

AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
NO. 205

**SUBJECT: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION
(SECONDARY SCHOOLS)**

Legal References: *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements 2011; Policy and Program Memorandum (PPM) 129: Prior Learning, Assessment and Recognition: Implementation in Ontario Schools; PPM 133: Music Certificates Accepted for Credits; Secondary Curriculum Policy documents; Ontario Student Transcript (OST) Manual 2010; Ontario Student Record (OSR)*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 209 Course Calendars; AP 370 Ontario Student Record (OSR)*

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby 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 Ontario secondary schools.
- 1.2. PLAR has two components: Challenge and Equivalency.
- 1.3. The "challenge" process is 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.
- 1.4. The PLAR equivalency process requires credentials from other jurisdictions which are assessed for the purpose of granting equivalent Ontario credits for grades 9-12.
- 1.5. For students who are transferring from home schooling, a non-inspected private school, or a school outside Ontario, principals will grant equivalency credits for placement purposes based on their evaluation of the students' previous learning.
- 1.6. 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.

2. Procedure PLAR Challenge

- 2.1. PLAR for regular Day School Students will be implemented through the procedures and practices outlined in the PLAR Quick Guide (Appendix A).
- 2.2. Students may apply to challenge for credit only those Grade 10, 11, and 12 courses developed from a provincial curriculum policy document which are offered in an Avon Maitland DSB school. A maximum of four credits may be earned through the challenge process, with no more than two in a single discipline.

- 2.3. Students who are unsuccessful in a PLAR challenge may apply to challenge the credit a second time, if additional reasonable evidence of additional learning can be presented.
- 2.4. Principals may make arrangements with other boards to provide opportunities for eligible students to challenge for credit for courses that are not offered by the board. The Avon Maitland District School Board is not obliged to provide opportunities for students to challenge for credit courses that are not actually taught in schools operated by the board. Contact the Program Department for advice on this process.
- 2.5. The PLAR challenge process excludes:
 - a) All Grade 9 courses
 - b) Transfer courses, Locally Developed courses, Cooperative Education courses
 - c) French as a Second Language courses if the student has earned one or more credits in Français (meaning that credits were taught as FFL, French First Language)
 - d) Courses the student has previously failed
 - e) Courses the student has previously passed
 - f) Courses that overlap significantly with credits the student has already earned
 - g) Courses in any subject if a credit has already been granted at a later grade (e.g. a grade 10 course cannot be challenged in a subject where a grade 11 credit has been earned)

3. Evaluation of PLAR Challenge

- 3.1. Assessment and evaluation must be based on all the strands in a course and on all categories of knowledge and skills and the descriptions of achievement levels given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy document for the discipline. A student's level of achievement will be recorded as a percentage grade on the OST in the same way as achievement in other courses.
- 3.2. Assessment and evaluation strategies for the challenge process must include formal tests (70 per cent of the final mark) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate for the particular course (30 per cent of the final mark). The formal tests must have a balance between written work and practical demonstration that is appropriate for the subject/discipline.

4. Record Keeping for PLAR Challenge

- 4.1. "PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record" form is maintained and included in the student's OSR. This form is intended to track the number of credits earned and the disciplines in which credits have been earned through the challenge process, as well as failures and withdrawals.
- 4.2. The following entries must be made on the student's OST:
 - *For challenges for credit for Grade 10 courses:* Only passing percentage grades will be entered on the OST. If the student subsequently takes the Grade 10 course, only the higher percentage grade will be recorded on the OST. No notation will be entered on the student's OST if the student withdraws from or receives a failing grade in the challenge process.
 - *For challenges for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses:* Passing and failing percentage grades will be entered on the student's OST. No notation will be entered on the OST if the student withdraws from the challenge process.

5. PLAR Equivalency: Music Certificates Accepted for Credits

Principals in Ontario secondary schools have the authority to award a maximum of two secondary school credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) for music programs taken outside the school. See *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirements 2011*, Appendix 4, for a list of music certificates recognized as equivalent to grades 11 and 12 music.

