

# Goddard College

## **UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING GUIDE**

Effective: Fall 2011

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## INTRODUCING APL

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### What is Assessment of Prior Learning?

The Goddard undergraduate educational philosophy includes the belief that college level learning can take place outside of a formal educational setting. The Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) process creates an opportunity to document this kind of learning when it has occurred between completing high school and matriculation into Goddard's undergraduate programs.

What follows is a brief introduction to the principles, process, and policies of APL as practiced at Goddard, a pioneer in experiential learning assessment since 1971.

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### APL Process - Overview

There are two phases in the APL process. It is recommended that the first phase be completed one semester and the second phase completed the following semester.

1.) *The Petition*: This document briefly outlines areas of your prior learning that you believe are deserving of academic credit; your learning goals were for each of these areas of study; how you achieved those goals; the amount of time you devoted to each area; how you will document your learning; and how much credit you propose be awarded to you in each area. The APL Advisor offers required Introductory APL workshops, individual meetings during the residency and a six-week on-line study group immediately following the residency to assist you in all aspects of preparing your APL Petition.

2.) *The Portfolio*: Your Portfolio is the resulting product of your approved Petition. Your Portfolio is a compilation of written components as outlined in your Petition. The APL Advisor reviews your Portfolio for completeness and adherence to format requirements. A committee of Goddard faculty members reviews your Portfolio to determine academic credit to be awarded in each area.

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### Important Points to Keep in Mind

- Your APL Portfolio will be evaluated for college level learning by both Goddard faculty and external accreditation reviewers.
- APL credit is not awarded for *experience*. It is awarded for documented college level *learning* gained through experience.
- The credit you earn will depend upon your ability to articulate the depth, breadth, and duration of your prior learning.
- Successful completion of a Goddard BA degree is *not* just a matter of accumulating 120 credit hours. The APL process allows you to earn credits that will move you ahead toward meeting your program goals and requirements.
- APL is available only to undergraduate students.
- *Be sure to read this handbook very carefully.*

## COLLEGE LEVEL LEARNING

*The Goddard APL process accredits the learning, not the experience, and this distinction is a crucial one.* In reviewing APL portfolios, the faculty will look for evidence of prior college-level learning characterized by the following:

- **It is describable** – you must be able to communicate the learning through written language
- **It is generally applicable** – the learning can be applied to a different situation from the one in which the learning occurred
- **It is intentional, not accidental.** College-level experiential learning results from a conscious pursuit of information, perspectives, skills or knowledge.
- **It combines theory with practice.** While most traditional undergraduate education tends to be theory-rich and experience-poor, much experiential learning tends to be experience-rich and theory-poor. The APL Portfolio Review Committee will assess your portfolio for the college level learning consisting of ideas, knowledge, skills and theory while reflecting on the experience.
- **It is verifiable** - you must be able to verify the learning through evaluation and documentation
- **Is beyond learning that is “common to all”** - The learning must be above and beyond the average knowledge needed to accomplish the same task. As an example, you could not ask for college credit for what you learned by giving birth after taking a childbirth class. However, if you went on to become an instructor of childbirth classes and taught the classes, you could seek APL credit for the additional learning required to become an instructor.
- **It fits within your Goddard program.** The learning constitutes appropriate advancement toward the completion of Goddard’s BA degree requirements.

## IMPORTANT DATES

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### Required Workshops and Study Group

During the semester in which you plan to submit your APL petition, you must attend the residency *APL Informational Workshop*, the *Program Review Workshop*, meet with the APL Advisor, the *APL Collaborative Learning Opportunities Workshop*, as well as participate in the six-week on-line APL Petition Preparation Course.

During the semester in which you plan to submit your APL portfolio, you **must** attend the residency APL Portfolio meeting.

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### APL Petition

Development of your APL Petition is your packet 2 work.

Your Petition **is due** to the APL Advisor one week before your packet 2 due date.

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### APL Portfolio

This phase of the APL process is in addition to your regular packet work.

If you are completing the entire APL process in one semester, your completed APL portfolio is due to the APL Advisor on or before the packet 4 due date.

If you are completing the APL process in two semesters, your completed APL portfolio is due to the APL Advisor on or before the packet 3 due date of the second semester.

Incomplete or late portfolios may not be reviewed until the following semester.

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### Progress Reviews

The APL process is directly linked with the Progress Review process in determining fulfillment of the Goddard Undergraduate Degree requirements. **Be aware that you are required to prepare a Progress Review portfolio simultaneously during the APL Petition phase.** Your completed APL Petition is attached to your Progress Review.

