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ABSTRACT

This guide describes the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology's (SIAST's) (Canada) Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) program. PLAR is an evaluation through a valid and reliable process of the knowledge and skills a student has learned through previous education, training, or experience, to determine the equivalency for credit to a SIAST course. PLAR contributes to the efficiency of the educational system through efforts to eliminate redundant training for individuals who have developed skill and knowledge elsewhere. The SIAST Prior Learning Assessment Committee monitors, reviews, and revises SIAST-wide PLAR policies with a goal to: (1) make SIAST more accessible to adult learners; (2) facilitate the development of learners' educational goals and plans; and (3) increase efficiency through the reduction of redundant education or training. Applicants for PLAR credit must complete an application, pay application and tuition fees, develop an action plan, compile and document evidence of prior learning, complete a self-audit, and meet with an advisor before an assessor evaluates the applicant's challenge. The evaluator is usually the instructor for the course for which credit is sought. This evaluator, along with a program advisor, a PLAR committee member, and the student, decides the appropriate level of structure for the challenge, and selects the evaluation method. (NB)

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SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Guide to

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

at SIAST

Prepared by:

SIAST Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee

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January 2000
#00-01

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Saskatchewan Institute of Applied

Science and Technology

Guide to
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
at SIAST

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1.0 Introduction

Changing student demographics in post-secondary education have implications for policies and practices. Adult learners are increasingly mobile and bring with them a mosaic of employment and personal experiences, as well as education from a variety of training modes or providers. Students are very selective in their demand for programming to match their learning needs. Institutions need to be able to identify, assess and formally recognize the learning that has already taken place and allow learners to build on that base. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) provides a valid and reliable process of determining knowledge and skill equivalencies for credit.

The demand for PLAR services is in greater demand. As a result of workforce changes, employees have been retraining and developing new skills, but they are also expected to be more mobile. They can now have their skills and knowledge recognized through prior learning assessment. PLAR enhances their marketability and portability of training credentials in the labour market.

PLAR promotes lifelong learning. New initiatives and partnerships between programs, their communities, and industry are seeking to incorporate PLAR methods into their flexible or distance delivery strategies. PLAR is a key component in the development of training plans.

Prior Learning Assessment contributes to the efficiency of the educational system by efforts to eliminate redundant training for individuals who have developed skills and knowledge elsewhere.

2.0 Definition of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

> Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is an evaluation through a valid and reliable process, by a qualified specialist(s), of the knowledge and skills that have been learned through previous education, training or experience, to determine the equivalency for credit to a SIAST course.

Explanation of Terms:

Credit course:
A planned education or training process with a defined set of learning objectives and learning outcomes, a qualified instructional resource, a curriculum and an evaluation formally recorded in the student's permanent record, and leads toward completion of a certificate, advanced certificate, diploma or requirements for licensure.

Experience:
May include work experience, self-directed studies, volunteer activities and on-the-job learning.

Education/Training:
May include both formal and non-formal learning. Formal learning occurs through structured, credit programming by accredited educational bodies. Non-formal generally refers to skills and knowledge acquired in situations other than formal studies. Non-formal courses are non-credit and usually do not involve testing or mastery demonstration.

Qualified specialist(s):
Content expert in the discipline area for which credit is sought and/or knowledgeable expert in the prior learning assessment process.

Reliable:
A measurement is reliable if it produces the same results repeatedly.

Valid:
A measurement is valid if it measures what it is intended to measure. The following criteria must be present: consistency with past usage, consistency with alternate measures, internal consistency and consequential predictability.

Valid and Reliable Process:
May include assessment methods such as: challenge exams, standardized exams, performance observations, documented evidence, interviews, portfolio or personal documentation files, product validation and assessment.

