

## **Portfolio Evaluation**

The process of examining prior learning and its relevance to a particular program or goal can be learning experience in itself. We hope that you will use the opportunity to learn from this process. It does require hard work, patience and skill. An advisor will work with you during the entire process.

Your portfolio, the finished product of this process, should provide the basis for assessing and awarding college credits for appropriate learning experience. In addition, you will be able to integrate these potential credits into your program of study at BHCC.

Application (\$15 non-refundable), evaluation and processing fees (\$15 per credit) are charged for this service and should not be confused with tuition.

### **IDENTIFYING YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

It is very important that you begin to list what you know and do. If you have already prepared a resume that will be helpful, but a resume does not always tell the whole story. Be sure to look at all of your learning experience keep in mind that these experiences take place in a variety of different settings, sometimes overlap, and very often enhance one another.

You have probably learned a great deal from a variety of prior work experiences. It is possible you have learned things simply out of necessity or as a result of responsibilities you have been given or assumed. At the same time, you undoubtedly have had a variety of learning experiences unrelated to your work. Perhaps you have hobbies, which require expert skills. Are you fluent in another language? Have you participated in community organizations? Do you have a military background?

So how do you begin to identify learning experiences that satisfy college-level criteria? You may find one or more of the following activities helpful:

- Develop a chronological list of jobs you have held, including part time and volunteer work
- Conduct a "remember when" session with a family member, friend, or others who have known you over a significant length of time.
- List key events, markers or milestones in your life.
- Develop a list of courses and programs you have participated in.

Or you may wish to begin with a specific set of questions for yourself:

What is my job?

What do I have to know to do my job?

What have I learned that makes me unique at my job?

What would I have to do to teach someone else my job?

What training programs have I attended/authored?

What special skills do i have?

Have I given public presentations?

Am I certified or licensed in a specific field?

Do I consider myself an expert in something?

Do I have special knowledge in technical areas?

### **STEPS IN THE PROCESS:**

1. Student receives a general description of the program.
2. Students interested in detailed information about the program or portfolio preparation
  1. must call the PLA office for an appointment
  2. Students who wish to participate in the program must fill out and return an application form with a \$15 non-refundable application fee.
  3. form with a \$15 non-refundable application fee.
4. Students meet with an advisor, as needed, to complete a portfolio.

A completed portfolio consists of:

  - a. Application
  - b. An assessment request for each course/competency;
  - c. A detailed narrative of learning acquired and /or applied;
  - d. Resume;
  - e. Job description;
  - f. Statement from supervisor testifying to the student's competencies;
  - g. College transcript (If applicable);
  - h. Certificates, Diploma, Military records, etc;
5. The coordinator/advisor receives the portfolio when completed and reviews it in order to:
  - a. ascertain that the competencies described and documented, agree with the title and credit requested.
  - b. evaluate whether the request is reasonable in terms of the student's academic goals at BHCC and long-term.
  - c. determine if the information in the portfolio suggests additional competencies that the student may have.
  - d. insure the validity of all documentation described and submitted by the student.

6. When the portfolio is judged to be in order, the coordinator/advisor consults a subject-matter specialist for evaluation. Subject-matter specialists are chosen primarily from the faculty and staff of Bunker Hill Community College. All subject-matter specialists receive an orientation to the program and guidance in equating prior experiential learning with conventional classroom learning. The subject matter may be equivalent to course work described in the BHCC catalogue or may be unique to the applicant. The subject-matter specialists provide a written evaluation regarding criteria on which credit award is based.
7. The coordinator/advisor has the option of consulting more than one specialist in the same subject-matter for evaluation or clarification.
8. If additional documentation is required, the student will be instructed and assisted by the Coordinator/advisor or subject-matter specialist in obtaining or providing additional information.
9. When the entire portfolio has been evaluated and credit award has been approved, the Coordinator/Advisor will notify the student by mail. An award/fee letter will be sent to the student detailing the status of credit award and amount of processing fee (\$15 per credit). Payment of all fees must be by check or money order, made payable to BHCC-PLA. A receipted copy of the award/fee letter becomes part of the student's permanent PLA portfolio. Please note: Processing fees are required by the college and are not to be confused with tuition.
10. An off-term credit form will be forwarded to the Registrar's Office upon full payment of all processing fees. The Coordinator of the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) will sign and forward this form to the Registrar so that credits will be officially recorded on the student's transcript.

PLA credits listed on student's transcript are equivalent to credits earned for completing similar courses at BHCC. When new course numbers or titles are assigned, the process will be consistent with regard to academic policy, procedure and discipline.

Up to 45 credits awarded through the PLA process may be applied to the student's degree program. However, at the student's request, all credits awarded may be officially recorded on a formal transcript.

For additional information, contact the PLA Office at (617) 228-2350. Or <mailto:famini@bhcc.mass.edu>