In order to complete your Progress Review, first you must have your completed APL Petition reviewed by the APL Advisor. You will then attach your APL Petition to your Progress Review. The Progress Review Group will then endorse your APL Petition.

A determination of your APL credit will be made during the semester in which you submit your completed Portfolio. Consult with your academic advisor to determine how APL credit will affect your overall degree requirements.

**You are required to submit the appropriate Progress Review portfolio during the semester you complete the APL Petition. Please refer to the Undergraduate Curriculum Guide for detailed information on the Progress Review process and submission requirements.**

## IMPORTANT DETAILS

### APL Fees

Students who participate in the APL process are charged separately for the two part process. Both the petition and portfolio fees are non-refundable. Contact the Student Accounts Office for current fees. Financial aid may be available for the Petition portion of the APL fee.

*Please Note:* Payment of APL fees does not guarantee that APL credit will be awarded.

- ***Payment of the Petition fee:*** You must make arrangements with the Student Accounts Office for payment of the Petition fee before leaving campus at the end of your residency. Payment is due within the first month of the semester in which the petition is pursued unless payment arrangements have been made.
- ***Payment of the Portfolio fee:*** Payment of the Portfolio fee is due before submission of the Portfolio. Your Portfolio will not be read by the APL Portfolio Review Committee unless payment has been received.

### Payments are to be mailed to:

**Goddard College  
Student Accounts Office  
123 Pitkin Road  
Plainfield, VT 05667-9432**

Upon receipt of the Portfolio the APL Advisor will verify with the Student Accounts Office that payment in full has been received. If payment has not been received, the Portfolio will not be forwarded to the APL Review Committee and the Student Accounts Office will contact the student regarding the outstanding payment. Upon receipt of the outstanding payment the Student Accounts Office will notify the APL Advisor. At that time the portfolio will be forwarded to the committee.

**NOTE: If the APL Portfolio Review Committee Members receive your APL Portfolio late, it may not be reviewed till the following semester.**

### APL Credit Awarded

A maximum of 45 credits may be earned through the APL process. The **combined total** of your APL credits and any credits you transfer in from other institutions may not exceed 75.

## THE APL PROCESS

There are two major phases to the APL process. The first is the preparation of a *Petition* in which you make the case that your prior learning is college-level and relevant to your degree. When the petition is endorsed by the Progress Review Group, you are given the "go-ahead" to prepare a *Portfolio* that documents the learning you are presenting.

Please plan for the reality that this is a time-consuming, intense process. Preparing the APL Petition and Portfolio happens *in addition to your regular packet work* for the semester. Plan for time to:

- 1) Review all previous college level education that took place after high school or completion of a GED and prior to entering Goddard and up to and including this current semester to identify how your studies to date address Goddard's degree requirements. Look ahead to what you wish to accomplish by the time you graduate so you can form an overall plan for your BA degree including areas you may be able to address through APL or through Goddard work in future semesters.
- 2) Complete the APL pre-residency preparation form (available on GNet) before attending the first APL Informational Workshop during the residency. Use the form to help recall the significant experiences you've had, *the learning you gained from them, and the kinds of documentation you think you will be able to provide* that will attest to the college-level equivalency of your activities.
- 3) Share the form with your advisor at the beginning of your residency and discuss how completing the APL process fits into your overall Goddard degree plan.
- 4) Attend the first APL Informational Workshop and a Progress Review orientation during your residency.
- 5) If, after the APL Informational Workshop, you feel it makes sense for you to continue, meet with the APL Advisor. Plan on an hour and a half for this meeting.
- 6) If your intention is to complete the entire APL process in one semester, the APL Advisor will set up and participate in a meeting with the student, the student's advisor, and the student's Program Director. This group will determine if it makes sense for the student to complete the entire APL process in one semester.
- 7) Inform your advisor of your intention to apply for APL credit and seek their support in preparing for a Progress Review and Summary of Studies appropriate to the level to which you hope to advance.
- 8) Attend the *APL Petition Collaborative Learning Opportunities Workshop* during your residency.
- 9) Prepare the Petition through participation in the **APL Petition Preparation Online Course**, led by the APL Advisor which begins the first week after your residency.
  - You will post work weekly and receive feedback. You will be able to ask questions that will guide you through the process.

