



Prior Learning Assessment Guidelines and Procedures

*“Let us help you accelerate your degree completion with
knowledge and skills you bring
to your program of study from past experiences.”*

A. **What is Prior Learning Assessment?**

Prior Learning Assessment is a process that involves identification, documentation, assessment, and recognition of the learning you have acquired through formal and informal study.

Prior Learning includes learning acquired from work and life experiences; correspondence and extension courses; individual study and reading; civic, community, and volunteer work; and participation in informal courses and in-service training sponsored by associations, business, government, and industry.

Any credits earned through Prior Learning Assessment apply to programs at Northeast Community College. The transfer to other colleges or baccalaureate granting institutions will require review by the accepting institution. Prior Learning Assessment hours are not included in hours registered in a term and are not used in determining enrollment status, hours for financial aid, VA benefits, or any reporting information.

B. **Methods of Assessing Prior Learning**

Four methods are available for Prior Learning Assessment: Standardized Tests, Published Guides, Course Competency Assessments, and Portfolios.

1. Standardized Tests

National examinations which generally reflect competency in college course work in specific subjects. Examples include College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Advanced Placement (AP) Exam Equivalencies, and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support Program (DANTES).

Standardized tests are administered several times a year at test centers located on college or university campuses. Established thresholds for standardized tests are used to determine passing scores.

Contact the Northeast Test Center for more information.

2. Published Guides

Guides developed by nationally recognized organizations in which non-college training programs are equated to college course work.

The credit recommendation from the American Council of Education (ACE) will be used to evaluate industry and corporate training and Veterans training during military service.

Note: Guidelines established by Northeast Community College take precedence over recommendations in published guides.

Contact the Northeast Registrar's office for more information.

3. Course Competency Assessment

Department written examinations and/or performance-based skills assessments that validate prior learning experiences are equivalent to an identified course or set of courses. The threshold used to determine competency is defined as “C” level work. If the program has a course requirement for a grade above “C” level work, the threshold will be raised to meet that requirement.

Contact the appropriate Division Dean for more information.

4. Portfolios

A collection of documents prepared by the student containing rationale, information, and materials that demonstrate acquired knowledge and skills equivalent to that acquired by completing college courses.

Student portfolios will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- a) Documents provide evidence that course objectives have been met at collegiate level.
- b) Theoretical framework and practical application elements can be identified and verified through appropriate documentation.
- c) Knowledge and skills must be current and/or relevant, as appropriate.

Contact the appropriate Division Dean for more information.

C. Criteria for Awarding Credit through Prior Learning Assessment

1. Academic credit will be awarded only for courses directly applicable to the curriculum requirements of the student’s declared degree, diploma, or certificate program as outlined in college publications.
2. A student may use Prior Learning Assessment using portfolio assessment and/or course assessment to fulfill up to 21 core program credits toward a degree, 12 core program credits for a diploma, and up to 6 core program credits toward a certificate.
3. The student may apply for Prior Learning Assessment prior to enrollment. The student must be enrolled during the term in which Prior Learning Assessment credits are awarded.

Prior Learning Assessment Procedures

Standardized Tests

- ❑ Step 1: Contact the Test Center to obtain information and to arrange a testing time. If you have already completed testing and have acquired results, continue to Step 2.
- ❑ Step 2: Provide the Registrar with formal documentation of official test results.
- ❑ Step 3: The Registrar will review the results and apply credit upon approval.

Published Guides

- ❑ Step 1: Contact the Registrar's office and be prepared to provide formal verification of your experience.
- ❑ Step 2: The Registrar will evaluate your records and apply credit upon approval.

Course Competency Assessment method of Prior Learning Assessment

- ❑ Step 1: The Division Dean will discuss descriptions and objectives for courses identified by the student for prior learning assessment, and will:
 - Determine if Course Competency Assessment Credit for prior learning is an option for the student.
 - Review criteria for course competency assessment of prior learning.
- ❑ Step 2: The student will complete the Prior Learning Assessment application, and will:
 - Submit the assessment fee in Accounts Receivable Services.
 - Submit the Prior Learning Assessment application to request Course Competency Assessment to the Division Dean.
 - If a student is enrolled in a course for which he/she wants to arrange for Course Competency Assessment Credit for Prior Learning, he/she must drop the course, then complete and submit the Prior Learning Assessment application prior to the 100% refund drop period deadline.
- ❑ Step 3: The Division Dean will assign a faculty member with course expertise to administer the course competency assessment.
 - In no case will credit be granted for less than credit hours posted in the catalog or for credits duplicated by an already completed class.
 - The faculty member will indicate the number of credits earned—even if zero, will sign the Prior Learning Assessment Evaluation Report where appropriate, and will return the report to the Division Dean. *(Students receiving financial aid must drop by the financial aid census date, typically the third day of the semester)*
- ❑ Step 4: The Division Dean will review the decision and clarify any remaining questions with the faculty member.

- If approved, the Dean will sign, and forward the Prior Learning Assessment application to the Registrar's office for posting to the student's transcript.
 - Credit will be listed as Prior Learning Assessment.
 - Grades will show as "P" for pass and will not count toward the student's Grade Point Average.
- If not approved, the Division Dean will notify the student of the decision.
- The Division Dean's decision is final.

Portfolio Credit method of Prior Learning Assessment

- ☐ Step 1: The Division Dean will discuss descriptions and objectives for courses identified by the student for prior learning, and will:
 - Determine if Portfolio Credit method for Prior Learning is an option for the student.
 - Review criteria for portfolio development of prior learning.

- ☐ Step 2: The application will complete the Prior Learning Assessment application.
 - Submit the assessment fee in Accounts Receivable Services.

- ☐ Step 3: The applicant will prepare a Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio for each course under consideration.

