

Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR)

What is Prior Learning Assessment Recognition?

Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) is a process that the University of Saskatchewan has recently adopted to offer adult learners an opportunity to have their experiential learning assessed for potential credit. PLAR can ease the entry or return of adult learners to formal learning by providing them with opportunities to articulate and verify what they know and can do against the standards required by specific university-level courses and programs. "Challenge credits" are awarded to these students so that they do not need to take courses for which they have demonstrated knowledge and skills. For adult learners who bring prior learning with them to the University, PLAR can reduce the time that it takes to earn a degree.

Are all classes at the University of Saskatchewan eligible for challenge credit?

Prior Learning Assessment Recognition is not appropriate for all university-level classes. The decision about whether to allow a challenge credit for any course is entirely a department-level decision based on the best interests of their students and departmental resources.

What is the process for Prior Learning Assessment Recognition?

Students who wish to have their prior learning assessed for credit can apply to the University for challenge credits. This process is only available to students who have been admitted to the University of Saskatchewan.

Students must first meet with the PLAR Advisor in Student & Enrolment Services to discuss the process and confirm courses available for recognition. To make an appointment with the PLAR Advisor, contact admissions@usask.ca or 306-966-6751.

If courses are available for challenge credit, the student pays a non-refundable application fee and completes an application form, which includes details of the Prior Learning Assessment request. The PLAR Advisor reviews the application, and, if accepted, forwards it to the relevant college, department, or program head for review. If the application is accepted by this reviewer, the student pays an assessment fee to meet with a faculty advisor, who will discuss with the student method(s) of assessment and timelines. The student and faculty advisor must sign an assessment agreement.

The assessment(s) are conducted according to the agreed timelines. Following the assessment by the faculty advisor, the PLAR advisor will inform the student of the outcome.

What kind of prior learning can be assessed for credit?

You may have mastered knowledge and skills equivalent to the standards of particular university-level courses through work experience, independent study, seminars and workshops, community activities and non-degree courses. It is important to understand that credit for prior learning is awarded based on verified knowledge and skills, not just on experience.

How will my prior learning be assessed?

PLAR encourages a combination of assessment strategies to evaluate a student's breadth and depth of learning. These methods may include the more traditional university assessment method of written examination, as well as demonstrations, interviews and oral examinations. Another assessment tool is the use of learning portfolios, which may include a variety of supporting evidence of prior learning, such as samples of work, course outlines from corporate-sponsored learning events and skills validation certificates. You and your faculty advisor will discuss the method(s) most appropriate for assessing your prior learning.

How much does it cost to have my prior learning assessed?

A non-refundable Application for Prior Learning Assessment fee of \$75 CAN allows you to challenge a maximum of three courses per assessment application. You may apply for Prior Learning Assessment on multiple occasions during your academic career at the University of Saskatchewan.

Do I have to pay tuition for my challenge credits?

The equivalent of one-half of the tuition for the course you are challenging is levied when you commit yourself to the challenge process. This sum is charged regardless of the outcome of the challenge.

Where can I find more information on Prior Learning Assessment Recognition at the University of Saskatchewan?

Information about PLAR at the University of Saskatchewan is housed on the website of the Gwenna Moss Teaching and Learning Centre, at http://www.usask.ca/tlc/plar_info_links.html. You can also make an appointment to meet with the University's PLAR Advisor, contact admissions@usask.ca or 306-966-6751.