

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION POLICY

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A. PURPOSE

Douglas College values student learning and the rich variety of ways and environments in which learning takes place. The College seeks to provide recognition of previous traditional and non-traditional learning. When such learning is not recognized by formal transfer agreements, it may be recognized through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). The purpose of this policy is to ensure a systematic and consistent process for recognizing a person's knowledge, skills and abilities for academic credit. This policy also outlines assessment methods and recognition of credits available through PLAR at the College.

B. SCOPE

Chairs/Coordinators
Deans/Associate Deans/Directors
Faculty Members
Registrar
Students

C. DEFINITIONS

Grade Point Average (GPA): A calculation of the total points and credits for all courses represented on a term or cumulative basis. For repeated courses, the highest grade is used in the calculation for the cumulative GPA. Challenge grades are not calculated in the term or cumulative GPA.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): PLAR is a systematic process to evaluate and give credit, where appropriate, to learning that has been gained through work experience, informal and formal training, and life experience.

Types of Assessment

- **Challenge Examination:** Written, oral and/or practical tests as determined appropriate by a department/program. Challenge exams are developed by the department/program in which credit is sought for courses which the department/program deems suitable for challenge. Individual course objectives/learning outcomes are assessed.
- **Portfolio-Assisted Assessment:** Assessment of documentation that systematically provides evidence of an individual's learning experiences and accomplishments in relation to course objectives/learning outcomes. This documentation may include a self-reflection. An interview may also be required as a component of this assessment.
- **Work-Based Assessment:** Assessment of a student's prior learning (knowledge, skills, abilities and/or values) as demonstrated in a simulated or real setting. Learning is demonstrated in a comprehensive way, showing knowledge, understanding and levels of competence in relation to the course objectives/learning outcomes.

D. POLICY STATEMENTS

Only students who are admitted into a Douglas College program may request formal recognition for prior learning.

Douglas College will provide recognition of learning gained through prior experiences where such learning is determined to be equivalent to College courses, subject to limitations noted below.

Departments/programs will determine whether their courses are eligible for PLAR. Eligibility for PLAR is noted on individual course curriculum guidelines.

ASSESSMENT

The department/program will determine whether a **challenge examination, portfolio-assisted assessment, or workplace-based assessment**, or a combination of the above, is most appropriate for assessment of the student's prior learning.

The assessment and evaluation of prior learning, and the determination of competency and credit awarded, will be done only by faculty who have the appropriate subject matter expertise.

Learning assessed for post-secondary credit should be defined in terms of what was learned rather than the amount of time spent in the learning process. Learning should be current and should be demonstrated at a level of achievement equivalent to students registered in equivalent Douglas College courses in that program/subject area.

The student has the primary responsibility for providing evidence that college-level learning has taken place.

LIMITATIONS

A request for PLAR may be denied or delayed under the following situations:

- The course is not eligible for PLAR as indicated on the individual course curriculum guideline.
- A qualified faculty assessor is not available to complete a PLAR assessment.
- The student's prior experience/learning is not deemed adequate to achieve a reasonable expectation of success in meeting the course(s) learning objectives/outcomes as determined by the Department Chair/Coordinator or designate.

GRADING/RECOGNITION OF CREDITS

Learning assessed through the prior learning assessment process will be assigned a grade in accordance with the Douglas College *Grading Policy* and consistent with the grading practices of the specified course.

Subject to provincial government requirements or institutional agreements, Douglas College will record credits awarded through prior learning assessment on the transcript.

Credits earned under the PLAR process do not contribute to residency requirements for a credential. See the *Credentials Awarded at Douglas College Policy*.

E. LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITES, RELATED POLICIES

Educational Policies

- Appeal of Educational Decisions Policy
- Appeal of Final Grades Policy
- Credentials Awarded at Douglas College Policy
- Curriculum Development and Approval Policy
- Grading Policy
- Standard Operating Procedure for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

F. RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS

- N/A

G. RELATED COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CLAUSES

- N/A