3.0 Principles

The process of assessing prior learning is based on a number of principles.

access:
PLAR should be considered as a vehicle for enhancing access to education/training.

articulation:
A system used by educational institutions to determine which courses are equivalent to one another.

consistency:
The process must be able to be applied in a consistent manner that can be repeated over time by different evaluations.

context:
The activity is evaluated in the context of the program for which accreditation is sought.

credibility:
PLAR is recognized by the receiving institution, potential employers and accrediting bodies.

equivalent rigour:
Criteria for awarding credit should be no more or less rigorous than the criteria used in assessing learning acquired through more formal training at SIAST.

outcomes:
Learning outcomes can be documented, validated and assessed against educational or employment standards

relevance of assessed learning:
The learning that is being assessed must have relevance to the curriculum of the course or program for which recognition is sought.

transferability:
PLAR should be determined within the context of the articulation process and institutional admission policy.

valid and reliable process:
The process must measure what it is intended to measure in a manner that is consistent over time.

4.0 SIAST Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee

SIAST has recognized the increasing importance of prior learning and has established a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee.

4.1 Mandate

The mandate of the SIAST Prior Learning Assessment Committee is to guide the implementation of a valid and reliable system of PLAR in the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST). The committee will be responsible to monitor, review and revise SIAST-wide PLAR policies with a view to:

a) making SIAST more accessible to adult learners
b) facilitating the development of learners' educational goals and plans
c) increasing efficiency through the reduction of redundant education or training.

The committee will also provide feedback and advice on the implementation of PLAR across SIAST.

4.2 Committee Composition:

An attempt should be made to reflect the diversity of Divisions and Programs for which PLAR has relevance. Committee members will be appointed on a rotational basis for a term of 2 academic years. In the event that a member must leave the committee prior to the end of a term, a new member will be appointed to represent the appropriate department or division.

In selecting a representative the division will appoint a member who is actively involved in the implementation of PLAR and/or who is working on a PLAR initiative. In addition, SIAST may invite external representation from business or organizations who are involved in PLAR applications with SIAST programs. Recommendations for external members will be made in consultation with the PLAR Facilitator.

The committee reports to the PLAR Facilitator and is ultimately responsible to the VP of Programs. The chair of the committee may also be the PLAR Facilitator.

SIAST shall endeavour to have a minimum of 6 committee members, and not to exceed 15. Membership shall consist of one representative in each of the following areas, where possible:

PLAR Facilitator
Counselling
Registrars
Planning, Research and Development
Extension Consultant
Associated Studies
Business and Agriculture
Community Services
Industrial Training
Nursing
Science and Health
Technology
Externals
ExOfficio – Director, Planning Research & Development
Ex Officio - Vice-President of Programs

4.3 Functions of the SIAST-wide Prior Learning Assessment Committee.

1. Develop SIAST-wide Prior Learning Assessment standards, policies, procedures and practices.

2. Liaise with divisions and programs on an ongoing basis to ensure that all relevant perspectives are considered.

3. Provide information and develop awareness on PLAR procedures and practices to groups within the respective divisions and programs.

4. Support the services and functions of the PLAR Facilitator.

5. Develop a system of registering and monitoring of PLAR results and credits awarded in consultation with registrars.

6. Facilitate an annual review of the PLAR process

5.0 The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process

The following generic steps must be followed in the prior learning assessment process, regardless of what method or tool of assessment is used. In most cases the applicant will need to be guided through this process by the counsellor and faculty.

5.1 Candidate Process for PLAR

Refer to the ten step process in the flow chart located in Appendix A

5.2 Procedure and Policy Issues

In addition to the academic and administrative standards listed in the PLAR Policy, the following specific policies will apply.

Eligibility

1. PLAR is available to any individual registered in a SIAST course or program.

2. The language proficiency and program entrance requirements will be as stated in the SIAST Calendar for the program in which the student is challenging.

3. Pre-requisites to any courses within a program may need to be challenged separately. Learning outcomes for pre-requisites may be different from those required in the advanced level course. The waiving of a pre-requisite is course-specific and must be approved by the program head/faculty. This does not exclude the application of PLAR credit to both prerequisite and advanced level courses if all learning outcomes are met in the PLAR challenge.