- The critical reflection and writing required to complete the APL Petition is considered your Packet 2 work. The credit awarded for this packet is based on the critical thinking and other skills that you develop through the process of preparing your petition and that you document in a reflective essay reviewing the process. One week prior to the packet two due date, you will send your completed APL Petition as an attachment to the APL advisor for review. Once reviewed, you will send it to your advisor and attach a copy to your Progress Review portfolio.
- 10) Progress reviews that include APL petitions will remain incomplete until the APL portfolio is reviewed and credit awarded. You can expect a conditional response from the PRG (Progress Review Group), pending the APL portfolio decision.
  - 11) Once your Petition is endorsed, you will assemble the APL Portfolio and submit it to the APL Portfolio Review Committee. In reviewing the APL Portfolio, the committee may judge it complete and acceptable as is, or may request additional evidence of your learning. (Your work on the APL Portfolio is not a part of your regular packet work.)
  - 12) If additional evidence is required, you will be notified by the Chair of your APL Portfolio Review Committee.
  - 13) The chair of the APL Portfolio Review Committee will notify you of the results of the portfolio review. You will forward these results to the PRG. These documents will be placed in your official records held by the registrar.

The APL Advisor is your contact person throughout this process for all questions concerning APL.

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### **Articulating the Learning (Knowledge or Theory Base)**

Since experience by itself does not constitute college-level learning, you'll need to clearly articulate and document discrete knowledge, insights and skills, and frame these within a conceptual, theoretical context. The level of understanding you are able to demonstrate is individualized according to your educational background.

Ask yourself:

What did I learn that I did not know before?

What skills did I need to develop in order to acquire that knowledge?

What can I do now that I could not do before?

What types/traditions of thinking led to the knowledge and ideas which contributed to my deeper understanding of this area of learning?

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## Intentional Learning

In addition to “*what did I learn?*” there is the question “*why and how did I want to learn it?*” Was there some situation in your job or life that caused you to seek new understanding and skills to do your work more effectively, or that especially piqued your interest?

People often learn as a by-product of experience. You decide to go on a vacation to Europe and in the process of enjoying yourself, you may come away with a stronger flavor of that culture, having seen a little more art, tasted a new cuisine, etc. But *unless you had actually set out to learn specific things from this experience, that learning could not be considered intentional.*

If, however, your museum visits aroused your interest in 19th century painting, for example, and you decided you wanted to know more about who the artists were, what was going on in the world at the time they were painting, how they approached their painting, etc., and then you set out to learn more about the subject by reading books, listening to museum talks, seeing more art of the time, and in this way built up your knowledge about this period in art history – then, the learning could be considered intentional.

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## Documenting Your Learning

In order to earn prior learning credit, your portfolio must provide evidence of **what you did** and **what you learned**. This evidence must be sufficient to allow your APL Portfolio Review Committee to evaluate the scope and quality of your college level learning.

In the petition, you must list the type of evidence that will be submitted in the portfolio. For each Title of Study you must include:

- 1.) A **narrative** that *is an analysis and description of your learning* in the context of your experience; the focus is not autobiographical. You will describe *the core principles and scope of what you learned in a theoretical context.*
- 2.) An **annotated resource list** of sources of the theoretical understanding you gained: books, texts, journal articles, manuals, or any other written sources, mentorships, workshops, interviews, formal or informal apprenticeships, and other personal contacts. Indeed, you could list here any recognizable medium for the transmission of theoretical understanding. *The “annotated” part of this list means that in a short paragraph you identify the primary theoretical content of that resource and the nature of its usefulness to you.*
- 3.) **Additional evidence** that attests to both what you did and what you learned in order to make a successful case for awarding college level credit.

Evidence that you had the college-level learning experience described in your petition may include, but is not limited to:

- Letters of Expert Testimony (see section below)
- Objects you produced out of that experience plus *a 1-2 page commentary* relating the object to the knowledge base and theory that you describe in your Petition. In other words, the commentary explains which key principles of theory are embodied in the “object.”

- Certificates of completion of workshops, seminars etc.
- Articles about you and what you did

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## Letters of Expert Testimony

These are letters from people who know you and your work and who, *on the basis of their credentials*, are qualified to evaluate the range and quality of college-level learning in your field.

If you use letters of expert testimony, **you must also include evidence of the expert's qualifications.**

Letters of expert testimony are most effective when they:

- Are on the letterhead of the organization/agency/program/group
- Include an address, daytime telephone number and e-mail address (if available)
- Offer a description of writer's present position, pertinent past experience, and formal education and training
- Describe the writer's relationship to the student, situation of observation and dates of observation
- Describe specific competencies, skills, or knowledge being assessed (should be provided by the requesting student)
- Describe the student's specific skills, knowledge, and competencies in the words of the expert
- Evaluate student's performance
- State that the learning is college level -- that is, intentional and beyond a day-to-day or average knowledge in this subject area -- and that the student should be awarded college level credit for the learning
- The original letter including the signature of the expert. (must be included in your APL Portfolio)

## APL PETITION

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### Cover Letter

Your cover letter needs to include your name, program, address, telephone and/or fax number, email address, current level, and date submitted. It should also *briefly* delineate the contents of the petition.

