

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Policy

Policy #ACA-SS-POL-85

Version	Version Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Next Review Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Description of Changes
01	04/08/2021	04/08/2022	Initial release
02	03/20/2025	03/20/2030	Purpose now includes 'military' experience. Scope now covers expanded impacted employee groups. Definitions aligned with other policies, regulations and Ministry. Policy responsibilities updated to reflect roles, practices and job title changes. Procedure updated to reflect current systems and role delineation.

Sheil West Associate Vice President, Academic	03/21/2025
Policy Holder	Date Reviewed

Academic Council	03/20/2025
Advising Body	Date Consulted

Yael Katz Vice President, Academic	03/24/2025
Approver (Name and Title)	Date Approved

Purpose

Georgian College recognizes that post-secondary equivalent learning can be gained through study, work, military, and/or other life experiences outside of a formal post-secondary environment, and that individuals who can demonstrate this learning in alignment with course learning outcomes should be granted formal credit where possible. The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements for the development and administration of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at Georgian College in adherence with the college's academic regulations and the requirements set out by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction.

Scope

This policy applies to all applicants, students, and employees of Georgian College.

Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Challenge Process	A method of assessment, other than portfolio assessment, developed and evaluated by Subject Matter Expert faculty and/or Employment Relations Consultants to measure an individual's learning achievement against course learning outcomes. The process measures demonstrated learning through a variety of written and non-written evaluation methods for the purpose of awarding credit without requiring enrolment in a course.
Course Learning Outcomes	Observable, measurable and obtainable statements conveying what students are able to do at the end of a course; the currency by which transfer is measured.
Credit for Prior Learning Systems	Group of tools used to facilitate all requests for credit for prior learning at the College. These tools include the Transfer Credit System , Transfer Equivalency Tool , Transfer Experience System (PLAR) , Transfer Articulation System , and the Student Information System .
Curriculum Information Management system	Curriculum information management module of CourseLeaf software used to manage course and program approval processes and data entry. The CourseLeaf Curriculum and CourseLeaf Catalog modules work together to automatically update all catalogues with approved course, program, and student information system (Banner) data.
Informal Learning	Learning and skills gained outside of a formal post-secondary course, including work, military, and volunteer experience.
Petition	An application submitted by current or prospective students to apply for recognition of prior learning, potentially resulting in credit exemptions toward a program.
Portfolio Evaluation	A method of assessment that involves the evaluation of an organized collection of materials developed by a learner that records learning achievements and relates them to personal, educational, or occupational goals, in this case, achievement of stated learning outcomes of college courses or programs.
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)	A process that uses a variety of methods to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate, and demonstrate past learning. Prior learning can be acquired through study, work, and other life experiences that are not recognized through formal transfer of credit mechanisms.
PLAR Candidates	Applicants or current students who decide to undertake the PLAR process in order to gain credit for prior learning acquired through work or life experience.
Residency Requirement	The number of courses students must take at Georgian College in order to receive a credential.

Responsibility

- The **Vice President Academic** is responsible for
 - Ensuring applicants and students are provided the opportunity to earn credit for college courses through the PLAR challenge process, where relevant;
 - Ensuring the implementation of this policy.
- The **Office of the Registrar/Transfer Officer** is responsible for
 - Ensuring the process is communicated clearly to PLAR candidates via multiple communication channels (e.g. web, portal, etc.);
 - Timely assessment of requests for the purpose of evaluation by the academics;
 - Tracking and following up on in-process petitions;
 - Recording the granted PLAR decision on the official student academic record (denied PLARs are not recorded on the student record);
 - Administration of the *Credit for Prior Learning Systems* and related issues;
 - Processing fees relating to PLAR;
 - Ensuring compliance with provincial guidelines and Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) binding policy directives;
 - Preparing and submitting data information to the Ministry to receive funding.
- The **Dean/Associate Dean** of the academic area or the **Director, Coop Education and Career Success** are responsible for:
 - Managing the development of PLAR assessments for all relevant courses (including placements) in their area, and ensuring that they are based on the course or co-op learning outcomes; and
 - Assigning a faculty Subject Matter Expert (SME) or Employment Relations Consultant (ERC) to conduct the PLAR.
- The **Associate Vice President, Academic** is responsible for:
 - Leading college-wide knowledge mobilization regarding PLAR policy, process and initiatives;
 - Disseminating necessary information to Deans and Associate Deans regarding PLAR at Georgian College;
 - Remaining up to date with PLAR best practices and applicable government mandates.
- The **Academic Leads** within the University Partnership Centre are responsible for:
 - Developing and delivering PLAR related training for program coordinators, SMEs, and ERCs;
 - Supporting training and knowledge mobilization within the academic areas regarding best practices for PLAR assessments;
 - Providing guidance and consultation to academic program coordinators, SMEs, and ERCs who are assessing a PLAR application;
 - Remaining up to date with PLAR best practices and applicable government mandates.
- The **Program Coordinator (or faculty designate) or Employment Relations Consultant (ERC)** is responsible for:
 - Providing academic advising to PLAR candidates regarding PLAR eligibility and preparation;

