PROPOSAL TO THE LINCOLN UNIVERSITY
EDUCATIONAL POLICIES and CURRICULUM COMMITTEES

FURTHERING THE LINCOLN EXPERIENCE:
(FLEX)
AN ACCELERATED BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE
WITH A HUMAN SERVICES MAJOR

Submitted by the faculty of the
Master of Human Services Degree Program

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PROPOSAL TO THE GRADUATE COUNCIL 
OF 
LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

FURTHERING THE LINCOLN EXPERIENCE PROGRAM  
(FLEX)

INTRODUCTION

The program of study that is being proposed by the Master of Human Services (MHS) faculty to the Administration and Faculty of Lincoln University by way of the Educational Policies Committee is FLEX (Furthering the Lincoln Experience). It is a course of study for the non-traditional student that will culminate in the awarding of the Bachelor of Science Degree with a Major in Human Services.

In keeping with the definition of the Bachelor of Science degree at Lincoln University, the FLEX Program is career-oriented. It is designed to accommodate students that are currently employed in the field of human services and are interested in furthering their careers. The combination of a rigorous undergraduate course of study and supervised practicum will afford the students the opportunity to directly apply their learning and thereby enhance themselves professionally.

Students in the FLEX Program will be over twenty-five years of age, the usual starting age for non-traditional undergraduate students.
They will also have had some college experience. Prospective students will be employed in the field of human services with at least five years of work experience in the field. Credits earned from previous academic studies, life learning, and professional experience will allow them to apply for advanced standing toward the undergraduate degree. Because of that opportunity, the FLEX Program will be an Accelerated Bachelor’s degree program. The residency requirement will be at least two years, including two summer sessions, unless the student is approved to bring more than 60 transfer credits from another institution.

The proved and tested undergraduate major in Human Services will serve as the foundation for the FLEX Program. All required core courses and major requirements will be incorporated, with minor modifications, to accommodate the older student with related work experienced.

**RATIONALE FOR FLEX**

The administrators and faculty of the MHS Program are presenting this proposal because of a keen awareness of the need. Based on learning from over twenty-five years of experience, the MHS Program staff knows that there are many practitioners in the field of human services that are strong in their own right, but need the academic exposure and credentials to enhance and qualify their work. The historically accepted
“paraprofessional” is no longer able to move up the career ladder as in prior times. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2006-07 Career Guide to Industries, agencies in the Social Assistance area that hire human service workers, are increasingly interested in prospects “with some related work experience or college courses in human services, social work, or one of the social or behavioral sciences.” (p. 5)

New emphasis on the status and advancement of paraprofessionals in the human services resulted from the Title I amendment due to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. The amendment to Section 1119 incorporates qualifications and credentials for paraprofessionals in education. However, the spillover into the human services field has given rise to paraprofessional certification and educational opportunities that did not exist previously. With increasing pressures for accountability on agencies and organizations, most are more careful in their hiring to assure funding sources, both public and private, that they are properly staffed. Finally, in the field of human services, the professional licensing and credentialing requirements begin with persons with the undergraduate degree. Job security and even the right to apply for certain positions hinges on those prerequisites.

Colleges and universities have been experiencing a dramatic increase in the enrollment of students that are twenty-five years of
age and older. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the older or non-traditional students account for at least 40% of the population in institutions of higher learning. (2004). In its earlier benchmarking study in 1999 the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) declared adult learners as “the new majority on college campuses.” Efforts to attract and retain non-traditional students have increased in intensity over the last 20 years. More recently legislators have been pressed to establish new guidelines for financial aid to assist the older, independent students that want to pursue a college education. (Clinton 2007; CLASP 2006) Continuing education and other learning opportunities have been established by community colleges and traditional undergraduate institutions to attract non-traditional students. The FLEX program will place Lincoln University in the position to compete for the non-traditional student population.

Another extremely compelling reason for the FLEX Program is that many of the non-credentialed personnel in human service agencies are people of color, and more specifically African American. A legislative study commissioned by the state of Connecticut demonstrated a greater proportion of people of color as education paraprofessionals than professional teachers of color. (Connecticut General Assembly 2006) Those findings are surely repeated across practice areas and in other locales. As a historically black university,
Lincoln University stands out as a leading academic institution that is able to create the right learning environment for members of previously marginalized groups. To that end, the FLEX Program will draw upon the already successful approaches that exist in the undergraduate and MHS programs at the University.

Finally, projections for the growth of the human service industry are significant. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report (2006), job opportunities in the Social Assistance area will be plentiful at least until 2014. The high rate of job turnover and expanded employment growth will provide more slots. Changing demographics and increased demand for services for the elderly and aging baby boomers guarantee expansion. The Social Assistance area will realize a 33% job growth rate in nongovernmental sectors, higher than any other industry.

The combination of present need for qualified human service workers and the projections for increased demand bodes well for the development of a non-traditional undergraduate program in human services. Additionally, the racial and ethnic diversity of those needing services demands the presence of people of color to provide those services. Lincoln University should be the institution to prepare the workers for the bright future that looms on the horizon.
CREATING THE PROPER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Adult learners or non-traditional students require an academic environment that is decidedly different from that suited for traditional college age students. Since adult learners are generally older, independent of parents, may have dependents of their own, and come with learning from life experience there is the need to respect all aspects of the person. According to CAEL, institutions that cater to adult learners must be characterized by “adult-centered learning, sensitivity to learners’ needs, flexibility and communication.”(1999, p. 4)

Based on the best practices model developed by CAEL, the FLEX program will be guided by principles that will permeate every aspect of the program. Starting with the design of recruitment materials and procedures to the admissions process and all the way to graduation, the adult-centered perspective will be prevalent.

An adult-centered learning environment is designed to be inclusive, supportive, and respectful of difference and personal preference. The main focus is to address the needs of adult learners by continuously asking: 1) what the needs are 2) how the needs can be met 3) how the academic and support services can be more convenient 4) how to assist the adult learners in meeting educational, career, and personal goals. There must be an expectation of change that is under girded by a respect for flexibility. High levels of
communication must be a priority, with faculty and staff being engaged in active listening to discern the adult learners’ needs. (p. 5) Availability of faculty and staff is a high priority.

Another necessary ingredient in the learning environment for non-traditional students is cooperative learning. According to Whisnant et al (1992), instruction that includes peer tutoring and group activities is preferred by older students. The benefit is that the students further develop their ability to work with others despite differences. It also gives them a greater sense of control of the learning environment.

The experience of the MHS faculty with non-traditional students and the strength of the Lincoln undergraduate academic program afford the FLEX developers great advantages. Expanding the traditional approach to incorporate the non-traditional students will be the challenge before the entire faculty. The adult-centered approach will not force the compromise of academic standards. The traditional orientation of the university will not relegate the older experienced student to set aside what has been gained by virtue of longevity and respect for learning.

WHERE TRADITIONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING MEET

The FLEX program will incorporate a concrete way to acknowledge the lifelong learning of non-traditional students. One
outstanding and challenging feature of the program will be the assessment of prior learning. At this point, the MHS faculty is inviting the undergraduate faculty to join in a pioneering venture. Although over 1000 colleges and universities award credit for life experience or prior learning assessment (Turner 2007), traditional undergraduate institutions are grossly underrepresented. Then, among historically black colleges and universities, none stands out in this arena. Community colleges and free standing institutions like Walden, Edison, University of Phoenix, and Kaplan have taken the lead in incorporating the assessment of life learning for college credit.

Many of the traditional liberal arts academic institutions have embraced the idea of degree completion. Degree completion programs are usually designed for students, whether of traditional college age or older, that have begun college studies and can apply to transfer credits for advanced standing. Usually a maximum number of credits can be transferred. Area colleges such as Eastern University and Delaware State College offer such degree completion programs. In those programs of study, the offerings are the same as for traditional undergraduates with variation in the scheduling being the most prominent differentiating factor. Most classes are offered in the evenings and on weekends to accommodate the older, independent, usually employed non-traditional student. The location may be more convenient and not necessarily on the main campus of the institution.
The degree completion programs are designed to afford non-traditional students the opportunity to earn an undergraduate degree in a traditional format.

The terms degree completion and accelerated degree are used interchangeably in the literature and titles of programs at different academic institutions. What they have in common is the requirement that students document college-level learning they acquired prior to enrolling in a particular institution. The source of such learning quickly distinguishes the programs. The accelerated undergraduate degree is a different entity altogether, because while it affords students the opportunity to transfer credits, it also acknowledges that learning can take place outside the traditional academic classroom. Such degree programs include the assessment of prior learning, that is, learning from life experiences and work experience. For Lincoln’s purposes, FLEX is defined as an accelerated undergraduate program.

The potential to earn college-credit based on learning from life and work experience is an attractive feature for non-traditional students. The accelerated undergraduate degree attracts older students that are often identified as non-traditional. The term non-traditional does not refer to the manner of learning, but more to the fact that such students are usually older than traditional college age students. They are also independent of parents and may have dependents of their own. They are required to have previous work
experience in the field in which the degree is being awarded. Finally, they must be able to demonstrate their ability to succeed at the college level.

