



## Medicine Hat College Policy PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)

Policy #:	AC-09
Policy Authority:	Dean, Student Services and Registrar
Executive Sponsor:	Vice-President, Academic and Provost
Approved by:	President and CEO
Effective Date:	June 30, 2023
Next Mandatory Review Date:	June 30, 2028
Frequency of Review:	Every 5 years

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### 1. OBJECTIVE

This policy identifies the criteria that governs eligibility for assessing and granting credit and/or advanced placement for prior learning (formal, informal, and non-formal).

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in a credit program at Medicine Hat College (MHC).

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- **Advanced Credit:** a grade awarded for course work completed through a non-credit program (or other established educational program pathway) that is comparable to an academic course(s) in learning objectives, outcomes, and hours. Transcribed as 'AC' on transcripts.
- **Challenge Exam:** a comprehensive written exam used to demonstrate knowledge and competencies specific to a course.
- **Formal Learning:** knowledge and competencies acquired through credit courses and programs offered at post-secondary institutions; normally appears on transcripts.
- **Informal Learning:** knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through life and work experience.
- **Non-formal Learning:** learning acquired through non-credit courses, on-the-job training, and professional workshops.
- **PLAR Assessor:** a faculty member whose content/subject matter expertise deems them an appropriate evaluator of acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies.
- **Prior Learning:** learning acquired through formal, informal, and non-formal learning experiences. Students granted a prior learning assessment who are successful will receive an awarded grade of 'PL' for the course in which credit is earned. Students who are unsuccessful will receive a grade of 'NC.'

- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR):** a process of identifying, assessing, and recognizing skills, competencies, and knowledge of individuals learned through informal, non-formal, experiential, or formal means.

#### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 MHC abides by the principles outlined by the Alberta Council on Admission and Transfer (ACAT) with regards to prior learning assessment. MHC is committed to reducing barriers to student mobility.
- 4.2 MHC is committed to the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment's (CAPLA) nine guiding principles for quality recognition of prior learning practices.

#### 5. DIRECTIVES

- 5.1 The PLAR process is conducted in a student-centered manner, adhering to PLAR practices that demonstrate quality and excellence.
- 5.2 The PLAR process promotes access and flexibility while maintaining academic integrity specific to disciplines, and the assessment process will be appropriate to the skills, competencies and knowledge required within that discipline.
- 5.3 The process is conducted in as timely a manner as is required in order to appropriately assess skills, competencies, and knowledge. This process may require significant timelines as well as significant effort/resources on the part of the student and MHC.
- 5.4 PLAR is based on demonstrated learning that is appropriate to the course and program to which the student has been admitted.
- 5.5 PLAR assessment is completed by content/subject matter experts, seeking external advice as necessary. Examples of acceptable assessment methods include, but is not limited to, challenge exams, portfolios, practical demonstrations, essays or projects, or interviews.
- 5.6 MHC supports the principle that students should not be required to repeat previous learning experiences in which competence has been demonstrated.
- 5.7 Each division/program is responsible for outlining any restrictions in student access to PLAR and for obtaining approval for any restrictions by General Academic Council for publication in the Academic Calendar.
- 5.8 Fees for PLAR are billed at 50 percent of the regular tuition rate and associated fees will also be billed at 50 percent for the course.
- 5.9 Successful PLAR course work will receive a grade of 'PL' in order to ensure compliance with Association of Registrars of Universities and Colleges Canada (ARUCC) transcript recommendations. A grade of 'NC' will be awarded for unsuccessful completion of a PLAR.
- 5.10 The maximum number of credits awarded through PLAR must not exceed 50 percent of the credential for which credit is sought (certificate, diploma, or applied degree).
- 5.11 Students must meet all residency requirements for the program within which they are registered. PLAR coursework is counted toward residency requirements.

- 5.12 Students are not permitted to apply for PLAR in courses for which they have received a failing grade.
- 5.13 Students will only be permitted one attempt at PLAR for a specific course.
- 5.14 PLAR timelines will normally follow the deadlines as outlined in the Academic Schedule, however there may be program specific deadlines or exemptions.
- 5.15 MHC has established a formal channel to recognize course work completed through non-credit programming within Continuing Education (at MHC) as well as other select training programs (e.g. the National Advanced Placement and Prior Learning (N-APPL) program). Advanced Credit will be awarded to transcribe the fulfillment of course work. Program areas may establish pathways to formally recognize these learning experiences in consultation with the Registrar's Office. Program areas will be responsible for determining any specific requirement/limitations on Advanced Credit awarded.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 **Students** are responsible for initiating the PLAR process.
- 6.2 **Admission, Transfer, & Transcript Coordinator** is responsible for
- (a) facilitating the PLAR process, and
  - (b) supporting the assessor and the student by facilitating communication efforts between both parties.
- 6.3 **PLAR Assessor** is responsible for
- (a) assessing potential for PLAR,
  - (b) determining the appropriate assessment,
  - (c) grading the assessment, and
  - (d) awarding a grade for successful or unsuccessful completion of the PLAR (PL/NC).
- 6.4 **Dean/Academic Chair** is responsible for
- (a) ensuring quality standards,
  - (b) remaining informed of assessment methods to assist in mentoring faculty through the PLAR process, and
  - (c) providing final approval of PLAR applications.

## 7. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

Post-secondary Learning Act  
Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment  
Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

## 8. RELATED POLICIES

AC-01: Credentials and Parchments  
AC-08: Evaluation of Student Learning  
AC-10: Transfer Credit Policy

**9. RELATED PROCEDURES**

PR-AC-09-01: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

PR-AC-10-01: Transfer Credit

***ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED***

Kevin Shufflebotham  
President and CEO

Date: June 14, 2023

***ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED***

Nancy Brown  
Vice-President, Academic and  
Provost

Date: June 14, 2023

**DOCUMENT HISTORY**

February, 2019

Policy Approved

June 2023

Revised Policy Approved