

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

(Maximum credit - 30 hours)

Belhaven University is among more than 600 colleges and universities involved in assessing documented learning for academic credit toward an undergraduate degree. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), an educational association founded in 1974 to promote the acceptance of the awarding of college credit for documented and experiential learning, has led the way in developing and implementing assessment techniques. Belhaven University uses the guidelines developed by CAEL. **In order for the credit to be granted officially and recorded on the transcript, the applicant must have completed successfully a minimum of 12 semester hours of academic course work at Belhaven University.** This type of credit is not necessarily transferable into or out of Belhaven University. A \$150.00 assessment fee is paid at the time the portfolio is turned in for assessment. Upon awarding of credit, the student is charged \$75.00 per semester hour of credit and must pay the full amount before the credits are recorded on the student's permanent record.

Prior Learning Assessment credit earned through experiential writing can be achieved in several ways depending upon the amount of credit award desired. The initial PLA discussion should be handled during the admissions process or within the first two semesters of enrollment. The following table explains how the amount of credit needed directs the students as to which method he or she should pursue:

Credit Hours Desired	Path to Completion
1 – 3 credit hours	Work with Dean at local campus to complete
4+ credit hours	EDU 290 (Portfolio I or Portfolio II) EDU290 may be waived with approval from the Dean at the Instructional Site based upon incoming GPA, current GPA and evidence of academic strength. If waived, student will be enrolled in a self-paced CANVAS PLA course.

A maximum of 30 hours may be earned through portfolio assessment. The process for experiential credit must be completed prior to the beginning of the last semester required for degree completion. EDU290 is a one-credit course offered online each semester which guides the student through completion of the PLA process.

- **Documented Learning - Portfolio I**

Credit for professional or technical courses, licenses, certifications, workshops, etc., can be awarded if documented thoroughly. Faculty members assess the validity of substantial documentation based on completion, clock hours, and content. The Portfolio I must include a resume, an autobiographical sketch, and a value of learning statement for each topic area. One semester hour of credit may be awarded for 20 hours of instruction that is determined by faculty to be college level.

- **Experiential Learning - Portfolio II**

Experiential learning credit assessments, in the form of portfolios, are methods by which students may earn academic credit for college-level learning completed outside of the traditional classroom setting. It is designed to assist adult learners in attaining their academic and career goals by validating their professional competencies acquired through experiential learning.

Credit from alternative credit programs may be given in a specific area in which a student wishes to major or minor, dependent upon departmental policy. The maximum total of such credit listed above, in any combination, is 45 semester hours, not to include more than 30 hours of experiential credit. Hours earned through alternative credit programs do not carry quality points and therefore are not considered as residential hours for honors calculations.