The prior learning assessment at the undergraduate level has not been easily embraced by traditional undergraduate programs. Several obstacles prevent the inclusion of the assessment. One objection raised by faculty is that disciplined learning does not occur outside the college classroom. Another is that the award of college credit for learning from life and work experiences will weaken the academic reputation of the degree granting institution. (Lakin 2007)

In order to allay some of the fears voiced by faculty, organizations like ACE and CAEL have worked for many years to systematize the prior learning assessment process. They have established guidelines and training resources for faculty that are interested in exploring the possibility of evaluating life learning for college credit. They emphasize that the key to prior learning assessment is that the student must document and defend the fact that college-level learning was acquired. The assessment is also a refereed procedure in that faculty and qualified, faculty-approved professionals review the written documents and interview the student in person. (ACE 2002; CAEL 2006) Both organizations encourage very active participation by the faculty to insure the maintenance of academic quality.
WORK AND THE ADULT LEARNER

Over the years as colleges and universities have considered opening their doors to older students, one concern has been whether such students can compete with their younger counterparts. Also, there has been some reticence about whether the non-traditional student can cope with distractions caused by their life realities, one of which is employment.

In a study of students at six community colleges in Virginia, Whisnant et al (1992) found that the older students came prepared with attributes that increased their achievement levels. They outperformed their younger counterparts academically, repeating the findings in studies from as early as the 1970s. The special features that the adult learners bring with them are motivation, maturity, life experiences, persistence, pragmatism and educationally focused personalities.

Distractions such as employment have been seen as potential drawbacks for the non-traditional students. Based on the findings in the National Center of Education Statistics report (2002), work for non-traditional students has benefits and liabilities. The study included students from all types of post secondary institutions in the 1999-2000 academic year. An important distinction arose between non-traditional students that considered themselves students first and those that considered themselves employees first. The first group tended to deem
their work as a complement to their course work. The course work helped them at their jobs or served to help them advance their careers. The employment identified students saw work as a limitation because of less time for the library and scheduling problems that caused less choice in classes. Interestingly, even the employment identified students saw their pursuing a college degree as personal and career enhancement and less as an obligatory requirement for their job.

The advantage of the FLEX program is that the students’ employment is defined as an asset from the beginning. Current employment in the chosen field of study is required. The Bachelor of Human Services program is designed to incorporate the work experience into the course of study. Direct application of learning to the work environment and inclusion of work experiences into the learning environment will decrease some of the tension in the dual status of worker and student.

SOURCES


SECTION II
FEATURES OF THE FLEX PROGRAM

The main features of the FLEX Program will include Recruitment, Non-traditional Admissions, Financial Aid, Faculty Advising, Prior Learning Assessment, Faculty/Student and Student/Student Interaction, and Professional Development. A description of each of those features will constitute this section. A fuller explanation of the prior learning component appears in section III of this proposal.

RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of non-traditional adult learners must be aggressive and creative. The strategy should include written materials as well as oral presentations. The written materials must emphasize the advantages of the FLEX Program, one being an environment that exudes respect for accomplished adults that bring a wealth of life experience with them. The cooperative learning mode that includes faculty and students should be highlighted. Pictures of older students must be incorporated to increase the chances of the prospective applicants identifying with the program.

Information sessions, onsite and offsite, must be held at convenient times, usually in the evening to accommodate work and life responsibility schedules. Sessions at jobsites should be pursued. Those sessions must include faculty and staff that can discuss various aspects of the learning environment and process at FLEX. The
supportive nature of the faculty and staff should be underscored so prospects will know they have a network that is ready and willing to help them achieve their goals.

The successful components extant at the undergraduate level and in the MHS program will serve as the basis for the recruitment strategy. Lincoln University, in its outstanding history of serving marginalized populations, is already positioned to appreciate and embrace the need for extraordinary efforts to attract and retain likely candidates for successful completion of the course of study.

**ADMISSIONS**

The Admissions process must be personalized as much as possible. Academic skills testing will be included to insure the applicant’s ability to challenge the academic program. Critical analysis must be assessed since much of the curriculum will draw upon that ability. Those testing processes must be so oriented as to relieve anxieties especially for people that have been away from the academic arena for a period of time. The Lincoln undergraduate program has established testing instruments to measure students’ ability to engage in college-level learning. Those same tests will be administered to applicants to the FLEX program.

The application process should include a pre-application session where the applicant is familiarized with the paperwork in advance.
Then as the application is being completed, the person should feel free to call for advice and support. Once the paperwork is submitted, the applicant should be contacted right way by letter documenting the receipt of a complete packet. Processing should be engaged immediately, utilizing faculty to review prospects.

Prospects for FLEX should be contacted for a face-to-face interview where the application will be reviewed with the applicant. The applicants will be afforded the opportunity to elaborate on career goals and directions. They will be helped to realistically review their personal life responsibilities and circumstances to determine potential for success. Applicants will be asked to elaborate on their employment site as an appropriate practicum setting for the course of study. They will also be advised about components of the application essay that will be used in the goals statement in the Prior Learning Portfolio. Finally, they will be advised about the likelihood of their benefiting from the Prior Learning Portfolio Assessment process.

In addition to the demographic information, the application will require a detailed essay. The essay will consist of the following areas of interest:

1. Description of work history related to the field of human services
2. Current position and responsibilities
3. Practicum possibilities at the current job
4. Professional goals
5. How will FLEX help move you closer to your stated goals?
ADMISSIONS REVIEW

A panel of Admissions Staff and Faculty will review the application, skills tests and interview results to determine an applicant’s appropriateness for admission. The final acceptance letter will be generated immediately.

Should the information support a rejection for admission, the applicant will be met with face-to-face to discuss areas that need improvement. Advice will be given so the applicant can pursue the proper course of action. The opportunity to make application again should be extended if that is deemed appropriate.

FINANCIAL AID

The applicant must be engaged in financial aid counseling as soon as the acceptance letter is sent. An appointment for financial aid should be included in the letter for admission. Again, face-to-face contact with a Financial Aid Counselor should be held to review the application form(s) and the process. Counselors must be available on an at-need basis throughout the application phase. Inclusion of Prior Learning Assessment credit allowance must be part of the financial aid counseling, since most students will engage in the assessment experience. Once the transfer credits have been posted by the Registrar the Financial Aid office will determine the potential cost for credits needed by way of the Prior Learning Portfolio Assessment. The expected cost will be added to the financial aid package.
FACULTY ADVISING
The FLEX program is designed to equip adult learners with the theoretical and practical application information that will enhance them professionally. Students will set their learning goals with their faculty advisor once they are accepted for admission. The dynamic nature of the faculty advising component will necessitate regular contacts to insure the students’ maintenance of the direction toward their goals.

After the Prior Learning Portfolio is assessed, the adult learners must meet with the faculty advisors to plan the remaining two year course of study. Advising meetings should be face-to-face, optimally, but communication by telephone, the internet, and other remote connections should be afforded the students in order to accommodate to their life schedule.

PRIOR LEARNING PORTFOLIO
The prior learning component of FLEX has been developed with the help of materials from the Antioch University Philadelphia Prior Learning Office. The undergraduate program at that now defunct institution included the prior learning assessment process as a significant part of the course of study. The experience of over twenty years affords valuable tools for the Lincoln FLEX program. Details about the portfolio and the assessment of it will appear in Section IV of this report.
The Prior Learning Portfolio will be developed in the Integrative Field Seminar/Experiential Learning course. That course will be scheduled during the fall semester. The purpose of the course will be to help students identify learning from work and life experience that has the potential to translate into college credit. The faculty will engage students in various exercises and research tasks that will help them generate lists of potential areas. They will develop the portfolio incrementally until completion.

In addition to the written product from the student, each portfolio will include official letters, reports of follow-up calls to references, verified job descriptions, copies of performance evaluations and training certificates.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE PRIOR LEARNING PORTFOLIO**

The Prior Learning Office will organize the portfolio assessment process. The staff will identify faculty and outside experts to review the written product and interview the candidates. Students will become candidates for the Bachelors Degree in Human Services only after the portfolio assessment.

The maximum award of credit for advanced standing (portfolio assessment, CLEP, and transfer credits) will be sixty hours. Students will not achieve candidacy if the advanced standing award is less than sixty hours.
In order to guarantee high quality in the assessment process, faculty will review the resumes and curriculum vitae of prospective outside assessors. Only those persons that have been recommended by the faculty will be able to serve as assessors.

**FACULTY/STUDENT INTERACTION**
Since the FLEX students will be older and experienced adults, the relationship with the faculty will be cooperative and respect based. Faculty will serve as guides more that teachers in the traditional sense of the word. They will introduce new concepts to the students through courses and will help them synthesize their learning throughout their studies. Based upon best practices from CAEL, the atmosphere will be one of complementarity. The goal of the faculty/student interaction will be to exchange strengths in such a way that the students are greatly enhanced in their development as human service professionals.

**STUDENT/STUDENT INTERACTION**
Older students are most productive in learning environments where cooperation and not competition prevails. Students will be engaged in group projects that will increase their ability to support each other in the academic pursuit. They will be encouraged and taught to respect what each one brings to the table, so to speak. Ground rules for in class interaction will be clearly spelled out so that each experience will be challenging while also safe for the students.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A significant difference between FLEX and the Lincoln undergraduate human service major will be the opportunity for students and faculty to have concentrated time to focus on the workplace. The practicum and class work will engage students in evaluating their work environment in light of course work. Students will be guided in ways to increase their effectiveness as human service providers. They will also gain knowledge to enable them to constructively critique their practicum with the goal of making valuable contributions to enhance the organization or institution.

