

Corporate Policy

POLICY NUMBER:	AC 511
POLICY TITLE:	Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR)
OWNER:	Registrar
APPROVED BY:	Senior Leadership Team Forthcoming – Consultation with Mohawk College Council
EFFECTIVE:	December 10, 2008
REFERENCE:	
LINKS TO OTHER POLICY:	AC702 – Program Promotion and Graduation Requirements AC700 – Grading and Transcripts

BACKGROUND

Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is a process which assists learners to reflect on, identify, articulate and demonstrate past learning which has been acquired through study, work, and other life experiences and which is not recognized through formal credit transfer mechanisms. PLAR facilitates the evaluation of past learning against established academic standards to enable the award of academic credits by a credentialing body.

The Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology use the PLAR system to evaluate prior learning and relate it to existing courses through portfolio assessment and challenge evaluation, for the purpose of granting college credit.

Purpose: This document defines policies and procedures regarding college recognition for learning acquired through individual life/work experience and the application of this learning to college courses/programs.

Scope: This policy applies to all courses and programs delivered by Mohawk College.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Mohawk College is committed to establishing equivalency, maintaining educational quality and consistency, and adapting existing registration and

grading procedures to the accreditation process, consistent with the *Principles for the Administration of PLA in Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology*.

2. Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provisions for appeal, must be fully disclosed and prominently available. All PLA candidates will be provided with PLAR orientation (through written materials or information sessions.)
3. Candidates cannot receive credit twice for the same learning. Credit awards and transcript entries will be monitored to avoid the awarding of double credit.
4. Recognizing that students derive significant benefits from direct participation in College programming/services, the College requires that each candidate complete a minimum of 25% of his/her Program of Studies in residence. Therefore, candidates will normally be allowed to secure up to a maximum of 75% of required credits through PLAR. The credits allowed will be determined at the discretion of, and in consultation with the appropriate Associate Dean.
5. The maximum fee charged for assessment of learning within ministry-approved programs is determined by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The assessment fee should not exceed the course fee, but may be equal to the course fee. Fees charged for assessment should reflect services performed in the process (e.g. preliminary counseling, portfolio development, portfolio assessment or challenge assessment) regardless of whether the credit is awarded.
6. Candidates who seek education credit(s) through prior learning assessment must comply with established admission procedures to gain admittance to a program or course. However, prior program enrolment is not a re-requisite for assessment of prior learning.
7. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning will receive adequate training in prior learning assessment and provision will be made for their continued professional development.
8. Prior learning assessment and recognition processes must be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served and in assessment approaches. PLAR issues are addressed on a college-wide basis through college committee structures that include student representation.

MONITORING

The Registrar is responsible for monitoring this policy according to an established schedule or more frequently in response to feedback from the college community.

POLICY REVISION DATE

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Procedures

SPECIFIC LINKS

APPENDIX A

Procedures related to Policy AC511

- P1. To be awarded credit, learning acquired through individual life/work experiences must satisfy the following criteria:
- Learning must be measurable; credit cannot be awarded for experience itself.
 - Learning to be credited must be consistent with Mohawk College offerings and satisfy the current course/program outcomes.
 - There should be an appropriate balance, relevant to the outcomes, between the theory and practical application.
 - The learning must be applicable outside the specific context in which it was learned and must serve as a basis for further learning. The learner must be able to apply the knowledge and skills in more than one setting.
 - The learning should bear some relationship to the individual's educational goals and to the context in which it is to be accepted as credit.
- P2. The candidates seeking credit for prior learning must demonstrate attainment of course outcomes using one or more of the following methods:
- **Portfolio** – an organized collection of materials developed by a learner that records learning achievements and relates them to personal, educational or occupational goals.
 - **Challenge Process** – A method of assessment other than portfolio, that is developed and evaluated by a subject expert to measure an individual's learning achievements against course learning outcomes. The challenge process will measure demonstrated learning through a variety of written and non-written methods, for the purpose of awarding credit without requiring enrolment in a course.
- P3. The determination of competency and of credit to be awarded must be made by appropriate subject matter experts.
- P4. Faculty will make all reasonable efforts to transcribe credit earned through prior learning assessment in the same way in which the course is usually graded. Where that is not possible, the designation "CR" will be used.
- P5. Successful completion of prerequisite courses is not required for prior learning assessment. Work experience prerequisites (time or source) will also not be used for PLAR.