

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR) FOR MATURE STUDENTS- LOYOLA, SCHOOL OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (Policy Statement: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR))

Purpose

The purpose of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process is to help schools acknowledge mature student's proficiency, utilizing a student-centered approach to credit accumulation. While in-class learning opportunities are the preferred method of acquiring new skills and knowledge, we recognized that some students require flexibility in how they complete their secondary school journey. PLAR is one tool available to Principals allowing them to help students create learning pathways that are personally relevant for them.

References

[Ontario Secondary School Grade 9-12 Program and Diploma Requirements 1999](#)

Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students: Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools.

[PPM 132](#)

Procedures

1. Definitions

- 1.1 **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (PLAR):** The formal evaluation and credit granting process whereby Mature Students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that Mature Students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside of secondary school. Mature Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the Secondary School Diploma.
- 1.2 **Challenge:** The process whereby a Mature Student's prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a Grade 11, or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later

- 1.3 **Equivalency:** The process whereby a Mature Student's prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting an equivalent credit for Grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published 199 or later.
- 1.4 **Credits:** Challenge for credit courses based on provincial curriculum policy documents will be available to Mature Students only in courses that are actually taught in schools operated by the Board. All credits granted through the PLAR process- that is, through either the challenge process or the equivalency process – must represent the same standards of achievement as credits granted to Mature Students who have taken the courses
- 1.5 **Reasonable Evidence:** Documentation that the curriculum expectations of the course have already been achieved and that the Mature Student would likely be successful in the challenge/equivalency process.
- 1.6 **Mature Student:** A mature student is a student who is 18 years of age or older, and who has been out of regular high school for a minimum of 10 months.

2. Policy Governing the Equivalency Process

- 2.1 In accordance with provincial Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 132, Mature Students are eligible to receive equivalent credits for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy Documents. (See OSS, section 6.6) The implementation schedule for the PLAR challenge process is as follows:
 - Grade 9 courses 2000-2001
 - Grade 10 courses 2001-2002
 - Grade 11 courses 2002-2003
 - Grade 12 courses 2002-2004
- 2.2 Each secondary school course calendar shall contain information regarding the equivalency process. Schools/Board may not charge Mature Students for undergoing the equivalency process.
- 2.3 Mature Students may earn no more than sixteen grade 9/10 credits and ten grade 11/12 credits through the equivalency process. Mature Students will earn a minimum of 4 Grade 11 and 12 credits by taking the necessary courses at a secondary school. Mature Students who have previously accumulated 26 or more credits towards the diploma must successfully complete the required number of courses to bring their total number of credits up to 30 before they will be eligible to receive the OSSD.

At the discretion of the principal, mature students who present evidence of a completed postsecondary diploma and/or degree from an accredited Canadian postsecondary institution may qualify for the OSSD under OS by completing a minimum of one Grade 11 or Grade 12 credit in the corresponding language of instruction (i.e., English or French) as their postsecondary credential. In this case no more than sixteen grade 9/10 credits and thirteen grade 11/12 credits through the challenge/equivalency process.

- 2.4 Mature Students may use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to be granted equivalent credits for a related course within the Ontario curriculum, if they wish to earn credit for the course without taking the course. Mature Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in OSS, Form B, Music Certificates Accepted for Credits, however, are not to be considered as equivalent credit for the appropriate music course but are granted credits in accordance with OSS Program and Diploma requirements.
- 2.5 The following will be reported in the School's October Continuing Education Report to the Ministry. This information shall also be submitted in the School March Report unless Cont Ed will be in July.
- The number of Mature Students who received an individual assessment for up to sixteen Grade 9/10 credits during the school year. (one assessment per Mature Student per fiscal year only).
 - The number of mature students who received an equivalency assessment for up to ten Grade 11/12 credits during the school year (one assessment per mature student per fiscal year only).
- 2.6 The responsibility for PLAR shall be carried out under the direction of the school Principal who grants credits in the school in which the Mature Student is registered.
- 2.7 In cases where a Mature Student disagrees with the decision of the Principal/Designate about whether or not the Mature Student should request an equivalency for credit, the Mature Student may ask the appropriate Supervisory Officer to review the matter.
- 2.8 The equivalency process is an evaluation process and shall not be used as a way to obtain a credit for a course they have previously failed.
- 2.9 Mature Students may request an equivalent credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to their principal (or designate) they would likely be successful in the challenge process. The responsibilities of the Mature Student include:
- signing the registration form to indicate they would like to initiate the equivalency process.
 - completing an application process by gathering and submitting 'reasonable evidence' to support the application by the due date.
 - completing the formal tests and other assessments by the due date(s) as determined by the Principal/Designate.

