



Title	Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
Policy No.	D.3.5
Approval Body	Education Council
Policy Sponsor	Vice President, Academic & Research
Last Revised/Replaces	October 5, 2004
Effective Date	March 14, 2017

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Vancouver Community College (VCC; the College) recognizes that students may have attained significant learning at a post-secondary level from work, training, and other experiences outside the formal post-secondary education system. Credit for such learning should be formally acknowledged if the student is able to demonstrate specific knowledge and/or skills reflective of the learning outcomes of a course at the same level and scope. The use of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) could also potentially shorten the length of time required to complete a program and/or reduce program costs for students.

SCOPE AND LIMITS

Each program or course whether part of a program or otherwise will determine whether PLAR is an acceptable route to acquire formal College credit. In addition, each program will determine the amount of PLAR that will be acceptable for that program, up to a maximum of 75% of a program. This maximum may be impacted by credit(s) received through policy D.3.11 Transfer Credit. In no case, will the combination of PLAR and transfer credit exceed 75% of a program.

This policy applies to all current or prospective VCC students requesting formal assessment of their prior learning experiences for College level credit.

STATEMENT OF POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. VCC will follow best practices established for PLAR within acceptable standards in the British Columbia Post-Secondary context.
2. VCC supports PLAR initiatives by providing information and assistance to students through the Registrar's Office and by ensuring faculty and staff are adequately trained in PLAR processes.
3. The use of PLAR promotes increased access to education through validation of non-traditional learning and industry experience.
4. PLAR is conducted through valid and reliable means and by a qualified specialist.
5. Assessment will normally result in credit (assigned or unassigned) being granted to satisfy the graduation requirements of a program or course not part of a program.

6. Where prior learning can be equated to the learning outcomes or objectives of a course at VCC, credit will be granted and a grade noted on a student's transcript in accordance with policy C.1.1 Grading, Progression and Withdrawal.
7. The chosen assessment methods must be:
 - a. appropriate for the subject or skill area,
 - b. targeted to the learning outcomes or objectives,
 - c. related to competencies and skills required of the course, and
 - d. reflective of the level of achievement expected of any student in that course.
8. Experts in the curriculum area will assess prior learning. The standards applied will be equivalent but not necessarily identical to those applied to students enrolled in the course for which credit is requested. Not all evaluation methods and related percentages outlined in the Program Content Guide (PCG) may be required as such methods are established to give a student feedback over time on their progress within a course.
9. The following methods of assessment may be used:
 - a. Challenge Process which includes Exams or Essays
 - b. Work-based Assessments
 - c. Simulation/Performance Assessments/Demonstrations
 - d. Portfolio Assessment

DEFINITIONS

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition(PLAR): Assessment by valid and reliable means and by a qualified specialist, of what an individual has learned outside of courses and programs. Assessment will normally result in credit (assigned or unassigned) being granted to satisfy the graduation requirements of a program offered by the College.

Transfer Credit: refers to the granting of credit for a course successfully completed at another formally recognized educational institution and/or through a professional organization or other agency and/or by recognized foreign credential assessment and/or by formal recognition of course equivalency in a VCC approved course outside the program area. Credit for such learning will be formally acknowledged and noted on a student's formal transcript. Refer to policy D.3.11 Transfer Credit.

Course Exemption: refers to the waiving of a pre-requisite or required course. Although direct transfer credit for the course has not been assigned, an exemption granted with unassigned transfer credit will allow students to take courses for which the exempted course is a prerequisite. Because credit for the exempted courses is not earned directly, students may be required to replace the exempted course with an alternate in order to meet program requirements

Program Content Guide (PCG): The document that contains the general description of a program of study as outlined in an approved template. Such a template generally includes the program name, program purpose, number of credits, program duration, a statement of program learning outcomes, admission requirements, grading system, information on the evaluation of student learning, and the credential received upon completion of the program.

Course Outline: The document that contains the essential features of a course as outlined in an approved template. Such a template generally includes the course name and number, credits, course description, admission requirements, course learning outcomes, grading standard, and information regarding student evaluation methods.

RELATED LEGISLATION & POLICIES

Legislation

College and Institute Act, (RSBC 1996) Chapter 52

Policies

- C.1.1 Grading, Progression and Withdrawal
- C.1.2 Appeal of Final Grade
- C.1.3 Granting of Credentials
- C.2.1 International Education Enrolment
- D.3.6 Admissions
 - D.3.6.1 Flexible Admissions
 - D.3.10 Indigenous Education Enrolment
 - D.3.11 Transfer Credit
- D.4.1 Students with Disabilities

RELATED PROCEDURES

Refer to D.3.5 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Procedures.