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## Summary of Studies

A Summary of Studies is necessary for the reviewers to understand your complete Goddard Degree Program. The *Summary* is a semester by semester breakdown of your undergraduate education (all 8 levels) including:

- All *transfer credit* (that has been officially accepted by the Records Office): date, institutions attended, titles of courses, course numbers, and number and kind of credits awarded (semester or quarter hours).
- All *Goddard semesters finished*: date, descriptive titles of study (and degree requirements each study addresses), and advisor's name.
- *Prior Learning advancement sought*: titles, dates of areas of learning, length of time engaged in that learning, brief description of the learning, number of credit hours represented in each area and the degree requirements these address. You must include a brief, one sentence and description of the Course Title for each area of study.
- All **Goddard semesters anticipated**: dates and general descriptive title of studies. You must include a tentative plan for your senior study.

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## Petition Text

The successful Petition is organized into separate areas of study. It is useful to think of each area of study as a course.

For each unit you must include:

- **Title of Study:** Choose a title that matches the knowledge and learning that *you* gained from this experience (or this combination of experiences). Check college courses that are related to your area and note titles. Then design a title that as closely as possible describes your study.
- **Dates of study:** Show when (from month/ year to month/year)— after high school graduation and prior to your enrollment in Goddard—you did this study; and the approximate number of hours you engaged in active learning.
- **Number of Credits:** The number of semester hour equivalents (credits) you are requesting.
- **Brief Description of Learning Activity:** Describe how the learning occurred, what you did in order to achieve your learning goals. Give the particulars of the learning setting: who, what, where, when, and for how long both in terms of duration and in terms of amount of time invested.
- **Intentionality:** Describe why you undertook this learning. What would you say was your key "inquiry question," i.e., essentially, what did you seek to learn, or need to know?
- **Knowledge or Theory Base: Describe what you learned in bulleted format.** Name the academic area(s) you explored. Identify the major theories, principles,

and skills you learned and content areas covered. For APL purposes, *the ability to identify learning and describe it in academic language is key*. This is the "meat" of the Portfolio. A possibly helpful approach might be to think about how you would organize what you know to teach it to someone else.

- **Bibliography/Resource List:** Include a full bibliography using the appropriate style (e.g., MLA or APA) and a list of other resources that supported your learning. Resources could include workshops, lectures attended, films, expert consultants, internships, etc. You will annotate these sources in your Portfolio.
- **Documentation: List the evidence you will submit to support your learning.** Specify how you intend to document your learning. Each area of study must include a narrative and annotated bibliography as well as a minimum of two pieces of supporting evidence. Examples of supporting evidence are, but not limited to: newspaper articles about you and your work, texts you have written, artwork, samples of your work, CDs, DVDs, websites you designed, PowerPoint presentations, letters of expert testimony, etc. Include names, titles and qualifications of persons from whom you are seeking expert testimony.
- **Program Fit:** Explain how this learning fits into your overall Goddard BA program and fulfills your specific Goddard degree requirements. Make very sure that what you claim in the program fit is aligned with the knowledge/theory base. E.g. Do not, in the Program fit, claim that the work involves math if you are not going to demonstrate your understanding of math in the portfolio.

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### Self-Assessment of Learning during the Petition Process:

In a reflective essay of 6 – 10 pages, which you send to the APL advisor before Packet #2, you will demonstrate the learning that occurred for you while creating your APL Petition. This learning is new learning; it is **not** the learning that occurred during your life's work/experience. This essay must be sufficiently detailed to count as part of a packet, showing development of your critical thinking and writing. Any work related to the Self-Assessment of Learning will be determined in consultation with the APL advisor at the residency.

You should address the following learning objectives/competencies:

- Critical Thinking
- Educational Reflection
- Writing for a Specific Audience/Purpose
- Learning Theory
- Organizing Information

You should reflect on:

- what did the process of consolidating your life's learning taught you
- what it was like to go back and view your life's work/experience through the lens of "college level learning"

- what you discovered in reviewing college course syllabi that reach content you have acquired in your prior learning experience
- the process you had to go through to extrapolate learning from your life's work/experience
- the process of articulating that learning
- the process of writing for an audience of faculty you may not know
- the process of how you will then integrate that learning into a narrative for your portfolio
- preparing an outline that clearly states how you will develop your portfolio

## APL PORTFOLIO

The APL Portfolio documents the learning that you described in your APL Petition. It must include material as outlined in your APL Petition and be sufficient for your APL Portfolio Review Committee to evaluate the scope and quality of your learning.