3. Principal/Designate Responsibilities

3.1 Step 1:

Ensure that Mature Students are informed that they are eligible to participate in the equivalency process and for satisfying all of the requirements.

3.2 Ensure that every prospective applicant is informed about policies and procedures related to equivalency for credit, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST).

3.3 Step 2:

Ensure that every prospective applicant signs the registration form as well as is provided with materials that indicate what is expected from them to be granted equivalent credits. This includes study materials to prepare for the Grade 9/10 testing and a description of acceptable evidence required for the granting of Grade 11/12 equivalent credits. (See Form C).

3.4 Shall use as a guide, the table entitled 'Requirements for the OSSD Under OSS' in OSS, Form F: Equivalent Diploma Requirements, to determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the Mature Student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the Mature Student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the Secondary School Diploma. (See Also Form A and Form B)

3.5 At the time of the registration, review the transcript presented by the Mature Student to determine whether they are eligible to take part in the equivalency process. (See Form B).

3.6 Inform the Mature Student of the date and time for Grade 9/10 PLAR assessments.

3.7 Evaluate each completed Grade 9/10 PLAR assessment with appropriate school staff (i.e., subject Teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success (Pass/Fail) exists and whether the equivalency should occur.

3.8 Evaluate evidence submitted by the Mature Student regarding evidence for the granting of Grade 11 and 12 equivalent credits with appropriate school staff (i.e., subject Teacher) to determine whether sufficient evidence has been submitted to warrant the granting of equivalent credits.

3.9 Ensure that no more than sixteen credits are granted through the Grade 9/10 Equivalency process and that no more than ten credits are granted through the Grade 11/12 Equivalency process.

3.10 Use and maintain the forms entitled:

- "Cumulative Tracking Record" form and, if required, on the "Interim Tracking Record" form for Grade 9 and 10 credits. Up to 4 credits for each of English, mathematics, science, and Canadian history and Canadian geography will be entered on the appropriate form. (See Form D and E)

- PLAR "Cumulative Tracking Record" form and, if required, on the "Interim Tracking Record" form for Grade 11 and 12 credits. The appropriate value for individual credits granted or earned must be entered on the tracking record forms. (Form F and G)
- 3.11 Ensure that Mature Students who do not have suitable documentation, owing to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., Mature Students who are refugees), will receive guidance concerning the gathering of evidence.

4. Board Office Responsibilities

- 4.1 Prepare and distribute to the schools the information brochure.
- 4.2 Prepare and distribute to the Principal the Policy and Procedures.
- 4.3 Ensure that a qualified Teacher prepares the assessment tools.
- 4.4 Ensure that a qualified Teacher administers the assessment tasks.
- 4.5 Ensure that a qualified Teacher evaluates the assessment tasks.
- 4.6 Ensure that a qualified Teacher reports Student achievement to the schools.

