

**TITLE: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION IN  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**Date Authorized: 4 January 2002**  
**Last Revised: XXXXXXXXXXXX**  
**Last Reviewed: XXXXXXXXXXXX**

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**COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUITY**

The Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that this policy and associated procedures promote and protect Indigenous rights, human rights, and equity. The Board will strive to address and eliminate discrimination and structural and systemic barriers for students, staff, and community.

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**1.0 OBJECTIVE RATIONALE**

To provide guidelines for the implementation of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in secondary schools in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, in accordance with the Ministry's Policy and Program Memorandum 129 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

Please refer to Appendix A for a full list of definitions of terms used in this policy.

**3.0 POLICY**

Application and Scope

- 3.1 This policy does not apply to mature students. Mature students should refer to Policy [P.112.CUR Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students](#) for additional information.

Challenge Credits

- 3.2 In accordance with provincial Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 129, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools, Students may challenge for credit only for Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy documents. (See Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: Program and Diploma Requirements (OSS), section 6.6.)
- 3.3 Schools may not charge students any fee for undergoing the challenge process.

- 3.4 Students may earn no more than four credits through the challenge process, including a maximum of two credits in any one discipline.
- 3.5 Students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence ~~to their principal~~ that they would likely be successful in the challenge process.
- 3.6 Students may use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit for a related course within the Ontario curriculum, if they wish to earn credit for the course without taking the course.
- 3.7 Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits ~~in OSS, Appendix 4, Music Certificates Accepted for Credits, however,~~ are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music courses, but are granted credits in accordance with OSS Program and Diploma Requirements, Appendix 4, OSS.
- 3.8 Each secondary school course calendar shall contain information ~~regarding challenges for credit and opportunities for challenge on the challenge for credit process.~~
- 3.9 The responsibilities of the student include:
- a) completing the application process by gathering “reasonable evidence” to support the application;
  - b) ~~initiating the PLAR challenge by approaching the school contact for information regarding the process;~~
  - c) completing ~~the formal tests and other assessments as determined by the school assessments,~~ as directed by PPM 129 and facilitated through the PLAR Central Team.
- 3.10 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 District.~~
- 3.11 A record of all challenges for credit that were completed – that is, all challenges for which students earned a final percentage grade, whether a passing or a failing grade – shall be included in the Board’s September Report to the Ministry. For semestered schools, this information shall also be submitted in the School March Report.
- 3.12 The responsibility for ~~Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition~~ (PLAR) shall be carried out under the direction of the school principal who grants credits in the school in which the student is registered ~~and in conjunction with the PLAR Central Team.~~ A student must obtain permission from the principal of the regular day school in which ~~he/she is they are~~ registered if ~~he/she they~~ intends to apply for a PLAR at any other public school or inspected private school.
- 3.13 In cases where a student who is an adult or the parent 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 or adult student may ask the appropriate ~~supervisory officer Superintendent of Instruction~~ to review the matter.

- 3.14 The challenge process is an evaluation process and shall 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.

#### Equivalency Credits

- 3.15 Students who are eligible for equivalency credits are those who transfer to Ontario secondary schools from non-inspected private schools or schools outside Ontario. Equivalency credits are granted for placement only.
- 3.16 The principal of the receiving school shall, 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.
- 3.17 In cases where a student who is an adult or the parent of a student who is not an adult disagrees with the principal's placement decision for students transferring to an Ontario secondary school from a non-inspected private school or a school outside Ontario, the adult student or the parent may ask the appropriate ~~supervisory officer~~ Superintendent of Instruction to review the matter.
- 3.18 Principals shall ensure that equivalency is recorded in accordance with the Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999-2013.
- 3.19 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to support this policy.

## 4.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Policy Definitions

## 5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

*Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: Program and Diploma Requirements (OSS), 1999*  
[Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 129, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition \(PLAR\): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools](#)  
[Ontario Student Transcript \(OST\): Manual, 1999-2013](#)  
*Ontario Schools, ~~Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7-12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements (OSIS), rev. ed., 1989~~ Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements, Revised 2016.*  
OCDSB Procedure [PR.634.CUR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Secondary Schools](#)

## APPENDIX A: POLICY DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

**Board** means the Board of Trustees.

**Challenge** means the process whereby students' 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.

**Credits:** Challenge for credit for courses based on provincial curriculum policy documents will be available to students only in courses that are actually taught in schools operated by the Board. 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.

**District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

**Equivalency** means the process of assessing credentials from other jurisdictions.

**Mature student**, for the purposes of PLAR, means a student who is 18 years old or will turn 18 by August 31 in their fourth year of secondary school. ~~is 18 years of age or older and out of day school for a minimum of one year. This policy does not apply to mature students. Mature students who returned to secondary school before the beginning of the 2003–2004 school year will continue to have their placement determined according to the requirements set out in Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7–12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements, 1989, rev. ed. (OSIS), section 6.14: Equivalent Standing for Mature Students.~~

**PLAR Central Team** means a team consisting of at least one system principal and at least one OCT qualified teacher who facilitates and organizes the PLAR challenge process.

**PLAR Designate** means an OCT-qualified teacher or administrator who the Principal of a school designates to conduct elements of the PLAR challenge and/or equivalency processes.

**Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** means the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby students, excluding mature 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 in order to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma. The PLAR process involves two components: “challenge” and “equivalency”.

**Reasonable Evidence** means documentation (including written artifacts, video's, graphic organizers, stories and other oral expressions of experiences and learnings, etc.) that the curriculum expectations of the course have already been achieved and that the student would likely be successful in the challenge process.