

Title:	Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
Type:	Academic
Policy #:	AC100-07
Responsibility:	Centre for Academic Quality
Approved by:	Executive Team, June 2014
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1. Introduction

Centennial is committed to expanding access to learning through the removal of barriers and the development of pathways that support continued learning for learners. The College supports the meaningful assessment and recognition of all relevant prior learning.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the College's commitment to, and standardization of processes and procedures for, the assessment and recognition of all forms of prior learning.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Centennial College recognition of prior learning practices, including:

- Equivalence-substitution courses/credits;
- Transfer credit; and,
- Prior learning assessment and recognition.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** is an all-encompassing term for all advanced standing, transfer credit and prior learning assessment and recognition processes. Central to RPL processes are the assessments of prior learning in an effort to evaluate the learner's sufficient demonstration of learning outcomes.
- 4.2 **Articulation Agreement** is an academic partnership activity between two or more institutions or organizations that recognizes learning achievement, facilitates learner progress, minimizes curriculum duplication, and eases the transition from one institution to the other.
- 4.3 **Equivalence-Substitution** refers to the awarding of credit for previous completion of the same or similar Centennial College course.
- 4.4 **Advanced Standing** refers to the granting of admission to a program at an entry point beyond Semester One based on the prior formal learning of a learner through a post-secondary education program.

- 4.5 **Fast-Track Progression** is the awarding of advanced standing through a separately established Centennial College program, where admission is partly based on prior completion of a relevant post-secondary credential.
- 4.6 **Transfer Credit** is the awarding of course credit for previously completed credit obtained at a recognized post-secondary institution.
- 4.7 **Qualification Recognition (QR)** is the assessment of a foreign post-secondary credential that determines the credibility, validity, learning value and grade equivalencies of a learner's academic history.
- 4.8 **Learning outcomes affinity** refers to the assessed similarity between two sets of course or program learning outcomes.
- 4.9 **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** is a process that uses a variety of tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate, and demonstrate past learning. Prior learning can be acquired through study, work, and other life experiences that are not recognized through the formal transfer credit mechanism.

5. Principles

- 5.1 The College shall foster consistent, fair, and reasonable RPL practices that assess and award previous demonstration of specialist and other curriculum-relevant knowledge and/or skills.
- 5.2 The College shall deliver efficient RPL services to the learner, minimizing work duplication and maximizing interdepartmental communication.
- 5.3 The College shall promote quality with the continual improvement of RPL processes through data reporting, departmental self-assessments, and periodic reviews.
- 5.4 The College shall preserve and strengthen the integrity and value of conferred Centennial College credentials through accountable, sound, and transparent processes.
- 5.5 The College is committed to incorporating Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities directives, learning-centred principles, and outcomes-based learning into all RPL processes.

6. Recognition of Prior Learning Practices

6.1 Recognition of Prior Learning Credit Limits

- 6.1.1 Course credit obtained through equivalence-substitution, exceptional waiver, advanced standing, transfer credit and/or PLAR shall not exceed 50% of course hours for degree programs and 75% of total course hours for all other programs.
- 6.1.2 In order to satisfy Centennial College residency requirements, learners must complete a minimum of:

- a) 25% course hours at Centennial College through classroom, distance learning and/or hybrid courses for successful completion of a certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, or graduate certificate program; or,
- b) 50% course hours at Centennial College through classroom, distance learning and/or hybrid courses for successful completion of a degree program.

6.2 Equivalence-Substitution and Exceptional Waiver

- 6.2.1 Equivalence-substitution credit shall be automatically granted for a Centennial course required in a program of instruction that has been previously completed in another Centennial program.
- 6.2.2 Grades for previously completed courses that are considered equivalent shall be included in the cumulative program Grade Point Average (GPA) calculation.
- 6.2.3 Equivalence-substitution credit may be granted by the Academic Manager (Dean or designate) for previous completion of a similar Centennial course. A similar Centennial course requires a minimum of 80% learning outcomes affinity.
- 6.2.4 In certain exceptional circumstances, an exceptional waiver may be granted for cases where the Academic Manager (Dean or designate) has determined it is reasonable for the learner to be waived from completing a course. Exceptional waivers shall be granted for COMM-160/161 when the learner receives an College Language Skills Assessment score higher than 160/161.