Each portfolio should include:

- A cover page with name, date, contact information, and course name and number for which course credit is being requested.
- Table of contents.
- Applicants resume.
- Statement of career and educational goals.
- A narrative summary, typed and double-spaced, explaining how and where learning experiences were obtained.
- Documentation demonstrating how skills and knowledge meet specific course objectives. Documentation could include, but is not limited to:
 - Officially-written, third-party verification letters from immediate supervisors, past employers, work associates, community leaders, or others who can verify your prior learning as it applies to the course objectives.
 - Awards, letters of commendation.
 - Copies of certificates/licenses and descriptions of requirements.
 - Scores on licensing exams.
 - Official job records, including job descriptions and/or classifications.
 - Membership requirements for professional associations.
 - Performance evaluations.
 - Work projects (proposals, reports, schematics, created crafts).
 - Any other appropriate information desired for consideration.

- ☐ Step 4: Applicant submits the Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio to the Division Dean.
 - Submit your portfolio in its entirety at one time.

- ☐ Step 5: The Division Dean will assign faculty member(s) with course expertise to review the portfolio.

- ❑ Step 6: The assigned faculty member(s) will review the portfolio against course objectives. Applicant may be required to demonstrate competency in skills-based classes
 - In no case will credit be granted for less than credit hours posted in the catalog or for credits duplicated by an already completed class.
 - The evaluator(s) will indicate the number of credits earned—even if zero, will sign the Prior Learning Assessment Evaluation Report where appropriate, and will return the complete portfolio to the Division Dean.

- ❑ Step 7: The Division Dean will review the decision and clarify any remaining questions with the faculty member(s).
 - If approved, the Dean will sign, and forward the portfolio application to the Registrar’s office for posting to student’s transcript.
 - Credit will be listed as Prior Learning Assessment.
 - Grades will show as “P” for pass and will not count toward the student’s Grade Point Average.
 - If not approved, the Division Dean will notify the student of the decision.
 - The Division Dean’s decision is final.

The transferability of Prior Learning Assessment credits is at the discretion of the receiving college. The acceptance for Prior Learning Assessment at Northeast Community College does not imply acceptance at any other institution, even if the same course completed in the classroom would normally transfer.

HELPFUL GUIDES WHEN CONSIDERING PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

In order to receive college credit, you must be able to demonstrate how your experience(s) meet specific learning outcomes. Before proceeding with the process of building your portfolio, determine whether your experience passes the following tests:

1. Experience resulted in considerable technical skill or knowledge, gained through paid employment and/or volunteer activities.
2. Continued education or professional experiences resulted in formal recognition, such as certificates from workshops, clinics, conferences, correspondence courses, continuing education units (CEUs), licenses, awards and industry certification.

The following guidelines should be considered:

1. Is your knowledge and/or skill current? For example, if you worked as an automotive repairman 20 years ago but have not kept pace with advances in automotive technology, a Prior Learning Assessment review would be unlikely to award college credit.
2. Is your knowledge applicable in other cases outside the specific job or context in which it was learned? For example, do you understand the principles of early childhood development or is your knowledge related primarily to experiencing the stages of your own child’s growth?

3. Is your experience in learning at the college level? Can you demonstrate that your learning included the application of certain theoretical principles of knowledge from others who have some recognition in the field? Do you know what recognized experts in the field have done, thought, read, and said concerning your area of knowledge? For example, if your experience is in personnel management, can you describe different theories of motivation, techniques in hiring, methods of job assessment, and/or methods of job performance evaluation?
4. Can your knowledge be measured and evaluated? Will you be able to demonstrate how much you know and what you have learned in your subject area?



Prior Learning Assessment Application
 801 East Benjamin Avenue
 Norfolk, Nebraska 68701
 (402) 844-7268, 800-348-9033, Ext. 7258

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student ID No. _____

Degree (AA, AAS, AS), Diploma or Certificate _____ Major _____

Desired method to earn credit for prior learning (choose one):

_____ Course Competency Assessment for Prior Learning

_____ Portfolio Assessment for Prior Learning

Northeast Community College course under consideration (one application per course):

Course No.	Course Title	Credit Hours
Assessment Fee Flat fee of \$50 per course.		

I hereby request permission to complete Prior Learning Assessment by the identified option marked above for the listed course. I understand that my course competency assessment or my portfolio will be evaluated to determine if college credit will be awarded. **I understand that proof of payment of the non-refundable Assessment Fee from the Northeast Accounts Receivable Services must be submitted to the Division Dean prior to the course competency assessment or the portfolio review.**

Prior Learning Assessment hours are not included in hours registered in a term and are not used in determining enrollment status, hours for financial aid, VA benefits, or any reporting information. The decision of the academic Division Dean of the area in which the Prior Learning Assessment is being pursued is final. I give Northeast Community College permission to discuss information with any or all parties mentioned in the portfolio for evaluation purposes. I have read and understand the Prior Learning Assessment Procedures provided to me.

 Applicant Signature

 Date

 Registrar Signature

 Date

EVALUATION REPORT

EVALUATION OF CREDIT HOURS FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Student Name: _____

Student ID No.: _____

Address: _____

Telephone (day): _____ (evening): _____

Major: _____

Evaluator(s): _____

Method student used to earn credit for prior learning assessment: <input type="checkbox"/> Course Competency Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio Assessment	Decision: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied
---	---

1. Technique(s) used to evaluate the competencies (interview, situation, observation, production assessment, etc.).

2. Provide specific evidence in your rationale for your decision to approve or deny.

3. Recommended course title and credits to be granted:

Course No.	Course Title	Credit Hours

Evaluator(s) Signature: _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Dean's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Registrar's Signature _____ Date: _____

Copies: Student Advisor Registrar Dean