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# Earn College Credits Without Attending Class?

HIGHER EDUCATION

BY DANIELLE MICELI

Yes you heard correct! All 14 Pennsylvania community colleges announced on February 2, 2015 how to earn credits for learning through previous training and work experience.

The new statewide Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), called College Credit FastTrack, allows potential or current students to create a petition for assessment of their work or life experiences into actual college credits. As stated by Danielle Gross on release of the PA Community Colleges Launch Statewide PLA Initiative: "PLA is the process used by many institutions to determine if an individual's prior educational, workforce and life experiences can be translated to college credits. Students who are granted PLA credits have better academic outcomes, better degree completion, better persistence, and shorter time to completion than non-PLA students." The College Credit FastTrack website has been designed to be the single point of entry in assessment of experience into credits. On College Credit FastTrack, profiles and applications will be created, meetings with an assessor will be scheduled to evaluate your petition, and credits will be earned if approved.

Funding for PLA has been provided from the U.S. Department of Labor through a \$2.5 million grant to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant program. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in 2009 and Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act in 2010 have provided increased funding to the TAACCCT grant program. The grant program provides community colleges with funding to expand and improve the delivery of education and career training programs. Eligible community colleges are those in which programs are offered that can be completed in 2 years or less. Again, the new PLA supports this eligibility requirement by speeding up degree programs with earning credit for previous experience.

This is a great opportunity for any adults looking to make a career switch and gain a jump start earning credits from previous experience. For additional information on the PLA, visit [College Credit FastTrack's website](#).

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