

Title	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
Number	E2004
Category	Admissions/Registrar

1. PURPOSE

Langara recognizes and values the significant learning that can be attained through life and work experiences. The purpose of this policy is to establish principles, standards, and criteria for assessment by valid and reliable means, and recognition of knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired through previous formal and non-formal education for academic credit/continuing education units (CEU).

2. DEFINITIONS

Challenge exam – a test or exam (written or oral) that is designed to validate the knowledge of the candidate as it relates to course requirements.

Continuing Education Unit – the value assigned to a Continuing Studies course or some other form of Continuing Studies learning that counts towards program or credential completion.

Credit – the value assigned to a Regular Studies course or some other form of Regular Studies learning that counts towards program or credential completion.

Demonstration – assessment of hands-on-learning such as competence in operating special equipment or conducting experiments.

Exemption – a waiver of a requirement; exempted course may need to be replaced with an alternative.

External evaluation – assessment provided by an expert other than a qualified College assessor; assessment method may include, but is not limited to, performance evaluation, letter of validation, or worksite assessment, and may require follow-up by a qualified College assessor.

Fee for assessment – the cost associated with the assessment of previous learning, distinct from tuition and number of course credit/CEU awarded.

Flexible Assessment – equivalent term for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

Interview – a personalized oral assessment that clarifies areas of learning.

Non-formal education – acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities through non-accredited, non-recognized studies in jurisdictions where there is no articulation agreement; demonstrated proof of having met professional competencies through non-credit courses or employer sponsored training; completion of professional licenses or certificates outside of the post-

secondary education system.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) – student receives credit/CEU for learning that has occurred in a non-standard or non-traditional environment, such as self-directed study, non-formal education, paid employment, volunteer work, travel, and non-accredited courses.

Project/Products/Portfolio – documents or objects that have been produced by the candidate and demonstrate tangible proof of accomplishment and achievement of the learning outcomes.

Qualified College assessor – a faculty member, Continuing Studies instructor, or Continuing Studies subject matter expert who possesses the necessary expertise, credentials, and experience to evaluate a candidate's knowledge, skills, and competencies against established learning outcomes or industry standards.

Reflection/Self-assessment – assessment performed by the candidate, with the aid of an established form or questionnaire; may require a parallel assessment by a field expert, preceptor, or assessor.

Standardized test – focused around widely recognized standards (as set by a department or professional/sectoral organization) that are equivalent to the course objectives.

Transfer credit – credit granted for the completion of a course or program at another post-secondary institution with which an articulation agreement has been reached; the course may be equivalent (assigned credit) or at an appropriate year level in a subject or program area (unassigned credit); it is distinct from PLAR.

Worksite assessment – student is observed performing tasks as a part of normal work routine, or as specifically assigned, in the place of work; if performed by an external assessor, it may be followed up by a self-assessment and/or interview with a qualified College assessor.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 Through a standardized prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) process, knowledge and skills that a student has attained through previous life and work experiences will be assessed. When that prior learning is determined to be equivalent to the required learning outcomes of a PLAR eligible course or program, credit/CEU will be granted.

Awarding of PLAR Credit or Continuing Education Unit

- 3.2 Credit/CEU will only be awarded for demonstrated knowledge and skills that are equivalent to achievement of the learning outcomes/competencies for specific PLAR eligible course(s).
- 3.3 Departments/programs/units will determine which courses are available for PLAR and the appropriate means of assessment of students' prior learning.
- 3.4 Education Council must approve course eligibility for PLAR.
- 3.5 Eligibility for PLAR is noted on course outlines.

Limitations

- 3.6 PLAR is only available to students who have been admitted into a Langara program.
- 3.7 PLAR is not available to students currently on suspension.
- 3.8 Students will not receive credit/CEU through PLAR for learning that was previously taken for credit or has been previously assessed for transfer credit.
- 3.9 Credit/CEU earned through prior learning and recognition as transfer credit from other Canadian accredited post-secondary institutions will not be accepted. Students must complete the PLAR process at Langara to receive credit/CEU.
- 3.10 Course(s) in which the student did not achieve the minimum academic requirements, at Langara or other post-secondary institutions, are ineligible for PLAR.
- 3.11 Request for PLAR may be denied or delayed if:
 - a) the course is not eligible for PLAR
 - b) a qualified College assessor is not available to complete a PLAR assessment
 - c) the student's prior experience/learning is not deemed adequate to achieve a reasonable expectation of success in meeting the approved course learning outcomes
 - d) the student has attempted PLAR for the same course unsuccessfully.

Assessment

- 3.12 Assessment and evaluation of prior learning, and the determination of competency and credit/CEU awarded, will be done only by a qualified College assessor who has the appropriate subject matter expertise and received training in the PLAR process.
- 3.13 Methods of assessment evaluate a student's ability to meet approved course and/or program learning outcomes/competencies and level of achievement (knowledge, skills, and abilities).
- 3.14 Methods of assessment may include, but are not limited to, projects/assignments, portfolios, practicum evaluations, challenge examinations, standardized tests, performances, and skills demonstration.
- 3.15 The same rigor of assessment will be applied to prior learning assessment as for regular course offerings.

Grading, Residency, and Recognition of Credit or Continuing Education Units

- 3.16 Students applying for PLAR are considered to have already mastered the content and therefore may not appeal a final PLAR grade.
- 3.17 Grades for PLAR will be consistent with the grading mode of the PLAR eligible course.
- 3.18 PLAR credit/CEU is subject to the residency requirement as articulated in the Regular Studies Credentials and Micro-Credentials Policy F1001 and the Continuing Studies Credentials and Micro-Credentials Policy F1011.

- 3.19 Credit/CEU awarded from assessment of prior learning will be identified as such on the student transcript.
- 3.20 Grades, letter or S/U, earned through PLAR are not included in the student's GPA calculation (note: this only applies to Regular Studies).
- 3.21 Credit/CEU granted for prior learning at Langara may not always be transferable to other institutions. It is the responsibility of the student to determine transferability.

Registration Fees and Student Loan Eligibility

- 3.22 The fees for assessment will be based on the services performed for each course requested. The fees will not be determined by the amount of credit/CEU awarded. PLAR fees are non-refundable.
- 3.23 If a student fails to complete a PLAR assessment within the stipulated time, it will be canceled.
- 3.24 Credit/CEU awarded for PLAR may be used to meet eligibility requirements for scholarships, bursaries, and awards, but will not be included in semester credit/CEU load.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

For inquiries relating to this policy, contact the Provost and Vice-President, Academic.

5. REGULATIONS/PROCEDURES

[Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedures](#)
[Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition \(PLAR\) Process Flow Diagram](#)

History/Revision	
Origination Date	January 1999
Amendment Date(s)	March 18, 2025 June 23, 2020
Next Review Date	March 18, 2029