

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR) POLICY

Approved by: Academic Coordinating Committee

Authorizer: Executive Dean Academic Administration

Reference Code: A35 V4

Effective Date: 9/1/2007

POLICY STATEMENT:

Conestoga recognizes prior learning of skills, knowledge or competencies that have been acquired through employment, education (informal/ formal), non-formal learning or other life experiences. Prior learning must be measured to meet the required course outcomes and grading standards .

SCOPE:

This policy applies to candidates who wish to earn academic credit for a course in acknowledgement of significant life and work experience. PLAR is not to be used by registered Conestoga students for the clearance of academic deficiencies and/or to improve grades.

Students must be at least 19 years of age or have an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (or equivalent) to be eligible to apply for PLAR.

DEFINITIONS:

Credential:

Awarded upon completion of a program of study as set out by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Approved credentials are as follows:

- o Certificate
- o Ontario College Certificate
- o Ontario College Diploma
- o Ontario College Advanced Diploma
- o Ontario College Graduate Certificate
- o Baccalaureate Degree

Formal Education:

Structured, intentional and achieved through credit-based programs/courses.

Informal Education:

Intentional and gained through participation in non-credit courses, work-place-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.

Work & Life Experience:

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

Post-Secondary Education Quality Assurance Board (PEQAB):

The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board is an arms-length advisory agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario on applications for ministerial consent under the terms of the Post- secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.

Program:

A series of courses, grouped together in some identifiable manner, designed to achieve identified learning outcomes, and approved by the Board of Governors and/or external bodies.

POLICY ELABORATION:

- The maximum credit allowed through transfer of credits and credits obtained through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for certificate and diploma programs is 75% of the program credits. Therefore, at least 25% of the program credits must be taken under the direct supervision of Conestoga faculty.
- PLAR decisions are final. Only one PLAR may be attempted per course, and no supplemental evaluations will be allowed.
- The PLAR fee cannot be refunded, even if the student decides to withdraw from the PLAR assessment.
- If the candidate withdraws with written notice before the PLAR assessment is scheduled to be completed, neither a grade nor a refund will be given.
- If the candidate obtains a failing grade on their PLAR assessment it will be included on their transcript, but will not be calculated into their program GPA.
- PLAR assessment grades will be input into SIS and communicated to students.
- The passing grade for a PLAR assessment will be consistent with the course passing grade.
- Credits obtained through PLAR do not guarantee admission into a program.
- All decisions are kept confidential. Appeals regarding PLAR decisions may be made by following the Academic Dispute Resolution and Appeal Procedure.
- Course outlines will clearly state whether or not the course is PLAR Eligible.

- All PLAR eligible courses will have a PLAR assessment methodology identified and, if appropriate, an assessment readily available.
- PLAR assessment requirements and tools will be reviewed as part of the normal course/program review process.
- Students will remain registered in classes for which they are attempting a PLAR assessment until they receive final confirmation of the assessment grade.
- Degree programs are required to follow the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) Admission, Promotion, and Graduation Standard, Benchmark 7 which states “The Institution:
 - Does not offer any credits for “life experience”, unless that experience is assessed for its appropriate learning value to the specific degree program;
 - Does not waive comprehensive examinations, academic reports, research projects and/or theses, if these are standard requirements of the program;
 - Does not award advanced standing for more than 50% of the total number of the credits of the program based on prior learning assessment;
 - Requires that at least 50% of the individuals enrolled in a program at any given time are actively taking required elements of that program”.
- Programs associated with articulation agreements, professional accreditation bodies may have external limitations that limit their ability to recognize PLAR in meeting their requirements.

REFERENCES:

Admission Policy - Post Secondary
 CAPLA Guidelines (Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment), <http://capla.ca/>
 Clearance of Academic Deficiency Procedure
 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedure
 Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition Registration Form
 Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Framework for Programs of Instruction

REVISION LOG:

Feb 17, 2012	Policy and Procedure Committee
Feb 29, 2012	Academic Coordinating Committee
June 27, 2012	Policy and Procedure Committee
July 2012	Review and Revised
September 2014	Academic Forum
November 10 2014	Policy and Procedure Committee
November 19, 2014	Academic Coordinating Committee

