

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Standards for the Tribal Languages Degree Program

Policies

PLA Standards for the Tribal Language Internships recognize that many of our students enter the program with previous tribal language learning and knowledge from home, work, or community environments.

PLA standards are currently only available for Tribal Language Internships 1-4. Students cannot apply to be awarded credit by PLA for any other course requirements of the Tribal Languages Degree Program.

Students may apply for credit by PLA only if a Center for Tribal Languages instructor or faculty advisor qualified to conduct an oral and written assessment for a given tribal language is available and has been approved by the Director to conduct prior learning assessments.

Credit by PLA is available only to students who have been admitted to Bacone College and been approved as Tribal Languages majors by the Center for Tribal Languages.

The Tribal Languages Degree Program is not an open enrollment program.

Communicate directly with the Center for Tribal Languages to determine if a degree track exists for your tribal language and if it has an approved PLA credit option.

The Center for Tribal Languages is actively working to expand the number of tribal languages available under the degree program and the number of instructors approved to conduct prior learning assessments.

In order to apply for credit by PLA students must demonstrate prior language learning that is equivalent or greater than what would be expected of a student who has enrolled in and successfully completed the course(s).

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Assessment Guidelines are the most widely accepted academic standards for measuring gains in language acquisition. In order to receive credit by PLA students must demonstrate that they have the language learning and knowledge to function at a specific level of the ACTFL guidelines. To receive credit for Tribal Language Internship 1 prior learning must be equivalent to **NOVICE HIGH** level, for Tribal Language Internship 2 prior learning must be equivalent to **INTERMEDIATE LOW** level, for Tribal Language Internship 3 prior learning must be equivalent to **INTERMEDIATE MID** level, and for Tribal Language Internship 4 prior learning must be equivalent to **INTERMEDIATE HIGH** level. The specific language knowledge and ability for each level can be found in the *Summary Descriptions of Standards* section of this document.

Procedures for applying for credit by PLA:

Review the PLA standards for each internship level and self-assess the current level of your prior learning and knowledge.

Go to the **National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL)** website (<http://ncssfl.org/secure/index.php?checklists>) and complete the LinguaFolio[®] Self-Assessment Statements by proficiency sub-levels up to the level for which you feel you can confidently apply for credit by PLA.

If you cannot meet a majority of the self-assessment benchmarks and can do statements for a specific level then likely you will **not** be eligible to apply for credit by PLA for that level.

If self-assessment demonstrates that you might be eligible to apply for credit by PLA then contact the approved instructor and/or faculty advisor for your tribal language and submit your self-assessment for review.

The approved instructor and/or faculty advisor for your tribal language will schedule an initial assessment with you to determine if you will proceed to formal submission for credit by PLA for one or more levels of the Tribal Language Internships.

For each internship level for which the student is seeking credit by PLA the approved instructor and/or faculty advisor will schedule and conduct a formal evaluation of prior learning utilizing the ACTFL standards, benchmarks, and can do indicators as a basis for assessment.

Students must demonstrate mastery at each distinct level **NOVICE HIGH** (Tribal Language Internship 1), **INTERMEDIATE LOW** (Tribal Language Internship 2), **INTERMEDIATE MID** (Tribal Language Internship 3), and **INTERMEDIATE HIGH** (Tribal Language Internship 4) to receive PLA credit for that specific level.

Fluent Native language speakers who have been admitted to the degree program must still demonstrate prior language learning and knowledge at each distinct level **NOVICE HIGH** (Tribal Language Internship 1), **INTERMEDIATE LOW** (Tribal Language Internship 2), **INTERMEDIATE MID** (Tribal Language Internship 3), and **INTERMEDIATE HIGH** (Tribal Language Internship 4) in order to apply for credit by PLA following the same procedures as other students. As an academic institution Bacone College must hold all its students to the same standards of demonstrating mastery of content for the Tribal Languages Degree Program.

The instructor and/or faculty advisor will submit the results of the formal evaluation(s) to the Director of the Center for Tribal Languages for review and approval. The Director reserves the right to require a second evaluation and/or additional documentation of prior learning before making a final determination on whether to recommend credit by PLA.

The Director of the Center for Tribal Languages will forward recommendations for credit by PLA to the Dean of Faculty for review and approval.