- Advising candidates about the implications of a PLAR for program progression;
 - Actioning the appropriate steps within the Transfer Experience System (TES), as outlined in the procedure;
 - Communicating the program progression implications to the PLAR candidate.
- The **Faculty Subject Matter Expert (SME)** or **Employment Relations Consultant (ERC)** is responsible for:
 - Creating the PLAR challenge process or portfolio assessment based on the course or co-op learning outcomes;
 - Communicating the expectations about the challenge process and scheduling the challenge process, if applicable;
 - Evaluating the PLAR petition;
 - Actioning the appropriate steps within the TES, as outlined in the procedure.
 - The **Student/Applicant** is responsible for:
 - Thoroughly reviewing Academic Regulation 3: Credit for Prior Learning
 - Seeking advice and guidance from the college on PLAR opportunities;
 - Submitting a PLAR application to the TES and providing appropriate documentation as required;
 - Adhering to deadlines to ensure timely resolution of requests for PLAR;
 - Preparing for the PLAR assessment.

Policy

- 1.1 In adherence to the Minister's Binding Policy directive, the College will ensure that PLAR is made available for as many credit courses as possible. If a credit course is not considered PLAR eligible, a rationale must be clearly documented within the Curriculum Information Management system and communicated to the PLAR candidate when requested. All course outlines will clearly identify if a course is eligible for PLAR.
- 1.2 PLAR is to be used to give credit for learning acquired through study, work, military, and/or other life experiences not recognized through formal transfer credits (refer to [Academic Regulation 3.2](#)). It is not to be used by students to clear academic deficiencies or to improve grades. High school experience and high school placements cannot be used towards a PLAR.
- 1.3 Georgian College's graduation residency requirements must be met to be eligible for a Georgian credential (refer to [Academic Regulation 6.1](#)).
- 1.4 For an equivalency to be established, knowledge and skills must match at least 80 per cent of the learning outcomes of the Georgian College course. PLAR candidates do not need to be enrolled in a program; however, they must meet admission requirements to gain entrance into college programs.
- 1.5 General term deadlines for candidates to submit PLAR petitions are:
 - Fall semester – June 1
 - Winter semester – October 1
 - Summer semester – March 1

PLAR petitions received by the deadlines (Refer to [Academic Regulation 3.5](#)) are guaranteed to be completed in time for the course registration or withdrawal deadlines (Refer to [Academic Regulation 4.4](#)).

- 1.6 Candidates must submit a PLAR petition in the TES to initiate necessary advising from the academic area or ERCs. The academic advising for PLAR should be based on the program as a whole, so that potential implications are considered prior to the formal PLAR process.
- 1.7 The method of assessment is based on the Course Learning Outcomes on the official course outline and is determined by the academic area or Co-op Education and Career Success according to the nature of the learning being evaluated.
- 1.8 If there is a grade being assigned for the PLAR challenge, the minimum passing grade for a successful PLAR attempt is the same as the minimum passing grade of the course being challenged. Grades are used in the cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation as appropriate, without indication that they have been obtained through PLAR. In cases where a grade is not being assigned for a PLAR challenge, a P for Pass is recorded on the transcript. Unsuccessful PLAR evaluations are not recorded on the official transcript.
- 1.9 Candidates are responsible for reviewing Academic Regulation 3 (Credit for Prior Learning) which advises that:
 - the code used to transcribe credits obtained through PLAR may impact transferability to other institutions
 - a reduction of course load from earning credits through PLAR may affect eligibility for study work permits or financial assistance through the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP).
- 2.0 PLAR decisions can be appealed if candidates believe that they were not evaluated fairly, or process was not followed (Refer to [Academic Regulation 9.1](#).)

Procedures

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

- 2.1 By the deadlines stated in 1.5, the candidate seeking recognition of prior learning is required to access the TES and submit a petition to begin the PLAR process.
- 2.2 The Registrar's Office/Transfer Officer assigns new petitions to the relevant academic area or Co-op Education and Career Success.
- 2.3 The Coordinator or the ERC reviews the request and determines the initial eligibility of a petition as it relates to the specific course being challenged.
- 2.4 The Coordinator or the ERC advises the candidate on the process of the PLAR challenge or portfolio and the implications the results might have on their program and related issues (i.e. student VISA, OSAP, program progression). If required, the Coordinator or the ERC seeks guidance from the Academic Leads, Registrar's Office or other relevant parties.
- 2.5 The candidate decides whether to move forward with the PLAR challenge and/or portfolio review. If the candidate chooses not to move forward, the Coordinator or the ERC cancels the petition or informs the Transfer Officer to cancel the petition. If the candidate chooses to move forward, they submit any additional supporting documents required into the TES, and the Coordinator or the ERC forwards the petition to the SME and/or ERC.
- 2.6 The SME and/or ERC reviews the supporting documents, and if needed, arranges to meet

- with the candidate to discuss the specifics of the PLAR process.
- 2.7 The SME and/or ERC evaluates the PLAR and records the results into the TES. The TES system notifies the candidate of the results.
 - 2.8 The Transfer Officer inputs the results of the PLAR into the Student Information System for the purpose of the official academic record and applies the PLAR fee to the student account.
 - 2.9 After any approved PLAR exemptions have been transcribed, the candidate is responsible for withdrawing from the course, if actively registered.

Related Materials

[Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction](#) [Georgian College's Academic Regulations](#)