PENN STATE
ABINGTON COLLEGE

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

STUDENT GUIDE

- **Helpful Resources**
- abington.psu.edu/registrar/credit-portfolio
- priorlearning.psu.edu/earn-credit/portfolio

Penn State University
Abington College

INITIAL APPLICATION FOR A REVIEW OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

NOTE: This form enables a student to give official notice of his or her intent to earn credit by portfolio assessment and allows the College to make an initial determination of the merits of a student's portfolio goals. Signatures from a faculty member with disciplinary expertise in the course for which credit is requested, the Campus Program Head, and the Department/Division Head will indicate that the intended documentation appears to support the development of a full portfolio. **The signatures do not guarantee that credit will be awarded once the portfolio has been developed**. Credit is earned on the basis of whether or not the evidence in the portfolio proves the learning is college-level, current, does not duplicate credit already earned, and meets the criteria for a particular course.

A student must submit this form for each course for which he or she wishes to have equivalency determined.

The nonrefundable fee for portfolio assessment is $390 per review, due at the time of submission of the complete portfolio.

Name:_____Student Number: _____

Address:_____Major: _____

Telephone: (Cell) _____(Other) _____

PSU Course Requested:_____PSU Email_____

AREA OF DEGREE PLAN: I request that credit earned from this evaluation be applied to the following area(s) of my degree program.

_☐ Communication Skills (English 202)
_☐ Electives/Supporting Courses
_☐ Major Requirement
_☐ Other_____(not all courses are eligible for portfolio review)

ATTACHED ARE:
A. Course Syllabus
B. Brief Description of Experience
C. Brief Description of Learning (relate to course syllabus)
D. List of Possible Documentation

DATE:_____ STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE:_____ FACULTY SIGNATURE _____

DATE: _____ CAMPUS PROGRAM HEAD _____
(may be the same as faculty signature)

DATE: _____ DEPARTMENT/DIVISION HEAD _____

If approval to proceed is granted, a complete portfolio should be submitted within 10 weeks of date of approval but not later than the fifth week of the semester prior to the semester of intended graduation.

CREDIT BY PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

Student completes this section of the form and submits, along with the portfolio and correct payment to the academic department for assessment.

PSU ID _____ Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Initial _____

Address _____

Student Signature _____ Date Signed _____

Cost Object Type	Cost Object #:	Cash Journal #	Fee Paid

Campus Signature _____

-- To be completed by the faculty member conducting the assessment --

I have assessed the student's portfolio and recommend the addition of the following credit to the student's Penn State record:*

Department Name _____ Course Designation _____ Course Number _____ # of credits _____

Faculty Member's Name (please print) _____ Email _____

Signature of Faculty member assessing Portfolio _____ Date _____

Campus Program Head _____ Date _____

The Faculty Reviewer submits a summary of the assessment of the portfolio, along with the portfolio, to the Department Division Head (see University Procedure AM2009)

-- To be completed by Department/Division Head--

I authorize the award of credit.

Department/Division Head name (please print) _____ Signature of Department/Division Head _____ Date _____

SEND COMPLETED FORM AND COPY OF THE PORTFOLIO TO OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR - ABINGTON 1600 Woodland Road Sutherland 118/121 Abington, PA 19001 or by email to Timothy Smalarz, Registrar, tjs421@psu.edu

When credit is to be awarded, the Office of the Registrar for Abington College will forward the completed form to Undergraduate Admissions, 201 Shields Building, University Park, PA 16802

*If no credit is to be awarded or if modifications are necessary, please communicate directly with the student.

