



*Maxine Goodman Levin*  
*College of Urban Affairs*

# AAPLE

Assessment and Accreditation of Prior  
Learning Experience Program



**Prior Experience.**  
**Academic Credit.**



## **Introduction to the AAPLE Program**

The Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Learning Experience Program (AAPLE) is a credit for life experience program offered by the Levin College of Urban Affairs.

The university is not interested in having students spend time in classrooms and laboratories re-learning knowledge and skills that they already possess as a result of “life” or “non-collegiate” learning. Since years of experience do not in themselves indicate a level of learning, some procedure must be devised to appraise these learning outcomes. At Cleveland State University’s Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs this is done by portfolio assessment.

The AAPLE process begins with a student enrolling in UST 190 Analysis of Experiential Learning in Urban Affairs, a two-credit course. This class is offered in Fall and Spring semesters. The course provides the student with the understanding necessary to identify relevant prior learning and present evidence of competence in specific areas. Students begin to develop portfolios in UST 190 which are used as the basis for assessment and awarding of credit. All portfolios must be submitted within one year of completion of UST 190.

Individuals who would like more information and/or who wish to schedule an interview to discuss this program in person should contact the following:

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## **What is a portfolio?**

The formal, written communication from the student to the university in which credit is requested for prior learning is known as a portfolio.

- Portfolios are written reports connecting your experience to coursework which also contain elements of a resume and detailed personal history.
- A portfolio is prepared in relation to a specific course or concentration area in the Urban Affairs curriculum.

## **How much credit may be earned through AAPLE?**

At the Levin College, a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 24 credit hours may be earned through the AAPLE Program depending on the amount of experience and its relevance to a major in Urban Affairs.

## **Who may participate in this program?**

- Undergraduate students who are officially admitted to Cleveland State University and pursuing one of the College of Urban Affairs majors:
  - Urban Studies
  - Organizational Leadership
  - Nonprofit Administration
  - Environmental Studies
  - Public Safety Management
- While this program is not restricted to certain age groups, it is designed primarily to meet the needs of experienced adults. Younger persons are not likely to have the extensive and in-depth experience which might qualify for academic credit.
- Graduate students may not earn credit through the AAPLE Program.



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## What are the advantages for students?

- Integrates life and work experience with other learning goals and educational programs.
- Improved self-understanding of students' competencies and deficiencies.
- Save time completing credits. Credits earned through assessment can reduce the total amount of time spent in the classroom.
- Pay less than 20% of the tuition rate. The required fees paid are significantly less than tuition paid to earn the same number of credits.

## What kinds of experiences are assessed?

- The most prevalent kinds of experiences presented for assessment are:
  - Work experiences—in business, in education, in the military, nonprofit agencies or other organizational settings.
  - Experiences gained through participation in non-credit courses, workshops, or seminars.
  - Extensive and substantive experiences in community, volunteer, or service organizations.
- Travel, hobbies, homemaking, and related experiences may be acceptable for evaluation ***only when clear and extensive evidence*** can be provided to indicate that the learning outcomes are equivalent to college-level learning.



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- The following are some general criteria that may be used in selecting experiences which could lend themselves to portfolio assessment:
  - The learning should be verifiable. Students should be able to demonstrate learning to an expert.
  - The learning should be equivalent to that usually acquired in college-level courses.
  - The learning should have a general applicability outside the specific situation in which it was acquired.
  - The learning should be related to a specific Urban Affairs course content. The College does not award credit if it does not offer similar course work.
- Skills that relate to Levin College courses include:
  - Proposal writing
  - Managing diverse populations
  - Fundraising
  - Budgeting, operational plans, and strategic plans
  - Conflict management
  - Discerning the difference between the public/nonprofit sector and the private sector as well as learn the key concepts behind management. Those key concepts are:
    - Problem solving/decision making skills
    - Communication (both verbal and written)
    - Citizen Participation
    - Teamwork and group dynamics



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# Andrea Hooks

## Organizational Leadership



*Why did you decide to enroll in the AAPLE program?*

Being a non-traditional student, the AAPLE program made the transition easy for me. I was able to apply skills I had developed in my career to obtain class credit. This helped in two ways; financially and with the credits I earned it moved me closer to a graduation date.

*What would you tell a prospective student about the program?*

With all of the stress that can come from going back to school the AAPLE program relieves a lot of the anxiety you might feel. The program gives you a detailed description of all the skills you've acquired during your life. It's a motivating process. Being involved with the AAPLE program was one of the best decisions I could have made towards furthering my education.

*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

I included my extracurricular activities in high school, my community volunteer experience as well as all the training I received during my career including work place diversity training, conflict management training and becoming a Certified Facilitator.



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**John Forsythe**  
Public Safety Management

*Why did you choose Cleveland State University?*

My reason for choosing Cleveland State was because of the positive experience I had and also because their Urban Studies program was ranked so high by U.S. News & World Report. The program was very rewarding. One of the most beneficial reasons for choosing the AAPLE program was the time and money I saved. I work full time and I have a family. With all of the responsibilities in my life, I still had to take six credit hours a semester so I could receive financial aid. By compiling my life experiences and putting them all together into a portfolio, I was able to receive credit for twenty four credit hours. This saved me thousands of dollars and knocked a year and a half off of my completion time. The AAPLE program also allows you one year to complete your portfolio. I was also able to attend classes a little closer to home at the Holden University Center. I am planning on going back for a Masters of Public Administration.



*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

I really enjoyed writing my portfolio. It made me realize how much I have really accomplished in my life. I wrote about my work experience, education, training, and my family. After twelve years in the military, twenty years in law enforcement, a combat tour in Iraq, a college education, many certificates from military and law enforcement training, and traveling to a dozen different countries, I had a lot to write about.



