

## **POLICY – PO514**

### **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Program**

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Area:	Teaching and Learning
Source:	Superintendent of Education – Teaching and Learning
Approved:	March 25, 2005
Revised:	Jan. 11, 2021

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#### **1. Introduction**

The Durham Catholic District School Board recognizes that learning is not exclusive to the classroom and is dedicated to assisting secondary students and mature students obtain credits for their prior life experience and learning. This is accomplished by conducting an equivalency process for mature students and a challenge process for both adolescent and mature students.

#### **2. Definitions**

**Challenge Process** - the process undertaken to have prior learning, knowledge and skills equated to existing courses within the Ontario provincial curriculum.

**Equivalency** – the determined value of prior learning indicating how it equates to existing credit course requirements.

**Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** - 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 of secondary schools.

#### **3. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition and for granting secondary school credits under PLAR.

## **4. Application / Scope**

This policy applies to all Board staff and students enrolled in secondary day school and Continuing Education programs within the Durham Catholic District School Board.

## **5. Principles**

5.1 The Board believes that:

- a) The PLAR process is integral to the implementation of secondary school and continuing education programs.
- b) The PLAR process must be implemented consistently and adhere to the rigours of established Ministry of Education procedures.
- c) Students who wish to have their prior learning assessed must be given the opportunity to do so.
- d) The PLAR process will allow our secondary students and mature students to strive to be effective communicators, reflective thinkers, lifelong learners, collaborative contributors, caring family members, responsible citizens and discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community.

## **6. Requirements**

6.1 The Director of Education shall issue administrative procedures to support this policy and amend them thereafter as the need arises.

6.2 Secondary school principals shall:

- a) Ensure that a clear statement on the challenge process and equivalency process is included in school course calendars and students are aware of the timelines involved.
- b) Inform students that they are responsible for initiating the challenge process, and satisfying all of its requirements.
- c) Ensure every prospective applicant and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), if under eighteen, is informed of the policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, including in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST).
- d) Evaluate each application in consultation with appropriate school staff (i.e., guidance counsellor and subject teacher) to determine if reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur and then notify

student and parent(s)/guardian(s), if under the student is under eighteen, of the outcome of the evaluation.

- e) Implement a Challenge Process consistent with the Ministry of Education's expectations which includes assessment and evaluation strategies that 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. Other assessment strategies may include evaluation of written assignments, demonstrations/performances, laboratory work, and quizzes, and observation of student work. The principal is responsible for developing and administering the formal tests and for determining which assessment strategies are most appropriate for each course for which a student is challenging for credit.
- f) Determine the total credit equivalency of the student's previous learning, and the number of compulsory and optional credits still to be earned.
- g) Report, as required, to the Ministry of Education the number of challenges for credit completed (i.e., all challenges for which students earned a final percentage grade, whether it is a passing or failing grade).

6.3 The Continuing and Adult Education principal shall:

- a) Ensure that a clear statement is published in school course calendars outlining:
  - a. when students may undergo individual assessment for the purpose of obtaining Grade 9 and 10 credits;
  - b. when students may present education and training credentials and/or other appropriate documentation for assessment through equivalency process for the purpose of obtaining Grade 11 and Grade 12 credits;
  - c. what opportunities for challenge are available at schools under the jurisdiction of the Board;
  - d. when they may challenge for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses.
- b) Ensure that students are informed that they are responsible for initiating the process of individual assessment for the purpose of obtaining Grade 9 and 10 credits, and satisfying all the requirements.
- c) Ensure students are informed that they are responsible for initiating the equivalency process for the purpose of obtaining Grade 11 and 12 credits, and satisfying all the requirements.

- d) Ensure that prospective applicants are informed about policies and procedures related to individual assessment and to the equivalency process for mature students.
- e) Determine whether the student can be granted up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits on the basis of transcripts indicating successful completion of two years of secondary school that are comparable to Ontario Grade 9 and 10.
- f) Determine, in the absence of transcripts, the number of Grade 9 and 10 credits to be granted following an individual assessment.
- g) Ensure that prospective applicants are provided with an application form for equivalency and/or challenge process, as well as the materials that indicate what is expected in the Grade 11 and 12 courses.
- h) Evaluate each application in consultation with the student to determine whether the student should begin the equivalency process and/or challenge process. If yes, conduct the testing, evaluate and report on the student's performance.
- i) Implement a Challenge Process consistent with the Ministry of Education's expectations which includes assessment and evaluation strategies that 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. Other assessment strategies may include evaluation of written assignments, demonstrations/performances, laboratory work, and quizzes, and observation of student work. The principal is responsible for developing and administering the formal tests and for determining which assessment strategies are most appropriate for each course for which a student is challenging for credit.
- j) Report to the Ministry of Education, as required, the types and extent of PLAR assessment services provided to mature students.

## **7. Sources**

- 7.1 Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memoranda: Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition: Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools No. 129
- 7.2 Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memoranda: Prior Learning and Assessment for Mature Students: Implementation in Ontario Secondary Schools No. 132
- 7.3 Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016

## **8. Related Policies and Administrative Procedures**

### **8.1 Equity and Inclusive Education (PO216)**