The APL Portfolio Review Committees consists of faculty members from programs at Goddard College, and when necessary, context experts from outside the college.

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### Portfolio Checklist/Components

The Portfolio includes the following components and must be organized in the following order and where at all possible in ONE document. Please check it before you send it to be sure it includes, in this order:

- **Cover Letter** that includes your name, program, address, telephone and/or fax number, email address, current level, and date submitted. It should also *briefly* delineate the contents of the portfolio.
- **Table of Contents with pagination**
- **Approved APL Petition** with full text (including cover letter, summary of studies, petition text and self assessment narrative)
- **APL Petition review letter from the APL Advisor.**
- **Progress Review Reflective Essay and Review Committee Response**

For each area of Prior Learning Areas for which credit is sought, the section will include, *in this order*:

- Title of study, dates & duration of study, semester hour equivalents sought (as in Petition)
- Narrative
- Annotated Resource List
- Additional evidence (E.g. PDF files of certificates, newspaper articles, signed letters of expert testimony, etc.)

If you are completing the entire APL process in one semester, your completed APL portfolio is due to the APL Advisor for review on or before the packet 4 due date.

If you are completing the APL process in two semesters, your completed APL portfolio is due to the APL Advisor for review on or before the packet 3 due date of the second semester.

The APL Advisor must review all narratives before the completed APL Portfolio is uploaded to the APL Portfolio Dropbox on Gnet. Please refer to the Portfolio Submission Requirements section of this guide for further instructions.

**Incomplete or late portfolios may not be reviewed until the following semester.**

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## Narrative

*The Narrative* is where you get to tell your story. You will write an in depth *analysis and description of your learning* in the context of your experience; the focus is not autobiographical. **Do not** describe what you did; describe what you learned. **Describe** the experience and introduce the evidence you will offer to document both the experience and the learning. You will describe *the core principles and scope of what you learned in a theoretical context*. You **must** address all the learning components as outlined in the Knowledge or Theory Base section of your APL Petition. You **must** clearly demonstrate how the learning fulfills your Goddard degree requirements as listed in the Program Fit section of your Petition.

In order to write this detailed narrative of your learning, ask yourself the following questions:

- How did you come to be in a position that required or compelled you to know more than you knew at the time the experience began?
- How did you set about learning what you needed to know?
- How did you know that you had succeeded in learning what you needed to know?
- How did you apply/test theoretical learning in practice?
- How did theoretical understanding emerge out of the practical activities in which you were engaged, and how did it transform your practice?
- What work of the influential thinkers in the field did I study? (which fields/published works)
- Look at the resources that have helped you grow in this field.
- What college level books, mentors, workshops, in-service training, etc., helped you come to these understandings?
- What were the key concepts or ways of thinking about the subject that each author or presenter gave you?
- How did you integrate/test those concepts in practice?
- What do you know now that you did not know before?

In the narrative, you should also discuss how you were able to:

- differentiate between experience that involved repetitious application of one piece of knowledge and experience that involved new learning;
- differentiate between college-level learning and learning that is common to all;
- relate your prior learning to known academic fields and traditions;
- identify core theories in your areas of study – and why you are confident you can document your understanding of/ability to apply these theories;
- confirm that your knowledge sources were dependable or scientifically supported (i.e. in your bibliography of sources, workshops/lectures attended, etc.,) and led to college level learning;

Address how you now perceive this work/experience. Has your opinion of yourself and your work/experience changed? How has this work/experience set the foundation for your educational goals at Goddard? How does this work/experience fit into your overall Goddard Degree Plan? How does all this set the stage to launch the next chapter of your life?

Finally articulate how the learning interconnects with the Undergraduate Degree Requirements Studies and with your overall degree plan, including your senior study, as outlined in your APL Petition and your Summary of Studies.

## ENGAGED CRITICAL REFLECTION

Critical reflection is the ability “to think mindfully about the world around us”. We do this through questioning, reasoning, noting our and others’ biases, perspectives and assumptions, and making decisions. Critical reflection is a lifelong process of self-assessment through analyzing and processing the information we take in. We are constantly discovering new information and new perspectives which lead to creative thinking that ultimately can empower us and the communities where we work and live.

