

The Department of Education's
Experimental Sites Initiative
Prior Learning Assessment
August 2015

Agenda

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- Overview of the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Experiment

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- Implementation of The Experiment

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- Evaluation and Reporting

Responsibilities of Institutional Offices



Administrative Capability
668.16(b)(1) and (4)

Prior Learning Assessment

Objective

- To learn how allowing the costs of prior learning assessments to be included in cost of attendance (COA) may influence students' educational costs and time to degree

Prior Learning Assessment

Requirements to Participate

- Must include the cost of prior learning assessment in students' cost of attendance
- Must provide academic credit when a student successfully demonstrates prior learning through an assessment

Prior Learning Assessment

Current Rules

- Costs for prior learning assessments may not be included in COA
- Time and effort spent preparing for prior learning assessments may not be included in a student's enrollment status

Experiment

- COA can include reasonable costs incurred by a student for assessments of prior learning
- Federal Pell Grant enrollment status may include up to three credit hours associated with a student's efforts to prepare materials for a prior learning assessment
 - Example: Preparing for a portfolio assessment

Prior Learning Assessment

Eligible Assessments



Tests provided by the institution or an outside entity (CLEP, challenge exams, etc.)



Portfolio assessments



May NOT include college transcript evaluations or placement testing

Prior Learning Assessment

Reasonable Costs



Test fees



Cost of portfolio evaluation



May NOT include fees charged by the institution per clock or credit hour applied toward program

Prior Learning Assessment

Pell Credit Hours



Up to 3 semester hours or 4.5 quarter hours per academic program may be added to a student's enrollment status



Additional hours could increase a student's Pell award (e.g. half-time to three-quarters-time)

Prior Learning Assessment

PLA Preparation



Credit hours must be associated with time spent preparing materials required to demonstrate prior learning



Each credit hour must reasonably approximate no less than 3 hours per week of preparation

Prior Learning Assessment

PLA Preparation



May not include study time for tests and examinations and may not include time taking a test



May not add clock hours or the amount of credit applied toward the student's degree

Prior Learning Assessment

Pell Grant Enrollment Status



Increase in enrollment status applies to Pell Grants only



Resulting additional Pell eligibility must be directly disbursed to student

Prior Learning Assessment

Waivers

Law/Regulation	Description
HEA Section 472	Establishes types of expenses that may be considered when determining a student's financial need
34 CFR 668.2	General definitions – definition of enrollment status
34 CFR 600.2	Definition of “credit hour”
34 CFR 668.10(f)	Prohibition on the use of Title IV funds for PLA in direct assessment programs

Program Participation Agreement



FSA sends the school the Amendment to the PPA

School signs and returns via courier service



FSA sends the school a countersigned amendment to the PPA

- School keeps copy

Evaluation and Reporting

The Department's evaluation of the experiment will include:

Information Type	Possible Data Sources
Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)▪ Institutional Experimental Site Survey and Narrative Descriptions▪ Common Origination and Disbursement (COD)▪ National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)
Program(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Institutional Experimental Site Survey and Narrative Descriptions
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) Data▪ Common Origination and Disbursement (COD)▪ National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS)▪ Institutional Experimental Site Survey and Narrative Descriptions

Evaluation and Reporting

- Annually, institutions will:
 - Complete a survey to provide contextual information about your school's utilization of PLA
 - Report identifiers and other data about students who take advantage of PLA opportunities
- Institutions will need to report for the 2014/2015 year and forward

Evaluation and Reporting

- Institutions should retain the following for 2014/2015 and thereafter:
 - Name, description and cost of PLAs used
 - Policy for awarding credit for PLAs
 - Identifiers for Title IV recipients who used PLAs
 - Students' program(s) of study
 - Which PLAs students used
 - Amount of credit students earned via PLA