During each semester, students will enroll in Methods and practicum courses that will allow them to analyze their approaches and the approach of their settings. The final product of the FLEX program will be a comprehensive evaluation of the practicum with measurable outcomes.
SECTION III
WEB SUPPORTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Background
The Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 2002 published guidelines to address the use of electronic technology in degree and certificate programs ("Distance Learning Programs: Interregional Guidelines for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs," 2002). FLEX Program courses, many of which will be designed around web-supported hybrid learning opportunities, will be based on these guidelines, which address the rapidly shifting use of on-line technologies to augment and support the delivery of content in more supportive styles to enhance student-learning experiences. Key assumptions are:

- that education is best experienced within a community of learning where competent professionals are actively and cooperatively involved with creating, providing, and improving the instructional program;
- that learning is dynamic and interactive, regardless of the setting in which it occurs;
- that instructional programs leading to degrees having integrity are organized around substantive and coherent curricula which define expected learning outcomes;
- that institutions accept the obligation to address student needs related to, and to provide the resources necessary for, their academic success;
- that institutions are responsible for the education provided in their name.
• that institutions undertake the assessment and improvement of their quality, giving particular emphasis to student learning;
• that institutions voluntarily subject themselves to peer review.

**Student Population**

Educational technology can provide a convenient, flexible, and effective means of providing education to a growing adult student population. Nearly half of all the college students in the country and all of the current Master of Human Service Program students, as well as all of those targeted for the proposed FLEX Program, come from the group once thought of as nontraditional: working adults or adults seeking first educational credentials or retraining. These working adult students find that the flexibility of online learning meets their needs because of the multiple demands on their time. In addition, most of the working adults come to formal educational programs with a working knowledge of word processing, spreadsheets, internet, web casts, text messaging, and other digital media that they use daily in their work environment ("DistanceLearning Manual," 2007).

Experience gained from hybrid courses currently offered in the Pre-master's Program, however, has shown that totally online learning may not be the best choice for adult students working in the people-oriented human service field, who tend to value face-to-face interaction with both instructors and classmates. Hybrid courses, such as the ones proposed for the FLEX program, can offer the benefits of
online learning while still providing for the personal needs of this particular group of students.

**General Philosophy for Hybrid Courses**

All web-supported courses will contain a variety of computer and internet-based educational services, video, and audio services. All proposed courses will be hybrid courses that combine traditional face-to-face classroom pedagogy with appropriate synchronous or asynchronous internet instruction to meet the time and learning needs of its targeted working adult population.

Web-supported courses will adhere to all policies presently in place for approval of course offerings, and will meet the student learning outcomes set forth on current undergraduate core and major course syllabi. Lincoln University and its faculty will impose appropriate rigor on course materials, academic quality and standards for all FLEX courses as it does for all other education delivered by the institution. The aim is that students will be able to move easily from the web-supported courses to other curricula of the University. The University will continue to provide and enhance appropriate learning resources that it considers essential to its educational mission.

The FLEX Program’s focus on web-supported courses demonstrates consistency with Lincoln University’s mission of providing "a quality education ...on its main campus, its Urban Center, and through
distance learning...with a commitment to promoting technological sophistication for its students in all academic programs.

**Curricular and Instruction Guidelines**

The specific requirements for BHS courses include the following:

- Courses designed to meet core curriculum requirements and well as selected human services major requirements will be provided as web and media supported classes.
- Faculty will be required to conduct at least two face-to-face meetings per semester with students at the Graduate Center. Other sessions can be via broadcast from the Main Campus to classrooms at the Graduate Center, or via Web CT live discussion sessions.
- The combined time for face-to-face sessions, broadcast sessions, and WebCT live discussion sessions will total 37.5 contact hours for each three-credit course.
- All course materials (syllabus, lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, relevant web sites and other resources will be posted on Web CT)
- Exams will be administered via Web CT, using the quiz function, discussions will be conducted using the discussion function of WebCT, and WebCT email will be used for submission of papers, project reports, and essays. Student evaluation will consist of 40% objective quizzes and essays questions, 20% class participation (including Web CT discussions), and 40% assigned papers and individual or group projects. All assignments will have written rubrics for grading.
- At least nine students will be required for a course to be offered. In any semester, when there are fewer than nine students enrolled for a course, the material will be offered through the tutorial process. When tutorials are offered, the above requirements will be met for these offerings.
- The selection of instructors for the web-supported courses will be based on their interest, expertise, and experience with the content and the methodology that the course will employ.
- Instructors will identify the content and the educational pedagogy to be employed to the appropriate program chair before the web-supported course is initiated.
- Faculty teaching loads, class size, time allowed for course development, and compensation will follow existing university policies, and its AAUP bargaining agreement when appropriate.
• All web-supported courses will be evaluated by the program’s evaluation mechanism annually.

**Student Support Guidelines**

Students should expect that distance learning programs will permit completion of learning outcomes and objectives in the same manner as those delivered in traditional programs.

• The academic and technical skills and the time commitment needed for success in the program will be made clear to students prior to their formal acceptance into the program
• Proper training in working independently and in utilizing the necessary technology will be available for students
• Access to student services such as admissions, orientation, financial aid, registration, advisement, tutoring, and other appropriate student services and technical support will be equal to that available to traditional students.
• Student access to faculty (face to face and online) will be spelled out in the course syllabus, as will rubrics with criteria for evaluating students’ work.

**Evaluation and Assessment Guidelines**

The institution will evaluate the educational effectiveness of electronically delivered course work by assessing student learning outcomes, student retention, and student and faculty satisfaction. Students will have access to such evaluation data, which will be available on the website and in promotional brochures.

All web-supported courses will require a course evaluation survey at the end of each course, each time the course is offered. The survey will be a requirement for each student, will be anonymous, and be administered through the WebCT survey function. Results will be
generated and shared within the program, department, and University
evaluation process. The Program chair will ensure that the results of
the survey’s serve as feedback to enhance a given web-supported
course.

References

Association of Schools and Colleges.

Distance Learning Programs: Interregional Guidelines for Electronically
1-21). Philadelphia: Middle States Commission on Higher
Education.
SECTION IV
THE PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT COMPONENT

RATIONALE FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AT LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Prior learning assessment supports the goals of Lincoln University as stated in its Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 2007-2011 Strategic Plan. University Goal 5 and University Goal 6 specifically give rise to such an addition to the academic program. (Source: Lincoln University Strategic Plan [2007]).

University Goal 5: The University will continue to serve its traditional base of students but will develop innovative educational programs and services in the Philadelphia area to meet the needs of non-traditional students.

University Goal 6: The University faculty will design and implement effective student assessment methodologies to document mastery of skills and competencies in the undergraduate and graduate programs.

Establishing prior learning assessment at Lincoln University will be a positive service to students, communities and to the institution. By making this service available to non-traditional students, Lincoln
University, the oldest continuously operating Historically Black University in the country, will take another step forward in advancing educational opportunity to a population desiring help to realize their goals and ambitions.

There are great benefits to Lincoln University as well:

1. Recruitment: This program rewards prior learning and yet is based on Lincoln’s curriculum.
2. Credit-granting ease: The credits are awarded by faculty and approved expert professionals.
3. Retention: Prior learning petitioning is a solution for students with financial or time constraints.
4. Academic rigor: Prior learning awards are based on college curricula developed by faculty who are skilled in determining whether students have mastered course content and knowledge in a specific subject.
5. Student Relations: The institution shows that it cares about and values students’ prior learning and learning environments, about whether they can complete their degree on time and the amount of money it costs them to earn a degree.

The combining of practical experience with theoretical concepts comes full circle in the assessment of the finished Prior Learning
Petition. Involvement with the student and faculty in this process dictates three different views of the petition:

1. FLEX instructors will know the student first and watch the student and the petition evolve.

2. Prior Learning faculty will see the petition first, evaluate it as a document, and may see the student only at pre-assessment and at the assessment interview.

3. The Assessment Team will see the petition first, deliberate and make preliminary recommendations on the merit of the document and possible credits to be awarded, and then will meet with the student in the interview for actual award.

During the preparation and assessment time span these three sets of evaluators of the petition are progressively removed from the individual. The greater the distance from the student, the greater is the specification.

The FLEX instructors will be intensely and wholistically involved with the students during the First Year Experience and the preparation of the Prior Learning Petition. The course content of the FYE is designed to address the many challenges an incoming student may face: social and academic skill development, the Lincoln tradition, the meaning of liberal arts, attending lectures, recitals, and convocations offered throughout the semester as the basis for class discussions, library
research/computer literacy, writing, speaking, and critical thinking. FYE precedes the preparation of the Prior Learning Petition.

Preparing the petition helps to advance the students in thinking critically, and the finished document provides a model for the supervised practicum study projects the students will develop throughout the program. The assessment program is based on the theory that suggests that students should look where they have been and where they are now to determine where it is they want to go.

**PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OFFICE**

As the prior learning component of the Bachelor of Human Services degree program is developed, faculty will find the need for a distinct office or department to coordinate that process. Such an office would aid faculty in establishing clear guidelines for prior learning petitioning. The staff of the Prior Learning Assessment Office would be responsible for the administrative details related to the assessment of the Prior Learning Portfolio. The PLAO staff would also work along with the faculty of the Integrated Field Seminar to help students develop the portfolio.

