

PLA Planner Student Handbook



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PLA Planner Student Quick Guide

When You Are Ready To Begin

- o Go to http://www.esc.edu/MyESC
- On the MyESC page select the **Academics** tab. In the **Your Degree Plan** section click the **PLA Planner** link.
- o Read the information found on the page then click the **Go to PLA Planner link**.
- O You will need to have a draft Degree Plan in DP Planner in order to begin this process. If you do not have one, you may start your PLA Request but you will need to create one prior to your Mentor submitting your PLA Request to the Center Office of Academic Review (COAR). You may save and exit the PLA Planner at any point in the process. You can return at any time to continue.

Your PLA Request

In this section, you can set up your PLA Request by clicking on **Start a New PLA Request.**

- o Select from DP in DP Planner
 - This will load in your information for your PLA Request from DP Planner and link this PLA Request to the Degree Plan.
- Required Sections
 - PLA Request Title
 - Number of Components
 - Credits Requested (imported from DP Planner)
 - Liberal and advanced designations. (imported from DP Planner)
 - General Education, if applicable (imported from DP Planner)
 - Learning Essay
 - Supporting Materials (if applicable)
- o Attaching your Learning Essay
 - Browse to your document, and then
 - Attach your Learning Essay by using the **Save** button on the taskbar.
 - The Learning Essay will now be attached to the PLA Request and be viewable by clicking on the View Learning Essay link. (This will appear in a pop-up window.)
- o Add Supporting Material by clicking on **Supporting Material** (a pop-up screen appears).
 - Enter a description of the materials being submitted.
 - Upload using browse and **Save**, then close window.
- Viewing the History of your PLA Request
 - Click on **View History** on the Taskbar and this will allow you to view the most recent major actions of your PLA Request.



- o Communicating with your Mentor and Evaluator
 - If you wish to send a message to your mentor, click on **Mentor-Student Dialog** link on the blue dialog bar.
 - A pop-up will appear where you can type your message to your mentor.
 - Click on Submit Comment.
 - An e-mail will automatically be sent to your mentor notifying him/her that you have started a dialog.
 - Follow the same process when your PLA Request is assigned to an Evaluator by using the **Evaluator-Student Dialog** link.
- o Submitting your Request to your Mentor
 - If the request is ready to be submitted, click on **Request Initial Mentor Review** at the top of the screen.
 - A pop-up will ask, "Do you wish to submit this request to your mentor for review?" This pop-up will also notify you that there are fees associated with the iPLA process. Click **Submit** to send the request to your mentor, or **Cancel** to stay in the Student-Draft phase.
 - Once you have submitted a request, you can modify it and resubmit for further mentor review as needed by going to PLA Home and selecting the request to be modified.
 - If any changes are made click Request Further Mentor Review.
 - A pop-up will ask, "Do you wish to submit this request to your mentor for review?" Click **Submit** to send the request to your mentor
- o Withdrawing or Deleting your PLA Request
 - Clicking on **Delete** on the task bar will allow you (or your mentor) to mark your PLA Request for deletion up until the time when your mentor submits your PLA Request to COAR.
 - If you and your mentor decide to withdraw your PLA Request please have your mentor contact COAR. They will be able to withdraw it and communicate with your evaluator if you have had one assigned.

Submission Process

When you and your mentor agree that the prior learning request and learning essay are complete, your mentor will submit it to your Center Office of Academic Review (COAR). After it is submitted, you will be able to view/print it, but not be able to edit it. If the center academic review office requires changes, you will receive information about how to submit the changes. COAR will review your PLA Request and assign an evaluator as appropriate. If you need to add supporting materials to your PLA request, you may do so at any time, even after it has been assigned to an evaluator.



What is PLA Planner?

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) offers students the opportunity to receive college level credit for knowledge gained outside the traditional classroom. PLA Planner is the tool used by Empire State College that enables you to submit your prior learning for evaluation.

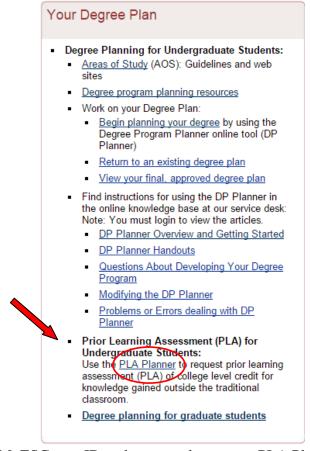
Using PLA Planner, you can create an PLA request at your own pace. You may complete it all at once or you may work at it over the course of several days or weeks. You will be working with your mentor throughout developing your PLA Requests and you may request your mentor's assistance at any time.