Application

4. All learners, who consider prior learning assessment, will receive orientation on the prior learning assessment process and will follow the steps as outlined in the Candidate Process for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (see Candidate Process Chart in Appendix A).

5. Learners requesting prior learning assessment must complete an application for prior learning assessment and pay the application fee. (See Application for Prior Learning Assessment Form in Appendix B.) These application fees will go to the registrar's budget at the receiving campus.

6. Learners will pay a course assessment fee, in lieu of tuition, for each course challenged through prior learning assessment. These course fees will be directed to the program responsible for the assessment.

Fees

- The services performed by the program and administration are reflected in the cost of prior learning assessment.
- An application fee of $30 will be charged to initiate the PLAR request. Applications will be valid for the student's enrollment period.
- The fee for the assessment will be $150 or the course tuition fee (using the base-funded tuition formula as applicable) whichever is less.
- When programs can demonstrate justifiable recovery costs, additional fees may be required. If a program predetermines that the fee guideline is too high for the service performed, then an appropriate course assessment fee may be set.
- PLAR fees shall be predetermined and valid for at least one academic year.
- Course Assessment Fees will be recorded with the Registrar's Office and the PLAR Office by the Program Head responsible for the course.
- When third party agreements for PLAR are contracted, costs may be negotiated to meet specific training, assessment and procedural needs.
- If an action plan (Step 5 in the PLAR Process) or Credit Completion Requirement (Steps 8 and 9 in the PLAR Process) involves a training component, a student will be assessed a fee based on the course hours consumed by the student.
- Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Assessment

7. Prior learning will be assessed only by content specialists who have expertise in the area to be assessed, and who understand the prior learning process.

8. The appropriate proportion of theory and applied components to be assessed will be determined by the program.

9. SIAST will assess credit for prior learning by using a variety of valid assessment methods. The appropriateness of any one method or combination of methods will be determined by the evaluator.

10. It is the responsibility of the learner to prepare the evidence that creditable learning has taken place and that it is consistent with the achievement levels required by the post-secondary credential to be awarded. The creditable learning must also demonstrate an appropriate balance of theory and practical application, which shall usually be equivalent to the proportion that exists in the course.

11. The evaluator will be responsible for ensuring that the evidence and documentation provided meets the learning outcomes for the course.

12. The program head/faculty will submit results of the course assessment(s) to the Registrar's office on a Results of Prior Learning Assessment Form (see Appendix C).

Recognition

13. The student's transcript will show credit has been earned for the course name and number with a CR grade code.

14. PLAR credits may be applied towards required courses and course electives that are offered in a SIAST program. PLAR credits may not be awarded for courses that are not offered for credit by SIAST. PLAR credits may be applied towards the fulfilment of any required work experience, practicum, internship, or co-operative education component of the program, unless otherwise required by an approved professional, accrediting body. Such requirements will be fully disclosed to the candidate.

15. The PLAR credit will not be included in calculating the overall average grade.

16. The candidate will be notified by the registrar's office about the results of the assessment. (See Appendix D for sample form letters.)

Scope of Application of Prior Learning Assessment

17. Availability of some PLA services may be limited to particular courses or specific periods during each academic year.

    Each program in consultation with the PLA Facilitator will determine its system for implementing PLA in accordance with policy, procedures and available resources. A system of identifying courses available through PLA will be developed and provided to the PLA Facilitator, Counsellor contact and Registrar's office.

18. The Prior Learning Assessment process applies to credit courses (as defined in the SIAST Calendar). Competency-based programs may continue to assess at the competency, band or task level as also described in the SIAST Calendar.

19. In circumstances where partial PLAR has been determined for credit, the following guideline will apply for the transcript grade code:
    - If the PLAR credit is greater than or equal to 60%, the PLAR grade code is applied
    - If the PLAR credit is less than 60%, the normal grade code for that course is applied.