Once the portfolio is completed and approved by the Integrated Field Seminar instructor, the document will become the responsibility of the PLAO. The staff will determine what areas are to be assessed in
order to constitute a team of assessors. They will schedule the assessment, arrange the physical location, and oversee the award of credits. They will communicate the results to the Registrar for posting. The staff will make certain that assessors are paid as indicated.

The prior learning component is labor intensive and requires at least one full-time staff member. Appropriate support staff such as clerical personnel must be assigned. Faculty should be relieved of the added administrative responsibility of the assessment process.

**RATIONALE FOR A PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OFFICE**

The Prior Learning Assessment Office (PLAO) functions as the bridge between systems within the educational program having responsibility to the students in this area of prior learning. The Prior Learning Assessment Office is the catalytic representative that synthesizes the activities related to the demonstration and analysis of learning that result in credit towards advanced standing in the accelerated degree program. The Prior Learning Petition is the primary instrument for assessing the student’s present level of skill and knowledge acquired before entering Lincoln. It serves as an agent for directing students in goal setting and planning based on that learning.

PLAO Staff should be an integral part of the academic process, and concomitantly knowledgeable regarding the Lincoln University Bachelor of Science Human Services degree requirements. This office will:
• review the completed petition
• interpret to the student and other institutional personnel the requirements for an acceptable petition
• select a team of evaluators (assessors) from faculty evaluators and from the professional evaluators who have expertise in the fields in which the student identifies learning. Faculty involvement is based on workload, expertise in the subject for which the student is petitioning and general interest. Professional evaluators have master or doctoral level degrees. They have submitted their resumes or vitae (and licenses, if appropriate,) for review by the academic department, and are approved by the Academic Dean.
• schedule and supervise the assessment interview process
• at the conclusion of the interview provide the student with the result of the interview and complete paperwork to the Registrar who will distribute the credits on the transcript and forward copies to the appropriate persons.

The PLAO staff must also keep current with CLEP, CAEL, and other activities and organizations available regarding prior learning practices in the academic arena. The College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) provides students of any age the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement through a program of exams in undergraduate college courses. There are 2,900 colleges that grant credit and/or
advanced standing for CLEP exams. Lincoln University Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is listed as one of the colleges granting credit for CLEP.

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) is an organization committed to promoting access to lifelong learning for adults. CAEL works with higher education institutions, business and industry. CAEL can assist staff in higher education to learn policies, procedures, and practical techniques for assessing prior learning. It may be beneficial to have CAEL present a workshop for administration and staff. The workshop can address specific topics related to prior learning which may be of interest to management, instructors or evaluators. The PLAO will organize such workshops and serve as the conduit between the faculty and CAEL and other such organizations.

Another role of the Prior Learning Assessment Office is directly related to the high level of anxiety that surrounds the assessment process. Students are going to experience anxiety in assessment of their prior learning, given the nature and design of the procedure. Anxiety cannot be avoided, but it can be reduced. The course of action calls for analysis of experience, some of which may have already produced anxiety, and may include concerns related to personal success or failure, values held, etc. In addition to anxiety relative to the experience itself, apprehension may also be increased as other
students verbally communicate their particular experiences with the process, whether positive or negative.

It is important, therefore, that there be clarity in understanding the oral and written communication that accompanies the actual interview and its purpose. Needed are the de-mystification of the interview and its outcome, and a comfortable feeling for the student regarding his/her requirement to participate in what might be a high anxiety-producing experience. A staff of persons outside the classroom who can assist them through the administrative phase of the assessment process will help to decrease student anxiety.

Information regarding how best to continue through this process is described in the two sets of guidelines that follow, one to the student preparing the Prior Learning Petition, *(Student Guide to The Prior Learning Petition)* and one to the assessment team *(The Prior Learning Assessor Guide: The Assessment Interview)* that will conduct the interview and determine the credit to be awarded.

References


Prior Learning Assessment in the Human Services Program: Student Guidelines, Antioch University, Philadelphia, PA, by Doris Van Langeveld, February, 1979
Guidelines for Assessors, Part II – The Assessment Interview, Antioch University, Catherine Johnson, May 1979

“Serving Adult Learners in Higher Education: Findings from CAEL’s Benchmarking Study,” Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 1999

“The Prior Learning Petition,” a paper prepared for Dr. Tawana Sabbath by Betty Turner, June 8, 2007
SECTION V

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT FEES

The assessment of prior learning for college credit is a process that incurs fees and expenses. Student fees are required to pay for the credits awarded at the end of the assessment process. Expenses include payment of assessors and administrative costs to provide copies of the Prior Learning Petition.

In academic programs that include a prior learning assessment component, there is a formula for calculating fees depending upon semester or quarter enrollment. Quarter enrollment carries a four to one ratio of prior learning assessment credit to one quarter credit hour. Semester credit hours are based on a two to one ratio, rendering the prior learning credit assessment fee as half the semester credit hour fee. So, at Lincoln where the fee per semester credit hour for in-state students is approximately $196.00, if a student is awarded 24 credits in the prior learning assessment process, the total cost will be $2,352.00.

Across institutions assessors are paid an hourly rate ranging from $25 to $60. A maximum of six hours is usually expected, including time to read and review the Prior Learning Portfolio and the assessment interview time. Faculty members usually serve as assessors depending upon their course load and areas of expertise.
SECTION VI

FLEX CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

BACHELORS OF HUMAN SERVICES CURRICULUM

The student will be required to take at least 33 credits from the Lincoln University Core and 42 credits from the Human Services Major. Up to 45 credits can be accomplished by portfolio, CLEP testing and/or transfer credits. The typical student able to achieve the 45 credits from the portfolio, testing, and/or transfer credits will complete the program over four semesters and two summer. If a student can not earn the 45 credits by portfolio, test, or transfer credits, he/she may need to spend more than the four semesters and two summers in study.

Courses of study will be individualized by an academic advising process that will consider what the student brings in knowledge and skills and what is needed to round out the academic experience and satisfy the core and major requirements. A typical student will have the following course of study:

Core Studies Component
33 credits

Human Services Major
42 credits

Portfolio, CLEP testing and/or transfer credits
45 credits

Total Credits 120

The core courses will be taught by Lincoln University undergraduate faculty. They will teach existing courses in the hybrid format and adjusted for the adult learner. Instead of the freshman experience a new required course will be developed: Adult Learners at Lincoln University. Courses in the major will be taught by faculty in the social sciences or adjunct faculty recommended by the program coordinator and approved by the Sociology Department.
SECTION VII

THE PRIOR LEARNING PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

In order for faculty, administrators, students and assessors to know the parameters for the prior learning assessment component of the Bachelor of Human Services degree at Lincoln University, clearly delineated guidelines have been developed. Two tools are provided in this section. One is *The Student Guide to the Prior Learning Portfolio*. The other one is *The Prior Learning Assessors Guide to the Assessment Interview*.

*The Student Guide* will be provided to each student that enrolls in the Integrated Field Seminar. The seminar will afford the students the opportunity to work together under the guidance of the instructor. The Prior Learning Assessment Office will work along with the faculty and students to insure the high quality of the final product.

The assessors will be provided with onsite training and *The Prior Learning Assessors Guide* in order to help them understand the assessment process. The importance of their role in insuring the systematic nature of the assessment process will be emphasized.
This guide is a product of the Prior Learning Office of Lincoln University
STUDENT GUIDE TO THE PRIOR LEARNING PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION

Now that you are enrolled in the Lincoln FLEX Program, you are actively on your way toward meeting one of your educational goals, earning the Lincoln Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Services. You probably already know that the educational requirements for this degree, like most Bachelor’s degrees, are designed to cover a four-year time period. In fact, you most likely know this in a rather sensitive, personal way, unlike many entering college students. In the past, the four-year full-time commitment may have been a major obstacle for you, as a working adult with long time, full-time commitments in other areas of your life.

Lincoln University’s educational philosophy recognizes the potential learning value of experience. We will recognize the learning value of your present professional work or volunteer experience as a practicum in the degree program. We also recognize past experiences that have resulted in learning which can be credited toward the Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services (BHS).

Such past experience might include, in addition to work experience, artistic achievement, independent reading, political or community organizing, cross-cultural and journalistic experiences. In all cases the
experience must meet certain requirements to be eligible for academic recognition.

The most important requirement for earning degree credit through non-college experience is that the learning you have gained must be equivalent to college level learning. The learning gained must be appropriate for meeting BHS requirements. It must be significant enough in quality as well as extensive enough in quantity to be equivalent to learning gained in a course of study as it would be taught and evaluated at Lincoln University.

College level learning is learning which meets established models or measures in the area. It has a subject matter or knowledge base, and is more than routine procedure. It explains actions, going beyond describing what is done (descriptions of learning), and relates to the how and why of action (analysis). It can be applied outside the setting in which it was acquired, and is applicable to the Lincoln University Bachelor of Human Services degree.

Although in everyday conversation the terms experience, knowledge, skill or learning are often used interchangeably, an important distinction is made here at Lincoln. Credit recognition is possible only for learning – skills and knowledge – not for the experience itself.
**Advanced Standing**

When credit is awarded for learning gained before entering the program, you may have completed some of the degree requirements and advanced your progress toward the degree. Advanced standing is credits applied toward degree requirements for learning gained before admission. Prior Learning Assessment is one way to earn this credit. Other ways include:

1. Completed course work at other accredited colleges or universities
2. CLEP (College Level Equivalency Program) examinations

More information on these types of experiences is available from your Integrated Field Seminar instructor.

