



## BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

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## Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Secondary School (PPM129)

### DIRECTIONAL POLICY

## Nurturing & Protecting Catholic Education

### **Title of Administrative Procedure:**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Secondary School (PLAR) (PPM129), *as it relates to credit challenges the current AP.*

### **Date Approved:**

May 2023

### **Projected Review Date:**

May 2028

### **Directional Policy Alignment:**

This Administrative Procedure aligns with the Nurturing and Protecting of Catholic Education Directional Policy by ensuring that the Board maximizes, to the greatest extent possible, the achievement and well-being of all students.

### **Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:**

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Secondary School (PPM129) Administrative Procedure supports our vision of recognizing that students come to us with a variety of experiences obtained outside of the Ontario Secondary School system. At the CDSBEO, the tenet of nurturing reflects our priority of creating welcoming, Christ-centered communities that foster safe, loving, and inclusive learning for all members of our Catholic schools. At the heart of our vision, we support the God-given dignity and worth of every person.

[CDSBEO Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#)

### **Principles**

Following the equivalency or challenge process, any remaining required credits may be earned by taking the required courses.

## **Purpose**

To provide guidelines for the implementation for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Catholic Secondary Schools in the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario. 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. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in Ontario provincial curriculum policy documents to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma. PLAR is an official evaluation and credit granting process that allows students to earn credits for their knowledge and skills acquired outside of an Ontario secondary school to ensure that every learner has the opportunity to succeed by removing barriers for all students.

## **Administrative Procedure**

To provide guidelines for After a review of the students' existing documentation and evidence of prior learning, principals will determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that a student needs to meet diploma requirements and determine how the PLAR process can be best applied. In cases where a mature student disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether the student should challenge for credit, the mature student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

The PLAR process for students involves two components: "equivalency" and "challenge". However, there is no challenge process for Grade 9 credits.

## **Principles**

Following the equivalency or challenge process, any remaining required credits may be earned by taking the required courses.

### *Ministry Policy Governing the Equivalency Process:*

- Students who are eligible for equivalency credits are those who transfer to Ontario secondary schools from non-inspected private schools or schools outside Ontario. Equivalency credits are granted for placement only. The principal of the receiving school will, in the process of deciding where the student should be placed, determine as equitably as possible the total credit equivalency of the student's previous learning, and the number of compulsory and optional credits still to be earned.

### *Ministry Policy Governing the Challenge Process:*

- Students may earn no more than four credits through the challenge process, with no

more than two in one discipline.

- Students may use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit for a related course within the Ontario curriculum, if they wish to earn credit for the course without taking the course. Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in OSS 6.8.6, *appendix 4: Music Certificates Accepted for Credits*, however, are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music course but are granted credits in accordance with [OSS Program and Diploma requirements, Appendix 4](#).
- The responsibility for PLAR shall be carried out under the direction of the school principal who grants credits in the school in which the student is registered.
- Arrangements may be made with other boards to provide opportunities for eligible students to challenge for credit for courses that are not offered by the Board.
- In cases where a student who is an adult or the parent of a student who is not an adult disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether or not the student should challenge for credit, the parent or adult student may ask the appropriate Supervisory Officer to review the matter.
- The challenge process is an evaluation process and shall not be used as a way for students to improve their mark in a course for which they have already earned a credit, nor as a way to obtain a credit for a course they have previously failed.
- Students cannot be granted credits through the challenge process for any of the following courses:
  - A course in any subject if a credit has already been granted for a course in that subject in a later grade either as a single credit or as part of a block equivalency.
  - A course for which credit has already been granted or for which there is significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted (e.g., a student cannot challenge for a credit for an academic course if the student has already earned a credit for the applied course at the same grade level, and vice versa).
  - A transfer course.
  - A locally developed course.
  - A cooperative education course.
  - A course in English as a second language (ESL), English literacy development (ELD), or *Anglais pour débutants* (APD), if the student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum policy documents for English in Grades 9 to 12 under OSS (i.e., the documents for English-language schools or the

documents for French-language schools) or from the curriculum guidelines for English or Anglais/English for Grades 9 to 12/OAC's under OSIS.

- A course in French as a second language (FSL), Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF), or Perfectionnement du français (PDF), if the student has one or more credits in Français from the curriculum policy documents for Français for Grades 9 to 12 under OSS or the curriculum guideline for Français for Grades 9 to 12/OACs under OSIS.

### **Action Required**

- Each secondary school course calendar shall contain information regarding challenges for credit and opportunities for challenge. Schools/Board may not charge students any fee for undergoing the challenge process.
- A record of all completed challenges for credit – that is, all challenges for which students earned a final percentage grade, whether a passing or failing grade shall be included in the board's September Report to the Ministry. For semestered schools, this information shall also be submitted in the school March reports.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **The Board of Trustees is responsible for:**

- Ensuring alignment with the Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education Directional Policy and reviewing this Administrative Procedure as part of its regular policy and procedures review cycle.

#### **The Director of Education is responsible for:**

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure.

