

## **PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)**

### **Preamble**

Brandon University (BU) respects all forms of learning however it is attained and recognizes also that individuals do attain university level learning outside of the usual academic environment. In acknowledgment of these achievements and with the goal of encouraging achievement of these individuals' educational goals, BU aims to provide an accessible yet fair and rigorous process for assessing this prior learning. BU recognizes PLAR credits on a case-by-case basis when the student's knowledge and skills, as assessed by academic experts in the relevant subject area, are determined to meet university level learning standards and specific expectations for the academic qualification sought.

### **Foundational PLAR Principles**

In its practice, BU aims to adhere to the *Nine Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Practice in Canada* established by the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA). The PLAR credit assessment process will be accessible, consistent, fair, respectful, valid, flexible, rigorous, transparent, and professionally supported (CAPLA, 2015, p. 3).

### **Applicant Eligibility**

Only individuals who have been admitted to BU are eligible to seek PLAR credit. Students may not apply for an assessment of prior learning while on academic probation, suspension, or academic withdrawal. Applicants are to be aware that individual faculties/schools and programs may determine additional applicant eligibility requirements.

### **Application Timetable**

Application for PLAR credit shall normally be initiated within the first 30 credit hours of registration in a new program at Brandon University.

### **Assessment Regulations**

Agreement to undertake a PLAR assessment is the prerogative of the faculty member serving as PLAR assessor. A range of evaluation methods may be used in PLAR, including, but not limited to, examinations, demonstrations, interviews, portfolio-assisted assessments, as well as evaluation of non-accredited credentials. The method or methods of assessment shall be determined by the faculty member serving as PLAR assessor or as established by the academic department or program.

Students may not apply for an assessment of a BU course previously completed (passed or failed) or courses completed at an accredited postsecondary institution but denied transfer credit. Students may not apply for an assessment of prior learning for BU Co-op, Field Experience, Practicum, Thesis, or Topics course equivalents, or for courses attempted under a Letter of Permission.

### **Types of PLAR Credit Recognized**

Department chairs and/or other members of a specific department/program considering what kind of credit, if any, will be granted for Prior Learning, will follow a process similar to the one currently used when evaluating courses taken from accredited postsecondary institutions for transfer credit. They may select one or more of the following options:

- Specific BU course equivalent(s)
- Unallocated credit in the department – number of credit hours and course level to be identified

In cases where a department/program-based PLAR assessor agrees that a student has acquired learning that is equivalent to university-level credit but that such credit should not be counted towards fulfilling major/minor requirements in the discipline, the assessor should invite the Faculty/School Dean to grant unallocated Faculty/School credit for the learning. Faculty/School credit can be applied within the student's degree but will not satisfy specific major/minor requirements.

### **PLAR Credit Limitations with BU Degree Requirements**

PLAR credit is not available in all programs. PLAR credit counts against residence (i.e., does not count as credit taken at BU) for the purposes of degree residence requirements.

### **Approval of PLAR Credits**

As with transfer credit assessments, decisions on PLAR credits recognized by the appropriate PLAR assessor shall be transmitted the Registrar's Office for inclusion on the student's BU record.

### **Transcript Notation of Recognized PLAR Credit**

Should PLAR credit be granted, a grade of CR for "Credit" will be assigned to the course(s) on the student's transcript, and the credits will be identified as having been granted on the basis of PLAR.

### **Proposed Undergraduate Calendar Amendments:**

Sections 3.11.5 of the 2021-22 Undergraduate Calendar will be deleted, and section 3.11.3 will be revised as follows:

### **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**

Brandon University respects all learning, however attained, and recognizes also that individuals do achieve university level learning outside of the usual academic environment. In acknowledgement of these achievements, Brandon University aims to provide an accessible yet fair and rigorous process for assessing this prior learning by academic experts in the relevant subject area. Brandon University recognizes PLAR credit on a case-by-case basis if the individual's knowledge and skills meet the expectations for the particular academic credential requested by the PLAR applicant. While providing this

opportunity, Brandon University reserves its mandate of ensuring that appropriate academic standards are maintained.

Only individuals who have been admitted to Brandon University are eligible to seek PLAR credit. Students may not apply for an assessment of prior learning while on academic probation, suspension, or academic withdrawal. Applicants are to be aware that certain Brandon University Faculties or Schools may determine additional requirements for eligibility. Application for PLAR credit shall normally be initiated within the first 30 credit hours of registration in a new degree program at Brandon University.

Agreement to undertake a PLAR assessment is the prerogative of the faculty member serving as PLAR assessor. A range of evaluation methods may be used in PLAR, including, but not limited to, examinations, demonstrations, interviews, portfolio-assisted assessments, as well as an evaluation of non-accredited credentials. The method or methods of assessment shall be determined by the faculty member serving as PLAR assessor or established by the academic department or program. Students may not apply for an assessment of a Brandon University course previously completed (passed or failed) or courses completed at an accredited postsecondary institution but denied transfer credit. Students may not apply for an assessment of prior learning for Brandon University Co-op, Field Experience, Practicum, Thesis, or Topics course equivalents, or for courses attempted under a Letter of Permission.

PLAR credit counts against residence (i.e., does not count as credit taken at BU) for the purposes of degree residence requirements. If PLAR credit is granted, it will be recognized as specific Brandon University course equivalent(s) or as Unallocated credit in the appropriate department or Faculty/School. Should PLAR credit be granted, a grade of CR for “Credit” will be assigned.

The PLAR assessment fee is non-refundable and must be paid in full before an assessment will be conducted. Contact [PLAR@Brandonu.ca](mailto:PLAR@Brandonu.ca) for further information.

**Approved by Senate: September 14, 2021**