



# Adult Learner Success

Year 3: Implementation Status

August 1, 2018

Tennessee Tech University

Year 3: Adult Learner Success Implementation Status

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Tennessee Tech University's mission is to create, advance, and apply knowledge to expand opportunity and economic competitiveness. As a STEM-infused, comprehensive institution, Tennessee Tech delivers enduring education, impactful research, and collaborative service. Our vision includes achieving national prominence and impact through its engaged faculty and career-ready graduates known for their creativity, tenacity, and analytical approach to problem solving. Improving and meeting the needs of Adult Learners, especially aligns with our mission and vision. TTU reports successful progress indicators in all of the following objectives in the Year 3: Implementation Status Report.

## Objectives

1. Market to and recruit adult learners/veterans
2. Develop an improved partnership with regional industry workforce needs and develop appropriate degree/certificate programs to align with education opportunities and professional needs
3. Improve the diversity of the degrees/programs attainable with flexible offerings and format
4. Develop a PLA Policy that aligns with State Standards
5. Develop Collaborated Effort to use articulation agreements and transfer pathways with regional Community Colleges
6. Implement an annual survey to collect feedback from adult learners and consistently review results for action
7. Improve the quality of outreach and services for adult learners
8. Implement consistent training for onsite and offsite Coordinators to improve services to meet the needs of adult learners
9. Improve the number of graduates as per the TN Governor's Drive to 55

## Success Indicators and Evidential Progress/Success

TTU developed a [matrix](#) to formulate and track objectives and strategies to improve learning for adults and affect the successful attainment of 4-year degrees. The matrix on pages 6-7 indicates success indicators and benchmarks for progress. TTU presented outcomes and results in this matrix from Year 3 Implementation. TTU utilized multiple assessments to gauge progress, and targets and aspirational benchmarks, and showed sustained improvement in all areas.

## Action Plans

### Recruitment, Engagement, and Graduation

√ *Tennessee Tech extended its marketing and recruitment campaign to include representation at Quad A (Army Aviation Association of America) annual meeting.* TTU attended and provided information, program representatives, advisors, and financial aid information to military personnel for recruitment.

√ *TTU identified labor force needs, tuition assistance programs, and degree programs* that addressed the needs and expectations of adult learners. The College of Business designed a new *Master's of Accountancy* to help adult learners complete their professional education in an online format, which addresses industry needs. In partnership with the College of Engineering and the College of Business, TTU also identified Engineering Management labor force needs and addressed this with a new *Engineering Management* online master's program in development. Proposed for Year 4, TTU has started discussion with the TN Department of Transportation to address the education and career training needs of over 4400 potential students.

√ **TTU enhanced outreach and adult services to Extended Campuses** (Crossville, Tullahoma, McMinnville, Oak Ridge, Lawrenceburg, Knoxville, and Pellissippi). TTU staff visited each location multiple times and provided advising professionals, Transfer Pathway seminars, and recruitment meetings at each of the campuses. In addition, TTU has expanded [\(from 8 to 9\)](#) to another Extended Campus in Lawrenceburg, TN (Columbia State Community College) and solidified this new partnership. In Year 4, TTU proposes to extend to Smyrna, TN (Motlow State Community College).

√ **TTU prioritized Enrollment Management to improve its efforts in relation to “Reverse Transfer”**. TTU is currently in discussion of an implementation strategy to assist TTU students that have transferred from a community college before completing the Associate’s Degree. The plan focuses on helping students complete the requirements for the Associate’s degree while working on a Bachelor’s degree. A new Director of Student Success was hired with this focus in mind. This objective is a priority for Year 4 Implementation.

√ **TTU academic advisors recruited adult learners** through visits to the community college campuses and met with counselors, and students, to review the TTU Bachelor degree program requirements and what a students need to do to qualify. TTU site coordinators recruited students through classrooms visits, information sessions, career/college fairs, and attending community college campus events. Sustained interaction between on- and off-campus staff occurred throughout the year and new promotional materials provided to each location. Adult Learner enrollment improved by [6% \(1,271 to 1,822\)](#) from our baseline.

√ **TTU addressed the need for course offerings and attainable degrees that targeted and addressed the needs of adult learners and industry in the Upper Cumberland Region**. In addition to a new *Master’s of Accountancy* in the College of Business designed to help adult learners complete their professional education in an online format, TTU also identified Engineering Management labor force needs and addressed this with a new *Engineering Management online program*. In the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, cohorts can attend night classes that run for 5-weeks at the Cookeville Higher Education Campus in partnership with Volunteer State Community College, which are more accessible for adult learners.

To meet industry needs in healthcare, an *Upper Cumberland Care Giver Certificate* was implemented. The College of Interdisciplinary Studies worked with the community and local industry to develop an online Caregiving Certificate. The certificate will help address the needs of the over 1 million untrained adult caregivers in the state of Tennessee. Additionally, the Caregiving Certificate will help nursing professionals improve their skills which will lead to promotion and advancement opportunities. COIS is collaborating with community colleges, private vendors, non-profit organizations, and the Tennessee Agency for Aging and Disability to develop the certificate.