Appeal Process

If a candidate does not agree with the final decision regarding the application for prior learning assessment, an appeal may be made. This process and fee for service will parallel the Grade Appeal Policy. A written statement describing why the learner does not concur with the decision will be made to the Registrar. It will be directed to the Dean, or designate, who will investigate and recommend appropriate action.

6.0 Assessment Methods

The assessment method will measure an individual's learning achievement against course learning outcomes. As with any assessment method, teams of faculty or experts will first need to define the learning outcomes and establish the performance criteria or standards for each eligible course. Accomplishing this task will facilitate the actual assessment process.

6.1 PLAR Assessment Methods

The listed assessment methods are not exhaustive, but they are the ones most commonly used. The methods may be used in combinations. A list of PLAR methods and the advantages and difficulties for each are contained in Appendix E.
Assessment methods will provide for the evaluation results, evidence of learning and documentation. These may include one or a combination of the following assessment tools:

Product Validation and Assessment
Challenge Exam/Final Exam
Standardized Tests
Performance Evaluations (including Role Plays, Clinical Applications, Case Studies)
Interviews and Oral Exams
Equivalency evaluations of learning from non-credit training providers
Portfolio or Personal Documentation Files (including life and work experiences and accomplishments)

6.2 Functions of the Prior Learning Assessment Evaluator.

The evaluator is normally the faculty/instructor of the course for which credit is sought. The program defines the standards against which the evidence presented by the learners is to be judged. These standards should be realistic learning outcomes for students in the regularly scheduled courses. In consultation with the student, program advisor(s) and/or a PLAR Committee member, the evaluator performs the following functions:

1. In consultation with the PLAR candidate, prepares an action plan for the student to follow in meeting the requirements of the course assessment. Action plans should have timelines, identification of evidence, and time, place and method of assessment.

2. Select evaluation method - The evaluation method selected depends upon the type of learning outcomes to be assessed.

3. Assessment documents will be kept on file in accordance with a standard exam retention system and schedule. (see SIAST Policy 312)

4. The evaluator decides the appropriate level of structure, high structure such as an oral exam or less structure such as a loosely patterned interview. Structure may be adapted to the experiences and needs of the individual.

5. Carry out assessment technique to determine the extent and character of the learning. Determine whether the learning meets an acceptable standard of the learning outcomes of the course.

6. Record observations - In instances where assessment is relatively complex or where judgement occurs sometime after the assessment, it is important that some record of observation or evaluation be kept.

7. Judge credit - Determine the worth of the learning for credit.

8. Submit Results to the Registrars Office for notification, transcription and recording on

permanent student records.

9. Provide feedback - Evaluator must provide an adequate response as to why credit was granted or why the learning was not deemed to be worthy of credit.

7.0 Quality Assurance Issues

The faculty evaluator will be responsible for ensuring that the documentation provided by the learner supports the claim for credit. The choice of flexible assessment method for PLAR and determination of credit will be made by assessors who have the subject matter expertise, and using external advice as required.

If the evaluator believes that the knowledge the learner has demonstrated is sufficient and appropriate for each course the learner has specified, the recommendation will be that credit be awarded. SIAST will make every effort to:

Ensure **reliability** (consistency):

- use a variety of samples of learning;
- use a variety of assessment tools;
- use multiple assessors until experience indicates that learning can be judged with acceptable consistency.

Ensure **validity** (measure what is intended):

- use clearly-defined learning outcomes
- Identify performance criteria including any critical factors and standards necessary to meet the learning outcomes.
- define what is "post-secondary" learning.

Ensure **cost effectiveness**:

- monitor value to learners;
- evaluate cost/benefit.

Ensure **competent assessment:**

- provide training for the evaluator
- evaluator should be competent not only in the content matter of the assessment but also in the principles and limitations of the assessment techniques;
- whenever possible use a team of evaluators in order to obtain greater knowledge and expertise;
- monitor authenticity of documentation;
- state results objectively;
- emphasize quality not quantity;
- specify appropriate documentation to meet the learning outcomes.

