



SECTION:	Student Management and Welfare	APPROVAL DATE:
SUBSECTION:	Attendance Management	September 3, 2002
POLICY NAME:	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition	LAST REVISED:
POLICY NUMBER:	R.SMW.C.2	September 3, 2002

1. THE CHALLENGE PROCESS

- 1.1 The challenge process is the process to allow a student's prior learning to be assessed for the purpose of granting credit for grade 10 (2001-2002), grade 11 (2002-2003) and grade 12 (2003-2004) courses developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later.
- 1.2 A student's request to challenge for credit will be entered in their annual educational plans as part of their plans for fulfilling their educational goals.

2. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 The board will report to the Ministry in the September and March reports the number of all challenges for credit that were completed, that is, all challenges for which students earned a final percentage grade, regardless of whether a passing or a failing grade is assigned.

3. PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) procedures will be carried out under the direction of the school principal, who grants credits. The principal will:
 - a) ensure that students are informed of their responsibility for initiating the challenge process and for satisfying all of the requirements, and ensure that students who are not adults (under eighteen) are informed of the need for parental approval before applying to challenge for credit in a course.
 - b) ensure that every prospective applicant and his or her parents, if he or she is not an adult, are informed about policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record and on the Ontario Student Transcript.
 - c) ensure that every prospective applicant is provided with an application form, and information which indicates what is expected in the course (curriculum expectations) for which the student wishes to challenge for credit.
 - d) evaluate each application in consultation with the student's parents, unless the student is an adult, and appropriate school staff (i.e. guidance counsellor, teacher-adviser, and subject teacher) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur;
 - e) develop formal tests and other assessment strategies;
 - f) conduct the testing (eg. the use of formal tests and other appropriate assessment strategies);

- g) evaluate and report on the student's performance;
- h) ensure that all students who do not have suitable documentation owing to extraordinary circumstances (e.g. students who are refugees) receive counselling concerning the gathering of evidence;
- i) ensure that only teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers conduct the PLAR challenge process.

4. POLICIES GOVERNING THE CHALLENGE PROCESS

4.1 Students may:

- a) only challenge for a credit in Grade 10, 11 and 12 course in provincial policy documents (Ontario Secondary Schools OSS).
- b) earn no more than four credits through the challenge process, including two credits in any one discipline (a subject area covered by one curriculum policy document).
- c) only challenge for credit for a course after completing all the phases of the Board Challenge Process;
- d) ask the superintendent of academic affairs to review a principal's decision to deny the challenge.
- e) use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit.
- f) use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit for a related course within the Ontario curriculum.
- g) use music certificates that are accepted for credits in OSS, however, they are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music courses, but are granted credits in accordance with OSS (Appendix 4: Music Certificates Accepted for Credits). The principal may award a maximum of two university preparation credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The credits will be awarded upon presentation of the official examination result forms or certificates. Additional music credits earned in-school may be counted towards the secondary school graduation diploma. Of these in-school music credits, a maximum of one Grade 12 credit may be awarded as a university preparation credit;

4.2 Students must:

- a) only challenge for credit for an entire course, whether it is a full-credit or a partial credit course;
- b) only challenge for credit for a specific course a second time in March of the year following the challenge and if the student can provide additional reasonable evidence to the principal of acquired knowledge from additional study and experience during the interval.

4.3 Students may not:

- a) challenge a course which they have already taken.
- b) challenge any subject in which a credit has already been granted for a course in that subject in a later grade either as a single credit or as part of a block equivalency.
- c) challenge a course for which credit has already been granted or for which there is significant overlap with a course for which credit has already been granted.
- d) challenge a transfer course.
- e) challenge a locally developed course.
- f) challenge a cooperative education course.
- g) challenge a course in English as a Second Language, English Literacy Development, or Anglais Pour Debutants, if the student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum policy documents for English for Grades 9 to 12 under OSS or from the curriculum guidelines for English or Anglais/English for Grades 9 to 12/OAC's under Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (OSIS).
- h) challenge a course in French as a Second Language, Actualization Linguistique en Francais or Perfectionnement du Francais, if a student has earned one or more credits in Francais,

from the curriculum policy documents for Grades 9 to 12 under OSS or the curriculum guideline for Français for grades 9 to 12/Oac under OSIS.

5. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- 5.1 Assessment and evaluation will be based on the curriculum expectations and the achievement charts in the Ontario curriculum policy documents. Assessment and evaluation must be based on:
- all the strands in a course and on all categories of knowledge and skills.
 - the descriptions of achievement levels given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum policy document for the discipline.
- 5.2 A student's level of achievement will be recorded as a percentage grade on the Ontario School Transcript (OST) in the same way as achievement in other courses.
- Assessment and evaluation strategies for the challenge must include formal tests (70 percent of the final mark) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate for the particular course (30 percent of the final mark).
 - The formal tests must have a balance between written work and practical demonstration that is appropriate for the course.
 - Other assessment strategies may include evaluation of written assignments, demonstrations/performances, laboratory work, quizzes, and observation of student work.
 - The principal is responsible for developing and administering the formal tests and for determining which assessment strategies are most appropriate for each course for which a student is challenging for credit.
- 5.3 Record Keeping
- The "PLAR Challenge for Credit: Cumulative Tracking Record" form will be maintained and included in the student's OSR. This form tracks the number of credits earned and the disciplines in which credits have been earned through the challenge process, as well as failures and withdrawals.
 - A "PLAR Challenge for Credit: Interim Tracking Record" form will be maintained for credits earned through the challenge process in a school outside the student's regular school (the one that maintains the OSR). The principal of the school outside the student's regular school will use the "Interim Tracking Record" form to communicate the results of the student's challenges for credit to the school that maintains the OSR. The principal of the student's regular school will enter this information onto the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form in the student's OSR.
 - The following entries must be made on the student's "Cumulative Tracking Record" form and the "Interim Tracking Record" form, as applicable: For challenges for credit for Grade 10, 11 or 12 courses: The student's passing percentage grade, failing percentage grade, or withdrawal from the challenge process must be entered on the appropriate tracking record form(s).
- 5.4 The following entries must be made on the student's OST:
- For challenges for credit for Grade 10 courses, only passing percentage grades will be entered on the OST. If the student subsequently takes the Grade 10 course, only the higher percentage grade record will be recorded on the OST. No notation will be entered on the student's OST if the student withdraws from or receives a failing grade in the challenge process.
 - For challenges for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses, passing and failing percentage grades will be entered on the student's OST. No notation will be entered on the OST if the student withdraws from the challenge process.

6. PHASES TO THE CHALLENGE PROCESS

- 6.1 There are five phases to the challenge process:
- Intent to Challenge
 - Orientation
 - Application and Acceptance

