

## TIPSHEET: What is PLAR?

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process that helps students to demonstrate relevant learning acquired through life and work experiences and translate this learning into college credit.

### Subject Eligibility for Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR):

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process a student can use to gain college credit(s) for learning and skills acquired through previous life and work experiences. Candidates who successfully meet the course learning outcomes of a specific course may be granted credit based on the successful assessment of their prior learning. The type of assessment method (s) used will be determined by subject matter experts. Grades received for the PLAR challenge will be included in the calculation of a student's grade point average.

The PLAR application process is outlined in <http://www.durhamcollege.ca/plar>. Full-time and part-time students must adhere to all deadline dates. Please email: [PLAR@durhamcollege.ca](mailto:PLAR@durhamcollege.ca) for details.

#### PLAR Eligibility

Yes  No

#### PLAR Assessment (if eligible):

- Assignment  
 Exam  
 Portfolio  
 Other

PLAR eligibility for each course is recorded on each course outline.

### *What are some of the key benefits of PLAR for students?*

Recognizes learners' previous accomplishments, skills, and knowledge.

May decrease cost of education and time to graduation.

### *How do I determine if my course is eligible for PLAR?*

Most courses should be eligible for PLAR. There are some exceptions such as when it is not permitted by an external licensing agency/group or not permitted for legal reasons.

Eligibility is determined by the professor (subject matter expert) in consultation with the Program Team and Dean.

## *What are the key steps in developing the PLAR challenge?*

---

### **First Step: Identify the course requirements**

What does the student need to “reliably demonstrate” by the end of this course?

What are the learning outcomes for the course?

What are the types of outcomes (e.g. skills, knowledge, attitudes)? Level of complexity?

What is the passing grade in this course?

### **Second Step: Identify suitable evidence of prior learning**

How will the student demonstrate the learning outcomes if they had a variety of different jobs, life, or other learning experiences?

How will the student provide suitable and reliable evidence or demonstration of the skills, attitudes, and knowledge required in this course?

### **Third Step: Create PLAR Challenge**

Include as many relevant types of assessments as needed to fully evaluate the course learning outcomes.

## *What are some common types of PLAR assessments?*

---

Common types of PLAR assessments include assignments, exams, portfolios, practical skills tests, interviews, and projects.

Often, faculty will ask for a combination of PLAR assessments to fully assess all the course and essential employability outcomes.

## *What is an example of a PLAR assessment?*

---

In a theory and skills-based culinary management course, a student might be expected to complete a comprehensive written exam (including a case study on how to adapt service styles for different clients and application questions on service, set up, point of scale, and beverage service) along with providing a professional portfolio (reference letters, copies of Smart Serve and other safe food preparation certificates, job descriptions from past jobs, and reflective summaries of their skills and learning).

## *How is PLAR different from a Credit Transfer?*

---

PLAR evaluates learning students have gained from prior life and work experience.

Transfer of Academic Credits (Exemptions) provides learners a credit without any further need for evaluation of learning from previously acquired course(s) taken at a college or at other educational institutions. Specific eligibility requirements need to be met for a course to be deemed as equivalent.

## *How can I learn more?*

---

Review the PLAR and Credit Transfer information and Policy and Procedure on the [Durham College website](#) and on [ICE](#).