

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

Fontbonne University offers students the opportunity to earn undergraduate credit for non-collegiate sponsored learning. Prior learning assessment is a concept based on accepted principles of adult learning and serves to validate learning outcomes and professional competence achieved outside the classroom. Credit for prior learning may be awarded for college/university-level learning which entails knowledge, skills, and competencies gained through validated testing, professional training, military experience, and/or portfolio development. Prior learning credit will be awarded only if the work assessed meets or exceeds 'C' level coursework.

A maximum of 32 credit hours will be accepted in PLA credit opportunities at Fontbonne. Students may not count PLA credit toward the 32-hour residency requirement at Fontbonne or toward the OPTIONS core requirements, and may not receive credit more than once for the same learning/competency achievement. Fees charged for PLA credit are subject to change.

The standards and criteria established by Fontbonne for assessing college/university-level learning were developed in conformance with guidelines set forth by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). Fontbonne University cannot guarantee how any other college or university might interpret transfer credit awarded through Prior Learning Assessment.

The PLA program at Fontbonne encompasses the following opportunities.

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Students may earn up to 32 credit hours received through the assessment of their college/university-level learning by these methods of testing. Students will not earn credit for an examination if they have taken a college/university course of equal or higher equivalency in that area prior to the exam.

The testing methods recognized by Fontbonne are defined as follows:

(1) College Level Examination Program (CLEP)

Students may earn credit for CLEP general and subject examinations to fulfill certain course requirements according to the respective college or department policy. Official test scores must be received by the registrar's office directly from the testing agency. Credit is awarded if the score received is at or above the American Council of Education (ACE) recommended score.

(2) Advanced Placement (AP)

Students who score four or five on Advanced Placement tests may be awarded university credit through Fontbonne, subject to the approval of the appropriate college dean or department chairperson. Each college/department will decide the amount of credit and the specific (equivalent) course for which credit will be given. A student who scores one, two, or three on AP tests will not receive advanced placement or earn university credit. Official test scores must be received by the registrar's office directly from the testing agency.

A copy of the Fontbonne courses that are satisfied by advanced placement courses is available in the offices of the coordinator of prior learning assessment, admission, registrar, and academic affairs.

NON-STANDARDIZED EXAMS/CREDIT FROM ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

(1) Military Experience

College/university credit can be awarded for military courses and enlisted ranks/military occupational specialties (MOS) which adhere to the standards of and have been evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide. When available, submission of the ACE registry transcript is required. If ACE is unable to provide a transcript, the DD214 and/or a transcript of in-service training is required.

(2) Professional Training

College/university credit may be awarded for professional training courses sponsored by business and industry, government, and labor which adhere to the standards of and have been evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE) or the New York State Program on Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction (PONSI).

(3) Credit by Exam

Fontbonne will accept undergraduate credit by exam for non-standardized examinations given by accredited institutions. The course number, title, and credit hours must appear on the official transcript. Determination as to the fulfillment of certain course requirements will be reviewed and considered by the appropriate college dean or department chairperson.

(4) Department Proficiency Exams

Several departments offer proficiency exams for specific Fontbonne courses. Students who

satisfactorily complete the proficiency exam for a specific course may petition to have the requirement met and to receive credit for the particular course.

(5) Portfolio Evaluation

The portfolio evaluation is available in two formats: (a) Portfolio I: Documented Learning and (b) Portfolio II: Narrative Essay. If students believe they have already acquired the competencies of specific university courses, they may petition for credit through the portfolio evaluation. Students can earn credit for courses listed in the Fontbonne University catalog as well as for college/university-level courses listed in the catalogs of an accredited degree-granting college or university, provided there is a Fontbonne faculty member who can evaluate the request relative to learning outcomes. The prior learning assessment coordinator provides guidance in portfolio preparation and submission procedures. The portfolio must contain detailed evidence of learning outcomes, supporting documentation, and descriptions of personal and professional experience.

(a) Portfolio I: Documented Learning

Students must prepare a portfolio of their learning experiences, which can be documented by licenses, certifications, or transcripts from non-accredited or professionally accredited colleges and schools. Professional training programs through local corporations, which have not been evaluated by ACE/PONSI, may be included in this portfolio. **The documented learning portfolio should have content congruent to the established Fontbonne University specific course for which credit is being petitioned. Credit awarded for the documented learning portfolio must not be greater than the credit assigned to the specific course as listed in the Fontbonne catalog.**

(b) Portfolio II: Narrative Essay

If the student has extensive knowledge which cannot be supported through areas of learning covered under the Portfolio I description, Portfolio II must be prepared for assessment. The narrative essay portfolio relies more on the student's explanation of the learning outcomes and the practical application of the experiences. Examples of supporting documentation include work samples, certificates of completion of workshops/seminars, and verification from superiors.

For additional information on prior learning assessment, please contact the director of Prior Learning Assessment at 314.919.0754.