8.0 Benefits of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

A PLAR process provides to learners and the Campus an innovative strategy for furthering the reform agenda underway in post-secondary education. PLAR assists the Campus in being responsive to the changing demands of both learners and employers for educational services.

Learners:

- will benefit as work experience and learning are more integrated leading to the greater acceptance of the requirement for lifelong learning and a learning culture;
- will have improved access to certification programs;
- will receive recognized and portable credit that is required in a mobile labour market
- will have greater flexibility in designing training plans when learning is recognized independent from location or method of learning
- will make better use of their resources, as they will spend less time attending formal courses at the campus;
- will gain, by nature of the assessment process, a greater appreciation of the relationship between learning through life or work study and Campus programs;
- will be able to move between Campus programs more efficiently as barriers to admission are removed; mature learners will be able to take the most advantage of this innovation;
- will benefit from the impact of a learner-centred focus and applied/experiential learning.

SIAST:

- will benefit from the expansion of proficiency-based curriculum and criterion-referenced assessment that is closely related to generic skills, knowledge, and values from the world of work. Curriculum will be less focused on the traditional subject disciplines. Such changes are essential to the establishment of an effective PLAR system;
- will be able to provide more flexibility in delivery of programming as PLAR becomes part of the educational strategy;
- will improve access to programs for non-traditional learners
- will increase the number of graduates and course completions from programs, thus reducing the average cost per graduate;
- will gain from the significant learning opportunities in prior learning assessment provided to counsellors, faculty, and program heads;
- will benefit as PLAR provides systematic methodologies to connect work-based training to SIAST programs. These methodologies will enhance SIAST's ability to accredit work-based training.

Faculty:

- will improve evaluation skills of instructors and these skills will be transferable to other training that occurs both within and outside of the institution.
- will develop more diverse networks with industry
- will have increased opportunity for learning about the current application of their discipline which will impact on teaching methods and resources for programs.

9.0 Impact of Prior Learning Assessment

For SIAST to grant learners formal course credit for learning gained from experiences, which outside of the traditional class or lab delivery will have program implications.

There are many challenges that need to be addressed as we implement prior learning assessment, but it will make SIAST more responsive to the needs of adult learners.

PLAR policy will impact on many of the stakeholders in the SIAST system.

Learners:
- will require easy access to well-developed and clearly-stated PLAR procedures;
- will require access to learning outcomes and assessment criteria used in course assessment, regardless of the mode of delivery normally used for the course;
- will need support in how to match their experiential learning to outcomes, and then how to successfully articulate and document their actual skills and knowledge for the assessment;
- will have to acquire funds to pay for assessment arising from successful accreditation;
- will have to resolve any issues related to student loan providers and funding agents that may arise from PLAR.

Counsellors:
- will have to receive training in the philosophy, principles, policy, methods, and procedures of SIAST PLAR;
- will have to act as first contacts in providing information services about prior learning assessment for learners;
- will have to work in close relationship with institute prior learning assessment facilitator;
- will need access to detailed program information including: course outlines, outcomes and assessment criteria;
- will have to make adjustments to their work patterns to accommodate PLAR consultations.

Program Heads and Instructors:
- will require training in the philosophy, principles, policy, methods and procedures of SIAST PLAR;
- will need to liaise with the PLAR Facilitator, counsellors, other training providers and industry.
- Records of PLAR documents and evaluations will need to be retained by the program per SIAST Policy 312.
- will have to review and possibly revise admission policies to programs to provide for PLAR and remove any barriers to admission;
- will need to articulate the assessment criteria and any critical factors required in the evaluation of the courses in a program, regardless of the delivery mode normally used.
- will need to develop flexible assessment tools that can appropriately and efficiently test for outcomes. In some instances, training in assessment methodology may be required.
- will have to ensure their curricula is documented in terms of outcomes/objectives/ proficiencies/competencies in both knowledge and skill areas so that prior learning assessment can be completed effectively and efficiently;
- will have to estimate the costs of PLAR services to their programs and determine appropriate fee structures for courses that provide for PLAR.
- Will need to make adjustments to work patterns.