√ **TTU collaborated with Regional Industry career needs**. TTU worked with regional partners and established the “*TN Center for Rural Innovation*” including Tennessee Tech University, TTU iCube, TN Small Business Development Center, The Biz Foundry, WCTE PBS, and the TN Department of Economic Development. Our goal for the TCRI is to create companies and build economic development through manufacturing, health care, information technology, agriculture and tourism sectors to reduce poverty levels and increase prosperity throughout these rural regions, and serves 44 rural counties in the middle-East region of Tennessee. (<https://www.techcri.org/>). Keys areas of focus for the TN Center for Rural Innovation include impacting highly skilled workforce activities, cultivating innovation and leadership, and commercialization. Strategies to improve these areas include a focus on:

- growing small business and creating new investments,
- marketing and expanding natural assets,
- increasing access to capital and funding,
- increasing technology and healthcare workers,
- expand agricultural innovations, and
- connecting dots through creating linkages networks

TTU and the TCRI conducted a regional *Rural Innovation Conference* on June 7-8, 2018, where economic developers, local and state officials, rural stakeholders, rural entrepreneurs, educators, business owners, and farmers, formally met to

collaborate on rural economic development through entrepreneurship and innovation, using a collaborative approach between the Tennessee Center for Rural Innovation and the community.

√ **TTU expanded its 2+2 sites** in order to recruit adult learners. TTU has expanded its Extended Campus areas (from 8 to 9) in Lawrenceburg, TN (Colombia State Community College) and solidified this new partnership. In Year 4, TTU proposes to extend to Smyrna, TN (Motlow State Community College).

√ **Conducted Podcasts on Adult and Veteran Learning.** The Office of Marketing and Communications conducted two podcasts focusing on Adult Learners with special speakers from the Center for Military and Veteran Affairs and the Division of Distance and Digital Education. These podcasts aired on local Upper Cumberland radio stations as well as our campus station WTTU.

### Prior Learning Credit and Degree Plans

√ **TTU formulated a comprehensive PLA Policy.** A committee was formed on the TTU campus including representation from all colleges and student success centers, and met throughout Fall 17 and Spring 18. During the Spring 2018 semester, a draft was developed of the policy based on the THEC Standards. A final policy went through the appropriate institutional approval processes. On June 26, 2018, the final [PLA Policy #258](#) was approved by the TTU Board of Trustees, to be effective July 1, 2018. A website was developed to aid in this area: <https://www.tntech.edu/is/PriorLearning>. Most notably, during the 2017-2018 academic year, a total of [4,615 credits were awarded](#) through TTU Prior Learning Assessment practice.

√ **Transfer pathways from Community Colleges and degree plans were extended and enhanced, and training for staff was implemented for improved transfer pathways and support services.** TTU faculty participated in a 5-year review of TTP curriculum in all academic areas. TTU has expanded to another Extended Campus (from 8 to 9 locations) in Lawrenceburg, TN (Colombia State Community College) and solidified this new partnership. In Year 4, TTU proposes to extend to Smyrna, TN (Motlow State Community College). The College of Interdisciplinary Studies conducted regular site visits and sustained training to all off-campus staff at Extended Locations in advising, recruitment, and student success campuses (Chattanooga, Cookeville, Crossville, Harriman, Huntsville, Knoxville, Lynchburg, McMinnville, and Oak Ridge).

### Incorporation of Adult Learner Feedback into Policy and Practice

√ **TTU implemented a Survey of Adult Learners in Spring 2018 to measure progress internally for adult learners.** [Results](#) were disseminated to stakeholders (Student Success Centers, Department Chairpersons, and other academic/service responsible areas), on and off campus, and for discussion in relevant committees for continuing improvement. Baseline and target metrics were identified, and results (n=202) reported in Appendix # for monitoring progress on each item. Notably, in 2018, TTU made significant progress on the following items indicated as needing improvement in our baseline year 2016.

<u>Item</u>	<u>% Improvement over Baseline</u>
	<u>Mean</u>
This institution offers sufficient courses within my program of study each term.	<a href="#">19%</a>
This institution offers a great variety of programs for the adult learner.	<a href="#">18%</a>
My studies are closely related to my life and work goals.	<a href="#">7%</a>
Faculty members are sensitive to my needs as an adult learner.	<a href="#">15%</a>
I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences (Prior Learning Credit).	<a href="#">7%</a>
I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me.	<a href="#">12%</a>
This institution offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies.	<a href="#">9%</a>

Additionally, TTU identified areas where the campus can continue to prioritize improvements in developing activities outside of the classroom for adult students, and diversifying times and places for providing adult student services. In Year 4 Assessment, TTU will implement the same adapted version of survey questions in Spring 2019 to measure progress internally for adult learners.

### Improvement of Quality of Adult Services and Experiences

√ **Advisor Training/Calibration** was implemented for adult-learner specific personnel. TTU identified key personnel from each college and student support office to aid adult learners in the process of attending college (Admissions, Financial Aid, Degree Planning, and Career Services). Every step to degree attainment was provided by adult-learner focused professionals, to help guide the students to success. Each staff person attended trainings to review the best practices for advising, teaching, and supporting adult learners. Training focused on andragogy, characteristics, fears, family and work obligations, and career options. Training in 2017-2018 was highly receptive and successful.

√ **Each community college location has a trained TTU site coordinator** whose duties include recruitment, advisement, and support for students and faculty. Each coordinator was extensively and consistently trained in the program requirements, course curriculum, and advisement of adult learners. The TTU campus provided improved support to these students through academic advisors and student services. Advisors and staff at these locations successfully communicated directly with students and perspective students utilizing information from the training agenda.

√ **TTU Improved websites** by adding a new site and resource for adult learners for information about Prior Learning Credit (<https://www.tntech.edu/em/academic-services/pla>). Additional websites are updated periodically with new information, policies, and practice (<https://www.tntech.edu/admissions/> ; <https://www.tntech.edu/adult-learning/adult-learning> ; <https://www.tntech.edu/em/military-and-veterans-affairs/>).