5. Record Keeping

- 5.1 The principal will ensure that the results of a mature student's individual assessment are recorded on the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form and, if required, on the "Interim Tracking Record" form for Grade 9 and 10 credits. Up to 4 credits for each of English, mathematics, science, and Canadian history and Canadian geography will be entered on the appropriate form. (See Form D).
- 5.2 Entries on the student's OST must be made in accordance with *The Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999*. The following information must be entered on the OST:
- the equivalent credits granted for Grades 9 and 10, entered as *one total*.
 - the notation "Equivalent Credits" in the "Course Title" column, and the code "PLE" in the "Course Code" column.
 - the total number of equivalent credits (up to 16) in the "Credit" column.
 - the total number of compulsory credits granted as equivalent credits (up to 14 compulsory credits for mature students working under OSS diploma requirements).
- 5.3 The principal will ensure that equivalent credits for mature students are recorded on the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form and, if required, on the "Interim Tracking Record"

form for Grade 11 and 12 credits. The appropriate value for individual credits granted or earned must be entered on the tracking record forms. (See Form F)

- 5.4 Entries on the student's OST must be made in accordance with *The Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999*. Beginning February 1, 2004, the following information must be entered on a mature student's OST, in accordance with Procedure 2 in the OST manual:
- the appropriate course codes for equivalent credits granted for all Grade 11 and 12 courses through the equivalency process.
 - the code "EQV" in the "Percentage Grade" column.
 - the appropriate value for individual credits granted or earned in the "Credit" column.
 - an "X" in the "Compulsory" column for each compulsory credit granted.
- 5.5 The only mature students to whom these new PLAR requirements do not apply are Mature Students who can be evaluated using the Standards of OSIS or Circular HS1. Principals will follow Procedure 1 in *The Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999* for recording equivalent credits granted to these Mature Students. However, if any of these Mature Students choose to have their prior learning assessed and credits granted through the PLAR process under OSS and therefore to meet the requirements for the OSSD under OSS, records for these Mature Students must be kept in accordance with the new PLAR requirements described above and outlined in *The Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999* as Procedure 2.
- 5.6 Board must ensure that only teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers conduct the PLAR challenge process. Teachers with expertise in the subject area will develop, administer, and evaluate PLAR challenge task for credit.

6. Mature Student Responsibilities

- 6.1 To sign the registration form when they register to give consent to participate in the PLAR Equivalency process.
- 6.2 To prepare independently for all Grade 9/10 Equivalency assessments identified and to contact the school to arrange a time to write the assessments when they are ready to do so.
- 6.3 To complete ALL Grade 9/10 Equivalency Assessments at the agreed upon date and time at the school.
- 6.4 To submit all requested documentation for the granting of Grade 11/12 equivalent credits to the school for assessment.

7. Policy Governing the Challenge Process

- 7.1 In accordance with provincial Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 132, Mature Students may challenge for credit only for Grade 11 and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy documents. (See OSS, section 6.6) The implementation schedule for the PLAR challenge process is as follows:

- Grade 11 courses 2002-2003
- Grade 12 courses 2003-2004

7.2 The school course calendar shall contain information regarding challenges for credit and opportunities for challenge. The school may not charge Mature Students any fee for undergoing the challenge process.

7.3 Mature Students may:

- challenge a previously failed course.
- earn no more than ten credits, or the equivalent in half-credit courses, through the challenge process if they **DO NOT** have an acceptable degree/diploma from a recognized Canadian institution.
- earn no more than thirteen credits, or the equivalent in half-credit courses, through the challenge process if they **DO** have an acceptable degree/diploma from a recognized Canadian institution.

7.4 Mature Students may earn no more than ten credits, or the equivalent in half-credit courses, through the challenge process.

7.5 Mature Students may use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit for a related course within the Ontario curriculum, if they wish to earn credit for the course without taking the course. Mature Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in OSS, (Form B), section 6.8.6, Music Certificates Accepted for Credits, however, are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music course but are granted credits in accordance with OSS Program and Diploma requirements.

7.6 A record of all challenges for credit that were completed, that is, all challenges for which Mature Students earned a final percentage grade, whether a passing or a failing grade shall be included in the school's October Report to the Ministry. This information shall also be submitted in the School March Report.

