

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)

Approval Authority	Senate
Responsible Executive	Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Related Policies / Legislation	Transfer credit (107) Course Credit (105) Credentials (64) Final Grade Appeal (217) Board Policy on Tuition and Other Fees (BRP-205.01)

PURPOSE

This policy is to define Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), establish guiding principles, implement quality assurance standards, and provide clear criteria for UFV employees to create PLAR opportunities for students to have their other forms of learning assessed and then recognized.

SCOPE

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an umbrella term for a set of processes for a student to identify, document, and have their prior learning assessed to gain recognition/credit. RPL can include formal learning, non-formal learning, informal learning, credential recognition, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), articulation to external programming, challenge examination, and course equivalencies. The scope of this policy speaks to only to Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, the following definitions apply:

Credit: A numeric value assigned to a course which indicates the course's weight relative to courses across the university.

Challenge Examination: Where a student's learning is evaluated through a faculty-developed examination designed to test for knowledge directly related to the learning outcomes of a specific course.

Informal Learning: Where no specific learning purpose, objectives, or specific goals are set. Examples include, but are not limited to, self-directed, volunteer, independent or self-study, reading literature, participating in forums or chat rooms, completion of Massive Open Online

Course (MOOC), primary or additional languages acquired, applicable employment experience, new hire onboarding, cultural and community work, lived experience, and coaching and mentoring sessions.

Non-formal Learning: Where learning is structured and intentional to acquire a skill, knowledge, or ability. Examples include, but are not limited to, industry and workplace-based training, continuing study courses (for non-credit), private colleges and training institutions, conferences, webinars, professional development activities, licensure, apprenticeship, certifications, and co-op.

Portfolio: A collection of artifacts (e.g. documents, objects, and other evidence) compiled by the student that demonstrates tangible proof of learning.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): An assessment process that helps students obtain recognition/credit for a UFV course(s) or meet UFV program requirements by demonstration of what they know and can do. PLAR assessments can include but is not limited to, one or a combination of the following methods: challenge exam, oral exam/interview, performance assessment, product assessment, and portfolio assessment.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): An umbrella term for a set of processes that an individual uses to identify, document, and have their prior learning assessed to gain recognition/credit. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is one of the RPL processes; other processes include formal learning, non-formal learning, informal learning, credential recognition, articulation to external programming, challenge examination, and course equivalencies.

Subject Matter Expert (SME): A person who possesses the knowledge and expertise in a specific area or specialization, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The SME will be chosen by the Program Head or Dean based on knowledge, expertise and fit.

Transfer credit: The granting of credit by one institution for courses or programs successfully completed at another institution or agency. Credit may be given in one of the following ways:

- Assigned credit: Credit given for a specific UFV course when a course is recognized as equivalent.
- Unassigned credit: Credit given when a course or program is considered worthy of credit at UFV. It may be recorded as credit within a particular UFV discipline or as general unassigned credit.

Unassigned credit: Learning that does not equate to specific UFV courses but is considered worthy of credit towards a UFV program. Unassigned credit by PLAR may be recorded as credit within a particular UFV discipline or as general unassigned credit.

POLICY

The University of the Fraser Valley recognizes that learning takes place in a variety of ways, and that giving recognition for students' prior learning can improve students' access to and completion of programs, eliminate duplication of learning, and optimize the use of resources. Recognition granted in the form of credit or completion shall be given for demonstrated

learning that is consistent with the learning outcomes and standards required for UFV programs. The focus of the PLAR assessment is on the learning, rather than where or how the learning occurred.

UFV is committed to providing PLAR assessment processes that are accessible, inclusive, fair, transparent, respectful, valid, flexible, rigorous, and professionally supported while maintaining academic integrity.