√ **TTU established a TTU Student Success Center for Military and Veteran Affairs** on its main campus. TTU currently has an enrollment of **345 (increased by 11%)** veterans and dependents utilizing VA educational benefits. Enrollment of current and prior service members has increased annually for the past five years. Graduation rates have increased **62.74%** for our veteran students and seen as highly successful. The Eagle's Wing Veteran Center contributed to adult, veteran and dependent learners by giving them a quiet and comfortable place to study and do school work. The services that the center offered are assisted by the Department of Veteran's Affairs work-study student employees, access to our computer lab area, and other forms of entertainment if they chose to participate. This included a pool table, television, board games, coffee station and other activities for social interaction. The center is the meeting location for our Student Veterans Organization (SVO) and hosted guest speakers that provided veteran-related information to our veterans and dependent family members. Although we are still examining our metrics, we have already served hundreds of student veterans and dependents since the center has opened in fall 2017. The resources included counseling, student-to- student mentoring, financial aid assistance, academic advisement, tutorial assistance, networking opportunities, and employment/career connections.

In development is the continued growth of our prior learning assessment program in concert with our campus PLA coordinator. Continued research conducted to best evaluate military experience and specialized education into college credits is important to our campus. Although this is already a priority at a reasonable level, we will continue to draw the necessary parallels between what some of our student veterans have attained in education and experience to their equivalent course offerings. This initiative will boost our veteran success rate by focusing their academic efforts towards material that is has the greatest potential for educational "return on investment" and provides the maximum benefit to their preparation and growth for the current job market. Reducing some academic redundancy boosted educational initiatives among our student veteran and dependent population.

## Increase Quantity of Adult Learner Graduates

√ **Digital and Distance Education TTU aligned course availability and offered more TTU online courses to increase the quantity of adult learner graduates.** [Distance and Digital Education](#) staff assisted faculty in the creation of online versions of several popular, high-enrollment, general education courses in multiple disciplines (Agriculture, Foreign Languages, Music, History Math, Sociology, and Communication). The number of adult learner graduates improved from 383 graduates (2016-2017) to [420 graduates \(2017-2018\)](#).

√ **TTU offered a complete general education core in an online format in partnership with eCampus and TTU Faculty.** TTU completed an analysis of general education requirements and developed courses to fulfill the requirements online. All adult learners can access their general education online (See [Online Courses](#)).

√ **Course Availability and Value** General Education Core Requirements are now completely attainable fully online. TTU faculty offers the majority of these [courses](#) and students can additionally utilize the TN eCampus system. The number of online courses offered improved from [469 to 495](#).

√ **TTU Met Workforce Needs by developing several Online Degrees and Extended Educational Opportunities.** The *Masters of Accountancy* <https://www.tntech.edu/cob/macc/> is the first and only program of its kind in the state, the hybrid MAcc program was designed to allow students to simultaneously earn a Master's degree and sit for the Certified Public Accountant's (CPA) exam. The goal of the program is to prepare students for successful careers in accounting, with an emphasis on professional certification and fundamental business skills. Tennessee Tech's MAcc program represents the first hybrid Master of Accountancy program available in the state of Tennessee. While the majority of the program's content is delivered online, presenting a unique benefit to working professionals, the program is "hybrid" in nature.

The *Professional Science Masters in Manufacturing Sustainability* <https://www.tntech.edu/engineering/coe-graduate-programs/professional-science-masters> is offered by the College of Interdisciplinary Studies. At TTU, Manufacturing Sustainability uses an interdisciplinary approach of course delivery by incorporating faculty from across Tennessee Tech's colleges. The College of Engineering's Department of Manufacturing and Engineering Technology provided courses central to the program. This Professional Science Master's program is designed for graduates of approved STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)-related undergraduate programs and working professionals from industry.

In addition, TTU developed several new programs for the MPS Graduate Certificate degrees in Healthcare Informatics, Strategic Leadership, Human Resources Leadership, Training & Development, and Public Safety.

*Extended Education* hosted numerous educational opportunities in 2017-2018. (15 conferences/seminars/workshops, successful transition of some TTU courses to CHEC building, Collaborated with Vol State at CHEC building, Hosted Highlands Leadership classes, awarded over 2,000 certificates for professional development, CEUs, etc., delivered industry specific courses including: Virtual Reality Summit, Motorcycle Riders Licensure Course, Tennessee Business Tax Seminar, PLC Control Systems Workshop, Child Care Resource and Referral Training, TVA Google Earth Training, TNCPE Examiner Training, and Ed2go and Gatlin online certificates and career training courses).

In Summary, TTU achieved significant progress on all objectives in the Adult Learner Plan by implementing its proposed strategies, monitoring results, and identified areas where the campus can improve in Year 4 Implementation.