Critical writing is the art of expressing and presenting the evidence and conclusions generated by this new creative thinking. It is a conversation between you the writer and the reader. In order to write critically one must think critically. “The goal is to gain new understanding by carefully examining evidence, carefully reflecting upon it, and coming to well reasoned and supported conclusions.” This process allows you and the reader to examine topics from a fresh and oftentimes different point-of-view.

In summary, critical reflection and critical writing are engaged processes that can be linked to all interests and desires. These goals applied to Goddard’s undergraduate pedagogy allow students to develop lifelong skills that serve them, their communities and the broad based approach to knowledge and lifelong learning.

How does all this directly apply to APL? APL is a two phase process with different goals and objectives that ultimately allow the student to earn college level credit for learning through experience.

The first phase is to create a Petition. The Petition is basically an outline. In order to create an outline, one must critically review past experiences in order to extrapolate and articulate learning. The format of the Petition forces the student to think critically about the intention behind the experience and how the learning occurred through the reflective lens of academic education.

In order to successfully complete a Petition an APL student must write for a specific audience, use critical thinking skills, engage in educational reflection and learning theory, and organize information into distinct areas of learning.

Once the Petition is completed, the second phase begins – the development of the Portfolio. Here, the student expands upon the Petition and demonstrates the learning into a descriptive narrative for each area of study. The narrative allows the student to examine and analyze the knowledge gained through the experience. This knowledge is then presented in a convincing manner so that the Portfolio reviewers are confident that college level learning has taken place and is worthy of receiving credit.

Every piece of critical writing must contain an introduction, the body of the paper and a conclusion. Every piece of critical work begins with a question.

The question you should be answering for the Petition Self Assessment of Learning is: How has the process of developing my APL Petition changed my perception of my life’s experience in terms of college level learning? The body of the paper must address the “new” learning that

occurred for you as you worked through the petition process. You should address the following components:

- Critical thinking
- Educational reflection
- Writing for a specific audience or purpose
- Learning theory
- Organizing information

Touch upon the impact this has made on how you now view your background. Describe how this background is the foundation of the anticipated learning that will evolve through your overall Goddard education.

This Petition self assessment of learning must be 6 – 10 pages long and should be written in the context of your packet 2 requirement for your advisor. Refer to the “Self-Assessment of Learning during The Petition Process” section of this guide for more specific guiding questions.

The question you should be answering for the Portfolio narrative is: If I were to guide someone through this learning process, what skills and knowledge would they need?

- The body of the paper must describe the core principles and scope of knowledge in a theoretical context.
- You must discuss the experience in terms of the learning and how that learning occurred.
- You must describe all of the learning components as outlined in the Knowledge or Theory Base section of your Petition.
- You must clearly demonstrate how this learning fulfills your Goddard degree requirements as outlined in the Program Fit section of your Petition.
- You must be able to describe the learning with enough detail and appropriate terminology that the members of your APL Portfolio Review Committee are convinced that you have enough knowledge to be awarded the college level credit you have requested.
- Your learning descriptions must be detailed and explicit.
- Credit **will not** be awarded if your narrative is vague, the learning is implied or you simply state what you did.
- You must also explain the evidence you have submitted to support your learning.
- Refer to the “Narrative” section of this APL guide for more specific guiding questions.

*Taken from the Undergraduate Curriculum Guide:*

- *Curiosity and openness to ideas and information beyond one’s own experience or ideas, and reflection on one’s own biases and perspectives.*
- *Well-reasoned conclusions and solutions*
- *Attributing ideas and information to their sources*

*While critical thinking happens in a variety of learning experiences, including visual, oral, movement and written work, all students are required to document competency with engaged critical writing in order to meet this degree requirement.*

## PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

If you are completing the entire APL process in one semester, your completed APL portfolio is due to the APL Advisor before the packet 4 due date.

If you are completing the APL process in two semesters, your completed APL portfolio is due to the APL Advisor before the packet 3 due date of the second semester.

The APL Advisor must review all narratives before the completed APL Portfolio is uploaded to the APL Portfolio Drop box: [http://gnet.goddard.edu/apl\\_dropbox](http://gnet.goddard.edu/apl_dropbox).

If you have materials like a book that cannot be attached, contact the APL advisor for guidance about ways you might send copies to reviewers. Often videos and audio materials may be accessed through online links.

**Limit file-size of documents to less than 100 MB per upload.** Contact the APL advisor for guidance in determining the best strategy for any materials larger than the size limit.

