



Prior Learning and Recognition Policy	
Date Approved: April 28, 2021	
Effective Date: May 1, 2021	
Date Reviewed: Spring 2021	Replaces: Version 2018

Purpose

This policy provides the criteria for demonstrating, evaluating and acknowledging prior student learning and/or experience that may be deemed equivalent to current Cambrian College ('the College') course learning outcomes.

Definitions

Advanced Standing: a procedure for granting credit to a student for previous educational courses completed at the College or another institution.

Candidate: Refers to any PLAR applicant who is 18 years of age or older.

Life Experience: Experiences such as self-directed study, paid employment, volunteer work and other learning experiences.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Refers to the identification, assessment and recognition of skills that results in the granting of course credit based on the formal demonstration of prior learning acquired through self-directed study, work, volunteer work or Life Experience. Numeric grades received for PLAR will be included in the calculation of a student's grade point average.

Subject Matter Expert: Staff with expertise in the subject who may conduct/provide PLAR assessment.

Transfer Credit: Is granted when a student has successfully completed a course or courses from an accredited and recognized post-secondary institution that is/are evaluated as equivalent to (a) Cambrian course(s).

Application/Scope

All current students and potential students.

Policy Statements

1. General

- a. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is based on the belief that individuals may acquire college level learning through Life Experience such as self-directed study, paid employment, volunteer work and other learning experiences.
 - i. For this learning to be credited, it must be described or demonstrated and deemed equivalent and current when compared to course or program learning outcomes.
- b. PLAR is to be distinguished from the transfer of academic credit mechanism (Transfer Credit), in that PLAR focuses on the evaluation of experiential learning rather than on the determination of equivalency of formal educational courses and/or programs.
- c. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) assess PLAR Candidate's prior learning.
 - i. If the SME deems the learning is equivalent to College course learning requirements, the College awards credit(s) with grade values.



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2. Candidate Eligibility

- a. Candidates interested in pursuing a Cambrian College credential who, through work and Life Experience, have acquired learning that may be equivalent to the course learning outcomes of one or more College course(s).
- b. Candidates must be at least 18 years of age.
- c. Candidates are not required to be registered Cambrian College students.

3. Candidate Requirements

- a. Candidates must fulfill assessment requirements within three months of an application.
- b. PLAR Candidates must go through the regular admission process to gain entrance into a College program.

4. PLAR Limitations

- a. Candidates are bound by the College's residency requirement –
 - i. For any certificate, diploma, advanced diploma or graduate certificate, the College does not award Advanced Standing of more than 25% of the total number of credits based on Prior Learning Assessment.
 1. In other words, a minimum of 25% of a program must be taken and successfully completed at the College.
 - ii. For any degree, the College does not award Advanced Standing of more than 50% of the total number of credits of the program based on Prior Learning Assessment.
- b. A student cannot complete PLAR for a course for which they do not have the prerequisite(s) or other requirement(s) unless approval is granted by the Program Coordinator or Dean/Chair responsible for the course.
- c. A student cannot complete PLAR for a course which they have previously audited.
- d. A student who has successfully completed a course via regular delivery cannot register for PLAR to achieve a better grade.
- e. A student who has not successfully completed a course via regular delivery cannot register for PLAR to achieve a passing grade.
- f. Wherever possible, PLAR shall be available to Candidates.
 - i. Where PLAR is not possible for a course, it shall be clearly documented on the course outline.

5. PLAR Results

- a. PLAR grades are made available to Candidates at the end of the semester in which the assessment was completed.
- b. PLAR grades are included in the calculation of the Candidate's grade point average (GPA).
- c. An "F" or "Fail" grade for a PLAR will not appear on a Candidate's transcript. These will only

appear on a grade report.

6. PLAR Fees

- a. Fees are set within the tuition policy directives of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU).
- b. These fees are charged over and above full-time fees and are payable prior to any assessment.
 - i. Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable irrespective of outcome.
- c. An application and remittance of fees for PLAR credit consideration must normally be submitted prior to the course start date, and no later than the last date for registrants to withdraw without academic penalty.

Responsibilities and Accountability

Vice President, Academic is responsibility for

- Ensuring that this policy and associated procedures are reviewed, communicated and fully implemented.

Deans/Chairs are responsible for

- Being familiar with the requirements of this policy.
- Ensuring the policy requirements are clearly communicated in a timely manner to their staff
- Ensuring that the terms of the policy are being upheld by faculty.
- Assigning a PLAR contact to liaise between the Pathways Office and faculty as necessary.
- Making available SMEs to determine appropriate assessment methods for Candidates, grade assessments and submission of results

Registrar is responsible for

- Managing the appropriate designation/recording and award of final grades as reflected on a student's transcript

Pathways Office is responsible for

- Coordinating and managing all PLAR related activities on behalf of the College
- Supporting students and prospective students in matters related to PLAR
- Supporting SMEs in matters related to PLAR
- Promoting, reviewing and monitoring PLAR procedures across the College
- Managing PLAR data and reporting, including maintaining PLAR records
- Coordinating the communication between the Pathways Office, staff, faculty and students regarding PLAR

Students are responsible for

- Being familiar with the requirements of this policy.
- Initiating the PLAR process and all subsequent requirements and submissions.
- Checking their enrolment status when applying for PLAR. Receiving PLAR credit may affect a



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student's course load, which in turn may affect fees and eligibility for financial support (OSAP), scholarships, bursaries and other sponsorships.

Related Procedures

- PLAR Process
- PLAR Student Guide
- PLAR Self-Assessment

Related Policies / Directives / Regulations

- Academic Appeal Policy
- Academic Evaluation Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Standing and Promotion Policy
- Auditing a Credit Course Policy
- Framework for Programs of Instruction Minister's Binding Policy Directive (MCU)
- Manual for Ontario Colleges, Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board 2020 (MCU)
- Official Student Records Policy
- Student Complaints Policy
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy
- Tuition and Ancillary Fees Minister's Binding Policy Directive (MCU)