

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policies and Procedures Guide

for

Adult Learning Centres (ALCs)

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Introduction

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of formal study and non-formal learning acquired through work and life experience. PLAR promotes access to Adult Learning Centre Programs and is an integral part of developing a community-based adult learning system.

The recognition of prior learning can be used towards the requirements of the Mature Student High School Diploma or the 28 credit high school diploma. The *Mature Student Graduation Requirements* (2003) state that any credit, including required credits, may be completed by a mature student through Prior Learning Assessment or the Challenge for Credit Option.

The annual *Subject Table Handbook* states that the Challenge for Credit Option offers students the opportunity to apply prior knowledge in a particular subject area by demonstrating achievement in the learning outcomes of that course/speciality and receiving credit for it.

Policy Statement

Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) will award credit to learners, whenever possible, for high school level prior learning. This learning may have been acquired through educational settings, work, and life experiences.

ALCs will have PLAR Policies and Procedures to align with the Adult Learning and Literacy (ALL) *PLAR Policies and Procedures Guide for ALCs*.

Intent of the PLAR Policy

Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy recognizes that learners may have already acquired the knowledge, skills, and judgments of a particular course prior to enrolling in that course. PLAR provides a process for learners to demonstrate that they have achieved learning outcomes as defined in the Manitoba curriculum for the course.

Requirements to earn a credit through a PLAR process should not be more demanding than the requirements to earn the credit through regular instruction. The assessment process should involve demonstrating that the learner can meet the curriculum learning outcomes in an appropriate way. The PLAR Policies and Procedures Guide for ALCs as outlined in this document include both academic and administrative requirements.

Academic Requirements

1. Credit

- 1.1 The learning to be credited must be consistent with current Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth learning outcomes for Provincial Senior 1 to Senior 4 courses. The assessment of learning can result in partial, full, or no credit.
- 1.2 An individual seeking credit(s) for prior learning must have met the established admission and registration requirements to gain admittance to the course.
- 1.3 Credit will be awarded for demonstrated learning (i.e., knowledge, skills, and judgments) and not for experience alone.
- 1.4 The ALC PLAR processes for determining PLAR credit include a combination of assessment strategies and skill demonstration(s) appropriate to the course and the individual and can include:
 - assessment of educational documents
 - portfolio/evidence review (e.g. a document that identifies and verifies prior learning)
 - challenge process (e.g. written/oral examinations, interviews, projects, assignments, skill demonstrations, simulations, etc.).
- 1.5 It is important to note that the PLAR option for a particular course may include a combination of assessment strategies and skill demonstration methods. The intent is to allow a learner to demonstrate prior learning in an appropriate way.
- 1.6 Credit will be awarded for learning, which reflects both the theoretical and practical components in a balance consistent with the requirements of courses.
- 1.7 Credit will be awarded for prior learning that is appropriate only to the course in which the individual is enrolled.
- 1.8 An individual may be granted up to 100% credit in a program. There is no limit to the number of courses that a student may PLAR.

*As stated in the *Mature Student Graduation Requirements* (2003), “any credit, including required credits, may be completed by a mature student through Prior Learning Assessment or the Challenge for Credit Option”.*

- 1.9 A certified teacher/instructor who is qualified to teach the course will assess the individual learner. A certified teacher/instructor will:
- agree to and review an assessment plan
 - judge evidence and provide feedback
 - make an assessment decision using differing sources of evidence and provide feedback.

2. Standard of attainment and approval of credit

- 2.1 The credit awarded will be for high school level learning.
- 2.2 The standard of attainment will be equal to the standard required by the course level in which the credit is sought.
- 2.3 The assessment of competence and determination to award credit will be made by the appropriate content specialists.
- 2.4 Final approval toward credit will be the responsibility of the ALC Education Director.

Administrative Requirements

1. ALC Education Director

- 1.1 The ALC Education Director is responsible for the implementation, co-ordination, promotion, and monitoring of PLAR activities and procedures and will liaise with ALC staff, recognized educational institutions, if applicable, and ALL.
- 1.2 With the approval of the ALC Education Director, an individual may access PLAR services for a course for which he/she has been unsuccessful in attaining credit in the past. Credit may be awarded if there is demonstrated evidence of additional learning.
- 1.3 The ALC Education Director will ensure a minimum of one person has completed the PLAR Foundation Training (40 hours) with a plan for all staff to complete the training.
- 1.4 The ALC Education Director will develop PLAR goals for the ALC and submit the goals to Adult Learning and Literacy on a yearly basis.

2. Policies and Procedures at an ALC

- 2.1 Each ALC, in consultation with ALL, will determine its system for implementing prior learning assessment and recognition in accordance with *PLAR Policies and Procedures for ALCs* and available resources.
- 2.2 Each ALC will regularly monitor, review, and evaluate its PLAR implementation system and revise as needed to reflect changing needs and improvements in the assessment process.
- 2.3 The *PLAR Policies and Procedures Guide for ALCs* and the ALC's implementation process will be fully disclosed and easily accessed by learners and the public.
- 2.4 The ALC will submit PLAR results to ALL as requested by the Registrar.
- 2.5 No direct fees will be charged for PLAR advising and assessing.

3. Recording and Reporting

- 3.1 The ALC will record credits completed through PLAR in the same way that grades are normally transcribed in a course, using a percentage mark to indicate the learner's performance in the course relative to the outcomes identified for the course.
- 3.2 Unsuccessful PLAR will not be recorded on transcripts. The ALCs will complete the "Results of Portfolio and/or Challenge Process Assessment" form in the PLAR Manual and notify the student in writing. The recording of unsuccessful PLAR will be recorded on the interim and final statistical returns.
- 3.3 Internally, the ALC will record the results of PLAR services and assessments and report the statistics on the interim and final statistical returns.

The ALC will:

- record the number of learners who received PLAR advising. PLAR advising is the process used to help the learner to identify relevant learning, agree to and review an action plan for demonstration of prior learning, and to help the learner prepare and present evidence for assessment
- record the number of learners referred to other educational institutions or community organizations for PLAR services
- record the number of learners for whom PLAR services have led to improved employment status
- record the number of assessments and the result of the assessment (full, partial, or no credit)
- record the number of learners who graduated with a Mature Student High School Diploma or 28 credit high school diploma consisting of 1 or more credits partially or fully awarded through PLAR.

If you have any questions about this policy guide, please contact:

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