APPENDIX A

Objective	Strategies	Assessment Metric	*Baseline (2015-16)	2017-2018 Outcomes	Target/Aspirational Benchmark	Made Progress to target
<b>(1) Market to and recruit adult learners/veterans</b>	a. Offer more flexible core courses online b. Utilize the STRONG Act and recruit and serve Veteran Adult Learners c. Podcasts for adult and veterans on local Upper Cumberland regional radio stations and WTTU	a. Enrollment (Adult Learners aged 25 or older) b. Enrollment (Veterans) c. Survey of Adult Learners	a. 11.61% (1,271 out of 10,952) b. 310 c. n/a	a. 17.3% (1,822 out of 10,504) b. 345 (increased by 11%) c. Overall-Somewhat to Very Satisfied	a. 17.00% (Overall Adult Learners) b. Increase by 10% in 3 years (Veteran Adult Learners) c. Satisfaction	a. √ b. √ c. √
<b>(2) Develop an improved partnership with regional industry workforce needs and develop appropriate degree/certificate programs to align with education opportunities and professional needs</b>	a. Utilize identified primary pathways for workforce development and associated industry recruitment 1) healthcare, 2) advanced manufacturing and 3) information technology. b. Diversify Degree completion per Industry Needs	a. Enrollment (Adult Learners aged 25 or older) b. Degree Completion by various programs (Adult Learners aged 25 or older)	a. 11.61% (1,271 out of 10,952) b. 421 (3-year average)	a. 17.3% (1,822 out of 10,504) b. 420	a. 17.00% (Overall Adult Learners) b. Develop proposal of new degrees with approval through campus committee process	a. √ b. √
<b>(3) Improve the diversity of the degrees/programs attainable with flexible offerings and format</b>	a. Degrees and certificates converted to flexible format b. Expand online course offerings c. Expand 2+2 Sites	a. Bachelor's Degrees awarded (Adult Learners) b. Online course offerings c. Expanded Site Locations	a. 421 (3-year average) b. 469 (12.1%) c. 8	a. 420 b. 495 c. 9	a. Match or exceed 3-year rolling average b. Increase the number of online courses c. Increase by 10% in 3 years	a. √ b. √ c. √
<b>(4) Develop a PLA Policy that aligns with State Standards</b>	a. Participate in State Task Force, develop consistent policy b. Gain approval through appropriate approval processes	a. PLA Credit awarded b. Approval of Policy	a. 158 (Fall 2015) b. n/a	a. 4615 credit hours awarded for PLA (Fall, Spring, Summer) b. Completed, See Appendix	a. Match or exceed past awarding of credit b. Official Policy Completion	a. √ b. √

Objective	Strategies	Assessment Metric	*Baseline (2015-16)	2017-2018 Outcomes	Target/Benchmark	Made Progress to Target
<b>(5) Develop Collaborated Effort to use articulation agreements and transfer pathways with regional Community Colleges</b>	a. Connect TN Community College completers to TTU pathways to 4 year degrees b. Expand articulation agreements with other Community Colleges	a. Transfer Student Enrollment from TN Community Colleges b. Increased number of agreements	a. 470 b. 8	a. 535 (14% increase) b. 9 (13% increase)	a. Increase by 10% in 3 years (Transfer Student Enrollment) b. Increase by 10% in 3 years (Articulation Agreements)	a. √ b. √
<b>(6) Implement an annual survey to collect feedback from adult learners and consistently review results for action</b>	a. Develop internal TTU Adult Learner Perspective Survey b. Administer Year 3 and 4 c. Discuss results with campus constituents	Internal; TN Tech Adult Learner Survey (Adapted from the Adult Learner Inventory (ALI), Ruffalo Noel Levitz)	a. Mean per item from Year one assessment	a. Completed, See Table 1, overall satisfaction mean = 5.24 out of 7.0 (Somewhat Satisfied) b. Completed Qualitative Results c. Disseminated	Overall (5.0-7.0) average satisfaction	a. √ b. √ c. √
<b>(7) Improve the quality of adult learner outreach and services</b>	a. Center for Veteran Students b. Increase Flexibility of services c. Advisor and Site Coordinator Training d. Develop Community Partnerships to help with adult learner services	Internal; TN Tech Adult Learner Perspective Survey (Adapted from the Adult Learner Inventory (ALI), Ruffalo Noel Levitz)	a. Mean per item from Year one assessment	a. See Table 1	Overall (5.0-7.0) average satisfaction	a. √
<b>(8) Implement consistent training for onsite and offsite Coordinators to improve services to meet the needs of adult learners</b>	a. Implement consistent training for onsite and offsite Coordinators to improve services to meet the needs of adult learners	Retention	a. 74.6% (Fall to Fall 2014)	a. 75.2% (Fall to Fall 2017)	Match or exceed	a. √
<b>(9) Improve the number of graduates as per the TN Governor's Drive to 55</b>	a. Increase number of Graduates: Adult Learner Overall b. Improve the Graduation Rate for Veteran Adult Learners	a. Adult Learner number of Graduates b. Graduation Rate (Veteran Students)	a. 421 (3-year average) b. 44%	a. 420 b. 63%	a. Match or exceed 3-year rolling average b. Increase by 5% in 3 yrs.	a. √ b. √