**Prior Learning Assessment**

Prior Learning Assessment is the process used to identify and evaluate learning you have acquired through past experiences other than those listed above. The process can result in college credit awarded by Lincoln. The prior learning assessment process does not include learning gained through experiences which qualify for transfer credit evaluation.

As part of your learning requirements in the FLEX program you will prepare a Prior Learning Portfolio. In this portfolio you will state your educational and professional goals as a first step in explaining how your prior learning fits in with your total educational program to meet
these goals. You will identify the learning you gained in the past and execute a Prior Learning Petition. You will write about your experiences, describe the setting where learning was gained, and relate this learning to subject areas studied at a college level.

A single subject area of learning may be the result of many experiences – developing skills and gaining knowledge – in a number of settings as you experimented with ideas, planned and then evaluated your actions. For example, you may have learned about the subject of *Adolescent Psychology*, through working in a group home, counseling in a half-way house, and implementing a youth recreation program. Now, you are asked to link these experiences together and explain what you learned. This will probably be the most difficult as well as the most rewarding part of the assessment process. The best assistance you have may be your classroom experience in the FLEX program, working with others involved in the same process.

The final step in preparing the portfolio will be producing evidence that you have, in fact, acquired the learning you described and have had the experiences which resulted in your present level of abilities and competence. In the portfolio this final step is known as *documentation*.

Finally, you will meet with a committee of assessors to demonstrate in person that you have gained the learning presented in your portfolio. At the end of this meeting, known as the Assessment
Interview, you will know whether the assessors recommend that you are awarded college credit for your prior learning.

If the assessors agree that the learning you have gained is equivalent to a course (or courses) of college study, they will recommend to the Registrar that the course(s) be entered on your program of study. The Registrar reviews this recommendation in the same way as a transcript from another institution. Courses accepted by the Registrar are added to your transcript of completed studies as Credit for Prior Learning, and you are advanced in the degree program accordingly. You then plan your remaining program to fully meet degree requirements, to satisfy your learning interests and any educational requirements of your chosen professional field or graduate study.

The pages that follow in this handbook will give you general guidelines for preparing your Prior Learning Portfolio and explain the assessment process in detail. Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the contents and prepare to follow the instructions.
**THE PRIOR LEARNING PORTFOLIO**

**Educational and Professional Goals Essay**

The goals essay is a descriptive statement of your future plans. It places your prior learning within the context of your educational goals, explaining how this learning will help you meet these goals. Your past learning and future learning should fit together in a tentative plan to meet the requirements of the undergraduate Human Services degree program.

An effective essay clearly states your immediate and long range goals, then builds a sense of connection to your past in a general way. In other parts of the petition you will gradually become more and more specific about the past learning gained.

By now you have completed the First Year Experience courses, designed to address the many challenges you may face: social and academic skill development, the Lincoln tradition, the meaning of liberal arts, library research/computer literacy, writing, speaking, and critical thinking. As you continue learning about the Human Services degree, or discover your educational needs should graduate school or professional certification in a field be an aspect of your goals, begin to think of the skills and knowledge you have already acquired as your *prior learning*. Your tentative educational plan should consist of the skills and knowledge you still need to acquire.
Your goals essay should answer these questions:

1. What do you want to accomplish professionally and educationally in the next 10 years?
2. What skills and knowledge will you need to be able to reach these goals?
3. Have you acquired any of this learning as a result of your experiences before entering Lincoln?
4. What learning will you need to gain while enrolled in the Human Services Program?
5. How does your present practicum fit into your goals?

An example of an *Educational and Professional Goals Essay* is included to give you an idea as to how these questions might be answered.

**The Resume**

A resume should be included in the portfolio. It serves as a brief history of your previous work and educational experience.

Your resume should contain the following information:

**Personal Data**
- Name, home address and telephone number.

**Formal Education**
- A chronological listing of post-high school education, identifying institutions, dates of matriculation, study concentrations, and degrees or certificates awarded.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work/Volunteer Positions</th>
<th>Beginning with the current position, list past work experiences. Include the name of the agency or business, dates of employment, the position held, and a brief description of the duties and responsibilities of each position.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informal Education Experiences</td>
<td>Projects, seminars, conferences, or training programs; including the dates you were involved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Activities</td>
<td>Briefly list activities or offices held in voluntary associations, service clubs, community organizations, political parties, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials and instructions on preparing a resume will be available from your Integrated Field Seminar instructor.
SAMPLE
EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GOALS ESSAY

In general my past experiences as a learner have been disorganized and not well planned, and so I have not always known what it is I wanted or where I wanted to go; therefore, it was impossible to determine how I was to get there. I want to change that now, and develop a systematic approach to learning so that I can increase my own rate of growth. I am pleased to be able to recognize my strengths, and I like the person I am today. I want to continue to grow to where I am more self-confident. Then I will be able to move into new ventures and not ask myself can I do it, but rather (based on what I know or what I have experienced), what is the best way to accomplish what must be done.

I want to earn a Bachelors degree, elementary teaching certification, and a Masters degree in Human Services. Although I am currently in the early childhood area at present, I want to one day move to where I can teach others how to grow young minds. I mean young in the sense that as long as a mind is in motion and is learning, it is young; constantly renewing itself. As long as the mind does not stop and stagnate, it can be young. This is the kind of mind I want to teach others how to work with. I am interested in how to bring about social change, and I believe education is the key.

My doctorate should follow, but I am not far enough in my planning and scope to be able to say definitely in what area. I only know that I am not sure in what area. I do feel that it might be in some area of human services besides education.

To reach my goals I know that I will need to meet educational requirements for teacher certification as well as the requirements for the Human Services degree. Right now I want to enroll in the Lincoln Masters in Human Services Degree program, and I know that I will be able to meet admissions requirements with a Lincoln Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Services.

I have already learned how to teach various subject areas in elementary and early childhood programs. In addition even though I have been successful in managing my classroom in a sensitive, humanistic way, I feel that I need more technical learning in classroom management. I have read extensively in the area of child development, and I feel that my classroom experience has added depth to my understanding. I can identify a child who is unable to do
class work because of a learning disability. Parents and volunteers have assisted in my classroom, and I think this is an important element in home and school relationship. Also, I have worked closely and efficiently with school counselors, and I believe my ability to support a child’s need for counseling services both in and out of the classroom is one of my strengths.

I want to make use of all the resources available here at Lincoln University, particularly in media and reading skills. I want to be innovative in my particular classroom, and let my room serve to help the entire school, and I want to visit other schools in the area that are innovative, and talk to those parents involved in the schools and their activities.

My most immediate goal is to have a classroom where there is everything needed to maximize independent learning for my students. This would involve having learning centers, increasing my knowledge and understanding of record-keeping and evaluation, finding ways to inspire creative writing in students. I want to know more about how children behave, and I want to work more closely with them in arts and crafts.

On a more personal level I want to engage more in cultural activities, such as in music and art, not just in viewing but also in performing. I want to return to playing the piano, and I want to learn to play the guitar. It would really be an achievement if I were able to express myself on canvas.

Looking back, and in considering my present feelings, I think I learn better working with one other person, or in small groups, and with minimal supervision. In some religions a teacher is considered on a level second only to a great spiritual leader. That is a great responsibility to live up to. I believe the field of education would benefit greatly if teachers were more highly respected than they currently are. Through my studies and subsequent demonstration of learning I hope to participate in and help elevate the role of the educator in bringing about social change.
Identifying Subject Areas of Learning

This section of your portfolio, The Prior Learning Petition, concentrates specifically on the learning gained as a result of your past experiences. The experience itself is important only as the setting where learning was acquired. A number of experiences may now be linked together, having resulted in learning in a subject area. It may be helpful to think of a college classroom as one type of setting where learning is gained and your individual experience as another type of setting where learning took place.

Adolescent Psychology was cited in an earlier example of learning gained as a result of past experiences. This knowledge was acquired in work settings; counseling in a half-way house and implementing a youth recreation program. One common factor in these experiences was that all clients were adolescents. The student working in these situations increased her understanding of adolescent psychology which helped her work more effectively with youth. This student might also have acquired skills in teaching and counseling techniques.

It is important to realize that only the student can identify what was learned. Many people can have similar experiences, but each person’s learning is unique. Only you can convey what you have learned as a result of past experiences.
You must identify the skills and knowledge you have gained, naming the subject areas of your learning. You are petitioning that your learning in these areas be evaluated.

You can begin with broad academic or professional fields of study and practice. Lincoln University will award credit for life experiences that have resulted in prior learning:

a. in the eight integrative areas of the core curriculum: communications, problems solving, values/ethics, science/technology, numerical data and computers, intercultural experience, historical perspective, art and aesthetics. Specific testing, including performance of tasks, paper and pencil testing, computer-assisted testing, simulation exercises, and other techniques will be used to assess prior learning in these areas. In addition, the portfolio process will include documentation of learning in these areas. Credits can be awarded for a host of learning activities, such as volunteer services or artistic achievements.

b. from specific human services work experience where learning equivalent to major course requirements in the undergraduate human services curriculum, such as Sociology, Human Development, Social Policy, Sociological Theories, and Social Research was gained. This assumes that the work environment over at least a five-year period provided opportunities for
supervised learning in the specified area, and may include on-the-job and in-service training which resulted in increased awareness and understanding of complex concepts common to the human services. Portfolio materials, including official letters, follow-up calls to references, verified job descriptions, copies of performance evaluations, and training certificates will document these work experiences.

