Introduction
Polk State College is committed to quality education and recognizes that learners in higher education come with many experiences from varied backgrounds. Therefore, in accordance with guidelines established by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), Polk State College has developed a way for learners to receive college credit for prior learning experiences that do not fit into another category of recognized credit (e.g. external standardized credit-by-exam, articulated licensure, or certification).

Extra-institutional learning is defined as learning that is attained outside the sponsorship of legally authorized and accredited postsecondary educational institutions. The term applies to learning acquired from work and life experiences; independent reading and study; the mass media; and participation in formal courses sponsored by associations, business, government, industry, the military, and unions. Polk State recognizes extra-institutional learning through a portfolio assessment process and adheres to guidelines established by the CAEL.

The guidelines presented are intended to provide a foundation for the experiential learning process, with an emphasis on learning outcomes and competencies that the learner will document in each portfolio. Credit proposed by the learner and granted by the evaluator will be course specific. Credits may be granted for the maximum number of course credits; however, the evaluator may choose to assign a lesser credit value. Students may earn a maximum of 25% of the credit in the academic program for which they are enrolled.

Students will complete the following before they will be accepted to complete the Prior Learning Portfolio Process:

1. Verify you meet the following qualifications for PLA:
   • Enrolled in a degree-seeking program at Polk State College
   • Completed ENC 1101 (or equivalent) and attained placement at college level in math or completed college preparatory math courses
   • Minimum of 3 years professional experience
   Note: PLA credits will not be transcripted until the student has completed 3 credits at Polk State College

2. Review the following documents and complete the tasks:
   • Read the Polk State Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio PowerPoint (found at www.polk.edu/pla ) and answer the questions (see step 3 below for answer-submission directions).
   • Read the Polk State Prior Learning Portfolio Guidelines (found at www.polk.edu/pla ) and write an abstract (see step 3 below for abstract-submission directions)

3. Complete the Polk State Request for Prior Learning Assessment Credit form (found at www.polk.edu/pla ) and submit to the appropriate program director. Attach to this form:
   • Responses to PLA questions from Polk State Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio PowerPoint
   • Abstract from Polk State Prior Learning Portfolio Guidelines
• Basic Course Information (BCI) Sheet for any course you are requesting credit for (see www.polk.edu/bci)
• Resume
• Unofficial college transcripts if applicable

Students must keep a copy of the submitted **Request for Prior Learning Assessment Credit** form and the attachments to include in the portfolio.

4. Meet with the appropriate program director and receive approval to pursue PLA credit.
5. Once the program director approves your request to pursue PLA, decide whether to develop the portfolio independently or to take SLS 2370 **PLA Portfolio Development** to assist with portfolio development (taking this course is recommended).
6. Pay PLA fee of $50 per credit requested. This is a nonrefundable fee. Keep receipt to submit with portfolio.
7. Build portfolio. Submit portfolio to the appropriate program director with a copy of the receipt.

**The Portfolio Defined**
A portfolio is a compilation of information presented by the learner to equate experiential learning to a specific college course or courses for a specified number of semester hours. It includes:

• cover page
• table of contents
• abstract
• copy showing student paid for credit-by-assessment (non-refundable)
• **Request for Prior Learning Portfolio Credit** form
• course BCI with the course’s learning outcomes delineated for each course for which the student is requesting credit
• student autobiography, chronological record
• resume
• introduction, goal statements
• significant learning statements/outcomes with learning narratives
• completed **Significant Learning Outline**
• narrative to convey knowledge acquired
• bibliography
• documentation – index, letters of verification, documentation with captions or artifacts if needed
• appendices
• evaluation form(s) for each course for the evaluator to complete

The portfolio is reviewed by an evaluator who determines whether there is sufficient explanation and documentation to assess learning and award credit.

**Portfolio Components**
**Cover Page:** The cover page will include your name, student identification number, address, phone number, and e-mail address.

**Abstract:** The one-page abstract includes an executive summary justifying your request and stating the documentation you will be providing. It should be submitted with the **Request for Prior Learning Portfolio Credit** form and a copy of the abstract included in the portfolio submission.
Table of Contents: The table of contents includes the portfolio page numbers, supporting documents properly cataloged, and noted.

Autobiography: The autobiography is a complete picture of the learner – who you are, what you have done, what you know, and what you want to accomplish. To demonstrate why you have selected the course(s) in this portfolio, prepare an autobiographical essay based on your life experiences using your resume as a guide. Relate the relevant experiences to the course in a general explanation. (Specifics will be detailed in the Significant Learning Outline). The autobiography introduces you to the evaluator and helps him or her understand the context of your learning for the particular course(s) you are requesting. This should include your educational and career goals. More importantly, it is intended to help you reflect on how experiences from different times in your life may have come together for a common goal.

The essay should be two to four pages and summarize the significant learning experiences in your life; define your personal, educational, and career goals; and describe how your experiences will validate your knowledge of the course content and meet the course outcomes being petitioned for credit. Your autobiography and resume must be included in each specific course portfolio you submit.