Registrars:

- will have to review SIAST and program admission policies to remove any barriers to the acceptance of PLAR;
- will have to include a description of SIAST's PLAR Processes in the calendar and other Campus publications;
- will assist in the maintenance of PLAR Fees;
- will have to work with programs to develop schedules and deadlines for acceptance of PLAR either prior to program start dates or during the program year;
- will set up a transcript system (Banner) for PLAR accreditation;
- will maintain student records and documentation pertaining to PLAR processes;
- will maintain statistical records of learners using PLAR and report on those records as required by management;

Senior Management:

- will have to approve PLAR policy and procedures;
- will ensure compliance of other policies and PLAR
- will have to provide training opportunities for faculty and counsellors designated who implement PLAR practices;
- will need to ensure mechanisms exist for the consistent application of PLAR process and procedures across SIAST campuses.
- will need to provide program development opportunities to programs that implement PLAR.
- will have to evaluate the impact of PLAR on Campus programming. This will include such criteria as cost/benefit, impact on learner achievement, impact on program results (graduates and completers);
- will consider including the evaluation of PLAR into the program review system.

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CANDIDATE PROCESS FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Consult with PLAR Designated Contact 1
- Are you registered in or on a wait lit for a SIAST course or program of study?
- PLAR process Application Forms and Fees
- Counselling
- ID program and courses for challenge
- Check entrance requirements
- Review and start a PLAR outcome audit
- Follow this candidate process on website or pamphlet

→

Decline PLAR
- Consult an academic counsellor
- Discuss training options

↓

Apply for PLAR 2
- Complete Application Form
- Pay Application Fee

↘

Complete PLAR Self-Audit
- Match your learning to course outcomes

↓

Attend PLAR Audit Meeting 3
- Meet with Program Head/Faculty
- Review completed self-audit
- Determine eligibility
- Identify appropriate course(s) for challenge
- Obtain PLAR approval to proceed on the application form