7.7 The responsibility for PLAR shall be carried out under the direction of the school principal.

7.8 In cases where a Mature Student disagrees with the decision of the principal/designate about whether or not the Mature Student should challenge for credit, the Mature Student may ask the appropriate supervisory office to review the matter.

7.9 The challenge process is an evaluation process and shall not be used as a way for Mature Students to improve their mark in a course for which they have already earned a credit, nor as a way to obtain a credit for a course they have previously failed.

7.10 Mature Students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to their principal (or designate) they would likely be successful in the challenge

process. The responsibilities of the Mature Student include:

- initiating the PLAR challenge by approaching the school Principal (or designate) for information regarding the process.
- completing an application process by gathering 'reasonable evidence' to support the application by the due date.
- completing the formal tests and other assessments by the due date(s) as determined by the Supervisory Officer responsible.

8. Principal/Designate Responsibilities

8.1 Step 1

Ensure that Mature Students are informed that they are responsible for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the requirements.

8.2 Ensure that every prospective applicant is informed about policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST).

8.3 Step 2

Ensure that every prospective applicant is provided with an application form as well as materials that indicate what is expected in the course (i.e., the curriculum expectations) for which the Mature Student wishes to challenge for credit, to be returned by a date set by the Supervisory Officer responsible. (See Form H)

8.4 Evaluate each application in consultation with the appropriate school staff (e.g., Department Head and subject Teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur.

8.5 Principals shall use as a guide the table entitled 'Requirements for the OSSD Under OSS' in OSS, Form F: Equivalent Diploma Requirements, to determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the Mature Student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the Mature Student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the Secondary School Diploma.

- No substitutions are allowed for Grade 11 Math, Grade 11 English, Grade 12 English or Senior Computer Science, Technological Education, or Math.
- Mature students should be encouraged to meet the literacy graduation requirement by successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Mature students also have the option to enroll directly in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course without attempting the OSSLT.
- Principals will determine, at their discretion, the number of hours of community involvement activities that a mature student who is working towards the OSSD under OS may have to complete (i.e., between 0 and 40).
- School boards may, at the recommendation of the principal, leverage courses such as Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary

School - (GLS40/GLE40/GLE30) to help prepare students for the PLAR process. At the recommendation of the principal, a mature student may be enrolled in the GLE courses without an Individual Education Plan.

- 8.6 Subject teacher shall use the Assessment Record to Challenge for Credit for a Course form provided to evaluate the evidence completed by the Mature Student. (See Form I)
- 8.7 Ensure that the Mature Student requests to challenge for credit will be entered in the Students' Annual Education Plan (Loyola Data Base). A Mature Student must challenge for credit for an entire course, whether it is a full-credit or a partial-credit course. Credit will be granted only for the specific course for which the Mature Student has successfully challenged for credit.
- 8.8 Inform the Supervisory Officer responsible that an application has been approved. (Grade, subject)
- 8.9 Ensure that no more than four credits may be earned by one Mature Student in the PLAR challenge process with no more than 2 credits granted in any one discipline.
- 8.10 Use and maintain the forms entitled:
 - PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record. (See Form J)
 - PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record. (See Form K) No changes of any kind will be made to these forms. These forms must be included in the Student's OSR.
- 8.11 Ensure that Mature Students who do not have suitable documentation, owing to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., Mature Students who are refugees), will receive counseling concerning the gathering of evidence.
- 8.12 Inform the Mature Students of the date of the assessment and the requirements of the challenge.

9. Board Responsibilities

- 9.1 Prepare and distribute to the schools the information brochure.
- 9.2 Prepare and distribute to the Principal the Policy and Procedures.
- 9.3 Ensure that a qualified Teacher prepares the assessment tools.
- 9.4 Ensure that a qualified Teacher administers the assessment tasks.
- 9.5 Ensure that a qualified Teacher evaluates the assessment tasks.

