Prior Learning Assessment

Prior Learning Assessment Policy

Georgia Southern University graduate programs may offer students an opportunity to obtain select graduate credit by Prior Learning Assessment (PLA). For programs opting-in, PLA is the means by which university credit can be awarded for learning gains resulting from experiences outside of the traditional university milieu. A maximum of 9 credit hours may be earned via PLA, with the total number of PLA credit hours earned and credit hours transferred from another institution not to exceed 9 credit hours.

A student’s eligibility for PLA will be determined by the department chair in collaboration with the subject area program faculty and approved by the College of Graduate Studies. The department will determine the number of semester hours of graduate credit for which a student may request eligibility. A student may be deemed eligible for PLA before or within the first semester of admission to one of the University’s graduate programs. Note: Eligibility for PLA does not guarantee program admission. Program admission and eligibility for PLA are separate and distinct decisions.

Graduate credit earned by PLA will be considered resident credit. A grade of “B” or better on any and all assessments is required to receive graduate credit. Graduate credit earned by PLA will be noted as “K” on a student’s Georgia Southern University transcript. Program faculty will determine the appropriateness of accepting PLA for their individual degree programs. Program faculty may also specify courses to be excluded or included for possible PLA credit.

Prior Learning Assessment Procedures

The procedure for seeking PLA credit is as follows:

1. Student petitions the department chair of the subject area before or within the first semester of program admission for an opportunity to demonstrate competence in the learning outcomes associated with a particular course or set of courses listed in the University’s Graduate Catalog.
2. The department chair or his/her designee will provide guidance to the student regarding how competence must be demonstrated, the acceptable timeframe for demonstrating competence, and the process of review (previously determined by department chairs in conjunction with program faculty members).
3. The student submits evidence of competence in the form and within the timeframe acceptable to the faculty of the program from which credit is sought. The evidence appropriate for each course under consideration for PLA will be determined by program faculty. Options include but are not limited to portfolios, exams, digital badges, or other means consistent with the learning outcomes of the course or courses at the program discretion.
4. The program faculty members will determine acceptable dates of evidence submission for each course or set of courses for which credit is sought via PLA.
5. The student will receive notification of performance results within a timeframe established by the program.
6. Students may appeal PLA decisions by following the procedures established by the university grade appeal process.