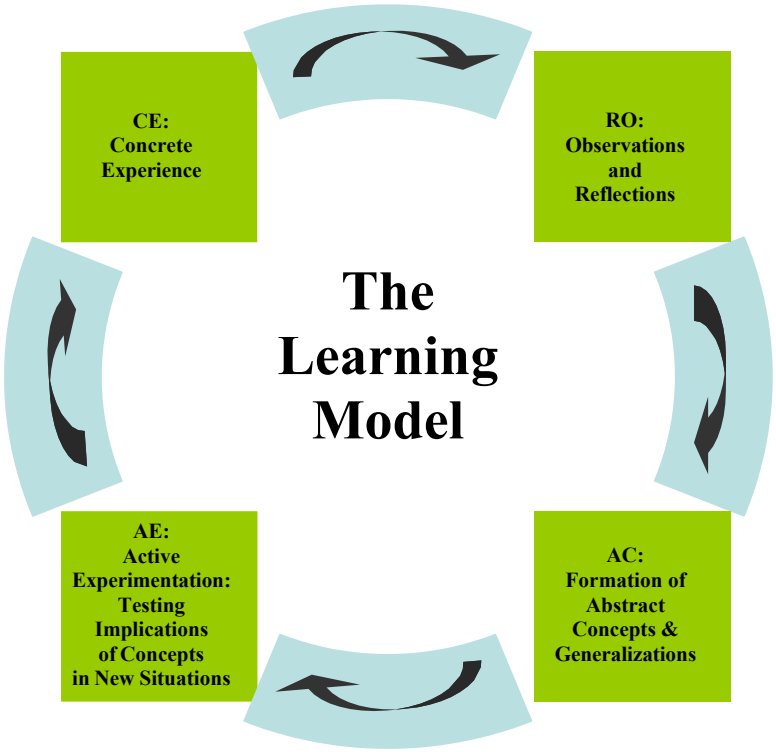
**Total number of credits that may be earned by an individual student via credit portfolio assessment: a candidate for an associate degree may be awarded a maximum of 15 credits; a candidate for a baccalaureate degree may be awarded a maximum of 30 credits by portfolio assessment. A maximum of 6 credits may be awarded for a single portfolio for a course.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT-AN INTRODUCTION

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT is a process that enables students to demonstrate college-level learning from experiences gained outside the classroom. While learning that occurs in the classroom often includes abstract thought and theory, learning gained outside the classroom is more often experiential. A challenge to students requesting portfolio assessment is to provide documentation that demonstrates an appropriate balance between theoretical learning and practical application. In other words, it is not sufficient to merely "do" something well. It is necessary to know why certain actions are successful, and what learning occurred through reflection and observation as a result of those actions.

Learning occurs from thinking about what we do. Why did we choose one action over another? What outcomes might have occurred if we had chosen a different strategy? What might we do differently in the future based on what we have learned from our experience and from the experts? Who are the leaders in the field and what are their contributions?

The Kolb (1976) Learning Model provides a conceptualization of how we learn as a continuous circle of experience, observation and reflection, concepts and generalizations, experimentation, and new experiences.



The process of portfolio assessment requires that students demonstrate knowledge equivalent to a particular course**. It is the student's responsibility to identify course(s) for which he or she would like to document** identification of appropriate courses. Portfolio Assessment is not "an easy way to earn credits," but rather a rigorous process that enables students, through careful reflection and documentation, to prove learning equivalent to a Penn State course. The information on the following pages provides helpful information about both the documentation of learning and the organization of a sound portfolio.

Kolb, David A., The Learning Style Inventory, McBer and Company, Boston, 1976

Evaluating Prior Learning Portfolios: A Guide

The development of a portfolio is a rigorous process that requires students to document learning—theoretical and practical—equivalent to a particular Penn State course.

Students must be in the common year of the Abington College (UGAB) or in a UGAB program and have completed a minimum of three Penn State credits.