You should be very specific when identifying the subject areas within these fields in which you have developed skill or knowledge. For example, in Sociological Theories you may have the ability to understand how groups develop because of work you have done in community organizing; you may have worked in a social welfare setting and have skills as a caseworker, and acquired the ability to interview clients and conduct counseling sessions.

Many subject areas of skill and knowledge are applicable to several fields. For example, knowledge of human behavior or group dynamics, and skills in leadership, problem solving or planning change can be considered basic and common to all human service professions. Such subjects are known as generic areas, and may be identified by students as subject areas when petitioning for credit for prior learning.

If you have had prior learning experiences in humanities subjects such as literature, languages, music, art, or theater; or in science subjects such as ecology, mathematics, biology or physiology, be sure
to include these. Learning in these two subject areas is required for
the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree at Lincoln
University.

You should list the subject areas you are presenting for
assessment. This list then serves as a table of contents for the next
part of the petition where you will analyze your learning, describing
what you have learned and how you applied your skills and knowledge
in past experiences.

The following sample lists of subject areas are meant to give you
some ideas about subject areas and how they relate to major fields.
They suggest experiences you may have had from which you acquired
skill and knowledge that can be credited through the prior learning
assessment process.
### SAMPLE LISTS OF SUBJECT AREAS
### CATEGORIZED BY PROFESSIONAL/ACADEMIC FIELDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health/Counseling</th>
<th>Community Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Intervention</td>
<td>Effective Use of Community Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling Parents of Exceptional Children</td>
<td>Church and the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Street Work with Urban Gangs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration/Supervision</th>
<th>Social Welfare/Social Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Administration</td>
<td>Psychiatric Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Selection</td>
<td>Intake Interviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory Practices and Procedures</td>
<td>Urban Social Problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science/Math</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology</td>
<td>Reading in African American Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Areas (May be related to various Human Service fields)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques of Fund Raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving in Conflict Situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State and Local Government Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmative Action Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage and the Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Human Behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing Areas of Learning

Once your list of subject areas is complete, you are ready to analyze the learning you have gained in those areas. Analysis is an in-depth description of what you have learned, presented in a systematic, organized way. When you analyze your learning, you want to communicate very clearly what you know and what you can do in a particular subject area.

The learning you have gained in each of your subject areas needs to be supported by analysis, explaining what you have learned in the subject as well as how and where you have used this learning. A single analysis may cover more than one subject. The analysis of your learning is the most important information in your portfolio. It is the learning you detail in your analysis that is considered when determining whether or not you will earn degree credit for your prior learning.

Writing an Analysis of Learning

You can use this information as an outline or as general guidelines for developing your analysis. An example of analysis, excerpted from a Prior Learning Petition follows this information.

Step 1 – Defining the subject area(s)

In your own words, define the subject you are analyzing. In the analysis of learning, definition means to describe the basic qualities of a subject, rather than develop a precise meaning for the words. In the
petition excerpt which follows, the student gives a general idea of the type of interview she has learned to conduct, one intended to gain information about a client’s social interests and background. Definition is also necessary in analysis when using the technical terms of a profession. For example, the term helping is considered general, and you would need to be more specific, stating exactly what kind of help you mean. You may use abbreviations, such as IEP for an educational programming process, or FLEX, which is organizational language at Lincoln for Furthering the Lincoln Experience. Again, you want to be sure your meaning is very clear, so define your terms when using similar language.

**Step 2 – Explaining Skills and Knowledge Gained**

This is the very specific identification of skills and knowledge you have gained as a result of past experiences.

**Skills** are what you are able to do, services you are able to provide. Skills statements usually begin, “I learned to...” or I am able to...” or “I can...”

**Knowledge** is the theoretical, factual or practical understanding of a subject. Knowledge statements begin, “I learned that...” or “I discovered that...” or “I understand that...”

**Knowledge of a subject** is the explanation for applying specific skills or methods in a particular situation. An explanation of skills and knowledge might begin: “I am able to conduct a staff training
session (skill) that incorporates my knowledge of group dynamics (knowledge) and the needs of employees in an organization (knowledge).

After this opening statement, the writer of an analysis should explain how the workshops were designed and conducted, and why they were handled in this particular way. Extensive detail is not necessary; stating essential or central points is sufficient.

**Step 3 – Illustration**

From your own experience, give examples showing how you have used the knowledge and skill you are analyzing. The example should be as brief as possible, emphasizing the most significant information and chosen to give the assessment team a general sense of how much and how well you have learned. Be sure your role in this experience is clear. For example, in the staff training program, the student should be clear as to whether he/she was the designer, instructor, a co-instructor or a member of the staff when illustrating his learning.

**Step 4 – Describing the Learning Setting**

In this section, you should provide the following information:

a. Where – Identify the particular place, (organization) the purpose and goals of this organization.

b. When – Length of time (dates) you were involved in this setting.
c. What you did – Your resume description may not give a full sense of your role, especially the activities most significant in acquiring your skills and knowledge.

d. With whom you worked – Identify the important people involved in your learning situation, and describe their relationship to you. Include supervisors, co-workers, instructors, clients.

In the example that follows, the student describes what she did and with whom she did it. She described the organization in a previous analysis, explaining its purpose and the length of time she was involved in this particular position. **If you have gained learning in more than one subject area in only one setting, you need describe the setting only once in your entire portfolio.** Background information related to a particular area of learning, such as this student has provided, may be added when needed for the specific skills and knowledge gained.

You will notice that this student described the setting and circumstances of learning before explaining skills and knowledge gained. Prior learning assessment emphasizes the quality of learning rather than where it was gained, but a description of the setting is helpful to the assessment team in designing interview questions appropriate to your learning situation. You may present your analysis
in any way you wish, as long as you provide the necessary information and follow the general guidelines for analysis.
Interviewing Techniques

My development of skills as an interviewer began with my position as a group worker. I was supervised by the department head, who had a Masters in Social Work. My early lessons were through the apprentice method. After sitting with my supervisor while he conducted interviews, we would discuss the process and he would answer my questions. He also recommended some readings on the principles of interviewing. It was not long before I was conducting interviews alone.

The interview was intended to provide general information about the client’s social and recreational interests and activities. The information was recorded on a form which permitted our staff to help the client make meaningful choices for his or her socialization program.

I quickly learned that in order to accomplish the purpose of the interview without alienating the client to the program, I had to develop a sense of the client’s needs at the time of contact and determine whether the client was ready for the interviewing procedure, which can appear long, cold and unfeeling.

The books and articles I read always seemed to stress an ideal physical setting for interviewing. I have never been so fortunate, so I had to learn to establish an atmosphere for an interview with my own manner. I learned that a comfortable, caring atmosphere does not come from the room the chairs or the desk.

I learned to be sensitive to the person’s needs, level of understanding and feelings about his or her situation. I learned to be flexible, and I believe that adaptability is a crucial asset to setting the tone of the interview.

I learned the importance of recognizing the person as an individual and not as one of many. I learned that the most important requirement in an interview is an atmosphere of trust.

I also learned that knowledge of my own agency was essential, in order to be able to present the agency accurately and establish clear mutual expectations between the client and the agency. I learned to
have information available to make appropriate referrals to other agencies when necessary.

I recall quite clearly the specific of interviewing one client which I feel illustrates the learning and skills I have described. J., age 20, was referred following discharge from a psychiatric hospital after a 30-day treatment period for an acute episode. At our first meeting, she appeared frightened and reluctant to talk with me. Observing her high level of anxiety, hoping to make her more comfortable, I asked her an open ended question – “What was her understanding of why Mrs. V. had referred her to our organization?”

She began slowly explaining what she had been told about our program. As she talked she became more relaxed, and I learned about her desire to return to college, her concerns about her young daughter, and her wish to live independently of her mother.

Since she was feeling progressively more at ease with me, I began to discuss our program, look at her options and focus on some direction. I informed her how we would refer her to the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation for educational evaluation and funding, and how we would secure day care for her daughter. I assured her that she would meet with a social worker at the conclusion of the interview to help her with planning.

I then concluded the interview and met its original purpose – to describe our group work program, assess her social interests, and determine her needs for that aspect of her total rehabilitation program.

I believe this client left me feeling good about the interview. I believe that had I been insensitive to her discomfort, simply explaining the social program and filling out forms, she might have left our program never to return.

As time went on, I began to participate in other interviews at this agency. I learned to apply my skills in interviews of prospective staff, taking social histories, eligibility determinations, information and referral and exit interviews for clients. Basic to all these types of interviews was the ability to be an active listener, some knowledge of human behavior, and observing and recording skills.
Analysis of Learning

The excerpts from portfolios are meant to give you a sense of how the analysis of learning is developed. Completed portfolios will be unique to each individual’s learning and writing style.