#### **Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:**

- Ensuring principals are consistent with the application of this Administrative Procedure.
- Ensuring that any employee for whom they have supervisory responsibility is aware of the requirements under this Administrative Procedure.
- The board must ensure that only teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers conduct the PLAR challenge process.

**Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:***Overseeing the Equivalency Process:*

- To ensure provincial consistency in establishing equivalency for students for placement purposes, principals will use as a guide the table entitled "[Requirements for the OSSD Under OSS](#)" in OSS, Appendix 8: Equivalent Diploma Requirements, to determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that the student must earn, as well as other diploma requirements that the student must satisfy, in order to qualify for the secondary school diploma.

*Overseeing the Challenge Process:*

- Ensuring that students are informed that they are responsible for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the requirements and ensuring that students who are not adults (i.e., students who are under the age of eighteen) are informed that they need parental/guardian approval before applying to challenge for credit for a course.
- Ensuring that every prospective applicant and their parents/guardians if they are not an adult, are informed about policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST).
- Ensuring that every prospective applicant is provided with an application package as well as materials that indicate what is expected in the course (i.e., the curriculum expectations) or which the student wishes to challenge for the credit (*See Appendix A*).
- Evaluating each application in consultation with the student's parents/guardian (or with the student if they are an adult) and appropriate school staff (i.e., guidance counselor, teacher-advisor, and subject teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur. A student must challenge for credit for an entire course, whether it is a full-credit or a partial-credit course. Credit will be granted only for the specific course for which the student has successfully challenged for credit.
- Ensuring that the successful applications are forwarded at the Board level.
- Ensuring that no more than four credits may be earned by one student in the PLAR challenge process with no more than two credits granted in any one discipline.
- Ensuring that students who do not have suitable documentation, owing to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., students who are refugees), will receive counselling concerning the gathering of evidence.

*Record Keeping:*

- Principals will ensure that equivalency is recorded in accordance with *The Ontario Student Transcript (OST): Manual, 1999.*
- The Principal will ensure that a “PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record” form (*See Appendix B*) 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. This form should be consulted as part of the student’s application challenge.
- A “PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record” form (*See Appendix C*) will be maintained for credits earned through the challenge process in a school outside the student’s regular school (the regular school is the school that maintains the student’s OSR).
- The principal of the school outside the student’s regular school will use the “Interim Tracking Record” form to communicate the results of the student’s challenges for credit to the school that maintains the OSR.
- The following entries must be made on the student’s Cumulative Tracking Record” form and the “Interim Tracking Record” form, as applicable:
- For challenges for credit for Grade 10, 11, or 12 courses: the student’s passing percentage grade, failing percentage grade, or withdrawal from the challenge process must be entered on the appropriate tracking record form(s).
- 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.

**Staff are responsible for:**

- Teachers with expertise in the subject area will develop, administer, evaluate, and report PLAR challenge tasks for credit.
- Informing the students of the date of the assessment and the requirements of the challenge.

**Students are responsible for:***Equivalency:*

- In cases where a student who is an adult or the parent/guardian of a student who is not an adult disagrees with the principal's placement decision for students transferring to an Ontario secondary school from a non-inspected private school or a school outside Ontario, the adult student or the parent/guardian may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

*Challenge:*

- Students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to their principal (or designate) they would likely be successful in the challenge process. The responsibilities of the student include:
  - Initiating the PLAR challenge by approaching the school Principal (or designate) for information regarding the process.
  - Students must apply for a PLAR at the school which they are registered. PLAR applications and challenges will be restricted to certain scheduled periods during the school academic year.
  - Completing the application process by gather “reasonable evidence” to support the application by the due date.
  - Completing the formal tests and other assessments by the due date(s) as determined by the Supervisory Officer responsible.

**Progress Indicators**

- Consistently applied PLAR process for students challenging credits towards their OSSD.

**Definitions**

- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (PLAR):** The formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby students eligible for PLAR, excluding mature 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 secondary schools. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the secondary school diploma.
- **Challenge:** 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.

- **Credits:** Challenge for credit for courses based on provincial curriculum policy documents will be available to students only in courses that are taught in schools operated by the board. 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 course.
- **Equivalency:** The process where mature students participate in an assessment of their prior learning credentials for granting credits towards their OSSD.
- **Reasonable Evidence:** Documentation that the curriculum expectations of the course have already achieved as well as related Catholic Graduate Expectations and that the student would likely be successful in the challenge process.
- **Discipline:** The term discipline refers to the subject area covered by any one curriculum policy document. All courses in that document are considered to belong to that discipline.

## Appendices

- Appendix A – [Application Package to Challenge for Credit for a Course](#)
- Appendix B – [PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record](#)
- Appendix C – [PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record](#)
- Appendix D – [PLAR Challenge Process Chart](#)

## References

- [Ontario Secondary School OSS Grade 9-12 Program and Diploma Requirements 1999](#)
- [Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 129 PLAR: Implementation in Secondary Schools](#)