→

Attend Course
- More skill or knowledge required

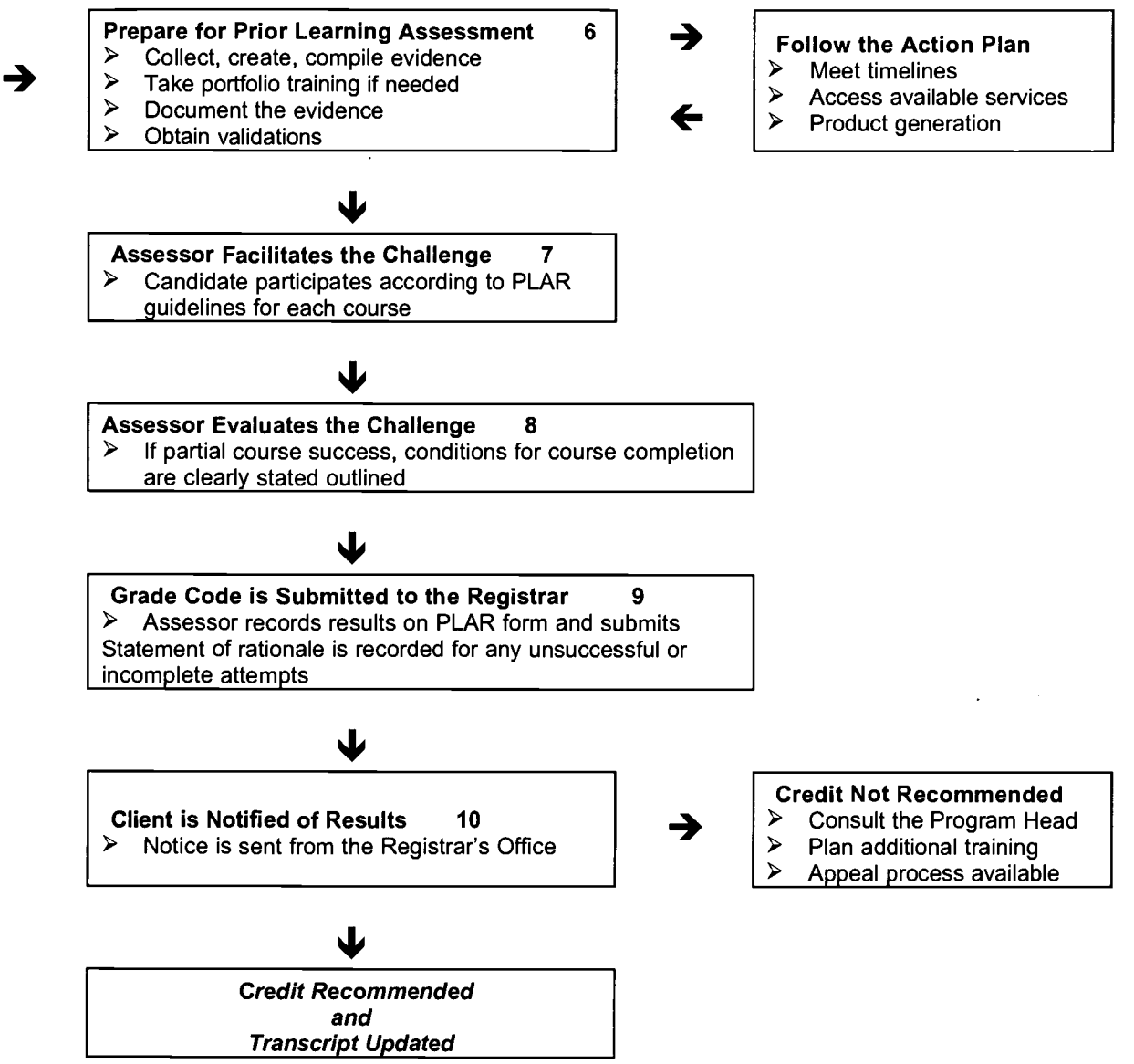
↓

Pay Course Assessment Fee 4
- Submit application form with approval to Registrar's Office
- Pay course assessment fee(s) to the campus collection office

↓

Develop an Action Plan 5
- Consult with Program Faculty responsible for each PLAR Course (s)
- Discuss assessment methods available for each course challenge
- Develop an action plan
- Determine any required access to Campus services
- Agree upon timelines for completing the PLAR requirements
- Program defines assessment mode and response time

→


Prepare for Prior Learning Assessment 6
Collect, create, compile evidence
Take portfolio training if needed
Document the evidence
Obtain validations
Follow the Action Plan
Meet timelines
Access available services
Product generation
Assessor Facilitates the Challenge 7
Candidate participates according to PLAR guidelines for each course
Assessor Evaluates the Challenge 8
If partial course success, conditions for course completion are clearly stated outlined
Grade Code is Submitted to the Registrar 9
Assessor records results on PLAR form and submits
Statement of rationale is recorded for any unsuccessful or incomplete attempts
Client is Notified of Results 10
Notice is sent from the Registrar's Office
Credit Not Recommended
Consult the Program Head
Plan additional training
Appeal process available
Credit Recommended
and
Transcript Updated

******GRANTED PLAR CREDIT – students will receive an "UNOFFICIAL" transcript printout on plain paper******

DENIED PLAR CREDIT NOTIFICATION FORM LETTER FOR BANNER GENERATION

SIAST LETTER HEAD GOES HERE

Date

Student name
Mailing Address

Dear First Name

RE: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Your submission for Prior Learning Assessment has been reviewed and evaluated by the program faculty. Your PLAR results for the following course(s) are:

Course Code	**Course Title**	**Unsuccessful, Credit Denied**

Please contact immediately **Name of Program Head/Faculty,** with whom you worked on this course challenge. Together you will develop a learning plan to complete the outcomes for this course.