Procedure:

- Student identifies the specific Penn State course for which equivalency is requested.
- Student obtains approval to develop a portfolio using the "Initial Application for a Review of Prior Experiential Learning." *Approval indicates that the student's intended documentation appears to justify the development of a portfolio; it does not guarantee that credit will be awarded.*
- Student submits complete portfolio within 10 weeks of approval of "Initial Application for Review" but not later than the fifth week of the semester prior to the semester of intended graduation. **PORTFOLIOS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED DURING THE SEMESTER OF INTENDED GRADUATION.**
- Portfolio and "Credit by Portfolio Assessment Application" is emailed to the Academic Affairs Department contact, Kim Birch, kmb38@psu.edu, for payment of the nonrefundable portfolio fee ($390 per portfolio).
- Payment is documented in the "fee paid" block, and signs the form where indicated.
- Student submits the form and portfolio to the Department/Division Head for forwarding to the faculty reviewer (the faculty member who signed the initial application for review).
- After review, and in consultation with the Department/Division Head, faculty member forwards the portfolio and Credit by Portfolio Assessment Application back to the Department/Division Head. Signatures of the faculty reviewer, Campus Program Head, and Department/Division Head indicate approval of the portfolio.
- Student will be notified of approval or lack thereof within 8 weeks of faculty receipt of the portfolio. Adhering to this timeline will allow students to meet their intended timeline for graduation, particularly if a portfolio is not approved for credit.
- When approved, the portfolio is submitted to **Office of the Registrar - Abington 1600 Woodland Road, Sutherland 118/121, Abington, PA 19001 (c/o Timothy Smalarz) tjs421@psu.edu**

Students are allowed a maximum of two opportunities to prove learning—(1) through the original portfolio submission and (2) one additional submission if additional information or revisions are requested by faculty upon the first review.

Portfolio Standards:

- Does the portfolio document learning, not just experience?
- Is the learning at the appropriate level?
- Is there a balance between theoretical learning and practical application?
- Is the learning equivalent to a Penn State course?
- Is there sufficient evidence that this learning does not duplicate credit already awarded?

PARTS OF THE PORTFOLIO

Portfolios may differ, but the items listed below are usually a part of any portfolio.

1. Abington College Credit by Portfolio Assessment Application

2. Table of Contents

3. Resume and/or Autobiography/Educational Goals Statement

   This section provides an important overview by introducing the student to the faculty member through a chronology of life experiences relevant to the portfolio submission. The goals statement is generally 300-400 words in length.

4. Detailed Description of the Experience(s) *

5. Description of the Learning

   The description of the experience and learning may be blended into one essay. This section is generally 8-20 pages in length. Students are expected to review relevant course textbooks and to refer to the course syllabus in demonstrating learning equivalent to the content of the course. Through observation and reflection, students are expected to demonstrate, when appropriate, conceptual and theoretical knowledge derived from their experiences.

6. Documentation (Direct and Indirect)

7. Annotated Bibliography

*The portfolio can include knowledge or skills gained from a wide variety of sources. Some of the more common sources for portfolio assessment are:

- full- or part-time jobs
- independent reading or study
- training programs or in-service courses
- volunteer work
- cultural and artistic pursuits
- hobbies and recreational activities
- community activities
- military service
- travel study
- organizational memberships

THE TWO GENERAL CATEGORIES OF DOCUMENTATION: DIRECT AND INDIRECT

Suggested Documentation

To help you think of your documentation, a list of suggested forms is included. This list is not complete nor are you limited to these alone. Appropriate documentation may be used in more than one portfolio.

- Letters from Employers
  (See Letters of Verification for Documentation.)
- Licenses and Certificates
  (See Description of Licenses and Certificates.)
- Certificates
- Newspaper Clippings
- Audiotapes and Videotapes
- Resumes
- Photographs
- Products of Your Work
- Proposals
- Job Descriptions and/or classifications.
- Official forms or records such as records of promotions or performance evaluations.

Direct evidence is documentation of your actual learning in a particular subject area. Examples are:

- samples of your work (poems, plays, artwork, reports of projects, tapes of music you performed)
- official verifications that show your mastery of the subject, licenses and certificates
- descriptions of the process of your learning (course outlines and evaluations for non-credit/training courses, notes you took in a class or training program)

Indirect evidence verifies and confirms your accomplishments. Examples are:

- letters written in your behalf,
- newspaper articles, and
- programs of your performance.

The following example shoes how both direct and indirect documentation are used as evidence of learning.

