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CMU OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS

Prior Learning Assessment
Briefing
For
Portfolio Development

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Agenda

- Welcome
- Overview
- Developing a Portfolio
- Evaluation Process
- Summary & Tips
- Questions

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PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

College Credit Awarded for the
Knowledge Gained Through
Employment, Training, and
Life Experiences,
As Self-assessed &
Documented in a Portfolio

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A Portfolio Includes:

- Portfolio checklist
- Tabs I and II (General information; transcripts and TCE)
- Tab III (Table of Contents)
- Tab IV (Job - if requesting credit)
- Tab V (Training -if requesting credit)
- Tab VI (Life Experiences - if requesting credit)
- Tab VII (Notarized page, attests to portfolio and "present" date)

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History:

- CMU began offering prior learning credit in the 1970's for military throughout the world
- Have evaluated approximately 9,000 portfolios
- CMU uses a Competency Model (not course challenge)

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PLA Philosophy:

- College level learning can occur in many settings, including work, training, and/or life experiences
- Students can express (write) an analysis of what they *learned* and how they *apply* this knowledge in the work environment

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Awards based on:

- Length of employment and/or hours in training determine the maximum possible credits (American Colleges of Education (ACE) guidelines)
- Quality of the self-assessment determines the actual credits awarded

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Hand Outs: Resources


1. Prior Learning pamphlet
2. Fact Sheet (Review Fact Sheet for basic information and advantages)
3. Who Should Submit...Is A Portfolio for You? (Review questions / meet with advisor)
4. Handbook ordering information
5. Writing Center information

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Developing a Portfolio:


1. **Meet with your academic advisor** to discuss potential use of prior learning credits on your program
2. Get PL Student Handbook and CD
 - Undergraduate = \$18 (new price)
 - Graduate = \$17.25 (new price)

www.direct.mbsbooks.com/cmuh.htm


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Portfolio: Eligibility

- Undergraduate: from high school graduation to present
- Graduate: from date of the undergraduate degree or 7 years prior, whichever is shorter.


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Portfolio – Self-Assessment & Learning

- Experiences must be supported by **self-assessment of learning**. (No credit for observations, experiences, or trainings without self-assessment.)
- Must reflect **college level** learning
- Self-assessment must explain learning with adequate details and examples, i.e., show analysis and synthesis of learning (in standard written English)
- Learning claimed must be supported in the documentation


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Portfolio - Applying Credits

- Undergraduate: UNV 297 or 497
- Graduate: UNV 697
- 5 CMU credits from CMU must be posted on the transcript before prior learning credits may be applied.
- Undergraduate: 60 credits max
- Graduate: 10 credits max; normally do not substitute for core courses

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Portfolio – Organization

- Use separate header sheet for **each** work, training, and life experience
- Start with most recent experiences (work, training, and/or life), then proceed backwards (reverse chronological order)
- Fully assess the learning for each tab

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Portfolio – Presentation

- Use a three-ring binder (only)
- Use tabbed dividers:
 - between each major segment
 - between each required section (I/II, III, IV, V, VI, and VII tabs)
- **Do not** use plastic page protectors
- Use the required forms (do not revise these forms)

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PORTFOLIO - Tab I: General Information

- Be sure your name is same as appears on CMU transcript
- Use student ID number
- Do not include social security number here or in any of the documents (black out)


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Portfolio -

Tab II: Education Background

- Indicate degree or certificate program desired
- Indicate date of high school bachelor degree completion
- Include a transcript for all college course work (unofficial copy is ok)
- Include a copy of your CMU Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE) form.


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Portfolio -

Tab III: Table of Contents

- **very important!**
 - basis for organizing materials
 - overview of contents to follow

List All Tabs:

- List current experiences **first**
- List different work responsibilities / positions as separate experiences
- List **ALL** documents included for each Tab


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Portfolio -

Table of Contents cont'd.

Note: Copy documents relevant to more than one experience (work or training); highlight information and insert with relevant tab.


Tip: List documents **ONLY** after have been acquired, organized, and placed in the correct section of the portfolio

Cross-check all dates for accuracy


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IV-Tab, Work Experience: Header Form (see handout)

- WORK EXPERIENCE ID: IV-1 (number EACH, with current job first)
- Dates of Employment (month & year, e.g., 10/94)
- Exact Title of Position, and Rank or Salary
- From: _____ To: _____
- Full Time / part time: # hours/week: _____
- Name and Title of Immediate Supervisor
- Name of Employer (firm, organization, etc.) and Address Including Zip Code
- Address of Supervisor


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IV-Tab: Work Experience

- Majority of credits awarded come from work experiences (spend time developing the self-assessment for these).
- Must work 10 months to get any credit. If jobs overlap, be sure to explain the hours/time for each.
- Self-assessment = explaining the *learning* that occurred during a work experience.


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IV-Tab: Work Experience

- Provide documentation that supports the learning.
- Quality of the self-assessment is critical for awarding credits.
- Writing must show analysis, value judgment and synthesis (process of applying learning acquired through the value judgment process; adapts and applies knowledge).
- Quality of the writing is important.

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Graphic Organizer: IV-Tabs

- List some of the items from your current (or recent) job description.

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Graphic Organizer: IV-Tabs

- List some of the items from your current (or recent) job description.
- What else do you do? List some things not in the job description.