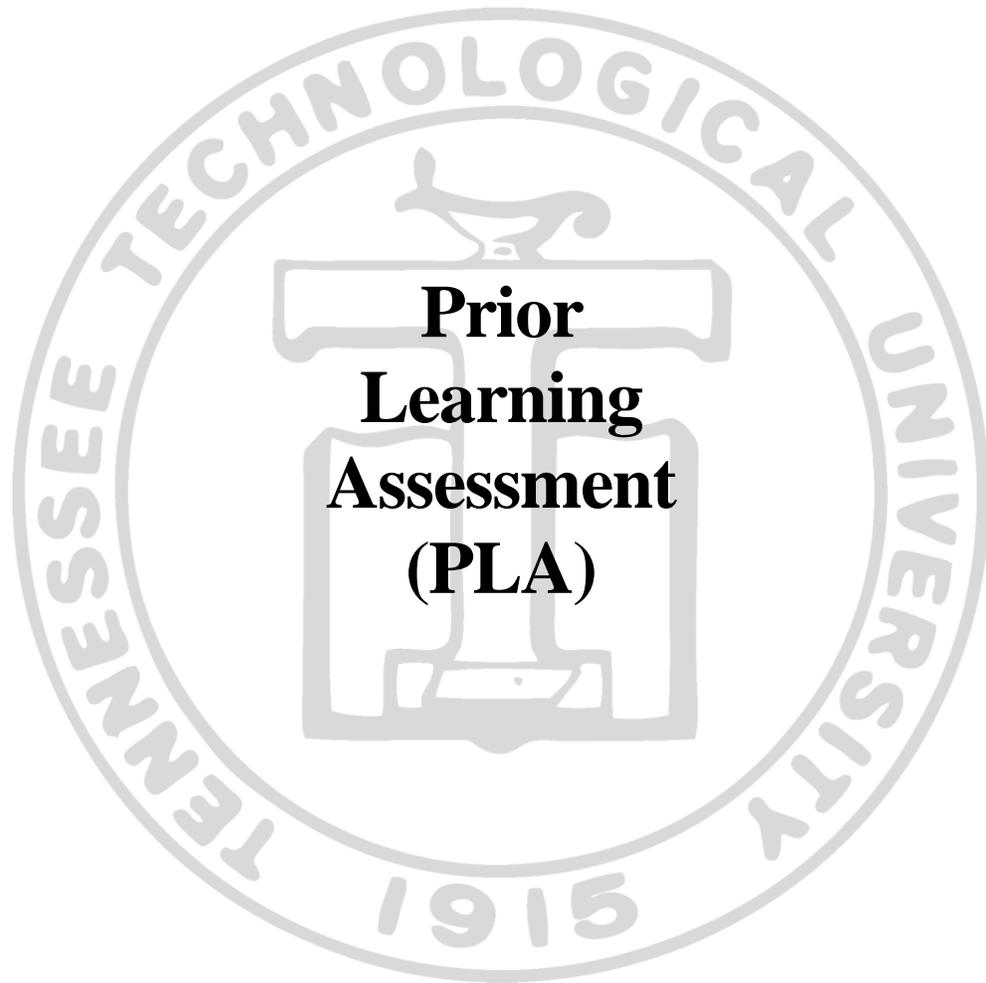
TTU Adult Learner Survey (Internal) Item	Baseline Means*	2017-2018 (n=203)	2018-2019	Total Improvement** (% Increase/Decrease)		National 4-year Adult Learners*** (2016, Noel-Levitz, LLC)
This institution offers sufficient courses within my program of study each term.	4.75	5.64		0.89	19%	5.28
This institution offers a great variety of programs for the adult learner.	4.61	5.42		0.81	18%	n/a
I am able to choose a course delivery that fits my life circumstances.	4.75	5.01		0.26	5%	5.48
I receive timely responses to my request for help and information.	5.51	5.81		0.3	5%	5.74
My studies are closely related to my life and work goals.	5.66	6.05		0.39	7%	5.99
My advisor is available by either phone, fax, e-mail, or online when I need help.	6.0	6.25		0.25	4%	n/a
Advisors/Site Coordinators are knowledgeable about requirements for courses and programs of interest to me.	5.67	6.00		0.33	6%	5.74
Faculty members are sensitive to my needs as an adult learner.	4.65	5.36		0.71	15%	n/a
Staff are available to help me to solve unique problems I encounter.	5.36	5.54		0.18	3%	5.67
This institution provides me with assistance in determining my career path and career opportunities.	5.07	5.26		0.19	4%	n/a
The institution provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan.	5.25	5.48		0.23	4%	5.64
I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences (Prior Learning Credit).	3.83	4.08		0.25	7%	4.98
Transcripts from institutions that I previously attended are evaluated in a timely manner.	5.48	5.51		0.03	1%	n/a
The school provides sufficient options for me to pay for my education.	5.17	4.91		-0.26	-5%	n/a
I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me.	4.63	5.20		0.57	12%	5.17
There are adequate numbers of student activities outside of the classroom for adult students.	4.52	4.41		-0.11	-2%	n/a
I know whom to contact for information about services I need.	4.96	4.85		-0.11	-2%	n/a
This institution offers strategies to help me cope with the multiple pressures of home, work, and my studies.	3.84	4.18		0.34	9%	4.90
The institution makes many support services available at convenient times and places.	4.80	4.27		-0.53	-11%	5.64
Overall Satisfaction with Education Experience	5.54	5.63		-0.09	-2%	5.86
Recommend to other Adult Learners	5.51	5.39		-0.12	-2%	6.03

\*Baseline Data - Year 1 Assessment TTU Averages

\*\* Improvement to Target - Match or Exceed Baseline Means

\*\*\* Aspirational Benchmark - Average of National 4-year Institutions, n/a – Internal Data Only

Tennessee Technological University  
Policy No. 258



*Effective Date:* July 1, 2018

**Policy No: 258**

**Policy Name: Prior Learning Assessment**

**Policy Subject: Definitions and Accepted Forms of Prior Learning Assessment)**

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent TTU policy for the transfer, acceptance, and evaluation of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) for undergraduate university credit.

## **II. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, with recommendations for revision presented to the Academic Council, University Assembly, and the Tennessee Tech Board of Trustees.

