



Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policy

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Purpose

The Centre for Indigenous Health Leadership (CIHL) strives to foster inclusivity and support diverse learners by recognizing and acknowledging prior learning experiences that align with the learning outcomes of the CIHL courses.

The purpose of this policy is to formally establish guidelines and procedures for conducting a Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR) at the CIHL to assess and grant credit for prior learning, whether acquired through prior education, work experiences (paid or unpaid), or personal development, to help learners progress efficiently towards their educational goals.

Scope

This policy applies to all learners enrolled at the CIHL seeking credit for prior learning in any of the CIHL's courses as part of a training or academic program. The policy encompasses the evaluation and recognition of prior learning experiences through the Challenge Exam, Transfer Credit, and Module-Based Portfolio Assessment pathways.

Definitions

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): a systematic process used by the CIHL to evaluate and grant credit for the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through formal or informal learning experiences outside of traditional classroom settings. PLAR recognizes experiential learning, work experiences, professional training, self-directed study, or other non-formal learning endeavours of learners towards their training or academic program requirements.

Training or Academic Program: refers to a specific set of courses and requirements leading to the completion of a degree, diploma, certificate or other offered credential at the CIHL.

Candidate: refers to a learner enrolled in a training or academic program at the CIHL who seeks credit for prior learning through the PLAR process.

Credit: refers to the academic units awarded for successfully completing a CIHL course, contributing to a learner's progress towards their program completion.

Transfer Credit: academic credit granted to a learner for coursework completed at another recognized institution, based on the evaluation of the course's equivalency to courses offered at the CIHL.

Challenge Exam: a method of assessment where a candidate is evaluated through examination or other direct evaluation processes that test for knowledge and skills directly related to the learning outcomes of a specific CIHL course. Successful completion of the Challenge Exam pathway may result in the award of credit for the corresponding course.

Module-Based Portfolio Assessment: involves a candidate providing a collection of documents, objects, and other evidence demonstrating material proof of learning and reflection related to the learning outcomes of a specific CIHL course. The candidate's learning is assessed against the course and/or program learning outcomes.

CIHL Administrator: a designated administrative authority responsible for overseeing the PLAR process at the CIHL.

Recognized Institutions: accredited, recognized, authorized, registered or licensed post-secondary institutions by relevant Canadian provincial and territorial governments.

Policy

The Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR) process can be applied to any of the CIHL's courses as part of a training or academic program. The CIHL recognizes three (3) pathways for a learner to be awarded credit for their prior learning: Challenge Exam, Transfer Credit and Module-Based Portfolio Assessment. A learner can apply to qualify for credit through PLAR using more than one pathway for different courses. For example, a learner can take the Challenge Exam pathway for Course A, as well as take the Credit Transfer Pathway for Course B.

PLAR Pathways:

Challenge Exam

A candidate is evaluated through examination or other direct evaluation processes that test for knowledge and skills directly related to the learning outcomes of a specific CIHL course.

Transfer Credit

For a candidate who has successfully completed a course, comparable in terms of content, academic level, length, and rigour at another recognized institution. A course outline will be required to assess if the course, taken at another institution is a suitable equivalent for a course offered by the CIHL. Refer to A011 Transfer Credit Policy for more information.

Module-Based Portfolio Assessment

A candidate is required to provide a collection of documents, objects, and other evidence that demonstrates material proof of learning and reflection related to the learning outcomes of a specific

CIHL course. The candidate's learning is assessed against the course and/or program learning outcomes.

Eligibility:

All enrolled learners in any of the CIHL's courses as part of an academic program are eligible to apply for PLAR. Candidates must be able to provide verifiable evidence of prior learning experiences through documentation and/or portfolio.

A learner should consider PLAR if they can demonstrate at least one of the following:

- A broad range of life experiences that can be related to the respective or relevant field;
- A clear career plan and understanding of how their educational goals align with their career plans;
- Five (5) or more years of experience in the respective or relevant field;
- in-depth experience relating to a specific CIHL course;
- Progression of learning in the respective or relevant field over time;
- Keeping up-to-date with changes in the respective or relevant field by reading materials and taking workshops and modules;
- Demonstrate prior learning by taking a challenge exam or by submitting documented evidence.

Application Process:

- In order to take advantage of the PLAR option, a candidate needs to be a current learner in good academic standing at the CIHL.
- After selecting the most appropriate PLAR pathway, the learner should collect supporting documentation and meet with the designated CIHL Administrator to discuss the best course of action.
- Based on the CIHL Administrator's feedback and further instructions, the learner revises their initial application, if necessary, and formally applies for PLAR under the chosen pathway.

Assessment Method:

- The CIHL will assign a qualified assessor(s) who possesses subject matter expertise to evaluate the portfolio.
- Assessor(s) will use established criteria and rubrics to assess the portfolio's content, relevance and demonstration of the course or program learning outcomes.
- In some cases, the assessor(s) may conduct additional assessments, such as interviews or practical demonstrations to validate the learning outcomes.

Timing and Decision:

- The time required for the CIHL to review each application may vary, depending on each case, especially if academic credentials earned at other institutions need to be verified.
- After the review is completed, the CIHL will determine the amount of credit that can be granted, and the learner will receive a formal response. Approval for PLAR candidates is not guaranteed, and the decisions will be based on the strength of the evidence supporting each case.

Transfer Credit & PLAR Limit:

- In compliance with the provincial regulation, the maximum number of combined transfer credits and PLAR toward a training or academic program completion requirements for a learner at the CIHL is no more than 50% of the hours of instruction of the program.