6. Recording PLAR Equivalency Credits on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST)

On the Ontario Student Transcript (OST) the total number of equivalent credits should be recorded in the “credits” column. The number of equivalent credits that meet compulsory credit requirements should be recorded in the “compulsory” column. Equivalency credits are recorded differently depending on the grade.

Grade	Course Title	Course Code	Percentage Grade
9 and 10	Equivalent Credits	PLE	EQV
11 and 12	Common Ontario Course Title as determined by the principal.	Corresponding Ontario Course Code as determined by the principal.	EQV

Prior Learning Assessment And Recognition

Quick Guide



Revised December 2013
Avon Maitland District School Board

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION: PLAR

PLAR QUICKGUIDE

PLAR provides opportunities for students to:

- Earn credits for learning outside Ontario classrooms
- Broaden their choice of courses
- Increase the flexibility of their secondary school program

PLAR allows for the evaluation of students' skills and knowledge against curriculum expectations. PLAR procedures are carried out under the direction of the Principal, who grants credits.

PLAR has two components: challenge and equivalency.

- The PLAR challenge process includes formal tests (70% of the final mark); and other assessments (30% of the final mark). A maximum of four credits may be earned through the PLAR challenge process. No more than two credits in any one discipline may be earned through the PLAR challenge process.
- The PLAR equivalency process requires credentials from other jurisdictions which are assessed to determine Ontario equivalency.

THE DETAILS

What is PLAR?

PLAR is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process in which Grade 9 – 12 students may receive credits for Grade 10 – 12 courses, based upon clear evidence of their prior learning. Knowledge and skills acquired by students outside of Ontario classrooms are evaluated against provincial curriculum documents and board standards to determine if the student is eligible for a credit in that course, which is then counted toward the student's Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

PLAR is not an instructional, or "independent study" process. No teacher assistance is provided. PLAR is used for evaluation purposes only, as its intention is to assess and evaluate prior learning. Successful students will receive credit for what they already know and can do.

A *successful* challenge to a Grade 10 credit will be recorded on the student's Ontario Student Transcript as a percentage grade. Both *successful and unsuccessful* challenges to Grade 11 and 12 credits will be recorded on the student's Ontario Student Transcript, in accordance with the OSS policy of full disclosure.

Who may challenge?

Secondary school students who are enrolled in a regular day school program in an Avon Maitland DSB school may challenge courses.

What courses may be challenged?

Students may apply to challenge for credit only those Grade 10, 11 and 12 courses developed from a provincial curriculum policy document which are offered in an Avon Maitland DSB school. A maximum of four credits may be earned through the challenge process, with no more than two in a single discipline. Students who are unsuccessful in a PLAR challenge may apply to challenge the credit a second time, if additional reasonable evidence of additional learning can be presented.

The PLAR challenge process excludes:

- All Grade 9 courses
- Transfer courses, Locally Developed courses, Cooperative Education courses
- French as a Second Language courses if the student has earned one or more credits in *français* (FFL, French First Language)
- Courses the students has previously failed
- Courses the student has previously passed
- Courses that overlap significantly with credits the student has already earned
- Courses in any subject if a credit has already been granted at a later grade (e.g. a grade 10 course cannot be challenged in a subject where a grade 11 credit has been earned)

What are the timelines?

See the PLAR Application Procedures Summary.

When can the student opt out of the process?

The student may opt out of the process at any time, until prior to the writing of the final assessment.

The student must notify the principal in writing.

WHO DOES WHAT FOR A PLAR CHALLENGE

THE STUDENT

- Initiates the PLAR challenge process
- Gathers evidence to support the challenge
- Attends the PLAR Challenge meeting with parent(s) and/or guardian(s)
- Submits the Application to Challenge form and all necessary documentation to the principal
- Completes the formal tests and other assessments

