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## Alternative Credit Types

When students think about completing their degree and transferring credits, they typically think of the standard route: Taking semester or quarter-long courses at a college or university. While this certainly is an option, there are other non-traditional avenues to consider, referred to as "Alternative Credits". Alternative credits may include Prior Learning Assessment, National Testing Programs, or self-paced alternative credit providers. Alternative credits are learning gained outside the college classroom through formal or non-formal means and usually cost less, are more efficient, and self-paced.

Here is a brief overview of the three alternative credit types which will be addressed in more detail shortly.

- **Prior Learning Assessment (or PLA)** refers to earning college credit by submitting industry training & licensure or writing on an approved life experience journal topic. University of Phoenix offers this option free of charge for students.
- **National Testing Programs (or NTPs)** provide options to demonstrate existing knowledge by taking an exam in an available content area.
- And **Self-paced alternative credit providers** offer a variety of self-paced courses that are a great way to fast-track your degree completion goals.

### Example Two

Student two worked with the **Student Services team** to choose a National Testing Program exam that could leverage their long-time interest in history. After successfully completing a 90-minute CLEP History exam from the comfort of their own home, the student paid \$123, transferred in 3 credits, and saved 5 weeks and \$1,364 in tuition and fees.

### Example Three

Student three collaborated with our **Student Services team** on which self-paced Sophia Learning courses to take. 30 days and 99 dollars later, they completed four 3-credit courses, saving them four and a half months

## PLA

[PLA submissions](#) provide many credit opportunities for our students. Two of the most popular options include Professional Training Portfolio and the Life Experience Journal.

The image is a screenshot of a webpage from the University of Phoenix. At the top left, the University of Phoenix logo is visible. The main heading reads "Earn college credit for work & life experience". Below this, a paragraph states: "Did you know trainings, certifications, and other things you've learned can count towards your degree? That's right! Complete a Prior Learning Assessment with us to see if your experiences can give you a head start on your degree – at absolutely no cost to you." A blue button with the text "Learn more about work and life experience" is positioned below the paragraph. The background of the page features a photograph of a man in a white shirt and tie, holding a young child's hand. At the bottom of the page, there are two statistics: "OTHER STUDENTS SAVED WITH WORK & LIFE EXPERIENCE CREDITS \$\$\$ \$1k-\$5k" and "OTHER STUDENTS SAVED WITH WORK & LIFE EXPERIENCE CREDITS \$\$\$ 1-6 months". At the very bottom, a small note reads "Phoenix undergrads earned 100,000+ credits in 2022."

### PLA Professional Portfolio

The Professional Training Portfolio may be for you if you completed certifications, professional licenses, or training courses. The PLA Team can evaluate these items for possible credit towards your degree. If you've taken vocational, technical, or continuing education courses from a school that is either unaccredited or non-degree granting, those transcripts can also be evaluated by our PLA Team.

If this sounds like you, start a list and gather the documentation. Once you're admitted and officially evaluated into your University of Phoenix program, you can upload and submit your portfolio as one batch. With the number of submissions received, it can

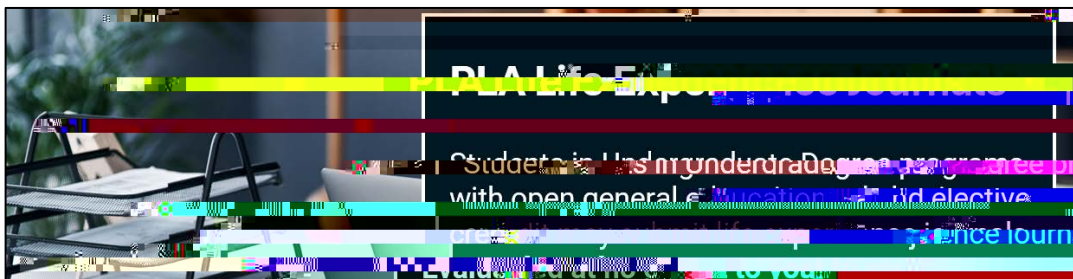
take weeks to be assigned an evaluator before the evaluation process begins, so the sooner you prepare, the better you'll be positioned to upload and submit your portfolio.