## **III. Scope**

Parameters for awarding PLA:

- A. *External* - Any credits awarded for PLA must be in accordance with the Standards of The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS Standard 10.8) and policies and guidelines of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.
- B. *Internal*- The maximum number of credits that can be earned through PLA (any combination) is 60 credit hours. In all cases, a student must earn 25% of hours required for graduation through Tennessee Tech credit. PLA credit will not count toward this 25% minimum.

No other limitations are to be placed in student eligibility for PLA credit, such as minimum age or work experience.

## **IV. Definition(s)**

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a term used to describe the evaluation of college-level, credit-worthy learning gained outside a traditional academic environment. It is learning and knowledge students acquire while living their lives, such as by working, participating in employer training programs, serving in the military, studying independently, volunteering or doing community service, and studying open source courseware. PLA is *not* confined to portfolio assessment, which is simply one type of PLA (as are CLEP tests, ACE evaluations, challenge exams, etc.).

Prior Learning Credit – University academic credit awarded as a result of PLA. Also called extra institutional learning credit.

## **V. Policy/Procedure**

**A. Requirements for PLA credit to be awarded: Academic credit will be awarded only:**

1. For students who have been admitted to the institution.
2. After the student has consulted with an advisor about the possibility and advisability of seeking credit for PLA.
3. For students who have declared an academic program.
4. For credit directly applicable to curriculum requirements of the declared program. Changing majors may result in a reassessment of the applicability of the PLA credit.
5. PLA credit must be reviewed and approved by faculty in the discipline of the proposed credit.

**B. The following credit can be awarded for PLA:**

1. Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
2. American Council on Education (ACE) Guides- Published credit recommendations for formal instructional programs and examinations offered by non-collegiate agencies (including civilian employers, the military, professional associations, and other workplace related-training).
3. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Exams
4. Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Subject Standardized Tests (DSSTs).
5. Evaluation of Local Training – Program evaluations of non-collegiate instructional programs approved by individual colleges.
6. Excelsior College Examination Program (ECE)
7. Institutional Course Challenge Examination Credit
8. International Baccalaureate Programs (IB).
9. Portfolio Review Credit (or portfolio assessment credit) – A portfolio is prepared by the student to demonstrate and validate credit for learning acquired outside of the classroom. University faculty will use rubrics to evaluate the student portfolio and make credit recommendations. Portfolios will include documentation such as certificates of training, work samples, awards and honors, job descriptions, performance evaluations, samples of artwork, evidence of self-directed learning, and resumes.
10. Prior Military Training Credit
11. Thomas Edison State College Examination Program (TECEP).
12. Dual credit program.
13. Dual enrollment program.
14. ACT/SAT

**C. How PLA credits may be used in a student's academic program:**

PLA credits apply toward majors, minors, concentrations, general education requirements, and electives that count toward the degree or certificate being sought in the same manner as traditional courses. PLA credits shall not be treated differently in their application and use than their course equivalencies or appropriate block credit. PLA credits also satisfy prerequisite requirements in the same manner as their course equivalencies.

**D. Transferability of PLA Credits**

1. Students who transfer to Tennessee Tech University may have their PLA credits transferred to the institution as long as the credits are applicable to the degree or certificate the student has declared. However, item 2 (below) still applies in the event that the receiving institution does not grant credit to its native students for that type of PLA credit.
2. PLA credit awarded at one institution which meets TTU Common General Education Core Requirements and/or Tennessee Transfer Pathway (TTP) requirements must be accepted as transfer credit toward the degree, in accordance with Transfer Guarantee policies related to the General Education Core or the Tennessee Transfer Pathways.

**E. Transcription of PLA Credits**

Prior learning credit that is granted will be given the grade of “S” (satisfactory). No quality points will be awarded to count toward GPA.

**1. Transcription Standards**

PLA credits shall appear on student transcripts in the following ways:

- a. **Prior Learning Portfolio-** Students may demonstrate college-level knowledge of a subject that they have acquired outside of a traditional college classroom (work, community service, or other experiences) through the development of a portfolio. Two types of PLA credit may be awarded through the portfolio assessments:
  - i. **Course Equivalency Credit:** Prior learning which is assessed based on the documented achievement of course specific learning outcomes will be recorded as that course.
  - ii. **Block Credit:** In instances where prior learning is assessed as block credit, that assessed credit will be identified by subject (ex. elective, accounting, health, etc.); by course as lower division (LD) or upper division (UD); with a grade of “S”.
- b. **College Level Exam Program (CLEP) -** Students may earn college credit for certain examinations administered by the College Level Exam Program. To receive credit for a CLEP test, a minimum score must be earned (see Catalog for details ). CLEP credit will be recorded as course specific credit. CLEP credit will be identified as transfer credit from the College Level Exam Program.
- c. **ACT/SAT -** Students may earn college credit for certain sections of the ACT/SAT test. To receive credit, a minimum score must be earned (see Catalog for details [ADD LINK HERE](#)). ACT/SAT credit will be recorded as course specific credit with a grade of “S”. ACT/SAT credit will be identified as transfer credit from the ACT/SAT Program.