How do I access PLA Planner?

You can access PLA Planner from the MyESC screen. Select **Academics** from the navigation taskbar at the top of the MyESC page.



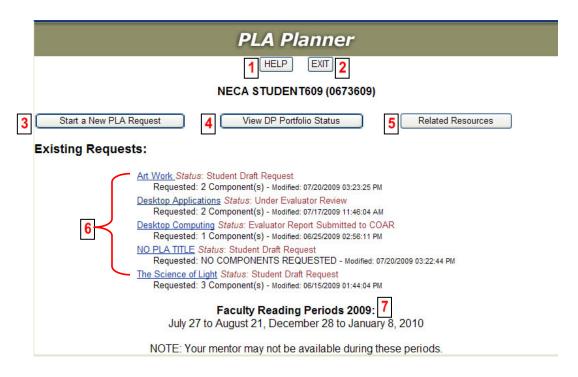
Navigate to the **Your Degree Plan** panel. Select **PLA Planner**.



Log in with your MyESC user ID and password to access PLA Planner.



Getting to Know PLA Planner Home



1 Help

Guides and technical resources

2 Exit

Exit to MyESC

3 Start a New PLA Request

This button allows you to create a new PLA Request.

4 View DP Portfolio Status

The current status of your degree plan

5 Related Resources

Additional Prior Learning Assessment, degree planning, educational resources.

6 Existing Requests

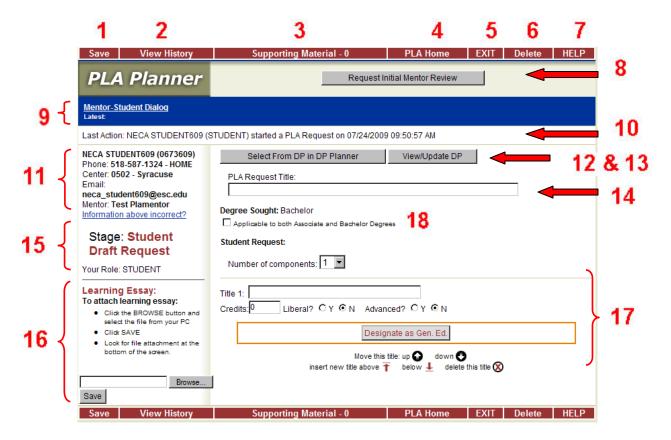
In progress PLA requests.

7 Faculty Reading Periods

Dates your mentor may not be able to work with you.



Getting to know the PLA Request Screen



1 Save

It is good practice to save your work often. You also need to **SAVE** your work before you **EXIT** PLA. If you exit without saving, your work will not be saved.

Please note: You need to **SAVE** your work before you EXIT the PLA Request Screen. If you EXIT without saving, your work will not be saved.

2 View History

At any point in the PLA review process, you may view the history of your request by clicking on **View History** in the taskbar.

3 Supporting Material

If you have any supporting material(s) (e.g., a picture, scanned certificate, etc.) you can add them to your request by clicking on **Supporting Material** in the taskbar.



A PLA Home

This option takes you back to the home page where you can start a new PLA request or select a PLA request already in progress.

5 Exit

You may save and exit or you may exit without saving. If you click on **EXIT**, you will given the opportunity to cancel and go back to save your work. If you click **OK**, you will exit PLA Planner.

6 Delete

You can delete your PLA request at any time.

7 Help

If you need assistance with the PLA process, click on **HELP** in the taskbar.

8 Request Initial Mentor Review

Once you have completed your PLA request, you submit your PLA request to your mentor for their review

9 Mentor-Student Dialog

This button opens a dialog area for you and your mentor to communicate. A similar link, Evaluator-Student Dialog, will appear when your evaluator has been assigned.

10 Last Action

This will list the last action taken by you, your mentor, your evaluator or the Center Office of Academic Review (COAR).

11 Student Information

This area lists the name, student ID, phone number, email, center and mentor that we have on file for you.

12 Select from DP in DP Planner

This will link your request to your designated degree plan and allows you to select components that you have already defined on your degree plan.

13 View/Update DP

This button will allow you to view your degree plan and/or make updates through DP Planner.

14 PLA Request Title

If you have only one component for your PLA request, the title will automatically be the component name. If you have more than one component, you will need to create a name for your PLA request.



15 Stage

There are 9 stages in the PLA process.

