Prior Learning Assessment Program

Leeward Community College (Leeward CC) believes there are many ways to demonstrate the learning outcomes and competencies found in our traditional course offerings. If you have previous life and work experiences where you gained significant knowledge or skills, you might be able to translate those skills and knowledge into college credit through our Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Program.

PLA helps you identify and demonstrate relevant learning acquired outside Leeward CC and translate this learning into college credit. Leeward CC provides several options to earn college credit through previous college and non-college coursework, standardized exam scores, and skills gained from life experiences, including:

1. **College Transfer Credit**: Courses completed at other regionally accredited colleges and universities with a grade of D or better may be transferable toward a Leeward CC degree. Some programs may require a grade of C or better. Leeward CC does not charge a fee for this type of PLA; however, official transcripts from other institutions must be requested and paid for by the student.

2. **Noncollegiate Sponsored Education Credit**: Courses completed in noncollegiate settings (e.g., military, businesses, industries, social and community agencies, labor unions) whose content is substantially equivalent to Leeward CC course offerings may be transferable toward a Leeward CC degree. Leeward CC does not charge a fee for this type of PLA; however, official transcripts from other institutions must be requested and paid for by the student.

3. **Equivalency Exams**: Standardized national exams such as Advanced Placement (AP), College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST) may be used to earn college credit. Leeward CC does not charge a fee for this type of PLA; however, official exam scores must be requested and paid for by the student.

4. **Credit by Institutional Exams**: If students have evidence that course concepts have been learned elsewhere, students may request to take an instructor-prepared course examination. If students pass the instructor-prepared exam with a grade of C or better, they can earn credit for the specific course without attending classes. 50% tuition of the regular course fee is required for this type of PLA.

5. **Back Language Credits**: Students placed above the 101 level in Hawaiian or foreign languages can receive, at no additional cost, credits for the courses they are exempted from upon completing the next course in the sequence with a grade of C or better. Students whose level is above that of 202, including native speakers of the languages, can receive credits for the full course sequence provided they register for and pass the highest course (202) in the sequence with a grade of C or better.

6. **Portfolio-Based Assessments**: Students with previous learning experiences may earn college credit if their experiences can be verified and documented. Appropriate Leeward CC faculty will decide if the learning experiences are eligible for credit through Leeward CC's PLA Program. 60% tuition of the regular course fee is required for this type of PLA.

7. **Independent Study**: Students who wish to design and complete individual study projects geared to their particular interests, aptitudes, and needs may apply for Independent Study credit. A faculty member and Division Chair must approve project plans and the student must complete the project within one semester. 100% tuition of the regular course fee is required for this type of PLA.

The number of credit hours that students may earn through the PLA Program varies depending on the type of PLA assessment given. Students may not use PLA credits to meet the residency requirement of 12 credit hours or 20% credit hours toward a degree or certificate.

To receive credit for prior learning, students should schedule a counseling appointment to inquire about earning college credit for their prior learning experiences, decide which Leeward CC course they want prior learning credit for and which PLA method to use, contact the appropriate faculty and decide if their prior learning is appropriate for PLA, and if needed, contact the PLA Coordinator to facilitate the PLA process.