Introduction
SOWELA Technical Community College (SOWELA) recognizes that students enter the college with a wide variety of backgrounds and learning experiences establishing firm grounding in a particular discipline. Through credit for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), SOWELA offers students the opportunity to earn college credit for knowledge and skills attained through educational or work experiences. We recognize prior learning and provide several assessment methods to measure mastery of college-level introductory course content.

Policy Statement
SOWELA offers PLA options to currently enrolled students wanting to pursue college credit based on non-traditional means. Each PLA option listed below include the passing score required to receive credit which will be reflected on the student’s transcript as “CR” but will not be used in computing grade point averages or in determining academic standing. Applicability of this transcribed credit toward fulfilling degree requirements is determined by the School/Division Dean overseeing content the area of the course.

While SOWELA encourages utilization of these PLA opportunities, students should recognize certain limitations. PLA options are available ONLY to students that are officially registered at the College. Students completing the admissions process but not enrolled are ineligible for PLA credit. A maximum of 33% of coursework required in a degree program may be earned through PLA. Credit earned by PLA may or may not be transferrable to other colleges and universities. Therefore, students are strongly advised to meet with a program advisor or contact the college or university to which they plan to transfer for advice.

Students may NOT request PLA for currently or previously enrolled courses and no refunds will be awarded for coursework previously completed. Students earning an Industry-Based Certification for a currently enrolled course must speak with the School/Division Dean overseeing the area to determine if and how credit might be applied.
Purpose
Currently enrolled students with a fundamental knowledge of the content and/or skills associated with a course qualify to participate in PLA. SOWELA offers credit by evaluation for prior learning in the following categories:

1. **Military Credit** – Credit for military experiences based on the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services.

2. **Departmental Credit Exams** – Credit exams are developed by faculty with expertise in course content. A matrix is maintained with a list of specific credit exams available. Minimum passing score is 75%.

3. **Advanced Placement Examination** – Students that have taken and passed the AP exam will receive appropriate credit when scores are received by the Registrar’s Office. Minimum passing score is three.

4. **College Level Examination Program** – SOWELA may award credit to individuals who have received a minimum acceptable score of 50 on the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) General Examinations.

5. **Industry Based Certifications** - Students entering the college with current industry-based certifications may receive credit for equivalent courses.

6. **ACT Scores** – Students with superior ACT scores in Math and English may receive advanced standing as outlined in the Prior Learning Assessment Matrix. Students must request credit for the lower-level courses through the Registrar’s Office.

7. **Portfolio Review** – A team of subject matter experts including faculty and School/Division Deans will serve on a review team with the purpose of determining appropriate course credit. Minimum passing score is 75%.

8. **Skill Assessment Review** – A team of subject matter experts including faculty and School/Division Deans will review student performance on skill assessments to determine appropriate course credit for lifelong industry-based experiences. Minimum passing score is 75%.

Procedural Matters
Listed below are the necessary steps required for students wishing to participate in PLA for each of the 8 options listed above.

1. **Military Credit:**
   - The student will obtain appropriate form from the Registrar’s Office
   - Content experts in collaboration with the Registrar’s Office and the Chief Articulation Officer will review and recommend the awarding of course credit

2. **Credit/Challenge Exam:**
   - Obtain a Credit Exam Form from the Registrar’s Office
   - Report to the Business Office to submit the Credit Exam Form and pay the non-refundable appropriate Credit Exam fees
   - Visit the appropriate School administering the exam with a receipt showing payment to schedule the exam
   - The student then reports to the appropriate Academic School at the scheduled testing time, presents to the proctor, a receipt of payment which will be copied and returned to the student, and completes the exam
   - Within two weeks of taking the exam, the School/Division Dean will contact the student to relay the exam results and submit the Credit Exam Form with a copy of the receipt to the Registrar’s Office for transcript recording
3. Advanced Placement (AP):
   • Scores must be submitted directly to the Registrar’s Office
   • Registrar’s Office will review AP scores for a three, four, or five on specific subjects for
     credit. Students that successfully achieve required credit-granting scores on these exams
     will be awarded the appropriate credits for each course.

4. CLEP:
   • Scores must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office for review
   • Students meeting the ACE recommended scores of 50 will be awarded the appropriate
     credits for each course as outlined on the Prior Learning. The college accepts previously
     accepted CLEP examinations as recorded on an official college transcript. Accepted
     courses will be reflected on STCC transcripts as T/CR.

5. Industry Based Certifications:
   • Students should submit copies of current earned certifications to the School/Division
     Dean overseeing the subject area of the certification.
   • School/Division Deans will review the certifications and make recommendations to the
     Registrar’s Office on the equivalent course(s) which the student will receive college
     credit as outlined on the PLA Matrix.

6. ACT Scores:
   • Students should submit copies of ACT scores under three years old to the Registrar’s
     Office
   • Scores will be reviewed and credit awarded for the equivalent course(s)
   • Students must request credit for the lower-level courses through the Registrar’s Office

7. Portfolio Review:
   • Students should contact the Dean of Instruction (DoI) office for information about the
     Portfolio Review process and pick up an application
   • Students are referred to Academic School/Division Deans to determine potential for
     portfolio credit
   • If the student decides to continue the PLA process, the student should report to the
     business Office to pay a non-refundable fee for each portfolio review
   • Student submits final portfolio to the Dean of Instruction
   • Portfolio is sent to School/Division Dean/Subject Matter Experts for review
   • The School/Division Dean notifies the DoI of the student’s assessment score who in turn
     notifies the student of the credit decision
   • If the student does not meet the minimum 75% required score, the DoI explains the
     academic appeal process to the student. If approved, the DoI notifies the Registrar’s
     Office to record the credit on the student’s transcript.

8. Skill Assessment Review:
   • Skill Assessment Reviews will follow the same process as the Portfolio Reviews.

The deadline for submitting Portfolio and Skill Assessment Review Applications is midterm of
each fall and spring semester. The deadline for student feedback from the Dean of Instruction is
Finals Week of the semester in which the student applied.

Students wishing to appeal the results of the portfolio review should complete an Academic
Appeal Form with the Dean of Instruction’s Office.