You will most likely need to get some practical experience with the process of written analysis. If you need to develop or refine certain skills in order to prepare an analysis that clearly communicates your learning, you should get assistance from your Integrated Field Seminar instructor. The best way to get this assistance is to start writing and ask for comments and criticism so that you acquire an understanding of what to do and how to do it. If necessary, take advantage of Communication Skills faculty and increase your writing skills while preparing the Prior Learning Petition.

This may be repetitive, but it is very important. The analysis of learning is the most important part of your portfolio. It should provide an in-depth description of what you have learned. Your experiences are important only as the background or setting for learning. Analysis goes beyond reporting about an experience. You will need to step back from your experience and decide what the essential components of the learning are, that is, the ideas, theories, procedures, techniques and concepts you understand. You need to look beneath the surface of situations or events and examine the underlying themes of your experience.
When analyzing learning, the most important factor in successfully communicating your understanding of a subject is writing in a way that shows you have examined and reflected on the meaning of your experiences and the learning you gained.

**Documentation**

The final step in preparing the portfolio is gathering and organizing documentation. Documentation is evidence that the prior learning experiences you have identified in your resume and in the analysis of learning (your illustrations and descriptions of settings) actually occurred.

Documentation verifies your:

- Employment
- Volunteer positions
- In-service training and non-credit courses
- Community services
- Accomplishments, especially products from your past learning experiences.

Letters of verification are the most common form of documentation. Several other types of documentation might be appropriate for your portfolio. The type used depends on the experience you had and your activities in the experience.
Letters of verification should follow these guidelines:

1. The person furnishing the letter should have directly observed you during the experience and be able to discuss your role or participation in that experience.

2. The person writing the letter of verification should identify his/her relationship to you in that experience (supervisor, peer, subordinate, etc.)

3. The letter should be one of verification, rather than recommendation.

4. The letter should be written on the official letterhead stationery of the company or organization with which you were associated, or the organization with which the person writing the letter is presently associated.

If the documentation is a product from your experience, such as a proposal or other work sample or piece of art, you may need proof that it is in fact your product. A letter of verification from a third party who observed you while you were involved in the making of the product can verify that it is your product. Organize your documentation. Documentation may either immediately follow an analysis or be contained in a separate section. If separate, it should appear in the same sequence as your analysis of related subject areas, or as experiences appear on your resume.
It is possible to provide too much documentation. You only need to supply enough documentation to verify your participation and accomplishment in the experiences you identify in the portfolio. If you are fortunate enough to have a number of choices, for example, if you have written numerous proposals or newspaper articles, choose no more than three, either written for different purposes, or highlighting your development over a period of time.

If you are unable to obtain documentation for an experience or accomplishment, and you have exhausted all the possibilities for obtaining it, include in your portfolio a statement explaining why documentation for a particular experience is not included.

In preparing this material for your portfolio, do not include originals you cannot replace; make copies. If materials such as case studies are included, delete any information which might reveal a client’s identity.
### TYPES OF DOCUMENTATION

#### Type of Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Experience</th>
<th>Letters of verification from Superiors, peers, clients</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job descriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters of commendation</td>
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<td>Promotion evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Case studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Licenses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evidence of membership in professional organizations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Service Activities</th>
<th>Letters of corroboration from co-volunteers, clients served, supervisor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commendations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Newspaper and magazine clippings</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-college courses and training</th>
<th>Transcripts or letter attesting enrollment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other evidence of completion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- certification, diploma</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific accomplishments</th>
<th>Published writing</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portfolio of art work</td>
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<td>Musical compositions</td>
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<td>Exhibits</td>
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<td>Speeches</td>
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<td>Programs and performances</td>
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<td>Writing samples</td>
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<td>Audiovisual presentations</td>
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<td>Proposals written</td>
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<td>Instructional materials</td>
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<td>designed or developed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bibliography of readings</td>
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</table>
FORMAT OF LETTER REQUESTING DOCUMENTATION

Your Name
Current Address
Date

Employer’s Name
Agency’s Name
Current Address

Dear (Full Name): (avoid Sir or Madam)

Introduce yourself. Remind people of what you did (title) where (location with company) and when (dates).

Tell why you need documentation. Ask the person to submit the specific information needed, i.e., verification of employment or services, length of time, duties and responsibilities, title, special activities, projects, accomplishments.

Provide the person with a copy of the analysis of learning section that describes your duties, responsibilities and accomplishments in the portfolio. If Lincoln provides a documentation form, you can type this information on that form if you prefer. That form can then be used to verify your information.

Make some positive parting comments; thank them.

Request that your documentation be sent to you at your home address, even if it is addressed to the Prior Learning Assessment Office as a formality. This enables you to make a copy of the documentation for your records, and the required copies for your portfolio.

Closing (Sincerely yours),

Sign your letter
Final Product Requirements

Your Prior Learning Portfolio must be typed, the text double-spaced. Margins should be at least one inch on all four sides of the paper, and pages numbered. The portfolio must be securely bound, and copies should be clear, of the best quality obtainable. Footnotes must be used if any information is taken from another source. Bibliographies are used to list readings completed prior to entering Lincoln, and related to your learning presented in the portfolio.

The Prior Learning Petition as a whole and in its parts should be coherent in the organization and expression of ideas. Spelling and grammatical usage are expected to be correct. The completed petition should not be more than seventy-five pages in length.

Format

The portfolio is organized in the following way:

1. Title Page – The page tells who the author is, date the portfolio is completed and is signed by the writer.

2. Table of Contents – This is a chronological listing of the material in the portfolio and the location of the material by page number.

3. Introduction – (optional) – if included, this is a brief statement about yourself, your ideas or expectations related to the assessment interview, and/or any directions on how you want the assessment team to read the portfolio.
4. The Educational and Professional Goals Essay – This essay must clearly state the educational and professional goals of the writer. The essay is usually two to three pages long.

5. Resume and Transfer Credit Summary – Your resume should be brief, not more than two pages in length. You must include a Credit Summary even if you do not have any transfer credit.

6. Identification and Analysis of Learning – This section is the actual petition for credit. The first page of this section is your list of areas to be assessed. The analysis of each area follows the list. All learning you wish to have considered for prior learning credit must be included in this section. This information is the subject matter of your assessment. The analysis of each subject area should be kept between two and five pages.

7. Documentation – Learning experiences and achievements as described in the analysis of learning are verified through documentation. As a general rule related documentation follows each analysis of learning. Any presentation (i.e., video, sculpture, etc.) planned for the assessment interview should be identified and described.
Prior Learning Petition Assessor Guide to the Assessment Interview

PRIOR LEARNING PETITION ASSESSOR GUIDE

TO

THE ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

Produced by the Prior Learning Assessment Office of Lincoln University
THE ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

About the Assessment Interview

The assessment interview is the oral documentation of the student’s petitioning for advanced standing. It is an interpersonal role situation in which the student will meet with an assessment team to answer questions designed to examine and evaluate the depth and breadth of the student’s learning outcomes gained from non-college experiences. The written documentation (Prior Learning Petition) is the guide for the assessment team to formulate the questions that are directly related to the skills, knowledge or competencies to be evaluated. As a general rule, questions in the interview should:

1. Be appropriate for the kinds of information to be obtained.
2. Be clear and unambiguous.
3. Not require knowledge or information that the student does not have or should not be expected to have, based on the written petition.
4. Not require information generally considered to be personal in nature.
Choosing the Team

The Prior Learning Assessment Team should be comprised of members from the Lincoln faculty and members from human service agencies/fields who are closely involved in and aware of changing societal needs to evaluate the learning for each student submitting a portfolio. The team should be selected on the basis of the subject areas identified in the petition, and other reasons deemed appropriate by the faculty of the PLAO. At the same time, one member of the team should be designated as the team leader. The leader should be selected on the basis of any or all of the following:

- Experience as a Lincoln assessor
- Strength in the subject-matter areas presented
- Familiarity with the interview process

The purpose for designating a leader is to insure the smooth flow of the interview.

Preparation for the Interview

At least two weeks prior to the interview, each assessment team member will receive a copy of the petition portion of the portfolio and a preparation guideline to assist in review. The team member should read the entire petition thoroughly, concentrating on his/her area of expertise. Note the learning the student has identified, and make tentative decisions on possible courses of college study indicated from
the skills and knowledge the student has presented. Compile a list of the specific questions you plan to raise in the interview.

Review time varies depending on length of the petition, depth of material presented, overall readability and experience of the assessment team member. The length of time required to review an average petition is approximately three hours or less.

**Developing the Interview**

Assessment team members should arrive at the interview at least one half hour before the student is scheduled in order to meet one another and develop a design for conducting the interview. This meeting is important because its objectives are to:

- Compare findings of the team members
- Promote thorough coverage of the material presented
- Insure consistency among team members who are interviewing
- Further formulate questions to reveal the depth of knowledge and skill the student is presenting
- Serve as a basis for development of standard evaluation criteria for all students claiming knowledge in particular areas.

The following list suggests the type of questions to which the student may be asked to respond:

1. Recall activities and evaluate student’s priorities and values.
2. Analyze issues in a given dimension and evaluate his/her ability to deal with them.
3. Draw comparisons among experiences.

4. Use hypothetical situations to demonstrate problem-solving skills within a given context.

5. Identify themes or systematic changes in his/her actions as well as the reasons for them.

6. Analyze his/her strengths and weaknesses with regard to specific situations or sets of behavior.

7. Analyze his/her basic operating style.

8. Identify theories that are consciously being applied.

Where a student clearly identifies learning in traditional academic disciplines, questions should be designed to elicit more specific information to determine the level and extent of the student’s knowledge, and not limited to describing personal perceptions. Once the interview design is in place, the team is ready to meet the student.