You may be requested by the APL Portfolio Review Committee to submit original documentation for verification of authenticity.

If you need help contact Technology and Institutional Support staff at [LITS@goddard.edu](mailto:LITS@goddard.edu)

## APL CREDIT

### How Much Credit May Be Earned?

A maximum of 45 credits may be earned through the APL process. The **combined total** of your APL credits and any credits you transfer in from other institutions may not exceed 75. Students should request the amount of credit their learning supports. The amount of credit requested must be based on the actual learning.

The exact amount awarded will depend on a combination of factors; the college-level prior learning a student has completed and can document, and the amount of advancement the student can receive and still meet Goddard's program and pre-graduation degree requirements as reviewed under the Progress Review II process.

### When to Submit Petition and Portfolio for APL Credit

The following chart reflects completing the APL Petition one semester and the APL Portfolio the following semester

Status upon completing APL Petition	Status upon submitting APL Portfolio the following semester	APL credit request	Returning Status if all credit granted	Progress Report Due
Level 1	Level 2	15	Level 4	PR I
Level 1	Level 2	30	Level 5	PR I or PR II
Level 1	Level 2	45	Level 6	PR II
Level 2	Level 3	15	Level 5	PR I or PR II
Level 2	Level 3	30	Level 6	PR II
Level 2	Level 3	45	Level 7	PR II
Level 3	Level 4	15	Level 6	PR II
Level 3	Level 4	30	Level 7	PR II
Level 4	Level 5	15	Level 7	PR II

The APL process allows students to request a maximum of 45 credits. However, the amount of credit one can request is determined by the level at which the student begins and intends to complete the APL process. All students must complete Level 7 and 8 plus one additional

semester at Goddard. Therefore, the amount of credit requested cannot take a student beyond a returning Level 7

Due to the extra amount of work involved, it is strongly recommended that APL students have complete their APL Petition in one semester and APL Portfolio in the following semester. Some APL students even choose to take a leave of absence to assemble their portfolio separate from semester work.

For those who have compelling reasons or need to complete their APL Petition and Portfolio in the same semester, approval must be received from the APL advisor, Program Director and Semester Advisor (refer to chart on the following page)

The amount of credit one can request is determined not only by the level, but also by the number of credits a student needs to fulfill the Goddard Degree Requirements. Students may use the APL process to round up dangling credits to a full semester or for a full 15 credits per semester.

The APL process is directly linked to the PR (Progress Review) process. All students must submit their APL Petition with their PR I or PR II for review of fulfilling the Goddard Degree Requirements.

In the charts above, if a Level 3 student completed the APL process in one semester, the maximum number of credit they could request would be 45. If all credits were awarded, they would be a returning Level 7 student. If however, the same student completed their APL Petition one semester and the APL Portfolio the following semester, the maximum amount of credit they could request would be 30. If all credits were awarded, they would be a returning Level 7 student.

The following chart reflects completing the APL Petition and APL Portfolio in the same semester

Status	APL credit request – same semester	Returning Status if all credit granted	Progress Report Due
Level 1	15	Level 3	PR I
Level 1	30	Level 4	PR I
Level 1	45	Level 5	PR I or PR II
Level 2	15	Level 4	PR I
Level 2	30	Level 5	PR I or PR II
Level 2	45	Level 6	PR II
Level 3	15	Level 5	PR I or PR II
Level 3	30	Level 6	PR II
Level 3	45	Level 7	PR II
Level 4	15	Level 6	PR II
Level 4	30	Level 7	PR II
Level 5	15	Level 7	PR II
Level 6	0		
Level 7	0		
Level 8	0		

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## How Does Experience Relate to the Amount of Credit?

Because the APL process credits learning, and not experience itself, there is no set formula that relates the amount of experience to the amount of credit. Nevertheless, some principles apply. If your experiential learning is job related, you should not simply translate length of employment into credit hours, because not all the time spent on the job is time-spent learning. At some point “learning by doing” usually becomes simply the experience of doing, as tasks become routine rather than challenging.

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## Course Matching

One way to think about your learning is to list what you know and then look online at courses offered by colleges and match those course objectives to your knowledge and skills. For example, you spent 11 years running your own business and when you go online you discover that you know all the basics listed under small business administration, business math, human resource development, organizational leadership and basic marketing. This might mean that your learning is equal to five college level three-credit courses for a total of 15 credits. When you meet with the APL advisor, you can determine if this is accurate and determine how this might fit your overall study plan.

