

Program Coordinator's Overview of the PLAR Process

What is PLAR?

PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) allows students to receive course credit for non-academic life experience such as employment, community work, independent study, on-the-job training, volunteering, or travel and leisure.

Unlike credit transfer, the PLAR process involves a formal assessment, with the students' results appearing on their transcript using the same grading scheme as the course (e.g. A to F letter grade; Pass/Fail).

What is a Program Coordinator's role in the PLAR process?

The Program Coordinator reviews a candidate's preliminary eligibility for the PLAR process.

Once a student applies online to challenge a course, the PLAR Coordinator will perform an initial screening to confirm that the student has not failed the challenged course in the last 12 months, and that they are in compliance with Algonquin College's Residency Requirement.

If these criteria are met, the PLAR Coordinator will email you with a completed self-assessment form outlining how the student's experience aligns with the course's CLR's. Based on this self-assessment, you are asked to determine whether you feel the student is eligible to continue with the PLAR process.

Note: Confirmation of a student's eligibility to PLAR a course does not guarantee that the student will be successful in obtaining the credit; it merely confirms that there are reasonable grounds for the student to challenge the course. The next step of the PLAR process has the student complete an assessment (e.g. portfolio, exam) in order to validate their experience.

What makes a student eligible for PLAR?

Some helpful questions to consider in reviewing a student's eligibility for PLAR:

- Has the experience occurred over a reasonable length of time (i.e. longer than a few days or weeks)?
- Does the student's experience address most of the Course Learning Requirements?
- Is the experience based on non-academic experience? (*Note: Credit for prior post-secondary experience should be sought through credit transfer*)

To ensure that PLAR timelines are met, we ask that you confirm or deny eligibility within 5 business days.

Once you have determined whether the student is a suitable candidate for the PLAR process, please notify the PLAR Office by emailing plar@algonquincollege.com. The PLAR Office will then contact the student with next steps.

How does the PLAR process work, from start to finish?

- Student initiates the PLAR process by reviewing a course outline, completing a self-assessment, and applying online for PLAR. All materials for this step are available on the PLAR website, www.algonquincollege.com/plar.
- PLAR Coordinator performs preliminary eligibility check.
- PLAR Coordinator contacts the Program Coordinator for second, content-specific eligibility check, to confirm whether the student's experience aligns sufficiently with the course's CLRs.
- If the student is determined eligible to PLAR the course, they must withdraw from the course, and pay the PLAR assessment fee.
- ***If the PLAR Coordinator does not have a current assessment on file for the course:*** the PLAR Coordinator reaches out to the Chair to request the development of a PLAR assessment, as well as the identification of a faculty member to grade the assessment once completed by the student. The Chair will work with the Program Coordinator to ensure that one is developed. *The academic area is to provide the assessment to the PLAR Coordinator within 4 weeks of request.*
- ***If the PLAR Coordinator has a current assessment on file for the course:*** the PLAR Coordinator requests the Chair identify a faculty member to grade the assessment once completed by the student.
- The PLAR Coordinator provides the student with their PLAR assessment guidelines and/or contacts student to schedule a time to write their PLAR exam at the Test Centre.
- Student submits completed PLAR assessment.
- PLAR Coordinator sends completed assessment and grade forms to assessor via email.
- Assessor evaluates and sends the grade form back to the PLAR Coordinator *within 2 weeks of receipt.*
- PLAR Coordinator informs the student of their results and sends PLAR grade form to Registrar's Office for transcription.

How can I direct students to PLAR?

Please direct students to www.algonquincollege.com/plar for general inquiries and to start the application process. If a question is not answered in our [FAQ](#), it can be directed to plar@algonquincollege.com.

The PLAR Office also offers one-on-one Zoom appointments, which can be booked through the [PLAR website](#).

What are the PLAR application deadlines?

Although students can technically challenge a course up until the last date to withdraw without academic penalty, they are strongly encouraged to initiate the PLAR process within the first four weeks of the semester.

Applying later in the semester may pose a risk to students' ability to progress as expected in their program of study, as PLAR submissions may not be graded in time for the student to receive credit for the course prior to the subsequent semester. Please advise students accordingly.