Jack is seeking credit for college-level skills as a sculptor. In his portfolio, he provides a number of pictures of a sculpture he sculpted and donated in memory of his late wife to her college's sculpture garden. The sculpture looks beautiful in the picture, but there is no identification of the sculpture. Therefore, the direct evidence, though interesting, does not verify that Jack is the sculptor and has college-level learning. However, in the narrative section of his portfolio, jack describes how he traveled to Italy, the process he went through in choosing the particular piece of marble, the problems incurred, and how he solved them. In addition, Jack provides sketches of the proposed sculpture along with additional narrative that describes the thought processes of how he decided what the finished sculpture should look like as well as the techniques he used for carving the marble. Newspaper articles, a letter from the college president, and a critique by a well-known professional sculptor are additional pieces of indirect evidence that verify not only that Jack was the sculptor, but also the level of his knowledge of the art form.

LETTERS OF VERIFICATION FOR DOCUMENTATION

Letters can be used to corroborate any type of activity and are usually one of the more common forms of documentation. Since letters occupy an important role in the documentation process, use the guidelines listed below. You may wish to copy this information and present it to the person you request to write a letter of verification for you to include in your portfolio. It is the responsibility of the student to make clear to the author that the letter is to be one of verification and not one of recommendation.

Be sure the person knows or has had the opportunity to observe the works and learning for which you are seeking academic credit.

Letter of Verification

- The author must indicate knowledge of the student and the learning for which the student wishes to receive prior learning credit.
- The letter should be written on the official letterhead of the company or organization with which the author is or was associated, if available.
- The content of the letter should focus on the duties, responsibilities, tasks, and/or activities which were a part of the learning experience that is under consideration. The letter should say who, what, when why, where, and for how long.
- The author of the letter should state clearly the nature of the relationship between author and student. Family members, friends, and ministers are not good sources as they may be biased and may not have firsthand knowledge of the learning.

Letter of Verification Example

January 2, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been (student's name) immediate supervisor in the Information Systems department for more than two years. His position involves, among other things, system administration and programming of a Digital Equipment Corporation PDP-11l/73 computer running the RSX-11M-PLUS operating system as well as setup and support of numerous MS-DOS-based computers.

I believe that he has a knowledge of the fundamentals of operating systems as well as an understanding of the specifics of the above-mentioned systems which is equal to or greater than that of a college student in an operating systems course.

Sincerely,

Information Systems Coordinator

BIBLIOGRAPHY/RESOURCES

An annotated bibliography of books and periodicals, and a listing of people and other resources should be included in each portfolio. ("Annotated" means that you have explained and identified your sources in enough detail so that someone who is unfamiliar with the material can find them in a library or similar repository, and that you have described what you have learned from the materials indicating how helpful or unhelpful the resources have been.) Included below is part of the bibliography of an adult student who included in his portfolio a tape describing his learning experiences in music as a percussionist.

1. Podemski, Banjamin. *Podemski's Standard Snare Drum Method*, Melville, New York: Belwin Mills, 1940.

   "This book was the most technical book, musically speaking, that I went through. It contained a complete musical vocabulary and exercises that had examples which employed the musical terms. It taught note values and note groupings. This book was the most important book in terms of my sight-reading development. The information contained in the book still applies today, and is used to instruct drum students. I use this book as a reference whenever I don't recognize terms in the church music. I have used this book as a warm-up tool prior to playing for pit orchestras for stage shoes. It helps me to get my mind ready for reading the kinds of charts used in this shows."

2. Jones, Steve. Drummer in the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Interviewed: December 19, 1992.

   Steve Jones was interviewed as a personal resource on December 19, 1992, after the Christmas concert. Mr. Jones described his own training. He listened to a two-minute tape of my playing and invited me to practice with a group of Birmingham musicians. He commented on my sense of rhythm, tempo, wrist action, etc. he also agreed to a series of twelve advanced lessons beginning on January 13, 1993. An evaluation of my progress is enclosed along with a tope of my playing before and after the lessons.