- 0. Student Draft Request
- 1. Mentor Review
- 2. PLA Submitted to COAR
- 3. Ready for Evaluator Assignment
- 4. Assigned to Evaluator Pending Evaluator Receipt
- 5. Under Evaluator Review
- 6. Evaluator Report Submitted to COAR
- 7. Evaluator Report Processed by COAR
- 8. PLA Request Complete

16 Learning Essay

A learning essay must accompany each PLA request. The learning essay is attached using the browser button.

17 Component Definition Area

This is the area where you will complete or verify the title, credits and credit designations for your components in your PLA request.

18 Applicable to both Associate and Bachelor Degrees

Check this box if you plan on using this PLA Request for both your Associate and Bachelor degree.

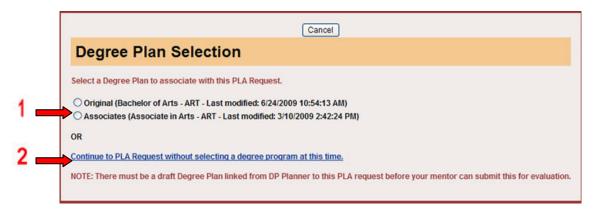


How do I use PLA Planner?

Starting a New PLA Request

From PLA Home, select Start a New PLA Request to go to the PLA Request screen.

You can begin a PLA Request in two ways.



By selecting a degree plan to associate with this PLA request (this degree plan is from DP Planner)

OR

2 By clicking Continue to PLA Request without selecting a degree program at this time.

NOTE: There must be a draft Degree Plan linked from DP Planner to this PLA request before your mentor can submit this for evaluation.

When you select a Degree Plan to associate with this PLA Request, the screen will expand and you will have the option to add components from your Degree Plan or link the degree plan but not add components at this time. (Components are units of learning or Studies that you have defined with your mentor).





By choosing Yes, select Component(s) from Degree Plan to add to PLA Request. the screen will expand further, giving you the selection of components that you have already defined in your degree plan.

Component Selection	
Select the component(s) you would like to use in your PLA Request. Choose from the "Independent Study" category below. Remember you may only attach ONE Learning Essay for each request.	
Independent Study	
□ Art Work On the Subway (4 cr, Intro, , No Gen Ed) □ English Composition I (2 cr, Intro, , 10. Basic Communication F) □ Classics of English Literature (4 cr, Intro, , Ib, 7. Humanities F) □ Desktop Applications (2 cr, Intro, , No Gen Ed) □ Desktop Computing II (2 cr, Intro, , No Gen Ed) □ Non-Accredited Technical School	
Computer Hardware II (2 cr, Intro, , No Gen Ed) Add Component(s) from Degree Plan to PLA Request Cancel	

Select the component(s) you would like to use in your PLA Request. Choose from the "Independent Study" category only. Choose one topic at a time, unless the topics are very closely related.

Once you have selected your components, click Add Component(s) from Degree Plan to PLA Request to add the components and continue to the PLA request screen. By selecting this option, many of the fields on the PLA request screen are populated for you.

By choosing the screen will take you directly to the PLA request screen. This option creates a blank PLA request screen. You will need to complete the following required fields:

- o PLA Request title
- o Number of components
- Component titles
- Component credits and designations (i.e., advanced, liberal arts, and general education designations)

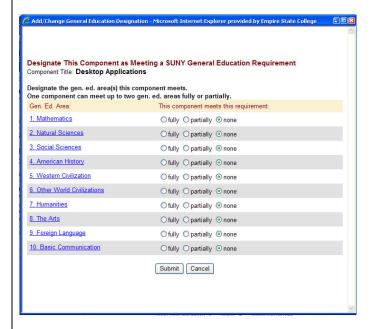
Note: If you make any changes to the components once they are in PLA Planner, you need to adjust your degree plan in DP Planner to match. (See instructions for accessing DP Planner from PLA Planner.)



Once you are on the PLA Request screen, you will need to verify or complete the following fields:

Required Field	Description
PLA Request title	This title describes your PLA request. If you selected your components from your degree plan, this title will automatically be populated. If you selected more than 1 component for this PLA request, the title will be populated with the first component's title. You may change the title to make it more descriptive if you desire.
Number of components	Using the Number of Components drop down menu, select the number of components that you would like to include in this PLA Request. PLA Planner offers a lot of flexibility in creating your request. You may change, add or delete components as needed. Your mentor can help you define which components should be included in your PLA request. If you choose to enter multiple components in one PLA request, the component titles must be closely related. Please note, any changes must be reflected in your Degree Plan. You will need to make these changes manually.
Components title	Enter or verify the title of the component(s).
Component credits and designations	Select the appropriate designations for each component: Select whether each component is Liberal (Yes or No). If a component is not liberal, it is usually more applied or technical in nature. Select whether each component is Advanced (Yes or No). Select Yes for Advanced, or No for Introductory. If this component fulfills a SUNY General Education requirement, click Designate as Gen. Ed.

