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Policy Version	V3
Policy Review	Annual
Policy Title	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition(PLAR) Policy
Policy Approval	Vice President of Academic and Campus Excellence

PURPOSE

1. At Willis College PLAR is used to recognize and assess formal, non-formal and experiential learning that occurs over time regardless of context. PLAR may help a student gain admission into a program of study or reduce the number of courses required to complete a program. By making pathways into and through programming more accessible, PLAR can help expedite program completion and career success for students in their communities, this province and beyond.
2. PLAR is recognized as a type of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that ensures consistent, reliable, transparent, fair, and quality-assured assessment of relevant prior learning that has occurred in a variety of work, life and/or educational settings.
3. This policy establishes clear guidelines for how academic credit may be applied for and awarded through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

SCOPE

1. This policy applies to the assessment of prior learning acquired through formal, non-formal, and experiential learning experiences for the awarding of college credit. The scope of PLAR is limited by Willis College's Residency requirement, which is the percentage of courses in a program of study that must be completed by a student through Willis College to be granted a Willis College credential. The minimum residency requirement is 50%.

Term	Definition
Program Coordinator	A College position that leads the delivery of high-quality and consistent teaching and learning in programs assigned to their portfolio.
Academic Course Credit	Credit that is awarded in recognition of having met the conditions for passing a course in a program of studies.
Student Admissions Advisor	In terms of the PLAR process, an advisor may provide timely and accurate information on College requirements, policies, and processes and help the student connect to college resources and engage confidently as a learner. An advisor may also assist students to set and meet meaningful goals that align academic, career, and personal development. Adapted from <i>The College Collaborative Advising Program Guide</i> , April 2018.

Audit	Occurs when a student participates in a course without being evaluated. Students auditing courses will not receive credit.
College Credential Program	A program of study that recognizes the successful completion of all program requirements within College approved timelines.
Course Outline	A document that outlines the learning requirements and outcomes of a course.
Equivalent Learning	Learning is acquired through formal, informal, non-formal, and/or experiential learning experiences which are assessed to be equivalent to the learning outcomes identified in a course or program.
Experiential Learning	Knowledge and/or skills acquired through life experiences.
Formal Learning	Knowledge and/skills gained through accredited learning from a formally recognized educational institution.
Faculty	A person or persons appointed by the College to deliver a course and evaluate students in accordance with the learning outcomes and course outline.
Informal Learning	Knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes, that a student has acquired through a combination of work, non-formal, and/or experiential learning experiences.
Internal Equivalency	The official acknowledgment of a previously completed NSCC course that is equivalent to a course taken within the current program of study.
Learning Outcomes	Formal statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or demonstrate in order to receive a pass mark in a course.
Non-Formal Learning	Skills and abilities and attitudes that students have acquired from noncredit courses, on-the-job-training, and workshops.
Official Transcript	An official document of a student's academic record, certified by the Director, Registrar or designate.
PLAR Candidates	Individuals who have decided that PLAR is a sound educational decision for their career pathways and are preparing for assessment of their prior learning.
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)	A type of <i>Recognition of Prior Learning</i> (RPL). It is the process for assessing formal and informal learning acquired in work, life and educational settings as equivalent to the learning outcomes of a college course. When faculty and/or other subject matter experts (SMEs) assess and verify that a student's learning is relevant, valid, sufficient, authentic, and can be measured reliably against course outcomes, academic credit may be awarded. PLAR ensures consistent, transparent, fair and quality-assured assessment of relevant lifelong learning regardless of context.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	A comprehensive term that refers to the recognition of the sum of an individual's learning that has occurred prior to the present. RPL recognizes that learning is life-long and occurs in formal, non-formal, informal work, life and educational situations. In addition, RPL places value on all learning including the unrecognized knowledge, skills, abilities, and values that individuals gain throughout their lives. Furthermore, RPL creates pathways for recognizing that some prior learning may be equivalent to the content of one or more college courses.
Student	A person who is registered in a course or program at Willis College.
Student Services	A team of professionals available to students to support and assist them in their learning at Willis College.
Transfer Credit	Credit awarded for courses completed on the basis that the learning outcomes are equivalent and current to the courses within a student's program of study.

POLICY

Roles and Responsibilities

1. *Applicants/Students/PLAR Candidates* are responsible to:
 1. Inform the Admissions Department of the intent to apply for PLAR
 2. Submit the PLAR application including supporting documentation
 3. Participate in the PLAR assessment.
2. *The College* is responsible to:
 1. Provide Guidance
 2. Schedule, prepare for and conduct the PLAR assessment.
 3. Ensure that the assessed learning is equivalent to the standards and criteria for the level required by the course in which the credit is sought.
 4. Maintain record of PLAR attempts.

Applying for PLAR

3. PLAR candidates are responsible for completing and submitting a PLAR Application form a minimum of four weeks prior to the date of study and prior to signing the enrollment contract.
4. PLAR fees may be applicable, student will be informed in advance of any fees. PLAR fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.
5. PLAR candidates will have access to support throughout the entire PLAR process, from general enquiry to assessment and follow-up. PLAR candidates will have access to advising throughout the entire PLAR process, from general enquiry to assessment and follow-up.

PLAR Assessments

6. PLAR assessments will be completed by subject matter experts who will verify that a candidate's prior learning is relevant, sufficient, authentic, current and can be measured reliably against course learning outcomes for the awarding of college credit.
7. College credit will be awarded for learning equivalent to the standards and criteria for the level required by the course in which the credit is sought. It should reflect both the theoretical and practical components in a balance consistent with the learning outcome requirements of courses/programs.
8. Recognized PLAR credits will be recorded on official transcripts as 'PLAR'.
9. Candidates have the right to review their PLAR assessments and related criteria with a subject matter expert. PLAR assessments will be completed by subject matter experts

which may include faculty, academic chairs or others who will verify that a candidate's prior learning is relevant, sufficient, authentic, current and can be measured reliably against course outcomes for the awarding of college credit.

Candidate Appeals

Candidates have the right to appeal PLAR decisions using the college Student Appeals process as prescribed by the Student Appeals policy and procedure.

Impact on Honours Calculations, Student Loans, Financial Aid, Bursaries and Other Awards

10. PLAR results will not be included in calculations for honours, awards or bursaries.
11. PLAR credit may reduce a student's course load status from full-time to part-time. Changes in courses load status may impact the ability to qualify for student loans, financial aid, awards and bursaries.

Limitations

12. PLAR cannot be used:
 1. To upgrade a course grade for which credit has already been granted by Willis College.
 2. To upgrade a failing course grade given by Willis College.
 3. To earn a course grade when a student has audited a course.
 4. In place of or in addition to a Supplemental Evaluation.
13. Multiple PLAR attempts for the same course will not be considered unless proof of additional learning can be demonstrated.
14. In programs that are bound by relationships with professional, accrediting and/or regulatory bodies, some courses may not be eligible for PLAR.

Quality Assurance

The quality of the PLAR process is assured through on-going professional development and continuous review of policies, practices and procedures.