

Policy for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Effectiveness: 2024.03.15

I. Purpose

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (hereinafter "Sagrado") recognizes that Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) represents an additional alternative to promote access to university education, persistence and graduation in different population segments: adult learners, veterans or in military service, workers in retraining process, among others. With this policy, Sagrado proposes a formal validation mechanism to recognize the validity and academic merit of prior learning, which may include work and professional development experiences, vocational experience, volunteering, military service, cultural management, artistic trajectory, civic experiences, among others.

This policy is in addition to the validation through advanced exams, another method of validation of prior experience defined in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog, which consists of granting academic credits for the Advanced Placement Program (AP), the Advanced Placement Exam (APE), or the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) of the College Board. This policy follows the philosophical framework and best practices defined by the American Council for Education (ACE) for the purposes of validation of prior learning.

II. Applicability / Scope

This policy applies to students admitted to and enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at Sagrado.

III. Definitions

1. *Prior Learning Assessment*: additional alternative to promote access to university education, persistence and graduation in different population segments: adult students, veterans or in military service, workers in the process of professional retraining, among others.

IV. Guiding Principles/ General Policy

- a. As a general rule, the maximum number of credits to be validated shall not exceed 30% of the total credits of the academic program. This validation may be combined with credits transferred from other institutions, according to the rule in the current Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog. In accredited academic programs the amount of credits will be governed by the specific rules of the

corresponding agency.

- b. The validated credits may be distributed among general requirements, institutional requirements, concentration requirements, exploration requirements, emphasis area requirements, or concentration requirements, as applicable in the undergraduate or graduate curriculum.
- c. The student may request the validation of prior learning after having been admitted and enrolled in Sagrado.
- d. The validation of prior learning will not apply to substitute the grade of a course already passed or failed at Sagrado or at another university institution (by transfer or authorized by the University), or in courses that have had a partial, total or official withdrawal.
- e. Sagrado reserves the right to administer or prepare tests in subjects that it does not offer, or that are not susceptible to evaluation by challenge exam or portfolio. The dean of the academic unit to which the course is attached will decide if it is viable to offer the modality of validation of previous experience. This decision will be based on pedagogical and academic quality criteria. Any appeal of this decision may be referred to the evaluation of the Provost. The Provost's decision will be indisputable.
- f. The validation of prior learning at Sagrado will have two modalities: challenge exam and/or portfolio presentation. In both modalities it will be evaluated that the prior learning is equivalent in quality and rigor to the higher education level. The equivalence between prior learning and course credit hours, level, learning objectives, knowledge and skills expected to be mastered will also be evaluated.
- g. The challenge exam will consist of a test designed to assess knowledge or skill mastery. It may be a written, practical (e.g., an applied demonstration of skills) or oral examination, or combination of these. It will be designed, administered and evaluated by a faculty member with expertise in the discipline of the course. The exam may be face-to-face or virtual, provided that it has an escrow mechanism.
- h. The portfolio presentation will consist of applying an evaluation rubric to the evidence presented by a student to demonstrate experiences equivalent to knowledge and mastery of higher level skills. Evidence may include certificates, industry or professional certifications, licenses, test scores, evaluations, newspaper articles, letters of recommendation, artistic works, audio or audiovisual material, among others. The rubric will be designed and applied to the portfolio by a faculty member with expertise in the course discipline.
- i. The minimum grade to pass the validation, through challenge exam or portfolio presentation, will be 80%.
- j. Courses approved through validation of prior learning will be reflected in the

academic record with a passing grade (P). If the student does not pass the challenge exam or the presentation of the portfolio, it will be included as Not Passed (NP).

- k. The student may request and attempt the validation of prior learning only once per course; if the validation is not approved, the student must enroll and take the course.
- l. The student is responsible for inquiring whether the approval of courses through the modalities of validation of previous experiences is recognized by the entities that certify licenses or professional registration.
- m. The costs of the process of validation of prior learning will be defined in the Financial Norms of the Institution and will not be reimbursable.
- n. In cases where there are validation recommendations for courses taken in the Armed Forces or other entities, and for which there are official guidelines such as those of the American Council on Education, the dean will determine which tests, if any, the student must take to determine the equivalence of credits to be validated.


VI. Questions About this Policy

This policy is approved by the president of Sagrado with the advice of the General Counsel's Office. Questions regarding the scope and interpretation of this policy should be directed to the office of Academic Affairs.

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón reserves the right to interpret this policy in its administration, implementation and enforcement. In the event of ambiguity in any provision of this policy, Sagrado reserves the discretion to interpret it in accordance with the purpose for which it was established, the impact on its operations, and good faith, unless otherwise provided by law.

VII. Reporting Violations to this Policy

Violations to this Policy should be directed to the Compliance, Internal Audit and Institutional Integrity Office at: cumplimiento@sagrado.edu. Any violation to this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with institutional policies and procedures.


Gilberto J. Marxuach Torrós
President