9.6 Ensure that a qualified Teacher reports Mature Student achievement to the schools.

10. Record Keeping

- 10.1 The principal will ensure that a 'PLAR Challenge for Credit: "Cumulative Tracking Record" form is maintained and included in the Student's OSR. This form is intended to track the number of credits earned and the disciplines in which credits have been earned through the challenge process, as well as failures and withdrawals. This form should be consulted as part of the Mature Student's application to challenge. (See Form J)
- 10.2 The following entries must be made on the Mature Student's "Cumulative Tracking Record" form and the Interim Tracking Record" form, as applicable:
- a) For challenges for credit for Grade 11, or 12 courses: The Mature Student's passing percentage grade, failing percentage grade, or withdrawal from the challenge process must be entered on the appropriate tracking record form(s).
 - b) The following entries must be made on the Mature Student's OST: - For challenges for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses: Passing and failing percentage grades will be entered on the Mature Student's OST. No notation will be entered on the OST if the Mature Student withdraws from the challenge process.
 - c) Mature Student must provide notification of withdrawal from the challenge assessment 48 hours prior to the date of assessment.
- 10.3 Board must ensure that only teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers conduct the PLAR challenge process. Teachers with expertise in the subject area will develop, administer, and evaluate PLAR challenge task for credit.

11 Mature Student Responsibilities

- 11.3 Mature Students must apply for PLAR at the school site which they are registered.
- 11.4 Mature Students cannot be granted credits through the challenge process for any of the following courses.
- a course in any subject if a credit has already been granted for a course in that subject in a later grade either as a single credit or as part of a block equivalency.
 - A course for which credit has already been granted or for which there is a significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted (e.g., a Mature Student cannot challenge for credit for an academic course if he or she has already earned a credit for the applied course at the same grade level, and vice versa.
 - A transfer course.
 - A locally developed course

- A cooperative education course.
- A course in English as a second language (ESL), English literacy development (ELD), or Anglais (APD), if the Mature Student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum policy documents for English language or the documents for French-language schools or from the curriculum guidelines for English or Anglais/English for Grade 9 to 12/OACs under OSIS.
- A course in French as a second language (FSL), Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF), or Perfectionnement du français (PDF), if the Mature Student has one or more credits in Français from the curriculum policy documents for Français for Grades 9 to 12/OACs under OSIS.

Appendices

Appendix 1: [Steps in the PLAR Process: The Challenge Process](#)

Appendix 2: [Steps In the PLAR Process: The Equivalency Process](#)

Appendix 3: [Mature Credit Assessment through Circular HS1 and OSIS Standards](#)

Appendix 4: [Flowcharts Assessing Eligibility for PLAR for Mature Students](#)

Appendix 5: [Acceptable Evidence for the Granting of Grade 11/12 Equivalent Credits](#)

Appendix 6: [Summary Table of Key Revisions to PPM 132](#)

Forms

Form A: [Document to Evaluate Circular HS1 Transcripts](#)

Form B: [Document to Evaluate OSIS Transcripts](#)

Form C: [Cumulative Tracking Record form for Grade 11 and 12 credits alternate with 10 lines](#)

Form D: [Cumulative Tracking Record form for Grade 9 and 10 equivalent credits](#)

Form E: [Interim Tracking Record form for Grade 9 and 10 equivalent credits](#)

Form F: [Cumulative Tracking Record form for Grade 11 and 12 equivalent credits](#)

Form G: [Interim Tracking Record Form for Grade 11 and 12 equivalent credits](#)

Form H: [Application to Challenge for Credit for a Course](#)

Form I: [Record of Assessment of Challenge for Credit for a Course](#)

Form J: [Cumulative Tracking Record form for Grade 11 and 12 Challenge credits](#)

Form K: [Interim Tracking Record form for Grade 11 and 12 Challenge credits](#)

Form L: [Application for Assessment for Grade 11 and 112 Through the Equivalency Process](#)

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