

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policy

Purpose

Royal Ontario Academy (ROA) recognizes that students may have completed learning outside of Ontario secondary schools. This policy explains how ROA evaluates prior learning so that eligible students may earn Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) credits without repeating the same learning.

Definition of PLAR

PLAR is a way for Royal Ontario Academy to recognize learning you have already completed outside of Ontario high school, so you may be able to earn high school credits toward your Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) without repeating the same learning.

Forms and Scope of PLAR

PLAR can happen in two ways:

1. Equivalency (Credit Review) - We review your transcripts and documents from another school, country, or program to see which Ontario credits you may already have.
2. Challenge (Test for Credit) - You show what you know through an assessment (like a test, project, or interview) to earn a Grade 10–12 credit without taking the full course.

PLAR rules depend on the type of student. Below is a simple summary for:

- Regular Ontario day school students
- Transfer students (home school, international, or outside Ontario)
- Mature students (18+)

Guiding Principles

PLAR decisions are guided by the following principles:

- Fairness, consistency, and transparency in credit decisions
- Alignment with Ontario curriculum expectations and graduation requirements
- Recognition of documented, verifiable learning
- Support for appropriate placement and student success

Regular Ontario Day School Students (Grades 9–12)

PLAR is limited for regular day school students because Ontario expects students to benefit from the full secondary school program.

Challenge credit limits (Grades 10–12):

- Up to four (4) total credits may be earned by challenging Grade 10–12 courses.
- Up to two (2) challenge credits may be earned in the same subject area.

Transfer Students (Home School, International, Out-of-Province/Out-of-Territory)

For transfer students, the Principal may grant equivalency credits following a review of prior schooling. For example, an international student who has completed Grades 9, 10, and 11 may be granted up to twenty-two (22) equivalency credits toward the OSSD (subject to review).

All transfer students must still meet Ontario graduation requirements, including the Ontario Secondary School Literacy requirement and at least 40 hours of community involvement activities (volunteering).

Mature Students (18+)

A mature student is 18 years of age or older (on or after January 1 of the current school year) and is working toward an OSSD. Mature students may earn some of the 30 credits required for the OSSD through PLAR, based on a Principal's review and assessment.

Mature student credit considerations:

- Up to sixteen (16) Grade 9 and 10 credits may be granted through an individual assessment (no challenge option for Grade 9/10).
- Up to ten (10) Grade 11 and 12 credits may be granted through equivalency and/or challenge.
- Mature students typically must earn at least four (4) Grade 11/12 credits by taking courses.

Required Documentation

Students must provide sufficient, official, and verifiable documentation for PLAR consideration. Documentation may include:

- Official academic transcripts (preferred)
- Course descriptions/syllabi or curriculum outlines (when available)
- Report cards or credit summaries
- Identification details needed for verification (as requested by administration)

Additional Supporting Evidence (Mature Students and/or Limited Transcripts)

When transcripts are limited, incomplete, or do not fully demonstrate learning, ROA may consider additional evidence—particularly for mature students. Work experience does not automatically grant credits but may strengthen the PLAR file when it clearly demonstrates learning connected to Ontario curriculum expectations.

Recommended supporting documents (if available):

- Resume/CV with job titles, duties, dates, and key skills
- Employer reference letter (on letterhead where possible)
- Job descriptions, training records, or performance evaluations
- Certificates and credentials (e.g., WHMIS, First Aid/CPR, safety training, industry certifications)
- Portfolio samples (projects, reports, designs, presentations, code, or other work examples)

Equivalency (Credit Review) Procedure

For equivalency review, the typical process includes:

1. **Transcript Submission:** Students submit official academic transcripts and any requested supporting documents.
2. **Course Matching:** The Principal reviews prior coursework and determines Ontario-equivalent credits.
3. **Credit Allocation:** Ontario secondary school credits are granted where equivalencies are supported by evidence.
4. **Placement and Planning:** Students are guided to complete remaining required Ontario credits toward the OSSD.

Challenge (Test for Credit) Procedure (Grades 10–12, Where Eligible)

Where challenge for credit is permitted and approved, the student must demonstrate achievement through an assessment process appropriate to the course. The assessment may include a test, project, performance task, interview, or a combination of methods.

ROA will:

- Confirm eligibility and applicable limits prior to proceeding.
- Identify the assessment format and success criteria aligned to Ontario curriculum expectations.
- Record the outcome and, if successful, grant the applicable credit.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal:

- Leads PLAR decisions, including equivalency credit allocation and approval of challenge opportunities.
- Ensures PLAR decisions align with Ontario requirements and ROA procedures.

Student/Parent/Guardian (as applicable):

- Provides complete and accurate documentation by required deadlines.
- Responds to requests for additional information as needed.

Administration/Guidance Support (as applicable):

- Supports collection and verification of documentation.
- Communicates outcomes and next steps to the student.

Records and Communication

PLAR decisions and credit outcomes will be documented in the student's academic record where applicable. ROA will communicate PLAR outcomes and any required next steps to the student (and parent/guardian, where appropriate).

Review and Approval

This policy is reviewed periodically to ensure clarity, fairness, and alignment with ROA operational requirements and Ontario Ministry expectations. Final decisions regarding interpretation and application of this policy rest with the Principal.