

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE	
Administrative Procedure	Administrative Procedure Number
<b>Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Program (PLAR)</b>	<b>303</b>
Directional Policy	
<b>300 - Student Achievement and Well-Being</b>	

### **Title of Administrative Procedure:**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

### **Date Approved:**

April 8, 2025

### **Projected Review Date:**

2030

### **Directional Policy Alignment:**

Student Achievement and Well-Being

### **Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:**

This Administrative Procedure informs priorities under the [2021-2025 Strategic Plan, Vision, and Mission: Building a Community That Accompanies](#), particularly the goals of Inspiring Faith, Providing Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and Nurturing Mental Health & Well-Being. PVNC Catholic acknowledges that students come to us with a variety of experiences obtained outside of the Ontario Secondary School system. Recognition of these reflects our priority of creating welcoming, Christ-centered communities that foster safe, loving, and inclusive learning for all members of our Catholic schools. At the heart of our vision, we support the God-given dignity and worth of every person.

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Administrative Procedure supports our Vision of Achieving Excellence in Catholic Education by ensuring our structures, processes, relationships, and actions reflect our Gospel values and Catholic Social Teachings. This vision calls the Board to these Strategic Priorities:

[PVNCCDSB Board Vision, Mission, and Strategic Priorities](#)

**Purpose:**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby eligible students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school instruction. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits toward the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

**Background:**

The PLAR process involves two components: "challenge" and "equivalency". All credits granted through the PLAR process – that is, through either the challenge process or the equivalency process – must represent the same standards of achievement as credits granted to students who have taken the courses.

Students may use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit or equivalency for a related course within the Ontario curriculum, if they wish to earn credit for the course without taking the course.

**Action Required:****1.0 Guidelines: PLAR Challenge Process**

- a. The challenge process (PLAR Challenge Process / Information Sheet ([Appendix A](#)) is the process whereby students' prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document.
- b. Given that young people benefit in many ways from the learning experiences offered in secondary school, PLAR has a specific, limited function in the Ontario secondary school program. For regular day school students, a maximum of four credits may be granted through the challenge process for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses; or for Levels 1, 2, and 3 in classical and international languages courses; and Levels 3, 4, and 5 in Native languages courses. Students may earn a maximum of two credits in any one discipline (the subject area covered by any one curriculum policy document).
- c. The challenge process is an evaluation process and may not be used as a way for students to improve their mark in a course for which they have already earned a credit, nor as a way to obtain a credit for a course they have previously failed.

- d. A student must challenge for credit for an entire course, whether it is a full-credit or a partial-credit course.
  - e. Credit will be granted only for the specific course for which the student has successfully challenged for credit.
  - f. Students cannot be granted credits through the challenge process for any of the following courses:
    - i. a course in any subject if a credit has already been granted for a course in that subject in a later grade either as a single credit or as part of a block equivalency
    - ii. a course for which credit has already been granted or for which there is significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted (e.g., a student cannot challenge for credit for an academic course if he or she has already earned a credit for the applied course at the same grade level, and vice versa)
    - iii. a transfer course
    - iv. a locally developed course
    - v. a cooperative education course
    - vi. a course in English as a second language (ESL), English literacy development (ELD), or Anglais pour débutants (APD), if the student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum policy documents for English for Grades 9 to 12 under OSS (i.e., the documents for English-language schools or the documents for French-language schools) or from the curriculum guidelines for English or Anglais/English for Grades 9 to 12/OACs under OSIS
    - vii. a course in French as a second language (FSL), Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF), or Perfectionnement du français (PDF), if the student has one or more credits in Français from the curriculum policy documents for Français for Grades 9 to 12 under OSS or the curriculum guideline for Français for Grades 9 to 12/OACs under OSIS
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- 1.1 The responsibility for PLAR shall be carried out under the direction of the principal of the school in which the student is registered.
  - 1.2 A student must obtain permission from the principal of the regular day school in which they are registered if they intend to apply for a PLAR at any other public or inspected private school.
  - 1.3 Arrangements may be made with other Boards to provide opportunities for eligible students to challenge for credit for courses that are not offered by the Board. Students/families will be responsible to cover travel / accommodations costs should travel be necessary.

