

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy

Policy Title	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition	
Policy Holder	Vice President Academic	
Policy Approver(s)	Senior Team	
Related Policies	Ch5-s1-01	Course Evaluation and Grading
	Ch5-s1-02	Academic Appeals
	Ch5-s1-03	Transfer Credits
	Ch5-s1-05	Withdrawal from a Course
	Ch5-s3-03	Acquisition of Secondary Credential
Related Procedures	Ch5-s1-07b	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedure
Appendices		
Storage Location	Website - https://www.confederationcollege.ca/policies-and-procedures	
Effective Date	2026-04-01	
Next Review Date	2031-04-01	

Purpose

Confederation College recognizes prior learning and skills, knowledge or competencies that have been acquired through employment, informal learning and/or other life experiences.

Scope

This policy applies to candidates requesting evaluation of previous learning through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), to earn a grade in an eligible Confederation College course(s). Courses eligible for PLAR are those offered by Confederation College that lead to an Ontario College credentials, including certificates, diplomas or degrees.

Definitions

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

PLAR is a process of evaluating learning, knowledge and skills acquired through life experience such as self-directed study, paid employment, voluntary work, professional development, travel, lived experience and other learning not acquired through formal postsecondary education. In order for this learning to be credited, it must be described or demonstrated, assessed as to its nature, extent, and depth, and deemed equivalent and current when compared to course or program learning outcomes. PLAR can be assessed according to various mechanisms.

Portfolio Assessment

Portfolio assessment is a method that involves the evaluation of an organized collection of materials developed by a candidate to demonstrate learning achievements and relate them to the stated outcomes/competencies of college courses or programs.

Exam Process

The exam process may involve a variety of written and non-written evaluation methods for the purpose of measuring a candidate's competency with respect to course/program learning outcomes.

Residency

Residency refers to the minimum number of credits, or corresponding length of time, that a student must be registered with Confederation College.

Candidate

For the purposes of this policy, a candidate is an individual requesting assessment of prior learning through PLAR process.

Governing Laws and Regulations

Ministry of Colleges and Universities – Governance and Accountability Framework.

1. General PLAR Elements**Eligibility**

- 1.1. A candidate for PLAR is 19 years of age or older or has an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent.
- 1.2. In order to receive a credential with credits obtained through PLAR, a candidate must meet the program admission requirements. However, candidates are not required to be registered Confederation College students in order to be assessed.
- 1.3. The student's prior learning will be assessed by academic faculty who have subject matter expertise in the area.
- 1.4. Students who have failed a course previously or have been unsuccessful in a PLAR challenge within the past year (12 months) will not be permitted a PLAR challenge in the same course.
- 1.5. Courses that are challenged through PLAR are not counted in your course load for the semester. This may have an impact on a student's eligibility for Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), sponsorship, scholarships, and awards.

Maximum Credits towards a Diploma or Certificate

- 1.6. Credit for courses obtained through PLAR replace no more than 75% of the courses required for such programs.

Maximum Credits towards a Degree

- 1.7. Credit for courses obtained through PLAR replace no more than 50% of the course credits required for any degree program.

2. Assessment Process for PLAR Courses

- 2.1. If a candidate applies for a PLAR in a course in the same semester as they should be registered for that course, the PLAR must be completed and submitted by the end of the semester. Students who may be registered in the course(s) that they wish to challenge will be withdrawn from the course(s) if they choose to pursue the PLAR option. PLAR registration must occur before the official College deadline for course withdrawal. If students apply for the PLAR after the refund date they will be withdrawn without academic penalty and no refund will be issued.
- 2.2. Candidates applying for portfolio assessment in practicum and field placement must do so before the course begins. Program-specific restrictions may exist.
- 2.3. Candidates may appeal Portfolio Assessments in accordance with the Academic Grade Appeal Guidelines.
- 2.4. Exam Process results cannot be appealed.
- 2.5. A candidate may re-apply for a course PLAR after an unsuccessful attempt, after 12 months has passed. The candidate is required to provide a reasonable explanation of additional relevant learning.

Noncompliance

It is the joint responsibility of the Registrar and Associate Dean to ensure that the guidelines contained in this procedure are followed and adhered to in order to effectively and efficiently support student focused learning objectives. Lack of compliance will result in delays in academic operations and student success.

Revision History

Version	Change	Author	Date of Change
2024-07-10	See below	Lynn Dyll	2026-03-10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminology updated (“Challenge Process” replaced with “Exam Process”). • “Block Challenge” removed from formal definitions. • Coordinator now determines Portfolio vs Exam Process. • Withdrawal processing centralized through Registration Services. • Administrative routing clarified (email documentation and Client Services notification). • Non-compliance language updated in the Procedure to reflect Registrar and Associate Dean responsibility. 			