- d. **Advanced Placement** – Course credit for successful completion of Advanced Placement examinations administered by the College Entrance Examination Board to high school students will be granted to students presenting Advanced Placement examination grades (see Catalog for details  
<http://catalog.tntech.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=4371&hl=%22AP%22&returnto=search>).
- e. **International Baccalaureate (IB)** – Course credit for successful completion of examinations administered by IB to high school students will be granted to students presenting IB grades (see Catalog for details  
<http://catalog.tntech.edu/content.php?catoid=23&navoid=4372&hl=%22IB%22&returnto=search>).
- f. **DANTES Subject Standardized Test (DSST)** – Students may earn college credit for acceptable scores on the DANTES Subject Standardized Test; based on institutional or system policy. If no such policy exists and an institution accepts DSST credit, then college credit shall be awarded based upon the credit recommendations and minimum scores recommended by the American Council on Education by default.
- g. **Military Credit** – Credit awarded for completion of service schools will be governed by recommendations at the baccalaureate or associate level from the current Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services. Military transcripts such as SMART or AARTS must be presented to the Office of Academic Services, and students will work directly with the Office of Military and Veteran Affairs and/or PLA Coordinator to determine what potential credit is appropriate for the particular program of study. Upon presentation of a copy of the veteran's report of separation (DD Form 214) and/or Joint Services Transcript (JST), the following credit may be awarded:
  - i. A minimum of eight semester credit hours will be granted based on information received from DD Form 214 and/or JST transcript with completion of Initial Entry Training (IET) and completion of Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) training.
  - ii. Credit will be awarded for formal service schools based on recommendation from the Office of Educational Credit of the American Council on Education after consultation with an academic advisor. All documentation supporting service-related educational experiences should be filed with the Admissions Office.
- h. **Occupational and Workplace Training** – Credit awarded for completion of workplace (corporate, volunteer, government, etc.) training may be awarded based on recommendations by nationally recognized college credit recommendation services or the individual evaluation and determination by the appropriate university department/school.
- i. **Institutional Course Challenge Examinations** – An institutional course challenge examination may be available to students who have knowledge of a subject area not covered by standardized exams (e.g., ACT, CLEP). Challenge exams are coordinated through the appropriate academic unit.

## **2. Transparency of the award/denial of PLA credit**

When a student has applied for PLA credit, the following procedures must be followed:

- a. Portfolio: Assessor must provide reasoning for the amount of credit hours awarded or a written explanation of the evaluation of the portfolio, regardless of outcome.
- b. ACE, CLEP, and other forms of non-portfolio PLA credit: If credit is denied, students will be notified with an automated message seven days after the evaluation of the credit.

## **3. Appeals**

- a. Students may appeal PLA credit decisions using the Requests for Exception form.
- b. Recommendations and scoring by ACE, CLEP, and other external bodies are under the auspices of the evaluation body and cannot be appealed at the college/university level. Student appeals of these decisions should be directed to the appeals procedures for each testing agency or credit recommendation service.
- c. Revision of portfolio – Students may submit revised portfolios upon recommendation of the assessor after receiving recommendations for improvement or reasons for credit denial.

## **VI. Interpretation**

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

## **VII. Citation of Authority for Policy**

THEC Recommended Standards in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Policy and Practice for Tennessee Public Colleges and Universities: The Tennessee Prior Learning Assessment Task Force. Approved August 7, 2012

## **VIII. Approved by:**

Academic Council: April 11, 2018

University Assembly: April 18, 2018

Board of Trustees: June 26, 2018

## APPENDIX D

### Adult Learner Plan Activities

#### Digital & Distance Education

June 1, 2018

*The following report is from the Division of Distance and Digital Education and the impact on Adult Learner Goals and Outcomes.*

- 1) Market to and recruit adult learners/veterans
  - a. Conducted undergraduate and graduate information/recruitment sessions at community college sites (MSCC and CoSCC) and industries such as VW, Bridgestone, Newell, and Goodman
  - b. Visited Community college classes to recruit
  - c. Send email blasts to graduating community college students
  - d. Posted recruitment flyers on community college campuses
  - e. Provided recruitment information and materials to community college advisors and students
  - f. Participate in community events to promote TTU
  - g. Provided one-on-one meetings with adult learners as needed to explain programs and admissions process
  - h. Partnered with TN Reconnect to promote TTU programs to returning adult students
  - i. Present to Leadership McMinnville
  - j. Helped to publicize special events and conferences targeting adult learners
  
- 2) Develop an improved partnership with regional industry workforce needs and develop appropriate degree/certificate programs to align with education opportunities and professional needs
  - a. Served on Mind2Marketplace (M2M) Board to collaborate with education and industry partners to advance workforce development in middle TN (M2M partnership was impetus for two VR summits in TTU iCube)
  - b. Supported off-campus 2+2 partnerships: Interdisciplinary Studies, MET, and ELED (as needed) to help meet workforce needs
  - c. Served as a liaison for TTU and EPRD through membership in McMinnville/Warren County Chamber of Commerce and by actively participating in Upper Cumberland Chamber of Commerce Executive Association, providing an exchange of information on workforce needs and educational opportunities at TTU
  - d. Consistently maintained and fostered relationships with community college and industry partners
  - e. Give input on development of content for new, special topics courses for BSIS program based on industry requests
  - f. Provide support for special events and conferences aimed at meeting workforce needs and improving economic development
  - g. Developed strategic alliances and relationships with federal and state agencies, industry, and private sector companies to further enhance EPRD's actions
  - h. Strengthened existing and developing new conferences, seminars, and workshops in response to participant demand in which these conferences, seminars, and workshops

will reflect the changing business as directed by surveys and planning committee meetings thus providing current information to all participants