Summary Descriptions of Standards

(see **NCSSFL** website and **ACTFL** website for full descriptions with specific benchmarks, indicators, and can do statements by for each specific level)

Summary description of PLA Standards for Tribal Language Internship #1:

NOVICE HIGH

Speakers at the Novice-High level are able to handle a variety of tasks pertaining to the Intermediate level, but are unable to sustain performance at that level. They are able to manage successfully a number of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to a few of the predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture, such as basic personal information, basic objects and a limited number of activities, preferences and immediate needs.

Novice-High speakers respond to simple, direct questions or requests for information; they are able to ask only a very few formulaic questions when asked to do so. Novice-High speakers are able to express personal meaning by relying heavily on learned phrases or recombinations of these and what they hear from their interlocutor. Their utterances, which consist mostly of short and sometimes incomplete sentences in the present, may be hesitant or inaccurate. On the other hand, since these utterances are frequently only expansions of learned material and stock phrases, they may sometimes appear surprisingly fluent and accurate. These speakers first language may strongly influence their pronunciation, as well as their vocabulary and syntax when they attempt to personalize their utterances. Frequent misunderstandings may arise but, with repetition or rephrasing, Novice-High speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors used to non-natives. When called on to handle simply a variety of topics and perform functions pertaining to the Intermediate level, a Novice-High speaker can sometimes respond in intelligible sentences, but will not be able to sustain sentence level discourse.

Summary description of PLA Standards for Tribal Language Internship #2:

INTERMEDIATE LOW

Speakers at the Intermediate-Low level are able to handle successfully a limited number of uncomplicated communicative tasks by creating with the language in straightforward social situations. Conversation is restricted to some of the concrete exchanges and predictable topics necessary for survival in the target language culture. These topics relate to basic personal information covering, for example, self and family, some daily activities and personal preferences, as well as to some immediate needs, such as ordering food and making simple purchases. At the Intermediate-Low level, speakers are primarily reactive and struggle to answer direct questions or requests for information, but they are also able to ask a few appropriate questions.

Intermediate-Low speakers express personal meaning by combining and recombining into short statements what they know and what they hear from their interlocutors. Their utterances are often filled with hesitancy and inaccuracies as they search for appropriate linguistic forms and vocabulary while attempting to give form to the message. Their speech is characterized by frequent pauses, ineffective reformulations and self-corrections. Their pronunciation, vocabulary and syntax are strongly influenced by their first language but, in spite of frequent misunderstandings that require repetition or rephrasing, Intermediate-Low speakers can generally be understood by sympathetic interlocutors, particularly by those accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Summary description of PLA Standards for Tribal Language Internship #3:

INTERMEDIATE MID

Speakers at the Intermediate-Mid level are able to handle successfully a variety of uncomplicated communicative tasks in straightforward social situations. Conversation is generally limited to those predictable and concrete exchanges necessary for survival in the target culture; these include personal information covering self, family, home, daily activities, interests and personal preferences, as well as physical and social needs, such as food, shopping, travel and lodging. Intermediate-Mid speakers tend to function reactively, for example, by responding to direct questions or requests for information. However, they are capable of asking a variety of questions when necessary to obtain simple information to satisfy basic needs, such as directions, prices and services. When called on to perform functions or handle topics at the Advanced level, they provide some information but have difficulty linking ideas, manipulating time and aspect, and using communicative strategies, such as circumlocution.

Intermediate-Mid speakers are able to express personal meaning by creating with the language, in part by combining and recombining known elements and conversational input to make utterances of sentence length and some strings of sentences. Their speech may contain pauses, reformulations and self-corrections as they search for adequate vocabulary and appropriate language forms to express themselves. Because of inaccuracies in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax, misunderstandings can occur, but Intermediate-Mid speakers are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.

Summary description of PLA Standards for Tribal Language Internship #4:

INTERMEDIATE HIGH

Intermediate-High speakers are able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with most routine tasks and social situations of the Intermediate level. They are able to handle successfully many uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange of basic information related to work, school, recreation, particular interests and areas of competence, though hesitation and errors may be evident.

Intermediate-High speakers handle the tasks pertaining to the Advanced level, but they are unable to sustain performance at that level over a variety of topics. With some consistency, speakers at the Intermediate High level narrate and describe in major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length. However, their performance of these Advanced-level tasks will exhibit one or more features of breakdown, such as the failure to maintain the narration or description semantically or syntactically in the appropriate major time frame, the disintegration of connected discourse, the misuse of cohesive devices, a reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, the failure to successfully circumlocute, or a significant amount of hesitation. Intermediate-High speakers can generally be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, although the dominant language is still evident (e.g. use of code-switching, false cognates, literal translations, etc.), and gaps in communication may occur.