A pop-up menu allows you to indicate which general education area(s) the component meets and whether you are requesting partial or full credit for the area(s).



Note: Your mentor can assist you with designations, as well as determining the number of credits to request.

After verifying or completing the required fields on your PLA Request, you will need to attach your Learning Essay and any Supporting Documentation.

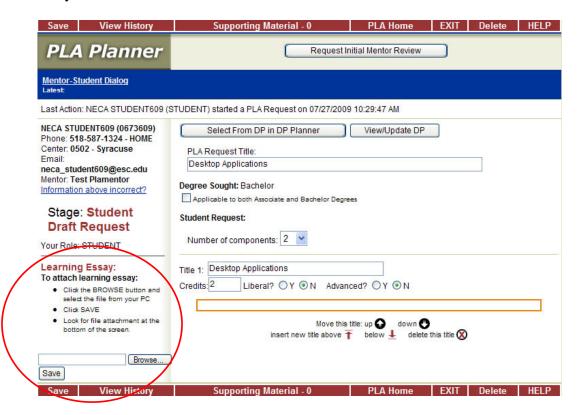
If you have made any changes to your component titles or designations use the button on the View/Update DP PLA Request screen to make the updates to your Degree Plan in DP Planner.





Attaching Your Learning Essay

Before you can submit your PLA request for mentor review, you must attach your learning essay.



Step one:

Click on the Browse... button and select the file from your computer that you wish to submit as the learning essay for this PLA request.

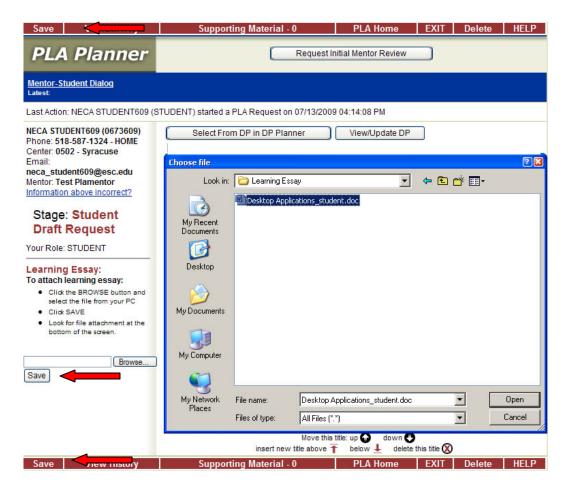
Step Two:

When you have located your essay, press the Open button to bring the essay into the PLA Request Screen.

Step Three:

Click on any of the **SAVE** buttons to attach the learning essay to the PLA Request.





After you attach and save your learning essay, you can view it by clicking on the **View Learning Essay** link on the left side of the PLA screen. Clicking on the View Learning Essay link will display a pop up window where you can view your Learning Essay.

If you decide to make a change to your Learning Essay once it is attached there are a few steps you must take:

- 1. **Save** your Learning Essay locally and make the changes.
- 2. Locate the learning essay attachment icon at the bottom of the PLA screen
- 3. Follow the instructions to delete the attachment



- 4. **Save** once you have deleted the Learning Essay
- 5. Attach the new Learning Essay as you did previously



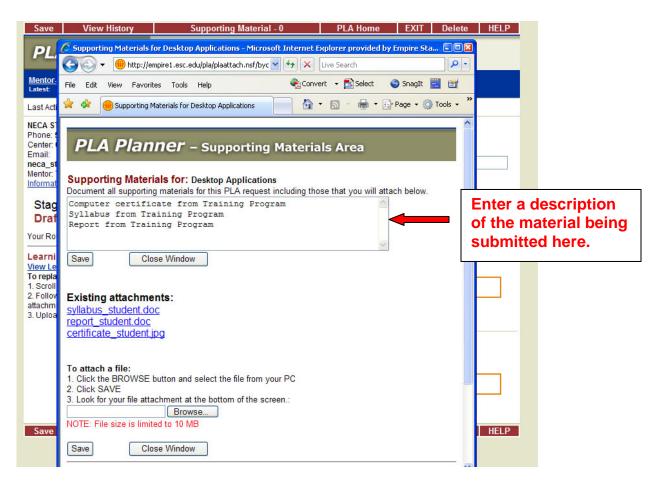
Attaching Supporting Materials

Step one:

If you have any supporting material(s) (e.g., a picture, scanned certificate, etc.) to augment your PLA request, click on **Supporting Material** in the taskbar and a pop-up screen will appear.