Please contact the program head directly if you have any questions about these results and the recommended activities.

Sincerely,

Office of the Registrar

Methods of Assessing Prior Learning

Assessment Method	*Advantages*	*Difficulties*	*Suggestions for Use*
Exams: Challenge Exams	▪ Relatively quick. ▪ Encourage cross-faculty collaboration in assessment and discussion of course content (what should be taught/learned). ▪ Inexpensive to administer and assess. ▪ Assess knowledge of content.	▪ Initial development costs are high. ▪ May be text-specific and depend on learner being familiar with specific jargon. ▪ Assess learner ability to take tests as much as they assess subject knowledge. ▪ Slanted to specific department/ institutional point of view and subject biases. ▪ May be weak indicator of a learner's true knowledge of the subject area.	▪ Should be developed as generically as possible—test only the most commonly accepted and taught material in the field. ▪ Should avoid being idiosyncratic to institution, instructor, or department.
Standardized Exams	▪ Generic. ▪ Cross-culturally normed. ▪ Reliability/validity established. ▪ Easy to access and administer for faculty and learners. ▪ Cost effective.	▪ Little support to learners who have trouble with objective tests. ▪ Intimidating for many learners. ▪ Limited subject area availability.	▪ Good transferability possibilities. ▪ Could be used for interpersonal communication, human growth development learning.
Portfolio Assessments through Documentation & Demonstration of Achievement	▪ Extremely learner centred. ▪ Enable the development of attributes, skills, and understanding beyond simple assessment.	▪ Expensive process for the institution. ▪ May require learners to take portfolio development course. ▪ Lengthy process for learner. ▪ Learner must generally exhibit high levels in written language, organization, self-motivation and self-direction.	▪ Campuses must identify expectations for portfolio submission. ▪ Useful when learner has access to documentation materials.
Portfolio-Assisted Assessment Product Assessment (Work sample)	▪ Very direct. ▪ Good opportunity for learners with writing difficulties.	▪ Difficult to authenticate. ▪ Doesn't demonstrate knowledge of theory. ▪ Evaluates only the end	▪ Best done in conjunction with other assessment methods (i.e. interviews).

Assessment Method	*Advantages*	*Difficulties*	*Suggestions for Use*
	▪ Useful when learner skills and knowledge are difficult to observe in the creation of a product.	product: doesn't show the process.	▪ Verify authenticity through interviews or letters from employers, etc.
Simulation/ Performance Assessments	▪ Clearly demonstrate skill levels and problem solving. ▪ Process can be assessed. ▪ "Real world" is replicated as much as possible.	▪ Hard to set up. ▪ Narrow, no guarantee of replicability. ▪ May involve extensive faculty and material costs.	▪ Develop clear standards about exactly what is to be assessed and what the performance criteria are. ▪ Use for skill-oriented subjects plus use a challenge exam.
Demonstrations	▪ Quick and observable. ▪ Often can be done in labs with no additional preparation.	▪ May be affected by the surroundings and learner's familiarity with the equipment and/or situation.	▪ Develop clear standards about exactly what is to be assessed and what the performance criteria are.
Interviews and Oral Exams	▪ Personal contact. ▪ Flexible, helpful for people who have trouble writing. ▪ Commonly used technique. ▪ Quite learner focused. Important that the learner be aware of the purpose of the interview to allow for preparation. May be used for a variety of purposes (e.g. counselling), as well as for assessment.	▪ Expensive. ▪ Potentially stressful. ▪ Risk of cultural bias. ▪ May favour people with good presentation skills but little content. ▪ Danger of becoming side-tracked from simple assessment of learning.	▪ Often best used in conjunction with other assessment methods. ▪ Use faculty experts in the field. ▪ Establish and follow guidelines. ▪ Establish questions and ratings in advance.

(Adapted from A Practitioner's Manual for the Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning. Central Regional Prior Learning Assessment Pilot Project Team.)

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