Resume: Provide an updated resume to include education and work experiences. Detail significant activities, exact dates, accomplishments in the workplace, and all non-formal and work related training.

Degree Audit: Include a print out of your program-objective degree audit, highlighting the courses for which you are trying to earn credit.

Significant Learning Outline: The Significant Learning Outline is a worksheet to reflect on your life experiences as they directly relate to the course. Your completed document must address the outcomes of the course(s) for which credit is being requested.

For each course objective, complete a Significant Learning Outline using a chronological outline of your applicable life experiences. The categories listed on the worksheet include employment, workshops, volunteer work, recreation, self-directed learning, military service, licenses, travel, and other items. Other items might include personal crisis (e.g., death or divorce), health (e.g., disability or illness), relationships (e.g., parenting or elder care), and many more.

For each category under each learning outcome, list what you have done, indicate how much time was involved, and describe the activities. Each learning outcome that you justify must refer to documentation you have collected. Explain what you learned using action verbs (i.e., differentiate, compare, contrast, list, calculate, solve, construct, organize, etc.).

Narrative: From the information and supporting documentation on your Significant Learning Outline, you will develop an essay to summarize the learning from your experiences based on the course description and outcomes. This essay (or narrative) is a detailed explanation of your activities and the resulting competencies achieved.

1. Use the course objectives to guide your discussion of your accomplishments.
2. Pull in details from the related Significant Learning Outline; explain where, why, and what experiences were involved.
3. For a course that includes a substantial amount of theory, demonstrate that you have the appropriate balance of theory and application.
4. The narrative will incorporate terminology appropriate to the course and examples of applications of the concepts as demonstrated through your accomplishments.

Consider the narrative as an open-book take-home test. Make sure it is clear, concise, and free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, and spelling. It needs to demonstrate college-level writing and critical thinking. The narrative may be three to ten pages in length, depending on the course.

**Bibliography:** The bibliography indicates reading done on the portfolio subject. You should have at least 3-10 references, probably the course’s textbook. Cite sources when you make reference to theorists, laws, statistical data, and any information that does not come from your own mind in the portfolio. References must be cited in the American Psychological Association (APA) style.

**Documentation:** Each of your experiences and competencies will require verification (evidence). This evidence can take several forms: Completion of training programs, workshops, seminars, etc., may be verified through certificates; personnel records, specifically performance reviews showing competencies; job descriptions; transcripts; samples of work; testimonials; certificates of attendance; and/or evidence of knowledge or letters of verification listing proven competencies from instructors or employers.

Each piece of documentation for a workshop or training program must be accompanied by a description page of content for each workshop, training program, or seminar and must show how the evidence relates to the course learning outcomes.

Employment history and job responsibilities may be documented on copies of performance appraisals, company job descriptions, and examples of projects or reports (verified as your work), or a supervisor’s letter of verification. Evidence of volunteer work may include awards, newspaper articles, or letters of commendation.

If your portfolio is a request for credit for a performance or activity-based course, you will need to submit evidence such as:

- a videotape of your speech, theatre work, or music recital
- samples of your painting, drawing, photography, or ceramics for a studio art course
- samples of presentations or reports you have generated and verified as your work to document competency in spreadsheets or other software

Letters are a common form of verification and can be very effective if the writer understands the purpose of the letter. When you request an individual to write a letter of verification, provide the person with the course description you are presenting in your portfolio. Explain you are requesting equivalent college credit for experiential learning and provide a copy of what might be included in a verification letter.

Extraneous or inappropriate documentation may indicate to the evaluator that you lack understanding of how your experiences relate to your learning.

*Note: When submitting your portfolio, it is important that documentation be specific to the course description and learning outcomes used in your portfolio.*

**APPENDICES:** Documentation of additional materials such as references used in citation.

**Evaluation Forms:** Student will include a *Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Evaluator Response* form for each course requested for evaluation.
Academic Honesty
Plagiarism, falsification, or misrepresentation are unacceptable and will result in disqualification of the portfolio.

The Completed Portfolio
Before submitting your portfolio, it is recommended that you make a copy for your file. Include a copy of receipt for your payment of the non-refundable Credit-By-Exam fee.

The evaluator will review the documentation and complete the Evaluator Response form. Expect to receive the results in approximately six weeks. The evaluator makes a recommendation to grant credit for all courses requested, for some courses requested, or for no courses. Alternatively, the evaluator may return the portfolio for minor explanation and/or documentation revisions. Large revision will not be allowed; portfolios that need large revisions will be awarded no credit with no revision opportunity. This decision is at the discretion of the evaluator. If the portfolio is returned for minor revisions, a date of return will be listed on the Evaluator Response form. The student must return the portfolio by the date listed or forfeit the credit with an automatic denial.

When credit is granted, the student will receive a copy of the Evaluator Response form from the Registrar’s office after credit has been posted to the student record.