- i. 15 conferences/seminars/workshops
  - ii. Successful transition of some TTU courses to CHEC building
  - iii. Collaborate with Vol State at CHEC building
  - iv. Hosted Highlands Leadership class
  - v. Over 2,000 certificates awarded for professional development, CEUs, etc.
  - vi. Delivered industry specific courses including:
    1. Virtual Reality Summit
    2. Motorcycle Riders Licensure Course
    3. Tennessee Business Tax Seminar
    4. PLC Control Systems Workshop
    5. Child Care Resource and Referral Training
    6. TVA Google Earth Training
    7. TNCPE Examiner Training
  - vii. Ed2go and Gatlin online certificates and career training courses
- 3) Improve the diversity of the degrees/programs attainable with flexible offerings and format
- a. Coordinated degree programs designed for working adult students
    - i. Conveniently offered at community college and workplace locations
    - ii. Traditional, hybrid, online, zoom (web conference) deliveries
    - iii. 5-week and 7-week accelerated formats
    - iv. Tuesday and Thursday evening OR Friday day classes at Volkswagen Academy
  - b. Participated in internal and external discussions to explore feasibility of and need for additional offerings of 2+2 programs at Motlow sites (including Smyrna), Columbia State, and Chattanooga State
- 4) Develop Collaborated effort to use articulation agreements and transfer pathways with regional Community Colleges
- a. Comprised a diverse offering of distance learning credit offerings at two new locations
    - i. Cookeville Higher Education Campus (partnership with Vol State Community College and TCAT-Livingston)
    - ii. Lawrenceburg Site: Partnership with Columbia State Community College
  - b. Comprised a diverse offering of distance learning credit offerings at established locations
    - i. Roane State Community College, Oak Ridge, Crossville, and Scott County
    - ii. Motlow Community College, McMinnville and Tullahoma
    - iii. Pellissippi State Community College, Knoxville
    - iv. VW Academy, Chattanooga
- 5) Improve the quality of adult learner outreach and services
- a. Advised on-site at 2+2 locations
  - b. Conducted student orientations tailored to adult learners at 2+2 sites
  - c. Communicated availability by email, phone, or in-person to help solve unique problems of individual adult students
  - d. Served as a liaison for off-campus students with various TTU offices such as Admissions, Health Services, Registration, Financial Aid, Business Office, Graduation, etc.

- e. Collaborated in identification, hire, and support of adjunct faculty who are “adult learner friendly” to teach at the 2+2 sites
- f. Attended CoIS Outstanding Alumni recognition event spotlighting one of our off-campus 2+2 adult student graduates
- g. Attended graduation recognition and celebration of MET 2+2 adult students at VW Academy
- h. Promoted the various types of PLA to reduce time to degree completion
- i. Guided and supported adult students constructing portfolios for prior learning credit
- j. Stayed current with research and best practices in serving adult learners through webinars and other professional development opportunities

6) In addition, we have supported faculty in the creation of online versions of several popular, high-enrollment, general education courses

AGBE 2010	World Food and Society
FREN 2510/3510	French People and Culture
MUS 1030	Music Appreciation
HIS 2010	Early US History
HIS 2020	Modern US History
MATH 1530	Intro Statistics
MATH 2010	Intro to Linear Algebra
SOC 1010	Intro to Sociology
COMM 2025	Fundamentals of Communication

These classes offer adult students the flexibility of online and do not carry the additional fee associated with eCampus enrollment. This saves students \$366 for a 3 credit hour course.

APPENDIX E

**Sample Online Course Offering**

TN Tech Course			
Course Name	Section	CRN	Title
ACCT 2110	500	85973	Principles of Accounting I
ACCT 2120*			Principles of Accounting II
ACCT 3170	500	83056	Financial Accounting/Reporting I
ACCT 3180	500	82395	Financial Accounting/Reporting II
ACCT 3210	500	83093	Cost Accounting
ACCT 3720	500	83341	Survey of Accounting
AGBE 2010	500	84797	World Food & Society
AGBE 2010	501	83932	World Food & Society (5 week)
BMGT 4150	500	83682	Employment & Labor Law
CJ 2660/SOC 2660	500	84757	Criminology (8 weeks - 8/27-10/21)
CJ 3650/SOC 3650	500	84831/85790	Juvenile Delinquency (8 weeks 10/22 - 12/13)
CJ 4050/SOC 4050	500	86026	Crime and Media (8 weeks - 8/27- 10/21)
CJ 4100	500	85868	Probation and Parole
CJ 4660/SOC 4660	500	84768	Corrections (8 weeks - 10/22-12/13)
COMM 2025*			Fundamentals of Communication
ENGL 1020*			English Composition II
ENGL 2130*			Topics in American Literature
EXPW 2015	500	85412	Concepts of Health and Wellness
FREN 2510/3510*			French Culture & Civilization
GEOG 1012*			Cultural Geography
HEC 1010**	001/500	81980	Life Span Development
HEC 2020	500	84871	Nutrition
HIST 1310	500	85945	Science and World Cultures
HIST 2010	500	84643	Early US History
HIST 2020	500	84654	Modern US History
MATH 1530	500	85608	Introductory Statistics
MATH 1910			Calculus I

MATH 1920			Calculus II
MATH 2010	500	85611	Introduction to Linear Algebra
MATH 2110			Calculus III
MATH 2120	500	85613	Differential Equations
MUS 1030	500	85882	Music Appreciation (5 week)
PC 2500	500	82202	Communication in the Profession
PC 2500	501	84133	Communication in the Profession
PC 2500	502	84134	Communication in the Profession
PHED 1221	500	85107	Fitness Walking
SOC 1010	500	85459	Introduction to Sociology

\* Offered online in summer 2018, no course presently listed online for fall

\*\* Moving online in fall