THE PRINCIPAL

- Informs students and parents of PLAR policies and procedures
- Directs students to course expectations on the Ministry of Education website, and makes the “*Application to Challenge*” form available.
- Reviews applications and consults with students, parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and others as required
- Ensures that students challenge for credit in an entire course, whether it is a full credit or partial credit course
- Ensures that students do not use the challenge process as a way to improve their mark in a course in which they have already received a credit, nor as a way to obtain a credit in a course they have previously failed
- Ensures that students who do not have suitable documentation due to extraordinary circumstances (e.g. refugees) have access to counseling concerning gathering evidence
- Ensures that the *PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record* is included and maintained in the student’s OSR
- Ensures that other Ministry of Education procedures in PPM 129 are followed, including all reports to the Ministry of Education

THE BOARD (Program Department)

- Oversees the development and maintenance of PLAR assessments
- Ensures that only OCT-certified teachers in good standing conduct the PLAR challenge
- Ensures that assessment and evaluation are based upon the strands in a course and the Achievement Chart categories for that discipline
- Ensures that the formal tests have a balance between written and practical demonstrations of knowledge and skills appropriate to the course
- Hosts the PLAR Challenge meeting
- Maintains the integrity of the PLAR Challenge process
- Trains staff as needed
- Monitors the process at the school level and suggests improvements to the PLAR process

Important Notes:

1. Students must initiate the process.
2. Students must have already met the course expectations prior to the PLAR Application.
3. Procedures, dates and deadlines must be followed by all students. Deviation from these will result in the PLAR Application being terminated.
4. Students under the age of 18 must have parental approval.
5. The Principal decides upon the merit of each application.
6. There is no provision whatsoever for teacher involvement to assist the student to prepare for the PLAR Challenge. The teacher’s sole involvement is to evaluate the PLAR assessments.

PLAR APPLICATION PROCEDURES SUMMARY

Important Note:

The student may drop out of the process at any point of the PLAR Challenge process until prior to the final 30% assessment(s) is/are to be written. The principal must be notified in writing.

Step	Semester 1 Times	Semester 2 Times	Procedure
Step One	September	Before March 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The student</u> examines the course expectations ¹ of the course he/she intends to challenge to determine whether or not he/she has the prerequisite knowledge and skills of that course. • <u>The student</u> indicates in their Individual Pathways Plan the course(s) which he/she intends to challenge. • <u>The principal</u> assesses informally whether or not the student has a reasonable expectation of possible success; the student is notified of his/her decision within two school days where possible. The principal's decision may be appealed to a Supervisory Officer. If the principal has determined that the student has a reasonable expectation of success, he/she is informed of the date of the PLAR Challenge meeting and all other relevant information.²
Step Two	October	April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The student and parent(s)/guardian(s)</u> attend the PLAR Challenge meeting and receive further information about the PLAR Challenge process. <i>Attendance at the meeting is mandatory for all students who intend to challenge a course for credit.</i> • <u>The student</u> submits the PLAR Challenge Application Form (all pages), with signatures and the appropriate Required and Supporting documentation within ten school days of the meeting. • <u>The principal</u> assesses the PLAR Challenge Application formally and determines whether or not the PLAR Challenge may proceed. The student is notified by the principal of his/her decision within five school days.³ • <u>The principal</u> informs the student of the balance of the PLAR procedure in the course: deadlines, materials needed, test dates, etc. <p>NOTE: Deviation from these will result in the PLAR Application being terminated.</p>
Step Three	November December	May, June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The student</u> writes the PLAR assessments ⁴ at the times and places which are appropriate to the course. 70% of the mark will be based upon a minimum of two (2) formal tests and require approximately two (2) hours each. 30% of the mark will be based upon further assessment(s).
Step Four	December	June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The principal</u> informs the student of his/her final results. • The credit is entered on the appropriate forms within the school.

¹ Course expectations may be found at the Ministry of Education website: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>.

² The details will be available through your Student Services Office, the Avon Maitland DSB website, <http://www.amdsb.ca>, and at the board office: 519.527.0111 or 800.592.5437 x 126. **Attendance is mandatory.**

³ Students whose applications are unsuccessful may re-apply the following year.

⁴ Some assessments may be done online, and may require the student to travel to a central assessment location.

**PLAR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
APPLICATION TO CHALLENGE A COURSE**

Please print clearly in ink. Both pages are required.