Follow the instructions for attaching Supporting Materials. You may attach as many files as you need.





Step two:

Enter a description of the materials being submitted, as indicated in the screenshot above. Click on the Browse... button and navigate on your computer to find the supporting material that you wish to submit for this PLA request. Any type of file can be attached except *.zip files.

When you have located your material, press the button to attach your file to the PLA request. You can add several attachments, but you need to save after each attachment before you can add the next.

After you have uploaded your attachment and clicked **Save**, your material will appear as an icon at the bottom of the Supporting Material pop-up screen. You can view your material by double-clicking on this icon, which will open a new window. A link will also appear in a list under **Existing Attachments**. When finished viewing, close this window to return to the Supporting Material pop-up screen. When you are finished attaching your material(s), click on the **Close Window** button.

When you return to the PLA Request screen the number of Supporting Materials will update according to the number of files you have attached.

Supporting Material - 3

If you attached the wrong file, you may delete it by clicking on the checkbox next to the document icon at the bottom of the Supporting Material pop-up screen then hitting the **Save** button.

NOTE: Modifications made through the viewing option will not be saved. If you make any changes to your file after you have attached it to your PLA request, save your changes locally to your computer. Then you must delete the original file from the Supporting Material screen and reattach the updated file.

You can return to the Supporting Material taskbar option at any point to review, add, or delete material(s).

If you have supporting material that cannot be submitted electronically, you can make a note in the description field and have your supporting material delivered to a location you arrange with the evaluator.





Checklist

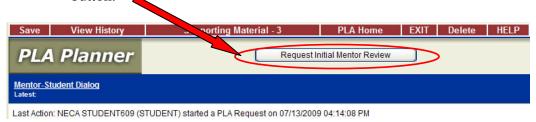
You should now have:

- 1. Created a PLA Request, including
 - PLA Request title
 - Link to the appropriate degree plan
 - Number of components
 - Component title(s)
 - Component credits and designations (i.e., advanced, liberal arts, and general education designations)
- 2. Attached your Learning Essay
- 3. Attached your Supporting Material (if any)
- 4. Reviewed all of the above to be sure it is correct and complete

Your request is now ready for mentor review.

Requesting Initial Mentor Review for your PLA Request

Once you have completed the Checklist and are ready to Request Initial Mentor Review click the button.



Then click **Submit** when prompted.

A Pop up will appear notifying you of IPLA fees associated with the PLA process. Click Accept to acknowledge that fees will be incurred.

Your Mentor will receive an email indicating that your PLA Request is ready for review.

If you need to make any changes after you have submitted your request to your mentor, click the same button which is now labeled

Request Further Mentor Review

Working with your Mentor on the PLA Request

You will be working with your mentor on your PLA request. You can continue to add, delete, or modify your request until your mentor submits your request for evaluation. Once your mentor has submitted the request to your center for evaluation, neither you nor your mentor can make any further changes to your request in PLA Planner.



Communicating with Your Mentor in PLA Planner

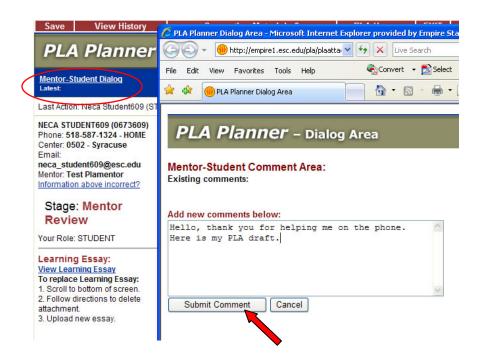
PLA Planner has an area for you and your mentor to have an ongoing dialog as you work together on your PLA request. Automatic e-mails are sent to notify your mentor that a new comment has been added to the conversation. You will also receive an email if your mentor adds a comment to the dialog box. You do not need to e-mail your mentor separately. All conversations in the dialog are maintained and stored within this PLA request.

Step one:

Click on the Mentor-Student Dialog box. A pop-up dialog area will open.

Step two:

Enter your comments into the text box, then select **Submit Comment** to add the comment and to notify your mentor. When you select **Submit Comment**, your mentor will receive an automatic e-mail notification containing a link to your message in PLA Planner.



The date and time of the last comment posted by either you or your mentor is displayed in the Mentor-Student Dialog box.





After Submitting Your iPLA Request to the Center Office of Academic Review (COAR)

Once COAR has received your iPLA request, they will determine if it is ready to be reviewed by an evaluator with expertise in the area in which you are seeking credit. If your request is ready COAR will accept it. It is at this point of acceptance that you will be charged the <u>iPLA fee</u>, if appropriate. Then, COAR will assign an evaluator. Once an evaluator is assigned, you will receive an automatic email with your evaluator's contact information.

You are responsible for making contact with the evaluator, responding to requests for additional supporting materials in a timely fashion, and participating actively in the evaluation process. If you cannot make contact with the evaluator or if you have other difficulties with the process, you are responsible for notifying COAR.

Once the evaluation process is complete, the evaluator will submit a written recommendation to COAR. COAR will process this recommendation and include it in your degree plan portfolio for the faculty committee to review and make final determinations for your request. You and your mentor will be notified by email once COAR has processed the recommendation. You will be able to view the recommendation prior to the faculty committee review.

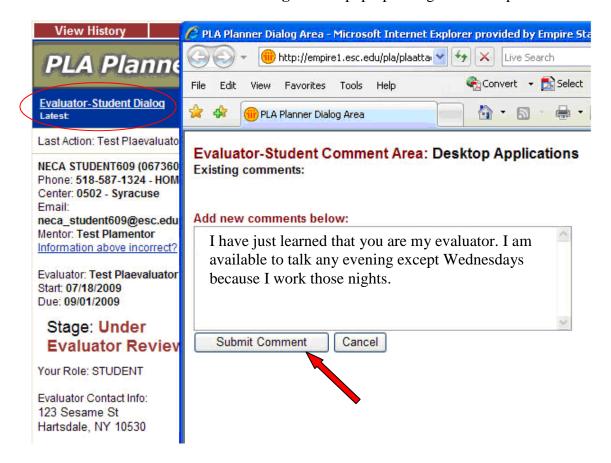


Communicating with your Evaluator

After an evaluator is assigned to your request, PLA Planner will have an area for you and your evaluator to have an ongoing dialog as you work together. This works just like your **Mentor-Student dialog** box. All conversations in the dialog are maintained and stored within this PLA request.

Step one:

Click on the **Evaluator-Student Dialog** box. A pop-up dialog area will open.



Step two:

Enter your comments into the text box, then select **Submit Comment** to send to your evaluator. When you select **Submit Comment**, your evaluator will receive an automatic e-mail notification containing a link to your message in PLA Planner.

The date and time of the last comment posted by either you or your evaluator is displayed in the **Evaluator-Student Dialog** box.





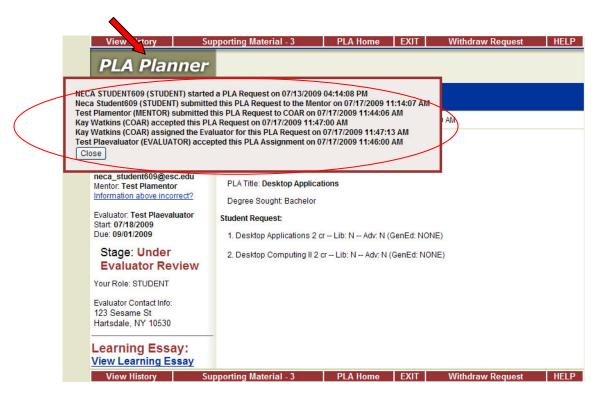
Viewing the Status and History of Your PLA Request(s)

Status

You can view the status of all your PLA requests by viewing them in the PLA Home screen.

History

At any point in the PLA review process, you may view the history of your request by clicking on **View History** in the taskbar. A pop-up window will appear. Click **Close** in the pop-up screen to return to the PLA screen. You can keep close track of your request as it goes through the evaluation process through **View History**.



Technical Support and Questions

Technical Support

If you need help while using PLA Planner, you can click on the **HELP** button in the PLA Home Screen or while in a PLA Request Screen. Click Submit Tech Support Ticket and this will take you to Empire State College Tech Info Home.

Questions

If you have any general questions regarding PLA Planner that are not answered by this manual, you may contact your Primary Mentor or your Center Office of Academic Review (COAR).