



## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

### PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR) IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (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 student 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 PPM 129](#)

#### Procedures

##### 1. Definitions

- 1.1 **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (PLAR):** the formal evaluation and credit granting process whereby students, excluding mature students, may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school. 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 student's prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a Grade 10, 11 or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later.
- 1.3 **Credits:** Challenge for credit for courses based on provincial curriculum policy documents will be available to 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 students who have taken the courses.

- 1.4 **Reasonable Evidence:** Documentation that the curriculum expectations of the course have already been achieved and that the student would likely be successful in the challenge process.

## 2. Policy Governing the Challenge Process

- 2.1 In accordance with provincial Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 129, students may challenge for credit only for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy Documents. In accordance with provincial Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 129, students may challenge for credit only for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy documents.
- 2.2 Each secondary school course calendar shall contain information regarding challenges for credit and opportunities for challenge. Schools/Board may not charge students any fee for undergoing the challenge process.
- 2.3 Students may earn no more than four credits through the challenge process, including a maximum of two credits in any one discipline (one curriculum policy document).
- 2.4 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. Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in OSS, (Appendix 4), 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.
- 2.5 A record of all challenges for credit that were completed, all challenges for which students earned a final percentage grade, whether a passing or a failing grade shall be included in the Board's September Report to the Ministry. For semestered schools, this information shall also be submitted in the School March Reports.
- 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 student is registered. A student must obtain permission from the principal of the regular day school in which he/she is registered if he/she intends to apply for a PLAR at any other school, public or inspected private.
- 2.7 Arrangements may be made with other Boards to provide opportunities for eligible students to challenge for credit for courses that are not offered by the Board. Students/families will be responsible to cover travel/accommodations costs should travel be necessary.
- 2.8 In cases where a student who is an adult or the Parent/Guardian of a student who is not an

adult disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether or not the student should challenge for credit, the Parent/Guardian or adult student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

- 2.9 The challenge process is an evaluation process and shall not be used as a way for 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.
- 2.10 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 student include:
- initiating the PLAR challenge by approaching the school Principal (or designate) for information regarding the process.
  - Completing the 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.

## 2. Principal Responsibilities

- 2.1 **Step 1:**  
Ensure that students are informed that they are responsible for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the requirements, and ensure that students who are not adults (i.e., students who are under the age of eighteen) are informed that they need parental approval before applying to challenge for credit for a course.
- 2.2 Ensure that every prospective applicant and his or her parent/guardian, if he or she is not an adult, are 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).
- 2.3 **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 student wishes to challenge for credit, to be returned by a date set by the Supervisory Officer responsible. (See Appendix 4)
- 2.4 Evaluate each application in consultation with the student's parent/guardian (or with the student if the student is an adult) and appropriate school staff (i.e., guidance counselor, Department Head in course subject department, and subject teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur.
- 2.5 Principals shall use as a guide the table entitled 'Requirements for the OSSD Under OSS' in OSS, appendix 8: Equivalent Diploma Requirements, to determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the Secondary School

Diploma.

- 2.6 Principals shall use the Application to Challenge for Credit for a Course form provided. (See Form A)
- 2.7 Ensure that the student request to challenge for credit will be entered in the Students Annual Education Plan. A 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 student has successfully challenged for credit.
- 2.8 Inform the Supervisory Officer responsible that an application has been approved.
- 2.9 Ensure that no more than four credits may be earned by one student in the PLAR challenge process with no more than 2 credits granted in any one discipline.
- 2.10 Use and maintain the forms entitled:
  - i) PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record (See Appendix 3)
  - ii) PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record (Appendix 4)  
No changes of any kind will be made to these forms. These forms must be included in the Student's OSR.
- 2.11 Ensure that students who do not have suitable documentation, owing to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., students who are refugees), will receive support/information concerning the gathering of evidence.
- 2.12 Inform the students of the date of the assessment in May and the requirements of the challenge.

### **3. Board Office Responsibilities**

- 3.1 Prepare and distribute to the Principal the Policy and Procedures.
- 3.2 Ensure that a qualified Teacher prepares the assessment tools.
- 3.3 Ensure that a qualified Teacher administers the assessment tasks.
- 3.4 Ensure that a qualified Teacher evaluates the assessment tasks.
- 3.5 Ensure that a qualified Teacher reports Student achievement to the schools.

### **4. Record Keeping**

- 4.1 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 student's application to challenge.

- 4.2 A 'PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record' form will be maintained for credits earned through the challenge process in a school outside the student's regular school (the regular school is the school that maintains the Student's OSR).
- 4.3 The principal of the school outside the student's regular school will use the 'Interim Tracking Record' form to communicate the results of the student's challenges for credit to the school that maintains the OSR.
- 4.4 The following entries must be made on the student's 'Cumulative Tracking Record' form and the 'Interim Tracking Record' form, as applicable:
  - a) For challenges for credit for Grade 10, 11, or 12 courses: the 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 Student's OST:
    - For challenges for credit for Grade 10 courses: Only passing percentage grades will be entered on the OST. If the Student subsequently takes the Grade 10 course, only the higher percentage grade will be recorded on the OST. No notation will be entered on the Student's OST if the Student withdraws from or receives a failing grade in the challenge process.
    - For challenges for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses: Passing and failing percentage grades will be entered on the Student's OST. No notation will be entered on the OST if the student withdraws from the challenge process.
  - c) Student must provide notification of withdrawal from the challenge assessment 48 hours prior to the date of assessment.
- 4.5 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.

## **5. Student Responsibilities**

- 5.1 Students must apply for PLAR at the school which they are registered. PLAR applications and challenges will be restricted to certain scheduled periods during the school year.
- 5.2 Students cannot be granted credits through the challenge process for any of the following courses:
  - a) a course in any subject if a credit has already been granted for a course in that

- b) subject in a later grade either as a single credit or as part of a block equivalency.
- c) a course for which credit has already been granted or for which there is significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted (e.g., a 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)
- d) a transfer course
- e) a locally developed course
- f) a cooperative education course
- g) a course in English as a second language (ESL), English literacy development (ELD), or Anglais (APD), if the 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.
- h) a course in French as a second language (FSL), Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF), or Perfectionnement du français (PDF), if the 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\*](#)

Appendix 2: [\*Record of Assessment of Challenge For Credit For A Course\*](#)

Appendix 3: [\*PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record\*](#)

Appendix 4: [\*PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record\*](#)

### **Forms**

Form A: [\*Application to Challenge For Credit For A Course\*](#)

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