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Graphic Organizer: IV-Tabs

- List some of the items from your current (or recent) job description.
- What else do you do? – things not in the job description.
- What new things have you learned from doing your job?

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Graphic Organizer: IV-Tabs

- List some of the items from your current (or recent) job description.
- What else do you do? – things not in the job description.
- What new things have you learned from doing your job?
- How have you improved?
- Any training experiences?
- Documentation have/available?

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Graphic Organizer: IV-Tabs

- List some of the items from your job description. (A1)
- What else do you do? – things not in the job description (A1)
- What new things have you learned from doing your job? (A2)
- How have you improved? (A3)
- Any training experiences?(A4)
- Documentation (support)

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V-Tab: Training Experiences

- Submit each experience separately
- Be sure to answer each question:
 - V-A1 – Why did you take the training?
 - V-A2 – What did you learn from the training?
 - V-A3 – Where/how do you use the things learned from the training?


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V-Tab: Training Cont'd

- Includes required training as well as courses and workshops attended to gain new skills or knowledge beyond those directly associated with job.
- Time: varies, e.g., 4 hours to over 200. Details in the self-assessment should correspond to the length of time.
- Think about the length of a college course as a reference for time.


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VI-Tab: Life Experience

- Any experience that does not fit into work or training may be fit here.
- must be for a significant amount/ duration of time, e.g., minimum 2 years for leisure area.
- Typically receive least credit.
- Are the most difficult to self-assess and evaluate.


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VII-Tab: Signature Block

- Re-check accuracy between TOC and individual work, training, life experience tabs.
- Be sure all copies of transcripts and documentation are inserted in the correct portfolio sections.
- Include Portfolio Checklist; be sure to indicate if any documentation is missing and why.
- Get signature notarized (last)

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Portfolio - TIPS & Hints

- Complete the self-assessment for one experience/tab, then take a break from writing; use this time to collect documentation and have others read/give feedback.
- Have a friend (not a co-worker or spouse) read the self-assessment for clarity
- Have a co-worker read the self-assessment to provide suggestions for additional responsibilities and/or learning
- Use the **CMU Writing Center (see handout or brochure)**
- Read and revise again.

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Portfolio – Submitting

- Check guidelines; complete portfolio checklist to be sure everything is included (or explained)
- Send two copies; keep one
- Send \$100 one-time fee for evaluation, re-evaluation, and additional submissions. (\$75 per credit hour only for credits **used** on transcript.)

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Evaluation Process (9-10 weeks)

- Documents with inconsistent information may be disallowed.
- Random portfolios are selected for verification of documents.
- Three faculty evaluate each portfolio independently; each recommendation must be within 6 credits for undergraduate, 3 for graduate.

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Evaluation cont'd

- Evaluators look for learned competencies (what you learned) not for CMU course equivalency.
- Skills and competencies are identified based on documents AND quality and thoroughness of self-assessment.
- PLA guidelines determine the maximum number of credits possible for time on the job.

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Evaluation cont'd

- You will receive an "Award Letter" indicating the number of credits available (awarded), the titles, and the level of awards.
- *REMEMBER: This is a competency-based model. You must work with your advisor to determine how/whether competency titles and credit levels can apply to your program.*

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Evaluation cont'd

- Review award, noting each IV, V and VI tab; some tabs may be combined
- Meet with an academic advisor for competencies to be used (transcripted)
- Pay **only** for credits posted to transcript (rather than all credits awarded)
- Have 1 year from date of award letter to pay for and post competencies
- Maximum credits than can be applied:
60 undergraduate, 10 graduate

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Re-evaluation: One, within 45 days from date on award letter.

- Submit letter of request with additional information
- Credits may increase, decrease, or stay the same depending on additional information and/or self-assessment.

Additional Submissions:
Unlimited for undergraduate; within 7 year limit for graduate

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Summary

- Read / Use STUDENT HANDBOOK / CD
- Forms on the CD are interactive; complete as instructed
- Forms on the CD are required, **do not** edit or submit any self-created header pages.
- Be sure all information in Table of Contents matches each of the header sheets and the documentation

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Summary cont'd

Remember:

1. Competency titles are based on the nature of the experience, and the **quality of the self-assessment**
2. The number of credits are determined by duration of the experience (documented) and the **quality of the self-assessment**

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Summary cont'd

- Proofread everything – twice!
- Submit preliminary work to the CMU Writing Center
- The signature block must be signed, dated, and notarized

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Summary cont'd

- Prepare 3 complete portfolios; send two, along with \$100 processing fee; keep your original
- Portfolios will not be returned:
make 3; send 2; keep 1!!!

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Contact Information

Questions?

- Hotline: 866-774-1018 or E-mail - priorlrn@cmich.edu
- Off-campus programs - www.cel.cmich
- Brochure, handbook, and online at: www.cel.cmich.edu/prior%2Dlearning/

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Additional Thoughts

- As with any class, the time and effort put into developing a quality portfolio, especially a quality self-assessment, will be reflected in getting the maximum credits possible.
- A three credit hour collegiate course requires work on the part of the student; a portfolio also requires a fair amount of work/time.
- Many people feel good about developing a portfolio – feel a real sense of accomplishment. Enjoy the process!

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QUESTIONS?????

- QUESTIONS??
- QUESTIONS??