REGULATIONS

PRINCIPLES

The university adheres to the following principles for PLAR:

1. The PLAR Office will be the centralized hub to mentor, coordinate, and track all UFV PLAR activities.
2. PLAR will only be offered to current students admitted to a UFV program or who are eligible to register under re-admission regulations.
3. PLAR will only be offered within the student's intended or current program of studies at UFV. Should students change disciplines or seek further learning with UFV, their previously awarded PLAR will be applied where applicable.
4. PLAR granted will be for course credit, course completion, and/or completion of program requirements.
5. Recognition will be awarded for learning where a minimum of 80% of the knowledge, skills, and attributes are demonstrated at a level of achievement appropriate to the subject, course, or program.
6. Recognition sought through PLAR cannot duplicate credit already granted via the Transfer Credit process.
7. One PLAR submission (e.g. the evidence of prior learning) may be eligible to grant recognition for more than one course.
8. If a student has failed a course, PLAR can be granted upon successful demonstration of informal and non-formal learning that occurred since the last course attempt. The limitations on course repeats apply as address in the UFV Academic Calendar.
9. Official course outlines will indicate whether PLAR is available. Not all UFV courses are eligible for PLAR. Non-eligibility will be determined by the program area in consultation with the PLAR Office. In instances where PLAR is not eligible for a course, a rationale will be provided on the official course outline.
10. Once a student has registered and paid for PLAR, withdrawals from the PLAR CRN are not permitted other than through the appeal process where extenuating circumstances beyond the students' control prevent the student from completing the assessment.
11. PLAR granted may not always transfer to other institutions. It is the student's responsibility to ask their receiving institution if they will accept the UFV PLAR granted.
12. Credit is awarded only for demonstrated learning that reflects knowledge, skills, and attributes at a level of achievement appropriate to the subject, course or program. Credit is not given for experience alone.
13. The determination of level, type, and amount of credit granted will be made only by UFV faculty members with expertise in the subject matter.

14. The timeline of the PLAR process from payment to completion is ideally completed within the same semester it began.

GRADING AND FORMAL RECOGNITION OF PLAR

1. PLAR recognition will be recorded in a consistent manner, university wide. PLAR recognition on the transcript will show the course, number of credits or level of unassigned credits, and a CR grade will be assigned. Unsuccessful PLAR attempts will not be listed on the student's transcript.
2. PLAR will not be granted for more than the program's residency rate. Within the program residency requirements PLAR can be combined with other forms of recognition such as transfer of credit or challenge examination.
3. PLAR credits will not be included in the calculation of the UFV Grade Point Average (GPA), will not count towards a student's semester course load, and will not apply to the qualifications for full-time or part-time student status, student financial aid, awards, scholarships, or the Dean's List.
4. UFV will grant transfer credit for credits obtained through PLAR from other recognized institutions on the same basis as if they had been taken through courses offered by that same institution.

APPEALS

Students who are unsuccessful in their PLAR attempt and disagree with the decision will first discuss the decision with the PLAR assessor to understand how the decision was determined. Following a discussion with the student, the PLAR assessor may change their decision or conduct an additional assessment. If the disagreement is not resolved, the student may appeal the decision.

Appeals related to the unsuccessful PLAR attempt must be submitted in writing, with a clear rationale and supporting documentation to the dean responsible for the discipline, and to the PLAR Office.

Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal request, the dean will respond to the student whether an appeal can be considered, based upon feedback from the original assessor. If the PLAR attempt clearly lacks demonstration that at least 80% of the learning outcome competencies were not met, then the original decision not to grant PLAR will be upheld.

If the PLAR appeal is granted, the dean may appoint a different assessor, request additional information and/or evidence from the student, or employ other strategies that could promote a successful PLAR attempt. The PLAR appeal attempt must be completed within a timeframe agreed upon by the dean and the student.

The decision by the dean is final. There will not be more than one PLAR appeal attempt.

FEES

1. The student will be charged a non-refundable PLAR fee, payable in advance, to proceed with the PLAR assessment.
2. Fees will be representative of the services provided in the PLAR assessment process.

3. Students will be responsible for any associated expenses including, but not limited to, travel (mileage), long-distance phone calls to the assessor, courier or mailing of documentation to the assessor, lab reagents, test strips, etc.
4. PLAR fees and compensation will be set, reviewed, and approved by the Board of Governors consistent with policy BRP 205.1.

APPENDICES/SOURCES

PLAR procedures, regulations, and further information may be found at:

The Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment: The RPL Quality Assurance Manual:
The MANUAL: <https://capla.ca/rpl-qa-manual/>

British Columbia's Prior Learning Action Network: <https://bcplan.ca>
