

What is Prior Learning Assessment?

The Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a process that allows students to get credit for learning. Through this assessment process students match NIC courses or program outcomes to learning that has been acquired elsewhere—courses, workshops, employment, volunteering, etc.

Several formal assessment options are available for students to gain recognition for their learning. It is important to note that all assessment options require the student to submit evidence. The evidence of the student's knowledge, skills and abilities will be assessed for possible academic credit.

For more information on the PLA process, see NIC policies 4-10 and 4-11.

PLA credit options

The following are Programs in which credits for some courses may be earned through Prior Learning Assessment:

- Fine Arts Diploma
- Applied Business Technology
- Business Administration
- Early Childhood Care and Education
- Human Services
- Hospital Unit Clerk
- Home Support and Resident Care
- Nursing
- University Studies


Not all courses within a program are necessarily open for PLA.

How the PLA process works


Three PLA assessment processes are available: Transfer Credit, Flexible Assessment or Challenge Exam. Each program/department will determine the type(s) of assessment used. Either the program Educational Advisor (BSN) or a department chair will work with an applicant to determine probable success through PLA. It is the program/department contact person (advisor or chair) who gives authorization for the process to proceed.

For information on the PLA Process contact the PLA Coordinator, Marie Ducharme (250-334-5065). For information on the specifics of the PLA Assessment, within a program, or to start the PLA process contact the department chair or Educational Advisor.


Transfer Credit

Students who have completed course work that is equivalent to NIC course objectives can apply to have the credit recognized at NIC. To apply for transfer credit the student will need to provide an official transcript, and complete the [Application for Transfer Credit form](#) . Sometimes the student will be asked to provide a detailed course outline in order to determine if the course objectives match.

Flexible Assessment

The Flexible Assessment (or Portfolio Assessment) usually involves a combination of documentation, skill demonstrations, assignments and, sometimes, tests. The program PLA advisor/Department Chair will provide written authorization to proceed by completing the [Application for Prior Learning Credit form](#) .

Challenge Exam(s)

Challenge exams recognize a student's prior learning through a formal examination. Students write one or more examination to prove their knowledge in an academic subject. The course Faculty will provide written authorization to proceed by completing the [Application for Prior Learning Credit form](#) .

How long will it take?

The time to complete the PLA process will vary according to the assessment measure used. The PLA process would not, usually, take longer than a regular college semester.

What will it cost?

For the Flexible Assessment or Challenge Exam process the cost is determined by the number of credits being requested. Fees are calculated at 75% of the tuition for each course. If any additional costs are required they will be explained by the PLA Coordinator or the Department contact.

PLA fees are due prior to an assessment occurring.

This fee is payable in person at any NIC registration office along with the **SIGNED** Application for Prior Learning Credit.

There is no fee for Transfer Credit unless the courses were taken outside of BC. For an out of province Transfer Credit Evaluation there is a \$20 fee.