



# PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

## ***Credit for What You Have Learned***

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a term used to describe the assessment of experience or knowledge for college credit that is acquired outside of a traditional academic environment. PLA can take many different forms, but generally, college credit for PLA can be awarded for an individual's demonstrated or documented learning and knowledge at the college level. Obtaining college credit through PLA shortens the pathway and saves time and money. The academic department chairs and content faculty experts ultimately determine what equivalent credit is awarded by PLA. They consider:

- Credit for course-related work experience
- Credit for course-related life experiences
- Credit for course-related experiential learning
- Credit for course-related military training

## ***Process and Procedures***

See our PLA guidelines page to learn more about the ins and outs of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) at [www.southwest.tn.edu/pla](http://www.southwest.tn.edu/pla)

## ***Eligibility***

To participate in the PLA program at Southwest, students must be:

- Currently enrolled at Southwest and actively pursuing a declared program of study
- In good academic standing with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0
- In good financial standing with the College and not have any outstanding debts

***For more information, contact  
Mike Stephens, PLA Academic Coordinator  
[gstephens@southwest.tn.edu](mailto:gstephens@southwest.tn.edu), or call (901) 333-4658***

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# WORK-BASED LEARNING: PLA STUDENT PROCESS

**START**

*Students interested in pursuing PLA opportunities for college credit should complete the online PLA application found on the Southwest PLA web page at [www.southwest.tn.edu/pla](http://www.southwest.tn.edu/pla)*

*The PLA Coordinator will review the application for student eligibility and credit suitability. The PLA Coordinator contacts the student to explain the process and conduct an eligibility interview.*

*The PLA Coordinator informs the student if they are a candidate for PLA, and introduces them to the academic department for guidance on what should be submitted for review.*

*The PLA Coordinator contacts the appropriate academic department and inform them of the students request for assessment of PLA.*

*Faculty make the decision to award or deny PLA credit for the student and inform the PLA Coordinator of the decision. If credit is awarded the faculty must define what course is being given credit.*

*The PLA Coordinator contacts the Registrar's Office to have the course added to the student's academic transcript.*