**Setting the Tone of the Interview**

Students come to the assessment interview experiencing various levels of anxiety, usually related to understanding the process, the role of the assessment team, and the desire to maximize outcomes in terms of credits. Thus, the first few minutes of the interview are important in putting the student in a frame of mind that will enable him/her to best verbally demonstrate depth in the areas which he/she is presenting learning.
Greet the student pleasantly, and allow time for introductions. The student will want to know the background and qualifications of each member of the team as they relate to the areas of learning in the petition. This may have been explained to the student beforehand, but can be repeated at this time. Any experiences team members have which are similar to the student’s would be of interest. Also, you should identify the general areas of learning with which you will primarily be concerned.

The team should be flexible enough to make adjustments in the design to accommodate both the needs of the team as well as those of the student. These adjustments may be necessary to insure the smooth flow of the interview as well as to maintain a comfortable atmosphere for the student.

During the first few minutes after introductions it is important to give the student a sense of the length of the interview, explain what will be covered, and clarify expectations regarding student participation. Students should understand that the purpose of the questions asked is to provide the assessment team with substantial information about the depth and breadth of the learning presented so that the team can evaluate learning, determine if it is at college level, sufficient to earn course credit and appropriate to the Lincoln University Bachelor of Science in Human Services degree.
Questions During the Interview

The interview is now in progress, and the objective from this point should be to maximize the opportunities the student has to demonstrate, orally, the depth and breadth of knowledge and/or skill in the areas presented. In order to reach that goal:

1. Have a clear purpose in mind, and ask questions that are pertinent.
2. Choose positive wording, and phrase conceptual questions within a framework appropriate to the student’s concrete learning experience.
3. Beginning with the first question, set the stage for the student to do most of the talking.
4. Phrase questions carefully so that they are clear and understandable, so that you don’t suggest the answer you are seeking, and so that the student can feel comfortable saying, “I don’t know,” and does not become embarrassed should it be necessary to say that.
5. When possible, use a comment instead of a question. Try to keep the interview from becoming a cross-examination.
6. Use examples, especially from the student’s experience, to help elicit more complete responses. Many students need this additional assistance in developing a framework or context within which to place their answers.
Controlling the Interview

The standard time for an interview is approximately three hours. The assessment team needs to maintain control of the interview to utilize the time efficiently and economically, and to insure that each subject area is covered adequately. Control can be maintained by:

• Being systematic and following the schedule you structured at the outset.
• Covering thoroughly one area before going on to the next.
• Pacing the interview, allowing enough time for discussion without breaking down into irrelevancy.
• Focusing attention on the issues in question.
• Urging the student on with a question if he/she goes into too much irrelevant detail or gets off the track. Anticipate the point at which you can interrupt, and do so with positive comments.
• Recognizing when the student is in a difficult situation, having exhausted his/her level of understanding of material presented or questions asked. Again, anticipate the point at which you can tactfully and positively move on to the next area.

You help the student by being responsive. Show that you are listening by nodding, using facial expressions, intonations, gestures, supportive comments, and other appropriate means of encouragement. Such supportiveness results in a more comprehensive response from the student, and consequently a more thorough interview.
You are expected to take notes during the interview. This is necessary to support accuracy in evaluation as well as credit decisions, and to be able to respond to the team report on the interview, which is submitted at its conclusion. To lessen student concern about note-taking, you should inform the student at the outset that you will be taking notes, and do not let the note-taking become the focus of the interview.

Taking a break is customary. You should include this when planning your schedule. Prior to the break the student should be asked to comment on how he/she feels about the interview – whether it is going as expected, if there are problems or questions at this point.

As the interview approaches closure, the student should be asked if there is anything he/she wishes to add that has not been discussed – any comments or questions before a decision is made.

This segment of the interview is concluded, and the student is asked to participate further in the process by responding to an evaluation questionnaire which is available from the PLAO.

**After the Interview**

The assessment team now decides what credits, if any, should be awarded. The team should look at what was presented in the written petition and the demonstration of learning in the interview to determine if the student has presented learning that is creditable. Prior learning is generally creditable if it:
1. meets criteria already established for students presenting learning in a specific area. Certain requirements, such as those for teacher certification, are standard, and should be considered when recommending credit to satisfy requirements such as these.

2. implies both a conceptual and practical knowledge of a subject. Students should be able to go beyond the “doing” part of the learning to express some understanding of the *why* that accompanies the action in the experience. In general petitioning students will be heavy on the practical, whereas the traditional student is heavy on the conceptual with little or no practical.

3. can be applied outside the specific context in which it was learned.

4. indicates learning that is relatively current. If there is a large gap between what the student learned on a job several years ago and what knowledge and techniques are required in that same job today, it is questionable if credit can be awarded.

5. is learning that can be applied to the Lincoln University Bachelor of Human Services degree requirements.

When course titles are recommended, they should be recorded for the PLAO, and the recommending assessor should briefly and clearly explain to all the team what skills and knowledge are being credited,
as well as what experiences were involved. The final list should be checked against the Credit Summary for duplication.

Course titles should clearly communicate, in the simplest academic terminology, the content or subject matter of the course and the level of student achievement. The assessment team is encouraged to utilize course syllabi and college catalogs to develop appropriate course titles. Titles directly excerpted from catalogs, etc., usually do not accurately communicate the unique quality of a student’s learning gained in the individual’s experience.

Courses are not recommended for credit if:

• learning gained is less than what would be the equivalent objective for a three semester hour course of study in a Lincoln undergraduate program.
• learning gained is secretarial, office skill, home economics, physical education.
• Learning gained is military science, exclusively military in nature, or involves classified information.

Names of positions, organizations, etc., are not appropriate as titles. Titles should be brief, not more than five words, and should not be highly contemporary or “faddish.”

The total number of credit hours awarded through assessment is added to the number of transfer credit hours, if any. Credits earned at Lincoln are not included. The sum of the assessment credits and any
transfer credits is the total amount of advanced standing the student has earned. The number of credits earned does not necessarily relate to graduation requirements in fields of study.

Once the advanced standing award has been completed, and while the team is awaiting preparation of the official copy of the assessment results, the assessment team is asked to complete an evaluation of the interview. Team members should utilize this opportunity to make specific recommendations for the student to consider as he/she plans and completes study towards the degree.

Following this the student will return to the interview where the results will be explained. Learning recognized for credit as well as learning not meeting requirements for credit should be candidly discussed. The explanation to the student should emphasize credit earned for learning gained or not gained, *never* explained as credit given for experiences. The decision of the assessment team, once presented to the student, is final.

The PLAO staff members are resources for any and all questions related to the Prior Learning Assessment process. Non-Lincoln assessors cannot be expected to know the full range of Lincoln University policy and practice. Assessors are expected to clarify assumptions or expectations with the PLAO staff.
SYLLABUS
HUS 5??

ADULT LEARNING AT LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Instructor:
Credits: 3
Room:
Time:
Office/Phone/Ext:
E-mail:
Office Hours:

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to help adult learners understand, value and enhance their academic survival skills. Drawing on practical work experiences and situated in the rich tradition of the nation’s first historically Black university, course assignments and class discussion will engage students in practicing the skills necessary to succeed in college.

COURSE PRE-REQUISITES: None

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the basic principles of adult learning in a personal reflective journal;
2. Identify and demonstrate effective social and academic skills by participating in online and in-class discussions and group tasks;
3. Conduct basic library research and demonstrate computer literacy by preparing all written assignments on computer, using the course management system as required for discussions, reading and quizzes, submitting a final paper following APA guidelines, and creating a PowerPoint presentation with appropriate visuals, text and animation;
4. Demonstrate competency in academic writing skills by producing completing journal assignments as required and submitting a final term paper applying theory to practice;
5. Demonstrate competency in oral communication skills by earning a passing grade on an oral PowerPoint presentation;
6. Demonstrate competency in critical thinking and problem solving skills through online discussion participation;
7. Describe significant events in the history and tradition of Lincoln University.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Reflective journal with weekly entries. Rubric specifying required outcomes provided.
• Participation in in-class and online discussion (two online discussion postings required per week, with no more than four missed postings over the course of the semester). Rubric specifying required outcomes provided.

• 10-15 page paper: Academic Success Plan (submitted in three sections throughout the semester) Assignment will be submitted in three sections, with the opportunity to revise the first two sections as needed before submitting the completed paper. Rubric specifying required outcomes provided.

• One oral presentation using PowerPoint presentation software. Rubric specifying required outcomes provided.

• Midterm and final examination

ASSESSMENT TOOLS/GRADING STANDARDS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion (online and class participation)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all classes. The University attendance policy (attached) will be followed. Please note that two late arrivals will equal one absence.

UNIVERSITY APPROVED INTEGRITY STATEMENT (attached)

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

The following topics will be explored:

• History of Lincoln University/Role of HBCUs in Higher Education
• Educational Technology and Basic Research Skills
• Fitting into Academic Conduct and Culture
• Dealing with Anxiety and Stress
• Principles of Effective Time Management
• Student Learning Styles and Preferences
• Improving Reading and Study Skills