

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Source: *2021-22 Academic Calendar, pages 27-28*

Policy

Many students enter the University with work, academic and life experiences that may reflect sound knowledge of subject matter covered in courses offered for credit by the University. Prior learning assessment is a method of recognizing and accrediting the demonstrated knowledge that has resulted from those experiences.

Mount Royal fully supports the following academic principles with respect to prior learning assessment and recognition.

1. Recognition of prior learning should be based on demonstrated learning.
2. Recognition of prior learning should be appropriate to the course or program in which it is accepted.
3. Recognition of prior learning should be consistent with the achievement levels required by the postsecondary program in which it is accepted.
4. Recognition of prior learning should be for learning that has a balance, appropriate to the subject, between theory and practical application.
5. Assessment of prior learning by post-secondary institutions should be made by content specialists, with external advice as necessary.

At Mount Royal, demonstrated prior learning resulting from work, life and academic experiences may be assessed by any one of the following evaluation methods or some combination of them:

1. Formal examinations (including challenge examinations and standardized external examinations);
2. Course equivalencies involving evaluation of non-collegiate and/or noncredit programs, courses, certificates and designations; and
3. Documentation and demonstration of achievement through portfolio assessment and portfolio-assisted assessment (including product assessment [work samples], simulation/performance assessment, interviews and oral examinations, and practical and laboratory demonstrations).

The most appropriate evaluation method in any particular case is to be determined by the department Chair, acting on the advice of the content specialists for the subject and/or discipline area for which recognition or credit is requested. The relevant department Chair shall also have the responsibility to evaluate each student's application for prior learning assessment and determine which courses and/or subject areas or disciplines may be reviewed for possible recognition or accreditation, subject to the general academic regulations specified below. Each department shall also compile and maintain a list of courses for its area that will not be considered for credit or recognition through the prior learning assessment methods indicated above.

Application for recognition of prior learning must be made through the Office of the Registrar.

Procedures

1. In order to obtain recognition of prior learning by the University, the individual requesting the assessment of prior learning must be a registered student at the start of the semester and when the assessment is conducted. New and continuing students are strongly advised to explore and, as appropriate, to initiate the prior learning assessment and recognition process outlined here as early as possible after their acceptance into a program of studies offered by the University. Requests must be received by the end of the first week of classes in any semester. The final assessment of prior learning must be completed by the end of the fourth week of classes in any semester.
2. Students may obtain the Application for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Form from the Office of the Registrar. The student must discuss this request with the Coordinator, Transfer Articulation who will determine if the request meets policy requirements. If approved the student will complete the form and take it to the appropriate Discipline Chair.
3. The Chair will evaluate the student's request for assessment and recognition of prior learning and determine if credit for a specific course or courses may be obtained in this manner. Upon completion of the initial evaluation, the decision of the Chair will be recorded on the Application for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Form.
4. The student shall return the form to the Office of the Registrar. The student will be notified when he or she has been registered in the PLAR and fees have been assessed.
5. The assessment of prior learning will be conducted by the department, which will determine whether the student clearly shows above average knowledge of the subject matter. The grading shall be either "CR" (credit awarded) or "NC" (credit not awarded). Under no circumstances will a letter grade be assigned. Courses for which credit is received in this manner will contribute to the student's total credits.
6. Students may confirm online the specific credits they have been awarded through the prior learning assessment process by accessing Student Web Services on the University website. The Office of the Registrar shall make the appropriate notation on the student's permanent academic record.
7. A student may request a review of a particular assessment through the normal grade appeal process.

Limitations

1. The purpose of prior learning assessment is to allow students to complete their studies at the University successfully. Prior learning assessment is not intended to be used to aid students in transferring to another institution. Any university transferable courses offered at the 1000 level or higher will not be granted credit by prior learning assessment.

2. Students may not apply for credit by prior learning assessment in any course in which they are currently or have previously been registered at any institution. However, courses taken over six years ago may be recognized for credit through prior learning assessment.
3. In cases where prerequisites exist, students may request assessment and recognition of prior learning only for those courses for which they have the stated prerequisites.
4. No student may receive credit by prior learning assessment in more than two courses within a given subject or discipline area, nor in more than a total of three courses at the University if registered in a diploma or certificate program or in more than a total of six courses if registered in a baccalaureate degree program.
5. This policy, procedures, and limitations are intended to govern the award of academic credit through the assessment and recognition of demonstrated learning resulting from prior life, work, educational and other extracurricular experiences. The assessment and recognition of work experience credit, based on prior work experience for purposes of satisfying the graduation requirements of the University's baccalaureate degree programs are covered under separate policy and procedures that apply specifically and exclusively to those degree programs.
6. Students should be aware that academic credit awarded through prior learning assessment at the University is guaranteed only toward the University's graduation requirements. Other institutions may or may not allow transfer credit towards degrees, diplomas or certificates for courses recognized or accredited through the University's prior learning assessment process.