- d) Assessment and Evaluation
 - e) Feedback
- 6.2 Timetable for semester 1 in the school year 2002-2003: the dates for the phases will be:
- a) Intent to Challenge: Friday, October 4, 2002
 - b) Orientation: Wednesday, October 9, 2002
 - c) Application and Acceptance:
 - Applications due: Wednesday, October 30, 2002
 - Acceptance notification: Wednesday, November 6, 2002
 - d) Assessment and Evaluation:
 - Stage 1: during the week of December 2, 2002
 - Stage 2: during the first week of school in January
- note:* Withdrawal Date: by the last day of instruction prior to Stage
- e) Feedback: last week in January
- 6.3 For semester 2 in the school year 2002-2003 all subsequent school years: the dates for the phases will be:
- a) Intent to Challenge: first Friday in March of the year of the challenge
 - b) Orientation: first Wednesday after the March Break
 - c) Application and Acceptance:
 - Applications due: first Wednesday in April
 - Acceptance notification: by the first week in May
 - d) Assessment and Evaluation:
 - Stage 1: during the first week of June
 - Stage 2: during the third week of July
- note:* Withdrawal Date: by the last day of instruction prior to Stage
- e) Feedback: Last week of July
- 6.4 PHASE 1: Intent to Challenge
A student who intends to challenge a course or courses for credit must record their intent to challenge in their Annual Education Plan. The student must also notify the principal of the intent to challenge by the date specified for Phase 1 of the PLAR Challenge Process outlined above. The principal will inform the student of the date of the compulsory orientation session as specified in Phase 2 of the Challenge Process above.
- 6.5 PHASE 2: Orientation Workshop
The Board, in conjunction with the secondary schools, will run an orientation workshop for all students intending to challenge a course or courses for credit. This session will provide students with information about the assessment components, time lines and the application process.
- 6.6 PHASE 3: Application and Acceptance
- a) Each student must pick up a PLAR Application Package from the guidance department at their school.
 - b) The PLAR Challenge Form and supporting documentation must be submitted to the guidance department in accordance with the dates specified for Phase 3 of the Challenge Process above.
 - c) The principal or designate will meet with the student to inform the student if he/she has been accepted or denied for the PLAR Challenge by the date specified in Phase 3 of the Challenge Process above. Successful candidates will discuss their application package components (eg. Knowledge and Skills Profile, copy of an Annual Education Plan) with the principal as well as the next steps in the process. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed of areas that didn't meet the requirements for acceptance and advised of the next possible date for initiating the PLAR Challenge Process (the following March).
- 6.7 PHASE 4: Assessment and Evaluation
- a) Assessment and evaluation will be initiated by a teacher in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers and hired by the Board.

- b) In Stage 1 the teacher conducting the challenge will consult with the student about course specific assessment materials, time lines and answer relevant questions about the process. Stage 1 will occur during the week specified in Phase 4 of the Challenge Process above.
 - c) In Stage 2 the teacher will administer the assessment and evaluation, determine a percentage grade and report the grade to the principal and the guidance department. Stage 2 will occur during the week specified in Phase 4 of the Challenge Process above.
 - d) A percentage grade will be determined for the students based on assessments 70% from formal tests and 30% from a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate to the particular course.
- 6.8 PHASE 5: Feedback
- a) The resulting percentage grade earned through the PLAR Challenge Process will be communicated to the student. Any student that was unsuccessful will receive information related to the areas requiring improvement. Feedback will be provided during the week specified in Phase 5 of the Challenge Process above.
- 6.9 Withdrawal from the PLAR Challenge Process
A student may withdraw from the Challenge Process up to the last school day prior to the date of Stage 2 in Phase 4.

7. THE EQUIVALENCY PROCESS

- 7.1 Students who are eligible for equivalency credits are those who transfer to Ontario secondary schools from non-inspected private schools, schools outside Ontario or otherwise declared eligible by Ministry of Education. Equivalency credits are granted for placement only. The principal of the receiving school will, in the process of deciding where the student should be placed, determine as equitably as possible the total credit equivalency of the student's previous learning, and the number of compulsory and optional credits still to be earned.
- 7.2 Ontario Secondary Schools' diploma requirements apply to all students who do not have Ontario credits who enter or are placed in Grade 11 in 2001 and Grade 12 in 2002, as well as to those who entered or were placed in Grade 9 in 1999 and Grade 10 in 2000.
- 7.3 Responsibilities of Boards:
Boards must implement policies and procedures related to the equivalency process that are equivalent with provincial policy. They must also ensure that information on the equivalency process is included in their school course calendars.
- 7.4 Principal's Responsibilities:
Principals will:
- a) ensure that equivalency is recorded in accordance with "The Ontario Student Transcript": Manual, 1999.
 - b) use as a guide the table entitled "Requirements for the OSSD Under OSS" in Ontario Secondary School, Appendix 8: Equivalency Diploma Requirements, to determine the number and type of credits earned.
Principals may use the Online Information System (OLIS) as a resource in establishing equivalency for placement purposes.
- 7.5 Review:
In cases where a student, who is an adult or the parent of a student who is not an adult, disagrees with the principal's placement decision (for students transferring to an Ontario secondary school from a non-inspected private school or a school outside Ontario), the adult student or parent may ask the supervisory officer to review the matter.