

TYPE:	Academic
TITLE:	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
NO.:	ACAD-121
RESPONSIBILITY:	Executive Vice-President, Academic + Associate Vice-President, Academic (International & Enrolment)
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
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1. Introduction

Durham College recognizes the value of skills and knowledge attained through prior work, volunteer, life and/or academic experiences and encourages applications for academic credit for these experiences through the [prior learning assessment](#) process.

2. Purpose

This policy and procedure provide the framework for the application, demonstration, evaluation, and recognition of prior student learning and/or experiences that may be deemed equivalent to current Durham College course requirements.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

4.1. Whenever possible, maximum recognition of prior learning will be given.

4.2. To apply for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) consideration, students must have a secondary school diploma or equivalent, or meet mature student status.

4.3. A student is not eligible to initiate the PLAR process if they:

- were registered in, or audited the course in the previous ten (10) months;
- failed a previous PLAR attempt of the course;
- failed the course within the previous two (2) academic years; or
- were unsuccessful in a previous attempt to PLAR the course, as the PLAR process may be initiated only once per course.

4.4. Not all courses are eligible for PLAR consideration.

- 4.5. For all certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas and graduate certificates, no more than 75 per cent of a program of study can be obtained through PLAR. For all degrees, no more than 50 per cent of a program of study can be obtained through PLAR.
- 4.6. Timelines for completing the PLAR process shall be prescribed but may vary based on factors including, but not limited to: availability of faculty subject matter experts and; access to appropriate testing facilities.
- 4.7. Fees for processing PLAR applications will be levied.
- 4.8. Course credits earned through the PLAR process do not automatically provide direct entry into a program. PLAR candidates must still meet all admission requirements for a program.
- 4.9. Course credits earned through the PLAR process do not override requirements for completion of pre-requisite courses in a program of study.
- 4.10. PLAR assessment methods shall be determined by an appropriate subject matter expert from the applicable program area.
- 4.11. Credits obtained through the PLAR process will be assigned a grade. Numeric grades assigned from successful PLAR assessments impact a student's grade point average.
- 4.12. All academic policies apply to the PLAR process.

5. Procedure

- 5.1. Applications for PLAR
 - 5.1.1. Applications for PLAR should be completed prior to course commencement, however, they will be accepted up to ten (10) business days from the start of the semester. Forms for the PLAR process are available in the Office of the Registrar, Faculty offices, and on Durham College's website.
 - 5.1.2. Applicants can obtain current course outlines from the student portal.
 - 5.1.3. Applicants are required to complete a Prior Learning and Recognition Self-Assessment Form, to compare their knowledge, skills and/or experience to the learning outcomes documented in the course outline.
 - 5.1.4. Applicants will provide completed PLAR Self-Assessment Forms to the appropriate program coordinator or designate to determine PLAR eligibility. Contact information for the appropriate program coordinator or designate is available through the relevant Faculty office or the PLAR office in the Office of the Registrar.

- 5.1.5. Program coordinators or designates will review the completed self-assessment form within five (5) business days of receipt. During this review, program coordinators or designates may ask clarifying questions about an applicant's skills, knowledge and/or work experience.
- 5.1.6. Program coordinators or designates will sign and return the self-assessment form to the applicant, indicating approval or denial of the applicant's eligibility for PLAR.
- 5.1.7. An eligible applicant will provide the original, signed and approved PLAR Self-Assessment Form to the PLAR Coordinator in the Office of the Registrar and complete the PLAR Application form to register. Fees must be paid at the time of registration.
- 5.1.8. The PLAR Coordinator will notify the appropriate Faculty office of a registered PLAR candidate.
- 5.1.9. A student is considered to have initiated a PLAR attempt upon registration.
- 5.1.10. Courses with a [mass challenge](#) option require a minimum of ten (10) post-secondary students to be registered for the same PLAR assessment, by the published deadlines, for fees to be assessed as such.

5.2. Evaluation Process

- 5.2.1. PLAR assessments are created by subject matter experts. Academic Faculties have twenty (20) business days after notification of a registered PLAR candidate to report the grade outcome to the PLAR Coordinator.
- 5.2.2. In order to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required to meet learning outcomes in a course, PLAR candidates will be evaluated using one or more assessment methods including, but not limited to:
 - Comprehensive written examination;
 - Free response assignment;
 - Performance test;
 - Observation/demonstration;
 - Portfolio;
 - Product assessment; and
 - Oral interview or presentation.

5.3. Outcome

- 5.3.1. The PLAR Coordinator will document the grade in the student information system as appropriate.

- 5.3.2. Passing grades obtained through the PLAR process will appear on the student's academic record, and are calculated as part of a student's [grade point average](#).
- 5.3.3. Failing grades obtained through the PLAR process will not be recorded on the student's academic record. Failing grades will be noted in the student information system for reference, as the candidate will not be permitted to PLAR the same course a second time.
- 5.3.4. The PLAR coordinator will communicate the grade attained in the PLAR process to the candidate within two (2) business days of its receipt from the academic Faculty.
- 5.3.5. Credits earned through the PLAR process do not automatically provide direct entry into a program of study. PLAR candidates must still meet all entry requirements for a program.

5.4. Appeals

- 5.4.1. Eligibility for PLAR cannot be appealed. Students may appeal a PLAR grade using the grade appeal process.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. It is the responsibility of the Executive Vice-President, Academic, to ensure this policy and procedure are fully implemented.
- 6.2. It is the responsibility of academic Faculties to identify appropriate subject matter experts, coordinate the creation and/or grading of PLAR challenges and communicate the outcome of PLAR challenges to the PLAR Coordinator in the Office of the Registrar.
- 6.3. It is the responsibility of program coordinators or their designates to determine applicant eligibility for the PLAR process.
- 6.4. It is the responsibility of the PLAR Coordinator to facilitate the processing of applications, as well as the documentation and communication of results to PLAR candidates.
- 6.5. It is the responsibility of applicants to complete the self-assessment process and meet deadlines as provided during the PLAR process.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

8. Non-compliance implications

Failure to comply with this policy and procedure puts the College in conflict with the ministerial directive on prior learning and assessment.

Failure to comply with the timelines associated with this policy and procedure may result in applicant ineligibility for PLAR.

9. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Board of Governors Executive Limitations Policy: Programs of Instruction
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities - Minister's Binding Policy Directive on Frameworks for Programs of Instruction
- Prior Learning and Recognition Self-Assessment Form
- PLAR Registration Form
- Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board – Manual for Ontario Colleges: Three Year Degrees/Four Year Degrees