

Upgrade Program- San Antonio Education Partnership

131 El Paso St., San Antonio TX 78204

www.upgradesatx.org | (210) 207-4563 | upgrade@saedpartnership.org

Name of Key Area	Career & College Exploration
Title	Other Ways of Earning Academic Credit, PLA
Goal	The goal of this resource guide is to help individuals understand alternative ways to earn college credit based on work experience, military experience, testing out, etc.
Advisor & Date	Micaela Rios, Spring 2019

Prior Learning Assessment, PLA, is when a student is able to demonstrate relevant learning acquired through life and work experiences and translate this learning into college credit. PLA varies by college. The following are examples of PLA:

- SAT II subject tests
- College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- Proficiency exams in university approved disciplines
- Certificate/Certified Career Credit Evaluation
- Armed Forces Experience (Military Record, JCERT)
- Portfolio Evaluation

SAT II Subject Exams

In order to determine what SAT Subject II exams will be accepted for credit, you will need to check with your university. Also check to see what score is needed for credit.

CLEP Exams

One way to test out of a subject is to take a CLEP exam. It is important to check with your college or university to confirm that your CLEP exam will be accepted for college credit. It is also important to identify what score is needed to earn credit. Acceptance of these exams for coursework is often listed in the university catalog or in the university testing center. For example, earning a score of 50 on College Composition CLEP will earn you credit for ENGL 1301 and 13012. When this is noted in your transcript, you will not be given a grade, rather a P for Passed. CLEP is a great way to save time and money. For example, say you spend \$105 on the exam, total, and earn the two English courses. That's two semesters and \$500 that you just saved!

- 33 subjects available
- Credit can be awarded towards lower division coursework
- \$85 per exam, plus a testing fee charged by the testing center
- Multiple choice, 90 minute exam
- <https://clep.collegeboard.org/>

CLEP exams are not cheap! It is best to prepare for your exam. Utilize your San Antonio Public Library card number to create an account through www.learningexpresshub.com. Once you've created your account, you may access full length practice exams through the "College Students" link. You can also take CLEP prep courses at www.modernstates.org.

DSST Exams

DSST exams are similar to CLEP exams, and are not accepted for credit as often as CLEP exams.

- 30 subjects available
- Credit can be awarded towards upper & lower division coursework
- \$85 per exam, plus a testing fee charged by the testing center
- Multiple choice, 2 hour exam
- <https://getcollegetcredit.com/>

AP Exams

If you took an AP exam in high school, and passed with a 3 or higher, you may be able to earn college credit at your institution. You will need to check your account with College Board and/or previous high school transcripts to see if you have earned credit.

Proficiency exams in university approved disciplines

Some universities will have the option to test out of course through proficiency exams. For example, UIW School of Professional Studies offers this as an option. There can be costs associated with this. We recommend checking your institutions catalog and speaking with staff.

Certificate/Certified Career Credit Evaluation

If you completed a vocational certificate or associates degree at a regionally accredited institution, you may be able to transfer your credit into a bachelor's degree. For example, say you completed a certificate in automotive technology at St. Philip's College. Colleges that have BAAS degrees will be able to accept your previously earned coursework towards a bachelor's degree. For example, Texas A&M San Antonio has BAAS degrees where you can transfer 18-42 credit hours of vocational coursework.

Armed Forces Experience (Military Record, JCERT)

College Credit For Heroes is a partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure our active duty, former and retired military personnel receive the credit they earned for their service to our country.

The Search for Credit recommendations are available to all website visitors. However, Servicemembers and Veterans who wish to request an evaluation of their military record (JST) for academic credit and transcripts of such evaluations should register for a CCH account.

Student will receive a CCH Transcript that will inform them of the TCCNS Equivalency of their coursework/certifications.

<https://www.collegetcreditforheroes.org/>

Portfolio Evaluation

Some institutions allow you to earn credit through a portfolio. For example, Texas State offers a robust option through their program in the Department of Occupational Workforce and Leadership. In this program, students complete a rigorous 4 credit hour writing course, preparing their portfolio, demonstrating competency of knowledge and skills acquired through work and life experiences. At the end, the portfolio is evaluated to determine award of credit. At Texas State, students may earn up to 24

credit hours from work/life experience, and up to 30 credit hours from non-collegiate training. This program is specifically for a Bachelors of Applied Arts & Sciences.

FAQs:

Are there any pros/cons to earning credit through work/life experiences?

Most of the time, BAAS programs are non-traditional degree programs that allow students to obtain a bachelor's degree by utilizing vocational credit hours or portfolios. Sometimes, BAAS degrees may not meet admission requirements. While BAAS degrees are not terminal, if you are considering a graduate degree one day, you may want to inquire about graduate school requirements, and if a BAAS degree will meet those requirements.

Which colleges in San Antonio offer PLA?

Nearly all colleges in San Antonio offer some form of PLA. Colleges/Universities offering credit by portfolio/work experience, that are also regionally accredited and not-for-profit include: University of Incarnate Word- School of Professional Studies, Wayland Baptist University, Texas State University. Costs vary.

Adapted from:

Credit for Prior Learning Adult Learners Guide to PLA. (n.d.). Retrieved April 17, 2019, from <https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Adult-Learners-Guide-to-PLA.aspx>