Sheridan	THE SHERIDAN COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING

TITLE: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION POLICY

Date of Approval: June 5, 2013 **Effective Date:** August 1, 2018 *Revised June 24, 2018*	**Mandatory Review Date:** August 1, 2021	**Approved By:** ☐ Board of Governors ☐ Executive Committee ☒ Senate

1. Purpose

The Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (Sheridan) recognizes that the learning outcomes of an individual course or program may be achieved by a number of different means including relevant work/life experience, service, self-study, and training on-the-job. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a challenge for credit process that recognizes and provides students and applicants with an opportunity to have their previous learning assessed and recognized by Sheridan.

2. Scope

Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is to be made available for as many credit courses as possible in programs of instruction in which enrolment is eligible for funding through the general purpose operating grant. If a credit course is to be excluded from PLAR, the reasons and considerations should be clearly documented for the student.

This Policy and the related Procedure applies to all full and part-time Sheridan students and applicants registered in, or that have applied to postsecondary studies, including Sheridan Certificates, Ontario College Certificates, Ontario College Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas, Post-Graduate Certificates, and Degrees.

3. Definitions

Applicant: is an individual applying to a program, including full-time and part-time course loads.

Applicant (PLAR): A student or applicant who decides to undertake the PLAR process in order to gain recognition or credit for learning acquired through work or life experience

Challenge Process: a method of assessment other than portfolio, developed by a subject-expert faculty to measure an individual's learning achievements against documented course learning outcomes. It measures demonstrated learning through a variety of written and non-written evaluation methods, for the purpose of awarding a

credit without requiring enrolment in a course (Council of Regents – 1994). Evaluation methods may include:

- written test,
- standardized exam,
- demonstration of competence,
- criteria-based interview,
- product assessment,
- simulation,
- other

Course Outline: A detailed description of a course that specifies learning outcomes to be achieved and how the learning outcomes will be evaluated.

Learning Outcomes: Describe what the learner should know and be able to do in order to be granted credit for a course. Some learning outcomes may be deemed essential; others may be optional or desirable. Content or contexts in which learning has been achieved is less important than the demonstration of its achievement (Council of Regents – 1994).

Portfolio is a presentation of samples of work demonstrating knowledge and skill in the area in which the student or potential student is seeking PLAR. Details on what is included in a portfolio vary depending on the field.

Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR): The process which uses a variety of tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate and demonstrate past learning which has been acquired through work experience, unrecognized training, independent study, volunteer activities, and hobbies and which is not recognized through formal transfer of credit mechanisms. PLAR allows the evaluation of past learning against established academic standards so that credit can be awarded by a credentialing body. (Council of Regents – 1996)

4.   Policy Statement

Sheridan's PLAR Policy and related procedure is guided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities policy directive and suggested best practices outlined in the Framework for Programs of Instruction for all colleges of applied arts and technology across Ontario:

> "Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) offers learners the opportunity to earn credit for college courses based on formal demonstration of prior learning usually acquired through study, work, and other life experiences that is not recognized through formal credit transfer mechanisms."[1]

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[1] Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. (2003). *Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Resource Document for Discretionary Use. Retrieved from* http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/documents/PLARResourceDoc.pdf

4.1   Eligibility:

A student or applicant may apply for PLAR when competency in the learning outcomes of a Sheridan course or program can be clearly demonstrated through the institution's established PLAR process such as a portfolio assessment, competency test or challenge exam.

PLAR offers flexible assessment practices for all candidates providing them with an opportunity for an assessment of learning no matter when, where or how it was acquired. Relevant learning will be credited towards the awarding of a Sheridan credential whenever applicable and measurable. Credit will be awarded for experience that is assessed for its appropriate learning value.

In some instances, where formal educational documentation is not available, a student or applicant may choose to apply for PLAR as a way of gaining recognition for formal learning.

4.2   Deadlines:

Students and applicants are encouraged to PLAR as early as possible, and at least three weeks prior to the course or work term start date. When a student is currently enrolled in the course they are seeking PLAR for, the deadline to apply is the tenth day of term. Students wishing to PLAR a course for a future term should pursue PLAR early in their program of study.

4.3   Waiting Periods:

PLAR relies on learning achieved through prior work/life experience, therefore, students who have received a Withdraw (W), or failing grade (U, F) in a Sheridan course or PLAR attempt may apply for PLAR for that course only after:

     i.   one academic year (two semesters following posting of the grade) has elapsed and

    ii.   ii) that reasonable evidence of additional relevant learning can be provided/demonstrated.

Similarly, PLAR is not an appropriate means for students to raise a grade in a course taken previously at Sheridan.

4.4   Prerequisites:

All pre-requisites must be met prior to challenging subsequent courses.

4.5   Residency Requirements:

The PLAR process can be used to earn up to 75% of the course credits required in a

given certificate or diploma program and up to 50% of the credits required in a degree. Residency Requirements for Graduation. No fewer than 25% of all required credits for the program must be completed through Sheridan in order for a student to graduate from that program.

4.6   Transcription:

Course credit received through PLAR will be noted on the transcript in numeric grade format unless otherwise specified on the course outline.

4.7   PLAR vs Advanced Standing:

PLAR is distinguished from the Advanced Standing process which is a course for course equivalency of formal educational courses rather than the equivalency of experiential learning.

4.8   Appeals:

Students or applicants have the right to appeal the decision regarding the granting of PLAR through the Academic Appeals and Consideration Policy.

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE:

The Office of the Registrar will interpret and apply the policy and has the responsibility to draft any associated procedures. The Office of the Registrar has the responsibility to approve any associated procedures.

Responsible Executive: Provost and Vice President, Academic

Contact: Office of the Registrar, Pathways Coordinator

5. Related Documentation (Procedures/Additional Policies/Forms)

1. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Procedure
2. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Application Package
3. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Co-op
4. Advising Package for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
5. Credit Transfer Policy
6. Academic Appeals and Consideration Policy
7. Graduation Policy
8. Academic Integrity Policy
9. Academic Standing Policy
10. Admission Policy
11. Grading Policy