If credit is denied, the student may appeal in writing to the Program Director or District Dean, who may determine whether to resubmit to another evaluator or make other recommendations to the student. All appeals must be requested within 30 days of the student notification mail-out date.

SLS 2371 Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Development
Polk State College offers a two-credit, online course call SLS 2371 Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio Development. Students who are requesting PLA credit are not required to take this course, but it is strongly recommended. This course provides an introduction to the PLA portfolio development process. The course includes a series of structured activities that teach the student how to prepare a portfolio.
Polk State College
Request for Prior Learning Assessment Credit
Submission of Portfolio does not guarantee credit will be approved!

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Student Polk State College ID__________________________________________

Student Name__________________________________________________________ E-mail address_________________________

Student Address__________________________________________________________________________________________

Home Phone____________________ Cell________________ Work________________________

POLK STATE COLLEGE INFORMATION

Degree student is seeking _____BAS _____AA _____AS _____Certificate

Program student is seeking: _______________________________________________ Program Code_____

This course is requested to satisfy the specific degree requirement for: (Check one)

_____ General education core subject in __________________________________________

_____ Program course(s)

_____ Elective(s)

INFORMATION ON REQUESTED COURSE(S)

Course Number__________________________________________________________ Credits ______________________

Course Title__________________________________________________________________________________________

Course Number__________________________________________________________ Credits ______________________

Course Title__________________________________________________________________________________________

(For additional courses, attach a separate page)

Attach the following:

A BCI with course description and learning outcomes for each course requested, the abstract, and
the answered questions for the Polk State Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio PowerPoint.

The information included in this portfolio being submitted to Polk State College is true and correct. I
understand failure to provide accurate information is considered adequate grounds for dismissal
from the College and for revocation of credits granted. Submission of the portfolio does not
guarantee approval of credit.
Learner Signature_______________________________________________
Date___________________

Note: SLS 2371 PLA Portfolio Development is recommended for all students pursuing PLA credit.

Proposal Approved______________________________________________
Program Director or District Dean Signature
Date___________________

Proposal Denied______________________________________________
Program Director or District Dean Signature
Date___________________

Explanation:
## Significant Learning Outline

Use this worksheet to identify specific competencies and learning outcomes as they directly relate to this portfolio. Make copies as needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Time Spent in Activity</th>
<th>Description of Duties and Activities</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes and Competencies Reached</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Work Experience</td>
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<td>Workshops, Webinars, Training, Seminars, Professional Development</td>
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<td>Volunteer Activities</td>
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<td>Experiences</td>
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<td>Recreation, Hobbies</td>
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<td>Self-Directed Study, Independent Reading</td>
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<td>Military Experience</td>
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<td>Licenses (that do not qualify for articulated credit)</td>
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<td>Travel Experience</td>
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<td>Other (projects, etc.)</td>
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</table>
Letter of Verification Guide

(Company Letterhead)
Date

To whom it may concern:

Introduction of how the individual writing the letter is acquainted with the learner and the length of time. (Why he/she is qualified to verify the learning and experience.)

A description of the learner’s experience and responsibilities, and a detailed explanation of the learning.

Statement of authenticity for a project, report, etc., submitted by the learner, if applicable.

If qualified to do so, the individual writing the letter may equate the learner’s knowledge with what would be taught in a comparable college course. (Note: The letter of verification is not a personal recommendation or testimony of character, but rather an outline of facts to support the learner’s narrative.)

A telephone number, if different than letterhead, where the writer may be reached if the evaluator has questions.

Sincerely,

Original Signature
**Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio**  
**Evaluator Response Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Inventory</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table of contents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Request for Prior Learning Assessment Credit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course syllabus with learning outcomes delineated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
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<td>Copy of paid receipt for PLA (non-refundable)</td>
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<td>Autobiography, including chronological record</td>
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<td>Significant Learning Outline</td>
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<td>Narrative of knowledge acquired</td>
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<td>Bibliography</td>
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<td>Submitting documents, appendices, evaluation forms</td>
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**Evaluation Detail**

Has the student documented competencies in at least 70% of the course content of the course?

- Yes
- No

If no, please elaborate:

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Does the learner, using a mixture of theory and practice as well as appropriate terminology, indicating a competent understanding of the course material and demonstrate how the learning was acquired?

- Yes
- No

If no, please elaborate:

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Comments from Portfolio Evaluator:

Recommendation:

- **No Revision Necessary, Credits Awarded** for the following courses:

- **Minor Revisions Necessary.** Resubmit deadline ____________________
  (Once the submission deadline is past, the student may no longer be granted credits for the portfolio.)

- **Extensive Revisions Necessary.** No credits awarded.
  If credits are denied, please explain:

**Portfolio Evaluator (please print)** ____________________________ (Evaluator Signature) ____________________________
Date

**Supervising Academic Dean (please print)** ____________________________ (Dean Signature) ____________________________
Date

**Registrar's Office:**

**Registrar Approval.** ____________________________ (Registrar Signature) ____________________________
Date

Credits entered into record. ____________________________ (Staff Signature) ____________________________
Date