First Name	Last Name	Ont. Education Number	
Address		Municipality	Postal Code
Home Telephone	Grade	Date of Birth (year/month/day)	Gender M / F
School		School Contact (counselor, teacher-advisor)	

IMPORTANT

- A student is eligible to challenge courses that have NOT been attempted or completed.
- Only those courses developed from a provincial curriculum policy document and offered by the Avon Maitland DSB may be challenged.
- Course expectations and course codes are available at the Ministry of Education website:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

Course Title: _____

Ministry of Education Course Code: ____ _

Applications for a PLAR Challenge must include two kinds of documentation. *Required* documentation must accompany this form. *Supporting* documentation must be submitted in accordance with the timelines above.

Required Documentation <i>Attach all of the following to this form:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record (most recent) <input type="checkbox"/> Current Ontario Student Transcript	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Pathways Plan (copy of relevant page) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Education Plan (IEP) if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Student Essay (100 – 200)
Supporting Documentation <i>Check a minimum of three of the following that you will submit in addition to the above documentation, as evidence that you are qualified to challenge for credit in this course:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Letter(s) of recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio of relevant work <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of successful relevant experience in a supervised setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Videotape and/or audiotape and/or CD with samples of relevant work <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

**PLAR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
APPLICATION TO CHALLENGE A COURSE cont.**

I certify that the information given in this application and all supporting documentation is correct, complete and current.

I am aware that (check each point to demonstrate that each has been read)

- Passing/failing marks for Grades 11 and 12 courses will appear on my Ontario Student Transcript;
- The PLAR Challenge process will include formal tests (balanced between written work and demonstration(s) of knowledge and skills, as appropriate for the subject, worth 70% of the final mark and other types of assessment worth 30% of the final mark);
- My knowledge and skills will be evaluated against the overall and specific curriculum expectations as outlined in the Ministry of Education’s curriculum documents for the course;
- A maximum of four credits may be earned through the PLAR Challenge process for courses in Grades 11-12, with no more than two in a single discipline (as defined by a Ministry curriculum document);
- Only courses taught in Avon Maitland DSB schools are eligible for the PLAR Challenge process;
- The school principal will review my application and supporting documentation and will determine my readiness to take the PLAR Challenge;
- Attendance at the PLAR Challenge meeting is mandatory for all PLAR candidates, with a parent or guardian in attendance for students under the age of 18.

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Avon Maitland DSB use only

Required Documentation Received: <input type="checkbox"/> PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record (most recent) <input type="checkbox"/> Current Ontario Student Transcript <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Pathways Plan (copy of relevant page) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Education Plan (IEP) if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Student Essay (Appendix 1)		Supporting Documentation Received: <input type="checkbox"/> Letter(s) of Recommendation <input type="checkbox"/> Portfolio of relevant work <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of successful relevant experience in a supervised setting <input type="checkbox"/> Videotape and/or audiotape and/or CD with samples of relevant work <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Application received (year/month/day) _____	Documentation Complete <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Attended PLAR meeting <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Application Approved <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO _____ Principal _____ Date

PLAR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
APPLICATION TO CHALLENGE A COURSE
STUDENT ESSAY

Write a well-organized essay of 100 – 200 words, outlining why you want to challenge for credit in this course.

Include:

- how the successful completion of this course will help you fulfill your educational goals
- your knowledge and skills related to this course

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION: CHALLENGE FOR CREDIT

Cumulative Tracking Record

Surname **Given Names MIN/OEN StudentNumber Gender Date of Birth**

School Board/School Authority/Inspected Private School ¹ **Number Name of School Date of Entry**

Date (Year/ Month)	School Board/Inspected Private School²	Course Grade/ Level	Course Title	Course Code	Discipline	Percentage Grade	Credit	Compulsory	Withdrawal	Authorization³

¹ Name of school board/school authority/inspected private school that maintains the student's OSR

² Name of school board or inspected private school through which the student earned the credit(s)

³ Signature of person authorized to maintain the student's OSR

Note: For policy on the use of this form, see Policy/Program Memorandum No. 129, "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools."