



## **PRIOR LEARNING ASSESMENT AND RECOGNITION PROCEDURE**

Approved by: Academic Coordinating Committee

Authorizer: Executive Dean, Academic Administration

Reference Code: A36 V3

Effective Date: 9/1/2007

### **PROCEDURE STATEMENT:**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process to assess skills, knowledge and/or competencies that have been acquired through employment, education (informal/formal), non-formal learning or other life experiences.

### **SCOPE:**

This procedure applies to candidates who wish to earn academic credit for a course in acknowledgement of significant life and work experience.

### **PROCEDURE ELABORATION:**

Methods of assessment are approved by the Program Chair and aligned with the nature of the course, its outcomes and the associated course outline.

Credits obtained through PLAR do not guarantee admission into a program.

Registered/currently enrolled Conestoga students may not use the PLAR for the clearance of academic deficiencies and/or to improve grades.

The length of time needed to complete a PLAR assessment will vary on a course-by-course basis depending on the content and method of assessment (i.e. A course requiring a portfolio assessment will require a longer period of time to complete than one requiring a challenge exam).

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **Advanced Standing:**

The placement of a student in a program (usually but not always) beyond level one: on the basis of documented previous education.

**Formal Education:**

Obtained through completion of credit-based programs and/or courses documented by an institution.

**Informal Education:**

Gained through participation in non-credit learning activities which may include activities such as workplace-based training, seminars and/or workshops.

**Non-formal Learning:**

Knowledge and/or skills gained through self-directed study, voluntary work, travel and other learning experiences.

**Official Transcript:**

An official academic record produced by the Office of the Registrar that includes all courses with a formal assessment taken by a student. The official transcript details a student's permanent academic record and bears the official seal and signature of the Office of the Registrar.

**Methods of Assessment:****Challenge Exam**

A comprehensive exam (written/oral/demonstration) which measures the learning outcomes for a specific course.

**Portfolio**

A comprehensive collection of documented evidence related to the learning outcomes for a specific course.

**Other**

Approved method of assessment such as:

- Interview
- Project
- Combination of assessment methods.

**PLAR Documents:**

Documents necessary for the PLAR process which may include assessment documentation, guidelines, course outlines, and brochures for potential students.

**Program of Study:**

A planned and coordinated selection of courses delivered to an identified student body leading to a certificate, diploma or degree or other document awarded by the board of governors.

**Work & Life Experience**

The prior learning of skills, knowledge or competencies acquired through employment, education (informal/ formal), non-formal learning or other life experiences.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Academic Schools**

- Determine and record the eligibility of a course for PLAR in the Student Information System (SIS)
- Confirm PLAR assessment availability and date
- Ensure PLAR section is entered into SIS and determine the Subject Matter Expert

### **Candidate**

- Be aware of processes and procedures related to requesting assessment/registration for prior learning
- Complete the PLAR Registration Form and submit to the Registrar's Office adhering to PLAR registration guidelines

### **Assessor / Subject Matter Expert (SME)**

- Be aware of and adhere to related policies/procedures and guidelines
- Develop/review PLAR assessment methods
- Evaluate PLAR assessment and submit final grade
- Provide advice/feedback to PLAR candidates/students as required

### **Records Officer**

- Follow established procedure and processes ensuring accuracy and confidentiality of student records

### **Registration Officer**

- Process registration/PLAR fee payments
- Distribute PLAR Registration Forms as required

### **Transfer Credit Officer/Student Pathways Officer**

- Interview potential PLAR candidates and provide advice, information, and necessary relevant documents
- Communicates information to Academic schools and Testing Centre

### **Testing Services**

- Coordinate PLAR challenge exam assessments schedule
- Provide proctors for challenge exams

## **PROCEDURE**

1. Candidates interested in obtaining course credits through PLAR must contact the Credit Transfer Office for information on the process.

2. The Credit Transfer Officer assesses the candidate's needs and provides the necessary information/documents relevant to the candidate.
  - a. confirms if the course is PLAR eligible
  - b. provides course outline, book information etc.
  - c. provides information regarding the registration process
3. If the candidate decides to pursue a challenge he/she must follow the process for registration by submitting a PLAR Registration Form.
4. The Registration Officer/Credit Transfer Officer notifies the Academic School regarding the candidate for PLAR registration.
5. The Academic School:
  - a. ensures the PLAR course section is created, entered into SIS and issues the contract..
  - b. communicates with the Subject Matter Expert regarding the Candidate's PLAR registration.
  - c. follows the appropriate process, based on the method of assessment that has been identified for the course.
6. If the method of assessment is a challenge exam, the Academic School forwards a copy PLAR registration form and the challenge exam to Testing Services.
7. If the method of assessment is NOT a challenge exam, the Academic School confirms the assessment process to the:
  - a. candidate which includes:
    - i. date, time, location of assessment and completion date
  - b. Subject Matter Expert
    - i. Date, time and location of assessment and completion date
    - ii. details of the assessment methodology/tools
    - iii. any other administrative arrangement
8. The Candidate completes the PLAR assessment as instructed by the Academic School.
9. The Subject Matter Expert:
  - a. evaluates the PLAR assessment
  - b. submits the grade in SIS,
  - c. completes the PLAR forms, submits to the Academic School and enters hours on the employee portal.
10. Candidate accesses their final grade through the student portal.
  - a. If the Candidate requests feedback on the results of the PLAR assessment, the Subject Matter Expert will provide it.

## **REFERENCES:**

Academic Credential Procedure

Academic Dispute Resolution and Appeal Procedure

Admission Policy - Post Secondary

Admission Decision Dispute Resolution and Appeal Procedure – Post Secondary

Credit Transfer Policy

Credit Transfer Procedure

CAPLA Guidelines (Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment), <http://capla.ca/>  
Clearance of Academic Deficiency Procedure  
Evaluation of Student Learning Procedure  
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Registration Form  
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policy  
Re-Admission Procedure

**REVISION LOG:**

July 26, 2011	Statement, Process, Definitions
February 17, 2012	Policy and Procedure Committee
February 29, 2012	Academic Coordinating Committee
June 27, 2012	Policy and Procedure Committee
July 2012	Reviewed and Revised
November 2014	Policy and Procedure Committee
November 19 2014	Academic Coordinating Committee