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## There Are A Few Hard And Fast Rules:

- Every Goddard student must complete at least one and a half years (three semesters) of packet work at Goddard in order to receive a Goddard degree. All Goddard students must complete level 7 and 8 at Goddard.
- APL cannot place you beyond level 7. Level 7 is typically devoted to finalizing the research for your senior study project. Be sure to plan your Level 7 semester as the beginning of your Senior Study research.
- Successful completion of the BA degree is dependent on meeting degree requirements, not just accumulating credit. Prior learning units should fit into a coherent program that addresses the degree requirements.
- APL credit will not be awarded for any learning for which a student received credit at another accredited college or university. (Please see the Undergraduate Student Handbook – Transfer Credit Policy for further information on what to do with these credits.)
- APL credit will not automatically be awarded for learning certified by an unaccredited institution. However, students can earn credit for that learning if it is substantively documented through the APL process.
- APL credit cannot duplicate credit you have earned through Goddard packet work.
- The learning must occur after High School graduation and before entering Goddard.

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## Dangling Credits

One other consideration has to do with what we refer to as “dangling” credits. Study at Goddard requires 8 “levels,” each of which takes a semester and results in 15 semester credits earned. For example, the “senior year” of two semesters is comprised of levels seven and eight. Credits transferred from previous colleges rarely come in 15 credit units. Any credits left after dividing the transfer credits by 15 are consequently called “dangling.” *The APL process may be used to round up these odd credits to 15 (thus completing a Goddard semester level).*

## CULTURAL IMMERSION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Students wishing to have their experience of immersion/language learning in another culture assessed for prior learning credit, please read the following guidelines.

- 1) Create an **Outline** that includes location(s), dates and amount of time spent in another culture(s), as well as the major aims and activities while participating in the culture (such as jobs, formal study, etc.).
- 2) Consider the following **Questions/Discussion Topics** when developing your portfolio narrative:
  - **Language:** Did you study the language(s), or local dialects, and if so how? (Formal school study? By ear through family or friends?) How fluent were you/did you become? (You might discuss moving toward fluency, barriers to deeper fluency, noticing linguistic differences, problems of translation, etc.)
  - **Preconceptions of the culture:** What expectations did you have before going? From what sources had your images of this culture been gleaned? For instance through formal language study in school, through reading, cultural products (movies, novels), from your home culture?
  - **Perceptions on arrival:** Were you seeking to confirm your preconceptions? What did you later realize you had noticed/not noticed? What did you notice about the “polite fictions”<sup>1</sup> in that culture, how they are similar to or different from those operating in your own?
  - **Danger (to yourself or others):** to what extent did you familiarize yourself with the major political/social concerns or divisions (including those related to religion, class, gender, age, etc.), prevailing government structures, laws you might inadvertently fall foul of? How about physical dangers due to climate, wildlife, etc.?
  - **Appropriate behavior:** Were you aware of behavioral taboos? Did you find yourself altering your behavior as you became aware of discomfort on the part of your listeners, or because friends/teachers in the culture alerted you to inappropriate behavior?
  - **Study in/of the culture:** did you undertake formal study while there? How was this presented, what assumptions accompanied the teaching, do you think?

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<sup>1</sup> “Polite Fictions” is a term coined by Nancy Sakamoto and Naotsuka Reiko (1982) in *Polite Fictions, Why Japanese and Americans seem rude to each other*, Tokyo: Kinseido. An example of a polite fiction is the invitation to visit our home that we may offer to a casual acquaintance, without ever expecting (or hoping) that they will come.

- What **informal activities** changed your understanding of that culture? For instance, “**critical incidents**”<sup>2</sup> events, or verbal communications, exchanges that triggered obvious problems, causing you puzzlement, or crisis? How did you come to understand what had “caused” the crisis? (If you engaged in discussions with indigenous people(s), to what extent did you think it likely that their information was given from true feelings, to what extent perhaps trying to meet your expectations?)
- **List Sources of Learning:** texts, etc., that did/did not enhance your culture-specific learning and your understanding of the nature of culture shock, effects of culture on perception, etc. (An annotated bibliography should be submitted with the APL portfolio.)

*Please note:* original signed copies of expert testimony and/or official certificates of progress and/or standardized proficiency language test certificates are required to document language studies. These may be supported by testimonials, and (if appropriate) “objects,” such as video, that demonstrate your skills in action.

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<sup>2</sup> “Critical Incidents” refers to situations when a person realizes s/he has done something wrong/inappropriate, but cannot figure out what. When finally informed, the person learns something about her/his own and the other culture.

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