



TITLE: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION FOR MATURE STUDENTS

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for the implementation of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

- 2.1 **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby 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. For mature students the PLAR process may involve two components for each of: grades 9, 10, and grades 11, 12. For grades 9, 10 the two components are individual assessment and/or equivalency. For grades 11 and 12 the two components are equivalency and/or challenge.
- 2.2 **Challenge** means the process whereby students' prior learning is assessed for the purpose of granting credit for a Grade 11, or 12 course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 2000 or later.
- 2.3 **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 classrooms operated by the Board. All credits granted through the PLAR process – that is, through either the individual assessment, challenge process or the equivalency process – must represent the same standards of achievement as credits granted to students who have taken the courses. The maximum number of credits that can be obtained from the PLAR process is twenty-six. A maximum of sixteen credits for grades 9 or 10 either through equivalency or individual assessment and a maximum of ten

credits for grades 11 and 12 either through equivalency or challenge. Each student must earn the last four credits one of which must be ENG4C or ENG4E or ENG4U or OLC4O. No substitution is permitted.

- 2.4 **Equivalency** is the process of assessing credentials from other jurisdictions, workplace and other institutions of learning and may involve individual assessment for the purpose of granting credits.
- 2.5 **Mature student** is a student who is at least 18 years of age on or before December 31st of the school year, has been out of school for a period of a least one year and is enrolled in a secondary school credit program for the purpose of obtaining an OSSD. Effective February 1, 2004, mature students who enrolled in a secondary school after September 1999 (OSS) are governed by this policy. Mature students from outside of Ontario are governed by this policy. Mature students who enrolled in a secondary school prior to 1999 in Ontario may choose to be governed by this policy.
- 2.6 **Reasonable Evidence** means documentation presented to the principal that the curriculum expectations of the course have already been achieved for the purpose of equivalency or challenge.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Challenge Credits

- a) In accordance with provincial Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) No. 132, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): students may challenge for credit for grade 11, and 12 courses in provincial curriculum policy documents.
- b) Each secondary school course calendar shall contain information regarding Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition opportunities for mature students. Schools may not charge students any fee for undergoing the challenge process.
- c) At grades 11 and 12 mature students may earn no more than ten credits through the challenge process.
- d) Mature 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. 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 and section 6.8.6.
- e) Mature 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. The responsibilities of the student include:
- (i) initiating the PLAR challenge by approaching the school contact for information regarding the process;
 - (ii) completing the application process by gathering “reasonable

- evidence” to support the application;
 - (iii) completing the formal tests and other assessments as determined by the school.
 - f) 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.
 - g) A record of all challenges for credit for grade 11 and 12 courses that were attempted – 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 October Report to the Ministry.
 - h) The responsibility for PLAR shall be carried out under the direction of the school principal who grants credits in the school in which the student is registered.
 - i) In cases where a mature student disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether or not the student should challenge for credit, the mature student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.
 - j) 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.

3.2 Equivalency Credits

- a) At grade 9 and 10 up to sixteen credits may be granted to a mature student through the equivalency process at the discretion of the principal following individual assessment.
- b) At grade 11 and 12 up to ten credits may be granted based on evaluation of a mature students education and/or training credentials and/or other appropriate documentation of learning.
- c) A record of the number of mature students who received an individual assessment for up to sixteen grade 9 and 10 credits during the school year shall be included in the Board's October Report to the Ministry.
- d) A record of the number of mature students who received an equivalency assessment for up to ten grade 11 and 12 credits during the school year shall be included in the Board's October Report to the Ministry.

3.3 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

*Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: Program and Diploma Requirements (OSS), 1999
Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 132, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR):*

Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999

Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7–12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements (OSIS), rev. ed., 1989,

Board Policy P.109.CUR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Secondary Schools

Board Procedure PR.634.CUR: Prior Assessment and Recognition in Secondary Schools

Board Procedure PR.631.CUR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students