
Standard Number:	4003	Effective Date:	Aug 1, 2022
Standard Title:	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)	Last Updated:	Apr 7, 2024
Standard Category:	Registrar's Office	Next Review Date:	April, 2026

Purpose

This standard provides framework for the granting of credit in cases where students have non-formal or unrecognized education, training or experience in a field.

Definitions

Advanced Standing: Indicates the granting of credit towards a credential by one institution for programs or courses completed at another when course content is significantly different, yet equivalent in breadth, relevancy, and level of difficulty.

Course: one course of the program which is required to achieve a regulated certification, or consideration for completion of a college defined program.

Credit: the number of units of academic value assigned to a course.

Cumulative GPA (CGPA): the total sum of grade points received during the period of a student's enrollment divided by the number of credits attempted during that period.

Program: the complete set of all courses required to achieve a regulated certification, or the collection of courses defined as a program by the College.

Transfer Credit: Indicates the granting of credit towards a credential by one institution for programs or courses completed at another when course content is considered similar and equivalent.

Statement

Ridge Meadows College (RMC) understands that students apply to various programs with a wide range of personal experiences and education. Obtaining course credit for informal education or experience can accelerate a student's pursuit of a credential as well as reducing a program's expense. When not in conflict with the academic integrity of RMC's programs, and when prior experience or education can demonstrably match the learning outcomes of a specific course, RMC will award credit as per this standard and accompanying rules.

RMC adheres to the following principles when granting PLAR credit:

- Recognition and credit will be given for demonstrated knowledge and skills, and not for experience alone.
- Learning assessed for post-secondary credit should be:
 - Connected to learning goals and outcomes of specific courses and programs.
 - Transferable to multiple contexts beyond the one in which it was learned.
 - Current and relevant.
 - At an equivalent level of achievement or skill to a student completing the appropriate course or level of a program.
 - Assessed using a range of different evaluation techniques consistent with post-secondary education.
- Some credits are not eligible for PLAR consideration. Those courses will be listed in the current version of the academic calendar.
- RMC accepts transfer credits for which PLAR was granted from accredited Canadian institutions as well as from others with verifiable quality assurance standards from a recognized accreditation body.
- All program students must meet a residency requirement, meaning no more than 50% of a program's credit may be obtained from any combination of transfer credit, advanced standing and PLAR.
- PLAR will not be considered when prior learning credit at an institution may be eligible for transfer credit or advanced standing. In such cases, a transfer credit or advanced standing request must be made instead.
- The appropriate Program Chair will appoint an instructor who is qualified in the field to evaluate any PLAR requests.
- Credit granted through the PLAR process will be noted as such on a student's transcript. PLAR credits do not contribute to a student's CGPA.

Evidence

The primary responsibility of preparing evidence in relation to a PLAR request rests with the student. The student must demonstrate that any identified experience or education meets the learning goals and outcomes of a specific course within a program. If an adequate amount of evidence is not supplied, the program chair reserves the right to terminate the PLAR request.

Examples of evidence may include:

- A resume / work experience
- Third party examinations
- Portfolios
- Practicums or internships
- Micro-credentials
- Certificates from educational bodies
- Challenge Exams

In most cases more than one type of evidence will be required.

Cost

There are significant college resources required to properly evaluate a PLAR request. As a result, students will be charged an appropriate fee for a PLAR evaluation as per the college's fee structure and/or Academic Calendar.

Appeals

Appeals to a PLAR decision may be made in writing to the college manager within two weeks of receiving a final decision to an application.

Related Standards

- 4001 – Grade Scales and Evaluation
- 4002 – Transfer Credit