PLA Action Plan

Sections

Waivers

Signed Amended PPA

Consumer Information

Established Record Keeping System to Support Evaluation

Policies and Procedures

Systems

Impact on Other Offices

Reporting

Link to Question and Answers

Policies and Procedures

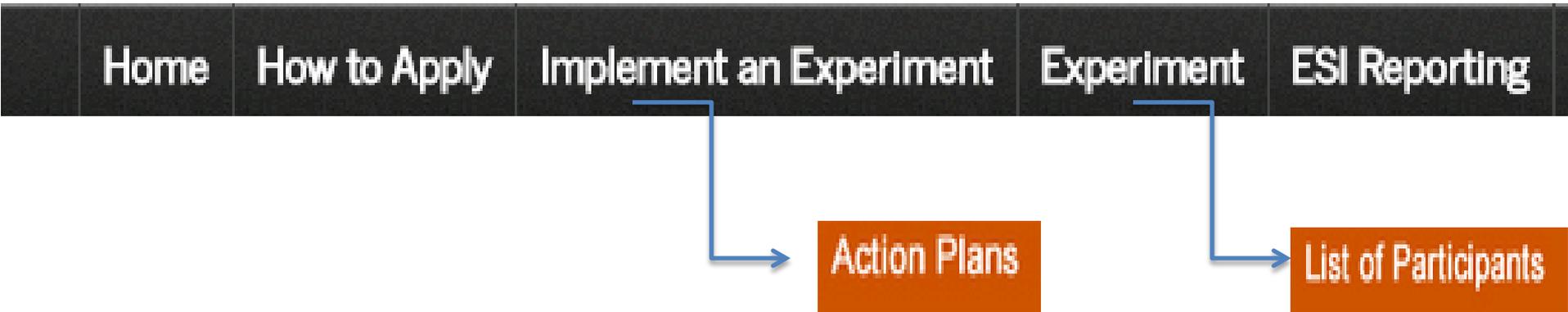
Policy Topic	Required policy & procedure	School Policy
Cost of Attendance (COA)	<p>Include procedures to ensure that school determines cost of attendance (COA) to include reasonable costs, such as test fees or the costs of a portfolio evaluation, that are incurred by the student for the assessment of prior learning. These costs must not include any clock or credit hour fees associated with the hours, if any, that the institution determines will apply toward completion of the student's academic program. The costs in question may reflect individual costs of a prior learning assessment, but must fall within the categories established in HEA § 472.</p> <p>The procedures must also ensure that any increased COA is used to determine the student's eligibility for and amount of Title IV aid for the payment period or enrollment period covered by the COA.</p>	
Enrollment Status	<p>The school may include up to a maximum of three credit hours in a student's Federal Pell Grant (or Iraq-Afghanistan Service Grant) enrollment status for preparation for a prior learning assessment, depending on the amount of effort expended by the student for that preparation. The maximum of three credit hours could be included in just one payment period or over multiple payment periods within an academic year, but a student may not receive more than three total credit hours toward Pell Grant enrollment status for the student's enrollment in a single academic program.</p>	

Policies and Procedures Cont'd

Policy Topic	Required policy & procedure	School Policy
Enrollment Status (continued)	<p>Include procedures to ensure that PLA preparation time used to increase enrollment status <i>does not</i> include the time taken by a student to study for a test or examination or the time spent taking the test or examination. Rather, it includes only the time spent by the student during, or just prior to, the relevant payment period(s) preparing any materials required to demonstrate the learning that will be assessed. The procedures must ensure that PLA preparation time is not the same as the academic hours credited to the student's academic program following a successful prior learning assessment.</p> <p>The procedures must ensure that the increase to the student's Pell Grant enrollment status does not apply to the student's enrollment status for purposes of Title IV awards other than Pell Grants.</p>	
Direct disbursement	<p>Include procedures to ensure that any resulting increase in the student's Pell Grant award is provided only as a direct disbursement to the student.</p>	
Individual student adjustments	<p>Include procedures to ensure that determinations regarding COA and Pell Grant enrollment status adjustments associated with a PLA under the experiment reflect the expenses, time, and effort incurred or spent by individual students, not a group or class of students.</p>	
Successful Assessment of Prior Learning	<p>Include procedures to ensure that successful assessment of a student's prior learning will result in the institution determining that the student has met part of the requirements for the program, without the student having to enroll in, pay for, and complete additional coursework attributable to that part.</p>	

ESI Website

<https://experimentalsites.ed.gov>



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Questions and Answers