

## PLAR at Cambrian College

# Are you ready for PLAR?

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**Q.**

**Do I have life and work experiences that I could use toward a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition?**

**A.**

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition is a process that enables you as an adult learner to challenge college courses by demonstrating your relevant learning from work, education and personal experiences. It can be a valuable tool to help you obtain college credits more quickly, but requires some preparation to conduct a challenge or to develop a portfolio.

**Q.**

**Do I know what program I think would best suit my learning background?**

**A.**

When you enroll in a college program, you may sometimes choose a program for which you have had previous work or life experience. You may want to have the academic qualifications to go along with that experience and therefore are often a good candidate for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. **Academic counselling** is available to you as a prospective student to help determine what program may be most suitable. The PLAR Facilitator can help to determine if you should pursue the PLAR option. You do not have to be registered in a program to apply for PLAR.

**Q.**

**Do I have the theoretical and practical knowledge to write or perform a challenge test that will meet the learning outcomes of the course that I am challenging?**

**A.**

Learning outcomes for courses are stated in all course outlines for each course in each program. Reviewing the course outline will help you to determine whether or not you have the knowledge required to pursue a challenge test. Contact the PLAR Facilitator for copies of course outlines.

**Q.**

**Do I have similar courses that I have taken at another postsecondary institution?**

**A.**

In most instances, if you have taken a similar course at another postsecondary institution, you can apply for a **transfer credit** to your program of interest.

Applying for transfer credit does not require you to go through the PLAR process and can be processed through your Program Coordinator or Dean's office and the Registrar's office.

**Q.**

**Do I have adequate time to prepare before the start of the semester to write a challenge test?**

**A.**

Planning is key to the success of challenging a course. Ideally, applying one or two semesters prior to the start of your program is helpful to you and the content expert who must prepare the challenge. The earlier you challenge the course the better. However, you may only find out once you are registered in the course and attend one or two classes, that you already have that knowledge. Within each semester, there are specific Add/Drop dates noted in the College Calendar that a student must follow if they choose to challenge a course. Contact the PLAR Facilitator to determine if and how they may apply to your situation.

**Q.**

**Am I ready for the challenge process?**

**A.**

The process measures demonstrated learning through a variety of evaluation methods or challenge activities designed by subject-expert faculty and include, for example:

Tests, both oral and written.

Performance activities observed and evaluated by the assessor, including presentations, demonstrations, on-site observations etc.

Product development specifically assigned by the assessor, including case studies, reports, programs etc.

**Q.**

**Am I ready to complete a portfolio?**

**A.**

Portfolios are more work and require more time, but may also produce more results in regard to the academic credits you can achieve through PLAR. A portfolio is recommended for individuals who wish to challenge several courses within a program. Based on the learning outcomes of the program, you would provide proof of your learning through detailed descriptions of your life experiences and learning accomplishments. Some of the documents used to help demonstrate or attest to your learning may include:

Resume

Previous Job Descriptions (Paid and Volunteer)

Previous Job Evaluations/Performance Appraisals  
Course Outlines (of courses taken or given)  
Workshops (attended or presented)  
Training Manuals (table of contents)  
Sample of Report Writing  
Sample of Proposal Writing  
Letters of Reference  
Letters of Recognition  
News Articles  
Work Plan Samples  
Newsletters  
Certificates of Accomplishment/Acknowledgement  
Software Programs (used or developed)  
Technology (you developed or helped to develop)  
Video Tapes  
Product Samples

### **Who do I contact to talk about PLAR?**

You can begin by contacting the PLAR Facilitator at:

Leanne Lewis  
Manager of Student Advising  
Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology  
1400 Barrydowne Road  
Sudbury, Ontario P3A 3V8  
Telephone: (705) 566-8101, ext. 7584  
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