

**SIENA HEIGHTS UNIVERSITY
PRIOR LEARNING CREDIT AWARD
Graduate College Guidelines**

General Information

What is a Prior Learning Credit Award (PLCA)?

The graduate student who has prior learning experiences through work, non-college courses or training, community service, or other accomplishments may be eligible for a prior learning credit award. The experiences must have provided graduate level-equivalent learning outside the college classroom, with documentation to demonstrate and support the learning. The documentation for the petition for prior learning credit is evaluated by graduate faculty with expertise in the field or discipline in which credit is sought.

What LIMITATIONS apply to PLCA?

A maximum of nine semester hours from any combination of transfer credit, credit for prior learning, and credit for special offerings may be applied toward a SHU master's degree.

What COSTS are involved? (Based on 2012-2013 tuition rates)

The costs of prior learning credit are as follows: A \$490.00 (the cost of 1 credit hour) processing fee for each petition, plus \$164.00 per credit hour awarded (approximately the cost of one-third of a regular credit hour).

What RESTRICTIONS apply to transcribing credits and grade point averages?

All prior learning credit is designated as "Credit" on the transcript. No grade points are awarded. Awards are posted only after student completes at least nine (9) hours of traditional SHU graduate-level credit.

What is the PROCESS FOR APPLYING for prior learning credit at Siena Heights?

The PLCA process has FOUR STAGES: initial survey; initial assessment; follow-up assessment; award or rejection.

Process

STAGE ONE

To investigate your eligibility for a Prior Learning Credit Award, **prepare the following documents TO SUBMIT WHEN SCHEDULING YOUR INITIAL SURVEY APPOINTMENT** with the Program Coordinator.

- a resume
- any documentation you have supporting your claim to prior learning (e.g. entry and exit job descriptions, letters of commendation, samples of work, in-service training certificates, etc.)
transcripts of previous college credit if applicable
- a letter of support/confirmation from supervisor
- correlation of your prior learning experiences to catalogued college course elements (use your SHU Graduate Catalog for this exercise) as preparation for composing your narrative description component

Because **your initial documentation will be examined BEFORE your scheduled appointment**, be prepared to answer specific questions clarifying or substantiating your prior learning experience. If your petition is viable at this first stage of the process, an appropriate faculty assessor will be recommended. (If your experiences cross traditional academic discipline boundaries, more than one assessor may be needed.)

STAGE TWO

Make an appointment with your faculty assessor **to review the initial documentation of your PLCA petition** (narrative description; resume; correlated documentation; letter of support). Ask what the faculty assessor's policy is about an initial assessment appointment when you are scheduling: should your resume, narrative description, correlated documentation and letter of support be presented a week in advance? Should you be prepared with supplemental documentation?

Because **only faculty assessors can specify acceptable evidence** of college equivalent learning in a particular discipline/field, during this appointment you will come to a clear understanding of the criteria that will be used to evaluate your particular petition in this specific field. The faculty assessor will aid you by identifying and remediating weaknesses in your petition. Discussion of the amount of credit award you are seeking is appropriate at this time.

Other appropriate outcomes at this stage are **answers to questions** like:

How can I best indicate the kinds of knowledge, competencies and skills I have acquired in my prior experience?

How can I demonstrate what I have abstracted theoretically from my prior learning experiences?

Does the faculty assessor have specific expectations related to PLCA of which I need to be aware?

Agreement on a timeline for the implementation of your plan is desirable at this point. Be sure to allow yourself time to complete the next two stages of this program **BEFORE YOUR FINAL SEMESTER** at SHC.

STAGE THREE

Proceed according to your approved plan of presentation. **Check back with your faculty assessor** if difficulties arise during this implementation stage. When your presentation meets the faculty assessor's criteria, s/he will forward the relevant documentation and PLCA recommendation to the Program Coordinator.

STAGE FOUR

You will be notified of your credit award in writing. If you are dissatisfied with your credit award, you may appeal to the Program Coordinator. Once the credit award is approved, you may process the document at any time through the Business Office and Office of the Registrar **as you would any other course registration.** This final step is necessary to ensure the recording of your Prior Learning Credit Award on your official college transcript. **Payment in full must be made before credit is awarded.**

ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT PLCA MAY BE DIRECTED TO:

ANNE M. HOOGHART, DEAN OF THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

KELLY A. CICHY, GRADUATE TEACHER EDUCATION & ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATION

LINDA M. PETTIT, COUNSELOR EDUCATION

JOHN W. FICK, LEADERSHIP

Siena Heights University Prior Learning Credit Award

TO: Program Coordinator

FROM: _____
Faculty Name

RE: Prior Learning Petition of _____
Student Name

Student Number

Major

Date: _____

I have reviewed and discussed with the petitioner an adequately documented presentation of the learning experience(s) named below. I recommend the award of Prior Learning Credit for:

Course number and Title to Appear on Transcript	S.H.	Dates of Experience
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Total Semester Hours Awarded: _____

Faculty Signature: _____

Program Coordinator _____ Date _____

Business Office _____ Date _____

Registrar's Office _____ Date _____