

Chatham University

Portfolio Development for Gateway Students

Frequently Asked Questions

How can a portfolio contribute to my educational goals at Chatham University?

Chatham University recognizes that life experiences may provide a knowledge base equivalent to college-level learning outcomes. As such, degree-seeking Gateway students have an opportunity to be awarded academic credit for post-secondary knowledge gained prior to matriculating at Chatham University. Learning acquired from employment, job training, volunteer and civic duties, military service and travel are just some examples to contemplate when considering experiential learning credit. Accordingly, Gateway students can potentially earn a maximum of 30 credits towards their educational goals and the explicit requirements of their program by developing a prior learning portfolio.

What is a portfolio?

Chatham University's Portfolio Development program is meant to assist Gateway students in identifying areas of college-level experiential learning by utilizing course-specific learning outcomes that correspond to targeted courses offered at Chatham University. Prior learning portfolios consist of written narratives along with supporting documentation that demonstrate a student's proficiency in the learning outcomes of the targeted Chatham courses.

Who is eligible for the portfolio development program?

Student must be registered as a Gateway or Enterprise student and have completed a minimum of 12 credits at Chatham with grades in all courses of "C" or above.

How do I begin the portfolio process?

You must contact the Coordinator of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) and your academic advisor. Together, you will clarify your (major/minor) requirements and identify courses from Chatham University's catalogue that are viable alternatives for your portfolio. Gateway students applying for portfolio assessment are then enrolled in a portfolio development course which guides students through each and every step of the portfolio development process.

How many credits can be earned through portfolio development?

Degree-seeking Gateway students may earn a maximum of 30 experiential learning credits which can include credits awarded through the portfolio development program. No more than 50% of portfolio and transfer credits can be applied towards the major or minor. The remaining 50% must be completed at Chatham.

What courses are eligible for inclusion in my portfolio?

This answer varies based on your major/minor requirements, credits transferred from other institutions and other PLA credits (e.g. CLEP exams, Challenge exams) that you have applied towards your requirements. Life experience credit may not be granted for COR304 (Diversity and Identity in a Global Context), COR405 (Integrated Seminar), PED courses (Physical Education) or SDE (Student Development) courses.

How long do I have to complete my portfolio?

The Portfolio Development course (SDE 121) is offered each spring and fall semester and is structured so that your portfolio can be completed by the end of the course. However, if you are applying for 15 credits or more through the portfolio development process, you may have an additional 45 days for the completion and submission of your portfolio after the end of the course.

Must the portfolio be submitted at once or is there an option of submitting it in parts?

Your portfolio must be submitted in its entirety. At Chatham University, only one portfolio may be submitted for life experience credit. Once the portfolio is complete, faculty members in the appropriate disciplines evaluate it and determine the number of credits to be awarded to the student.

How will my portfolio be evaluated?

Chatham University faculty members will evaluate your portfolio on your ability to articulate your learning experiences as they relate to the specific outcomes of each targeted course. Portfolio credits are awarded only to satisfy existing course outcomes, and all outcomes within a course must be satisfied to earn credit for the course. No partial credit for a course will be awarded. As per Chatham University policy, there is no guarantee that credits assessed will result in credits awarded.

When will I receive my results?

Your portfolio will be evaluated by faculty from the appropriate departments for each course. Evaluations are typically performed within 90 days of your portfolio submission.

Do I have any recourse if I do not agree with the evaluator's results?

If you do not agree with the results of an assessment, you should request a meeting with the Coordinator of PLA and your advisor to review the evaluator's comments. You may request a review by the Dean of the Chatham College for Women; however, the student may not submit additional materials at the time of the second review.

How will I receive my assessment results?

You will receive a letter from the Coordinator of Prior Learning Assessment along with a summary sheet listing the credits awarded for each course with the evaluator's comments.

How will I be billed for my portfolio credits?

Fees for credits earned through experiential learning are charged at a significantly reduced rate relative to Chatham University's undergraduate tuition rate. When you submit your portfolio for review, billing to your student account will be initiated at the rate of \$252 per credit assessed. This is in addition to the \$500 portfolio assessment fee incurred upon registration in the portfolio development course (SDE 121). The fee per credit assessed is not eligible for federal or state financial aid; however, as a Gateway student, a no interest, no application fee payment plan is available.

The awarding of credit for prior learning occurs upon review of a successful portfolio or other appropriate means and does not coincide with the scheduled offering of a course. Students are billed at the time credit is awarded.

PLEASE NOTE: Once an undergraduate has been accepted into an Accelerated Graduate Program (AGP), several factors will determine the timing of her change in status from undergraduate to graduate. A shift in status from undergraduate to graduate student may impact a student's eligibility for financial aid. Students should carefully review AGP policies and consult with a financial aid counselor prior to entering the Accelerated Graduate Program in order to determine the impact that a change in status will have on her financial aid.

How much savings will I incur?

Based on the number of credits that you attempt, your savings could be as much as \$10,751 for a thirty credit portfolio (see worksheet).

Please contact the Coordinator of Prior Learning Assessment with any additional questions or to explore your eligibility for portfolio development as a means of earning credit:

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PLA Savings*

Example (30 credits):

Chatham University tuition at \$14,044 for credits 0-21 and 681 per credit for credits 22-30	20,173
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 30 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$7,560
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$9,422
Savings to student	\$10,751

Example (27 credits):

Chatham University tuition at \$14,044 for credits 0-21 and 681 per credit for credits 22-27	18,130
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 27 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$6,804
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$8,666
Savings to student	\$9,464

Example (24 credits):

Chatham University tuition at \$14,044 for credits 0-21 and 681 per credit for credits 22-24	16,087
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 24 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$6,048
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$7,910
Savings to student	\$8,177

Example (21 credits):

Chatham University tuition at full-time tuition rate of \$14,044	14,044
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 21 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$5,292
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$7,154
Savings to student	\$6,890

Example (18 credits):

Chatham University tuition at full-time tuition rate of \$14,044	14,044
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 18 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$4,536

Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$6,398
Savings to student	\$7,646

Example (15 credits)

Chatham University tuition at \$681 per credit	\$14,044
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 15 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$3,780
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$5,642
Savings to student	\$8,402

Example (12 credits)

Chatham University tuition at full-time tuition rate of \$14,044	\$14,044
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 12 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$3,024
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$4,886
Savings to student	\$9,158

Example (9 credits)

Chatham University tuition at \$681 per credit	\$6,129
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 9 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$2,268
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$4,130
Savings to student	\$1,999

Example (6 credits)

Chatham University tuition at \$681 per credit	\$4,086
Compare to Portfolio Development costs:	
Tuition for SDE 121 (Portfolio Development)	\$1,362
Portfolio Development application Fee	\$500
Fee for 6 credits assessed at \$252 per credit	\$1,512
Total Costs incurred for portfolio	\$3,374
Savings to student	\$712

* Calculations are based on tuition and fees from the 2010/2011 academic year.