, competencies, training, and certifications that align with specific course objectives. The portfolio developed in the documentation course should not only describe the relevant experience but should also identify how reflection upon these experiences resulted in significant learning.

Students must also offer insights on how reflective analysis has led to the realization of college-level learning that has been acquired through selected non-traditional experiences. These experiences might include a variety of work, training, reading, and research; civil and military service; or life learning.

Once students complete and submit the CPL portfolio, assessors will evaluate it to determine if the portfolio provides evidence of achieving the course objectives for a specific course. If the portfolio does so, credit can be awarded when assessors determine that the prior learning is acceptable for credit.

Registering for the PLA Documentation Course

Students register for the PLAD 2000 after consulting with the Office of Academic Affairs. If you would like more information on CPL, contact

Dr. Andy Meyer
Office: Academic Affairs, Westcott Bldg
Phone: 706-272-4421
Email: ameyer@daltonstate.edu

Policies Specific to the PLA Program: Dalton State College adheres to these policies which follow CAEL's Ten Standards of Assessing Learning:

STANDARD I: Credit should be awarded only for learning and not for experience.

Students will be required to demonstrate what they have learned through their experiences. They can demonstrate their learning through standardized exams, certifications, departmental exams, or portfolio assessment. CPL is available for adult students who are non-traditional students that have learning experiences beyond a traditional college curriculum. This may include life, corporate training programs, continuing education, military or life experiences.

STANDARD II: Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are both agreed upon and made public.

Students awarded credit will have demonstrated mastery of the published course learning objectives. The number of credit hours awarded will be the same as the traditional class credits. Due to the amount of work involved in both creating and assessing a portfolio, credit via portfolio may not replace existing credit assessments available through CLEP, departmental examination, DSST, or ACE.

STANDARD III: Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not apart from it, and be based on an understanding of learning processes.

Learning is an ongoing process and assessment should be continuous and used to guide a student's progress. Students are encouraged to find a faculty "coach" to help guide their portfolio development. Portfolio credit may be awarded after the first submission, in which case the student will be notified that credit has been granted. The assessors may specifically outline areas for improvement and encourage students to resubmit their documentation one time during the next semester. The assessors will provide a report giving specific feedback to students regardless of whether credit was given or not.

Students may resubmit the portfolio for re-assessment, with a revision of the documentation set and inclusion of any noted areas for improvement in the semester immediately after the original assessment of that particular documentation set. Students may resubmit only one time for any given course.

STANDARD IV: The determination of competence levels and of credit awards must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic experts.

Assessors at Dalton State College are experts in their discipline. They teach the courses that they will be assessing and have undergone training to be effective assessors of prior learning. Assessed portfolios must demonstrate learning that reflects mastery of the course objectives equivalent to someone receiving credit in the traditional class.

STANDARD V: Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.

Students should consult with both the CPL advisor, CPL assessor, and their regular advisor to ensure that seeking prior learning is appropriate for completion of their program.

Students may not conduct CPL by departmental examination, standardized test, or portfolio for any courses for which they have previously or currently registered at Dalton State as a regular or audit student.

STANDARD VI: If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.

Since Dalton State is matching credit award to specific courses and course objectives, the potential for duplication should be minimized.

A maximum of 30 semester hours can be earned through any combination of CLEP, credit by departmental examination, ACE credits, advanced placement (AP), or CPL by portfolio credit. Students should also work with the CPL counselor and their academic advisor to determine any additional requirements they may need to consider.

The CPL 2000 Prior Learning Documentation course will be recorded on the students' transcripts as "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory." CPL credit for the courses for which the student seeks credit will be noted with a specific letter (S) designating that credit was given by CPL. (This is the current procedure for courses in which letters such as "K" are used.)

Individual departments with unique accreditation requirements may determine how many, if any, CPL credits may be awarded.

STANDARD VII: Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available for all parties involved in the assessment process.