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## Linda Hebert

Urban Studies, *Public Management*



*What is the most rewarding part of the program?*

Hands down, the most rewarding part of the program is that I was able to graduate last May with a Bachelor of Arts from the Levin College of Urban Affairs.

*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

In my portfolio, I included experiences in the budgeting processes of local government, the perspective of being a woman in several leadership positions in local government, management in the public sector, and the many trials of negotiation and conflict in the public sector.

*What do you most love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs?*

I think what I love most about the Levin College of Urban Affairs, was that every single person associated with any part of my education at the school was as enthusiastic and encouraged about my learning there as I was. Throughout my career, I attended several colleges and universities, but it was the Levin College that picked me up and carried me to the finish line.



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**Kevin Hudson**  
Urban Studies, *Planning*

*Where do you work now?*

I am the Director of Annual Fund at St. Edward High School.

*Why did you decide to enroll in the AAPLE program?*

I came back to CSU after having been out for nearly 10 years because I wanted to change my career path. The AAPLE program recognizes the significance of the lessons I learned in that time away and awards credit so I do not have to relearn things I already know, shortening the time it was going to take to finish my degree while also saving me money.



*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

I included the various political campaigns I had worked on; time spent volunteering; jobs I held with banks and financial institutions in and around Cleveland, and non-profit experiences.

*What do you most love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs?*

There are many things to love about the Levin College; the faculty and staff who are not only experts in their field, they have a true interest in passing their knowledge on to students and seeing them grow; and again, how helpful the staff is in helping you navigate the path which is in your best interest. They truly want to see you be successful and you feel as if you have a partner guiding you through, helping you reach your goals.



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# Diane Jackson

Nonprofit Administration



*What would you tell a prospective student about the program?*

To definitely go for it – the program is truly an excellent opportunity.

*What is the most rewarding part of the program?*

The chance to actually provide real life applications with my academic studies.

*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

My role as an executive officer, treasurer/secretary for Colors of Cleveland Pride, and examples of my leadership role as Team Lead for Tenable at First Energy Stadium (Formerly, Cleveland Browns Stadium)

*What do you most love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs?*

The DIVERSITY of the students.



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**Tricia Granfors**  
Public Safety Management, *Homeland Security*

*What would you tell a prospective student about the program?*

For me, it was a “This is Your Life” process that enabled me to consider the people, events, and experiences that have made me who I am as a person and a life-long learner. As I considered my life journey, it enabled me to better apply life experiences to where I am today. It also helped me to focus on where I want to be in light of where I’ve been. In the end, my portfolio(s) felt like a diary.



*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

Family, friends, and group affiliations; knowledge, skills, and abilities learned in the most unlikely ways; hobbies and volunteer efforts; lessons learned through good times and victories as well as difficulties and losses.

*What do you most love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs?*

The flexibility. Levin College of Urban Affairs seeks to meet the student where they are in life instead of forcing individuals to fit into a schedule that simply doesn’t work. On-campus and remote classes, online options, CLEP testing, and the AAPLE program allow each student to meet their goals in a way that works. Whether going to college right out of high school or coming back to it decades later, the college experience you need is available.



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# Calvin Williams

## Public Safety Management



*Why did you decide to enroll in the AAPLE program?*

I returned to Cleveland State after a twenty-six year absence to complete a major in Public Safety Management. I am currently employed by the City of Cleveland as a police officer and a member of our command staff. I was introduced to the AAPLE program by my advisor at the Levin College of Urban Affairs. I saw it as an opportunity to save both time and money pursuing my degree.

The program enabled me to gain some valuable insight as to how my years of experience and training in law enforcement, compare to the curriculum being taught in Public Safety Management. I would highly recommend the program to students that have real-life experience, training and expertise that directly relates to some of the subject matter in Urban Studies.

*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

I was able to directly relate my training and supervision in such specialized units as SWAT, Vice and the Fugitive Task Force to the subject matter taught in the Public Safety Management major.

*What do you most love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs?*

I enjoyed the feedback I received from the AAPLE program advisors and others in the Levin College during this process. With their help, the direction and scope of my writing was reinforced. Don't miss out on a great opportunity.



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**Ken Galla**  
Organizational Leadership

*What are some of the experiences you included in your portfolio?*

In my portfolio, I included many of my day-to-day work experiences as a retail store manager, such as resolving conflict and managing a diverse workforce. I also included experiences that I gained while holding volunteer positions for various nonprofit organizations. The structure of the portfolio also allowed me to incorporate learning gained from past training sessions and from books that I have read over the years.



*What would you tell a prospective student about the program?*

I would tell a prospective student that the AAPLE program is a fantastic opportunity. It has been one of the most rewarding parts of my college career. It allows you to reflect on the experiences of your life, and validate the learning that has come from those experiences. In addition to being able to quickly earn college credit for past life experiences, you also benefit from a reduced tuition cost when compared to taking traditional courses. Additionally, the structure of the UST 190 course makes the portfolio completion process very manageable.

*What do you most love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs?*

What I love about the Levin College of Urban Affairs is the people. Every time that I met with an advisor or professor, my questions were answered quickly and professionally. Everyone that I have encountered has been friendly and legitimately concerned with my progress toward graduation and beyond. The college has a family atmosphere that I truly enjoy being a part of.



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Prior Experience. Academic Credit.



Get Started Today.



Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs

*Call us:*

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**Office of Student Services:** 216-687-3884

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*Visit us online:*

**<http://urban.csuohio.edu/academics/undergraduate/aapple.html>**



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