- 1.4 Students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to their principal (or designate) they would likely be successful in the challenge process. The responsibilities of the student include:
- Initiating the PLAR challenge by approaching the school Principal (or designate) for information regarding the process.
  - Completing the application process by submitting the application form ([Appendix B](#)) by the due date.
  - Gathering reasonable evidence and completing all supporting documents - evidence of relevant learning form(s) ([Appendix C](#)), reference(s) ([Appendix D](#)), sample product ([Appendix E](#))
  - Completing the formal tests and other assessments by the due date(s) as determined by the Supervisory Officer responsible.
- 1.5 In cases where a student who is an adult, or the parent/guardian of a student who is not an adult, disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether or not the student should challenge for credit, the parent/guardian or adult student may ask the superintendent who holds the student success portfolio to review the matter.
- 1.6 A student will be permitted to challenge for credit for a specific course a second time after a reasonable interval, if the student can provide reasonable evidence to the principal that he or she is likely to be successful after having benefited from additional study and experience during the interval.

## **2.0 Guidelines: PLAR Equivalency Process**

- 2.1 Students who are eligible for equivalency credits are those who transfer to Ontario secondary schools from non-inspected private schools or schools outside Ontario.
- 2.2 Equivalency credits are granted for placement only. The principal of the receiving school will, in the process of deciding where the student should be placed, determine as equitably as possible the total credit equivalency of the student's previous learning, and the number of compulsory and optional credits still to be earned.
- 2.3 In order to ensure provincial consistency in establishing equivalency for student placement purposes, the information outlined in [Section 6.1.1.1 and 6.1.1.2 of Ontario Schools](#) is utilized to determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the secondary school diploma.

### 3.0 Guidelines: PLAR Equivalency Process for Mature Students

- 3.1 After a review of the student's existing documentation and evidence of prior learning, principals will determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that a mature student needs to meet diploma requirements and determine how the PLAR process can best be applied.
- 3.2 For Grade 9 or 10 credits the equivalency process is as follows:
- students participate in individual assessment(s) consisting of four subject-based assessments, as needed, for the purpose of granting Grade 9 or 10 credits
  - up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits may be granted through the Grade 9 or 10 equivalency process at the discretion of the principal following individual assessment
  - There is no challenge process for Grade 9 and 10 credits.
- 3.3 For Grade 11 or 12 credits the equivalency process is as follows:
- students participate in an evaluation of their credentials, other appropriate documentation, and evidence from jurisdictions within and outside Ontario for the purpose of granting credit for Grade 11 or 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum
  - up to 10 of 14 Grade 11 and 12 credits may be granted through either the equivalency process.
  - a minimum of four Grade 11 and 12 credits must be earned by taking the necessary courses, with the following exception:
    - at the discretion of the principal, mature students who present evidence of a completed postsecondary diploma and/or degree from an accredited Canadian post-secondary institution, as well as those with an Ontario Certificate of Apprenticeship and/or Qualification may be granted up to 30 credits for the OSSD under Ontario Schools.
- 3.4 Following the equivalency process, any remaining required credits may be earned by taking the required courses.
- 3.5 Mature students who have previously accumulated 26 or more credits towards the diploma (excluding those with postsecondary credentials as noted in 2.3) must successfully complete the required number of courses

to bring their total number of credits up to 30 before they will be eligible to receive the OSSD.

- 3.6 Mature students who are working towards the OSSD under Ontario Schools and have not already successfully completed each of the four Grade 11 and 12 compulsory credit requirements, a mature student must obtain a credit that meets the compulsory credit requirement(s) under Ontario Schools in each of the following:
- English, Grade 11 – only the following substitution is permitted:
    - students may count a maximum of three credits in ESL or ELD towards the four compulsory credits in English
    - the fourth credit must be for a Grade 12 compulsory English course
  - English, Grade 12 - no substitution is permitted
  - Mathematics, Grade 11 or 12 - no substitution is permitted
  - Computer Studies, Science, Technological Education, or Math, Grade 11 or 12
- 3.7 As per Ontario Schools, all students are required to meet the secondary school literacy graduation requirement in order to earn an OSSD. Mature students should be encouraged to meet the literacy graduation requirement by successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Mature students also have the option to enrol directly in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) without attempting the OSSLT.
- 3.8 At the discretion of the Principal, the number of hours of community involvement activities that a mature student who is working towards the OSSD under Ontario Schools may have to complete (between 0 and 40).

## **Responsibilities:**

### **The Board of Trustees is responsible for:**

- ensuring alignment of this administrative procedure with the Student Achievement and Well-Being Policy;
- reviewing this administrative procedure as part of its regular policy and procedure review cycle.

### **The Director of Education is responsible for:**

- providing leadership and designating resources to ensure the implementation of and compliance with this administrative procedure.

**Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:**

- ensuring principals are consistent with the application of this Administrative Procedure;
- ensuring that any employee for whom they have supervisory responsibility is aware of the requirements under this Administrative Procedure; and
- upon written request, reviewing a principal's decision to deny a PLAR challenge.

**Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:**

- ensuring provincial consistency in establishing equivalency for students for placement purposes, by using as a guide the information outlined in [Section 6.1.1.1 and 6.1.1.2 of Ontario Schools](#), to determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the secondary school diploma;
- ensuring that students are informed that they are responsible for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the requirements, and ensuring that students who are not adults (i.e., students who are under the age of eighteen) are informed that they need parental approval before applying to challenge for credit for a course;
- ensuring that every prospective applicant and their parents/guardians, if they are not an adult, are informed about policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST);
- ensuring that every prospective applicant is provided with an application form ([Appendix B](#)), as well as materials that indicate what is expected in the course (i.e., the curriculum expectations) for which the student wishes to challenge for credit;
- evaluating each application in consultation with the student's parents (or with the student if the student is an adult) and appropriate school/board staff (i.e., principal of adult & continuing education, guidance counsellor, teacher-adviser, and subject teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur;
- ensuring that only qualified teachers within the appropriate subject area, who are certified by the Ontario College of Teachers, conduct the PLAR process; and
- determining when a mature student was previously enrolled in the Ontario secondary school system on the basis of evidence (for example, the Ontario Student Transcript (OST), and/or the Ontario Provincial Report Card, Grades 9–12).

**Educators are responsible for:**

- developing and administering a variety of assessment and evaluation strategies to elicit evidence of learning, which may include written assignments, demonstration/performances, laboratory work, quizzes, observation of, and conversation with, the student;
- evaluating and reporting on the student's performance relative to curricular expectations; and
- reviewing the evidence of relevant learning that the student provides, and offering assistance where needed.

**Students are responsible for:**

- providing evidence of their learning within established timelines, with educator assistance as needed;
- communicating and working collaboratively with parents and teachers to support their learning, their achievement, and their well-being;
- reviewing the PLAR Process / Information Sheet ([Appendix A](#));
- completing and submitting the application form ([Appendix B](#)) by the due date; and
- gathering evidence of learning and submitting completed supporting documents - evidence of relevant learning form(s) ([Appendix C](#)), reference(s) ([Appendix D](#)), sample product ([Appendix E](#)).

**Parents/Guardians are responsible for:**

- Familiarizing themselves with the PLAR Process / Information Sheet ([Appendix A](#));
- Supporting students to complete the application form ([Appendix B](#)) and supporting documents ([Appendix C](#), [Appendix D](#) & [Appendix E](#)).

**Progress Indicators:**

- All PLAR processes are implemented according to this Administrative Procedure;
- PVNC Catholic schools are using PLAR forms to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate and provide evidence of their learning experience and accomplishments; and
- PVNC Catholic schools are consistently applying PLAR processes for students challenging credits towards their OSSD.

**Definitions:**

**Challenge:** The process whereby a student's prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a Grade 10, 11, or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later.



**Discipline:** The term discipline refers to the subject area covered by any one curriculum policy document. All courses in that document are considered to belong to that discipline.

**Equity:** A condition of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

**Equivalency:** The process of assessing credentials from other jurisdictions.

**Evaluation:** The process of judging the quality of student learning based on established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. Evaluation is based on assessments of learning that provide data on student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/subject/course, often at the end of a period of learning.

**Mature Student:** A student who is at least 18 years of age on or after January 1 of the current school year and who is enrolled in a program for the purpose of obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

**Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (PLAR):** The formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents to earn credits toward the secondary school diploma. The PLAR process involves two components: "challenge" and "equivalency".

**Reasonable Evidence:** Documentation that the curriculum expectations of the course have already been achieved and that the student would likely be successful in the challenge process.

## **Appendices:**

Appendix A - [PLAR Process / Information Sheet](#)

Appendix B - [Application Package to Challenge for Credit for a Course](#)

Appendix C - [Evidence of Relevant Learning](#)

Appendix D - [References](#)

Appendix E - [Sample Products](#)

Appendix F - [Cumulative Tracking Record](#)

## **Resources:**

[Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010](#)

[Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 129 PLAR:  
Implementation in Secondary Schools](#)

[Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 132 PLAR: Prior Learning  
Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students – Revised Mandatory  
Requirements](#)

[Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements,  
2024](#)