In fact, many students don't realize they already have something they can use to help save time and money for school! What are possible interests that can translate to PLA credit?

- Are you a licensed scuba diver?
- Have you earned a state barber's or cosmetology license?
- Did you finish a diploma in welding, or a medical assistant diploma program?
- Do you have a real estate license? Or maybe you're a certified personal fitness trainer?

These are the kinds of things to include in your PLA Professional Portfolio submission. One important callout to remember is that some programs, such as Education, Certificate, and Graduate may have limited PLA options. In addition, competency-based programs are not eligible for PLA options. If you are in one of these programs, please contact your Academic Counselor to discuss possible options. Whether you're still working on choosing the right program or are already underway in your program, we're more than happy to discuss your eligibility.

## PLA Life Experience Journals



Another type of PLA submission is the PLA Life Experience Journal. Once you're admitted and officially evaluated into your program, you can see which general education and elective categories are still needed. The Student Services team

can help you match the general education category you need with an approved journal topic available for that category.

For example, you need 3 credits of social science and 1 credit of physical/biological science so you review our approved topic list. Next, you notice \_\_\_\_\_ is an option that fulfills social science and \_\_\_\_\_ is an option that fulfills physical/biological science. You find that you are interested in writing about these life experiences as they relate to the approved topics. Our Prior Learning Assessment department can review your program and re henngif6 0.5 (t)0.6 (h)3.1 (e).5 (s)4 ( )0.j5 ( )0.2 (u)9 (r(rn)10. (a)8.1 )0.5 ( )0.5

experimented with different foods, how did your thoughts change about your nutrition plan?  
Did you grow to like foods you didn't before? Explain that.

c. Next is the third segment,





### Berlitz

All three national testing programs include a remote proctoring option, which means you can do a test from the comfort of your own home using a computer and a webcam.

Cost	Description	Exam
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are given a chance to retake an assessment if they need to improve their grade. And if necessary, they offer 10 hours of free tutoring on select courses.

Cost	Course Offerings	Course Structure	Requires Webcam?	Placement Tests?	Average Completion Time	Tutoring Availability	Passing Score
\$99/month (unlimited)	60 + course titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Many Ways to Learn"</li> <li>No textbooks</li> <li>Mobile-friendly</li> <li>1 retake per assignment</li> </ul>	No	No	Varies from course to course and student to student.	10 hours free (on select courses)	70% or higher

### Study.com

With over 200 course titles, [Study.com's](#) catalog includes both upper- and lower-level content and covers a wide range of unique subjects. Imagine learning Cybersecurity, Spanish for the Workplace, or Social Psychology at your own speed. With flexible courses that you can start, stop, & resume at any time, **Study.com's courses** are designed to make the learning process simpler and more enjoyable. No textbooks!

Complex concepts are broken down into quick 5-minute engaging, animated video lessons, and are followed by a short, graded quiz. To help you be successful and stay on

track, they offer a mobile app. [Study.com's](#) courses are designed to make the learning process simpler and more enjoyable. No textbooks!

## StraighterLine

[StraighterLine](#) offers over 60 course titles for just \$99 a month plus the cost of the course, most of which are just \$79. They provide Textbooks (at no cost) and support your learning with free on-demand tutoring & writing center support that's available 24/7. With practice assignments and multiple chances to improve your grade, StraighterLine is a great way to take self-paced courses in subject areas that include Business

Communication, Medical

Terminology, Sociology, and

Personal Fitness and Wellness.

Average time of completion is

4-6 weeks per course, but many

students are able finish a

course in less than 30 days.

You'll only need a computer and

course material.

## Additional Resources

- PLA - [College Credit for Your Work and Life Experience | University of Phoenix](#)
- Journal Info - [Experiential journals | University of Phoenix](#)
- Self-Paced Courses - [Online Alternative Course Providers | University of Phoenix](#)
- National Testing Programs - [National Testing Programs | University of Phoenix](#)