

## **Assessment and recognition of prior learning and skills procedure**

### **Parent policy**

Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR) Policy

### **Purpose**

The procedures outline the responsibility for, and activities related to the assessment and recognition of prior learning. The process provided will ensure that all PLARs are processed and administered in consistent and efficient manner.

### **Scope**

The policy applies to credit and non-credit courses.

### **Compliance**

Employees, contractors, and learners are responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with Bow Valley College (BVC) policies, procedures, and any other attached documentation that relate to their position, employment, or enrolment at the College.

### **Procedures**

#### **1. Roles and responsibility**

- 1.1. The Vice President, Academic and Chief Learning Officer is responsible for this policy and procedure.
- 1.2. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the overall administration of this policy and tracking of all PLAR requests.
- 1.3. Deans, based on the advice from coordinators and faculty, are responsible for identifying programs and courses within their respective Schools, for which a learner may apply for credit by PLAR. Exceptions to the procedures outlined may be made with the approval of the appropriate Dean.
- 1.4. Coordinators, in consultation with content experts when required, are responsible for determining whether a learner application for PLAR meets established eligibility criteria. Coordinators are responsible for developing, disclosing, and monitoring processes for assessment of demonstrated prior learning.

#### **2. PLAR processes**

- 2.1. An individual may request a PLAR Assessment once they have been accepted or waitlisted to a program, including Open Studies.
- 2.2. PLAR requests are submitted by the learner to the program area responsible for the course for which prior learner credit is being requested and the learner will be informed within 30 days as to whether or not the program area agrees to do an assessment or not. If the request is agreed to, the department informs the learner of the fee for the assessment, the details of the assessment process, and the timeline for assessment completion.
- 2.3. The learner must pay the non-refundable PLAR fee before being assessed.
- 2.4. After the fee is paid, the program areas make arrangements with the learner for the assessment.
- 2.5. Learners may not PLAR BVC courses that they have previously failed. Deans may approve exceptions where learners have had further experience or learning opportunities since they took the BVC course.

**3. Prior learning assessment**

- 3.1. The method of assessment will be tailored to the courses for which prior learning recognition is requested and will reflect the intent of the assessment. The assessment will ensure that the learning outcomes set out in the course outline have been met through prior learning. Prior learning may include but will not be limited to the following:
  - 3.1.1. *Portfolio Assessment* – a collection of information documenting an individual's competencies acquired through past experiences. The information contained in the portfolio serves as evidence of learning relevant to the outcomes of the course for which prior learning credit is being requested. Some additional assessment may be required.
  - 3.1.2. *Examinations and/or Assignments*–May include paper, online or oral exams, or written assignments used to assess the individual's competencies relevant to the course for which prior credit is being requested.
  - 3.1.3. *Skills Assessment* – Demonstration of skills within a prescribed environment. Typically used in laboratory, clinical or practicum settings for the expressed purpose of assessing and individual's ability to meet competencies of the course for which prior learning credit is being requested.
  - 3.1.4. *Review of Employer-Based Training* – Review of employer-based training to determine comparability with the content of a course offered by the College. Credit is granted in situations where the competencies acquired through employer-based training are found to be highly comparable to the outcomes of the course for which prior learning credit is being requested.
- 3.2. It is the responsibility of the individual requesting prior learning credit to provide all of the documentation and evidence required for the assessment of the prior learning.
- 3.3. Learners are advised to continue to attend the course for which they have requested a PLAR assessment until they have been notified of the outcome.
- 3.4. All materials submitted by applicants for a PLAR assessment are considered confidential, and are to be used only for the purpose for which they were submitted. PLAR assessment files are open to the applicant as outlined in the Learner Records & Information Policy – Collection, Access & Waivers (500-1-16). Assessors and others who may contribute material to this file are advised of this. Materials submitted by the applicant are not normally returned to the applicant unless specifically requested.
- 3.5. Granting of prior learning credit must be approved by a program coordinator.
- 3.6. Once the assessment is complete, the Office of the Registrar and the learner are notified of the assessment outcome by the academic department.

**4. Credit and graduation considerations**

- 4.1. Credits acquired through PLAR will be transcribed and will be noted as PLAR credits using a grade PL. The exception to this is for high school or upgrading courses for which a percentage or letter grade may be assigned through PLAR.
- 4.2. Unsuccessful outcomes of an assessment of prior learning will not be recorded on the transcript.
- 4.3. Credit awarded through PLAR will apply only to the designated course and will not constitute awarding of PLAR credit of any prerequisite to that course.
- 4.4. There is a time limitation with respect to how long PLAR credit for a particular course would be considered acceptable for purposes of credit toward program completion. This limitation is the same as the time limitation for the acceptability of transfer credit for that course. Time limitations for courses vary for each course and program.
- 4.5. Credits earned through Prior Learning Assessment are not used to determine full or part-time status.
- 4.6. As per the Academic Continuance and Graduation Policy and Procedure (#500-1-5), the usual residency requirement for graduation is 25% of a program, which allows learners to

receive up to 75% of program credits towards a Bow Valley College certificate or diploma through courses taken elsewhere or through courses credited through PLAR.

- 4.7. Learners will be advised that although credit awarded through PLAR may fulfill Bow Valley College graduation requirements, another institution may or may not recognize PLAR credit towards their own credential.

## **5. Appeals**

- 5.1. Decisions of the College with regard to the awarding of credit by PLAR may be appealed under the Learners Appeal Policy (#500-1-12).

## **6. Recognition of PLAR awarded by other institutions**

- 6.1. Bow Valley College will recognize courses awarded a PLAR grade at other institutions for transfer credit, provided the courses are otherwise eligible for transfer credit.

## **Definitions**

### **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR):**

Is a process of identifying, assessing and recognizing skills, competencies, and knowledge to facilitate the transfer of these skills, competencies, and knowledge of individuals into further learning and work. Skills, competencies and knowledge, may be acquired through formal, informal, non-formal or experiential learning gained through work experience, training, independent study, or volunteer activities.

(From *Advancing PLAR in Alberta: An Action Plan*. Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education. October 2008)

## Data sheet

### Responsible officer

Dean, School of Health and Wellness  
 Dean, School of Community Studies and Creative Technologies  
 Dean, Chiu School of Business  
 Director, Enrolment Services and Registrar

### Relevant dates

Approved	Executive Team: EXT202108-17-07
Effective	November 2015
Next review	November 2025
Modification history	Name Change October 2021 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rebranded 2021</li> <li>• Policy Committee reviewed and updated numbering format January 2022</li> </ul>
Verified by	Office of the President, March 2022*

### Related policy

Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning and Skills Policy (500-1-8)

### Associated policy(ies), procedure(s), and guideline(s)

Academic Continuance and Graduation (500-1-5)  
 Grading Policy (500-1-6)  
 Learner Appeals (500-1-12)  
 Learner Records & Information – Collection, Access & Waivers (500-1-16)  
 Learner Credit Registration Policy (500-1-17)  
 Transfer Credit Request (500-1-9)  
 Academic Accommodations and Support for Learners with Disabilities Policy & Procedure (500-1-4)