6.3 Transfer Credit

- 6.3.1 Learners who have completed credit courses at other recognized post-secondary institutions may apply for a Centennial College transfer credit on a course-by-course basis.
- 6.3.2 Transfer credit can only be applied to a failed course if the equivalent course was successfully completed after the failed course.
- 6.3.3 Advanced standing and/or transfer credit may also be awarded through articulation agreements between Centennial College and other institutions.
- 6.3.4 Qualification Recognition is required of any learner who intends to apply for transfer credit using prior formal learning from an institution outside of Canada and is not at Centennial through an articulation agreement.
- 6.3.5 The RPL Assessor is solely responsible for carrying out transfer credit assessments for the course(s) in which they have subject matter expertise, as determined by the Chair.
- 6.3.6 Courses that were taken as part of a post-secondary credential used to obtain credit through an articulation agreement, or admission to fast-track progression program, may not be used to obtain further transfer credits.

- 6.3.7 Grades for courses used to obtain transfer credit shall not be included in the learner's GPA calculation.
- 6.3.8 Wherever accreditation requirements dictate a need for additional transfer credit standards, these additions may be implemented by the Academic Manager (Dean or designate) in consultation with the Manager, Pathways & Academic Partnerships.

6.4 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

- 6.4.1 Where possible, PLAR shall be available to learners. For courses in which PLAR is not available, rationale for this decision shall be clearly communicated on the course outline and through any other suitable medium.
- 6.4.2 Learners who have obtained prior knowledge and skill through formal (i.e. post-secondary study), non-formal (i.e. seminars, workshops) and/or informal (i.e. employment, hobbies) learning sources may apply for a Centennial College PLAR on a course-by-course basis.
- 6.4.3 Learners who do not succeed in obtaining transfer credit for specific prior formal learning are permitted to use such learning in a PLAR attempt.
- 6.4.4 Learners are not eligible to apply for PLAR for Centennial courses in which they have previously failed.
- 6.4.5 The RPL Assessor is solely responsible for carrying out PLAR assessments for the course(s) in which they have subject matter expertise, as determined by the Chair.
- 6.4.6 PLAR assessments must be culminating, in order to ensure course learning outcomes are assessed to the same degree as all other learners.
- 6.4.7 PLAR credit shall be considered a Centennial College course credit and shall be included in the learner's GPA calculation when a PLAR attempt results in a passing grade.
- 6.4.8 Program areas, particularly those related to vulnerable sectors, are permitted to limit access to PLAR for field placements. Program areas may choose to require a minimum of one field placement, regardless of a learner's prior learning or experience.

7. Additional Institutional Responsibilities

- 7.1 For all degree programs, Centennial College ensures that at any given time a minimum of 50% of learners registered within the program are actively taking required elements of the program.
- 7.2 Program areas are required to communicate to learners whether or not advanced standing, transfer credit and/or PLAR will have implications on certifications and/or career prospects within the corresponding field of practice.

- 7.3 Learners who must satisfy full-time status, either for financial assistance or international student visa requirements, are responsible for determining whether the approval of transfer credit and/or PLAR credit will result in an adjustment to part-time status.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 Centennial College guarantees the protection of all private and confidential information as it pertains to this policy and the corresponding procedures.

9. Cross Reference

- Grading Policy
- Academic Partnerships Policy
- Admission Standards Policy
- Admission Standards – General Procedures for Students
- Equivalence and Substitution Procedures
- Transfer Credit Procedures
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedures
- Cooperative Education Policies and Procedures
- Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board, *Handbook for Ontario Colleges*
- Minister's Binding Policy Directive, *Admissions Criteria*
- Minister's Binding Policy Directive, *Framework for Programs of Instruction*