The departments responsible for grading particular departmental challenge examinations determine the grading timeline for the examinations. Portfolios are due three weeks prior to the end of the semester for consideration of receipt of credit by CPL. Faculty assessors will assign grades of S or U by the final examination period. Along with the determination of credit, the assessor will also provide feedback regarding the portfolio whether credit was awarded or not.

If the assessors deem a portfolio “satisfactory,” they will submit a CPL Credit Approval Form (available in this handbook). This form must be approved by the assessor, the assessor’s department head and dean, and the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs before being sent to the Registrar’s Office. Students will earn a grade of satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U) for the CPLD 2000 Prior Learning Documentation course, and the course or courses for which students have successfully earned CPL credit will be noted on the transcript with a letter grade of “S” or “U.” These “S” or “U” grades will not be part of the student’s grade point average.

Appeal Process: Students may appeal an unsatisfactory grade on a resubmitted portfolio through the normal course grade appeal process. The assignment of grades and symbols is the responsibility of the instructor. Any change in an assigned grade or symbol must be recommended by the instructor who assigned the original grade or symbol and be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Time Limit Policy: Students have one semester to complete CPL by portfolio for a particular course. Students may have one additional semester if it becomes necessary to resubmit an unsatisfactory portfolio.

All appeals by students for grade or symbol changes must be made by midterm of the semester following award of the grade(s) or symbol(s). The sequence of appeal is the student’s assessor, the department chair or dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. (Refer to <http://www.daltonstate.edu/registrar/students/explanation-of-grades.html>)

STANDARD VIII: Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.

The Testing Center charges a fee of \$85 to administer standardized exams such as CLEP. Departmental Challenge exams are administered by the individual departments and also carry a fee of \$85.

When students submit a portfolio for assessment, they must pay in full a CPL assessment fee based on the number of credit hours for which they are seeking credit. The table below designates fees per credit hours. Students then submit their receipt for this fee to the CPL advisor who will submit their portfolio to the appropriate assessors. Students must pay this fee for each assessment (including resubmits) submitted.

Credit Hours	Fee
4 hr class	\$300
3 hr class	\$250
2 hr class	\$200
1 hr class	\$150

Students who submit Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Certification documents will pay in full a \$200 fee prior to assessment and alignment of their training to Dalton State courses. This is the only fee associated with POST Certification assessment regardless of the amount of credit awarded. Please see the form at the end of this document. This form must be turned into the CPL advisor prior to the assessment.

STANDARD IX: All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.

Dalton State faculty must successfully complete CAEL's workshops 1 and 2 through DePaul University. They are also expected to maintain scholarly activity in both their discipline and assessment of prior learning.

STANDARD X: Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and in the state of the assessment arts.

The CPL program will be evaluated in terms of student interest, faculty costs, and administrative costs. Dalton State College currently runs a program of Comprehensive Program Review and the CPL program will be subject to the same criteria as other DSC programs. Success of the program will be measured in terms of student success, impact on graduation rates, and student satisfaction.



CPL (PLA) Credit Form

NAME OF STUDENT _____ STUDENT ID _____

The above student has completed either a Departmental Exam or Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio and documentation to receive credit for the following course(s).

Date paid: _____ Receipt _____ Initials _____

Portfolio credit Departmental Exam Credit Certification Credit

**Course Prefix
and Number**

Course Title

Credit Hours

<u>Course Prefix and Number</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

APPROVALS

Approved Disapproved _____ Date _____
Assessor

Approved Disapproved _____ Date _____
Department Head

Approved Disapproved _____ Date _____
Dean

Approved Disapproved _____ Date _____
Vice President of Academic Affairs

The CPL Counselor has reviewed all submitted materials to verify that the documentation to meet the requirements for credit is complete.

CPL Counselor

Date



POST Certification Assessment

NAME OF STUDENT _____ STUDENT ID _____

The above student has paid in full an assessment fee of \$200. This form must be submitted to the CPL Advisor along with the POST Certifications for assessment and alignment to Dalton State courses. The assessment fee is the only applicable fee regardless of the amount of credit awarded.

Date paid: _____ Receipt _____ Initials _____