

Introduction to Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Faculty

INTRODUCTION TO PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION FOR FACULTY

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INTRODUCTION

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) enables postsecondary institutions to recognize and value the diverse knowledge, skills, and competencies learners acquire outside of traditional classroom settings. These learning experiences—gained through work, community involvement, independent study, and other life experiences—can be rigorously assessed and, where appropriate, credited toward program requirements.

This guidebook is designed to support faculty in implementing PLAR practices with confidence, consistency, and academic integrity. Whether you are new to PLAR or looking to refine your approach, this resource outlines clear expectations and provides examples of various assessments along with rubrics to help you assess prior learning in ways that are fair, transparent, and aligned with institutional standards.

As you use this guide, consider PLAR not as an exception to traditional learning, but as an extension of your role as an educator: assessing learning wherever and however it occurs. The tools and examples provided here are intended to support your professional judgment while maintaining the academic standards that define your discipline.

ATTRIBUTION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Accessibility of This Textbook

The textbook has been designed for easy accessibility. It includes:

- **Easy navigation.** This text has a linked table of contents and uses headings in each chapter to make navigation easy.
- **Accessible images.** All images in this text that convey information have alternative text. Images that are decorative have empty alternative text.
- **Accessible links.** All links use descriptive link text.

The following considerations have been made for each element:

Headings

- Content is organized under headings and subheadings that are used sequentially.

Images

- Images that convey information include alternative text descriptions.
- Images and text do not rely on colour to convey information.
- Images that are purely decorative include alternative text that explains that they are only decorative.

Tables

- Tables include row and/or column headers that have the correct scope assigned.
- Tables include titles or captions.
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Links

- Link text describes the destination of the link.
- Links do not open new windows or tabs.
- Links to files include the file type in the link text.

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- All videos include transcripts and high quality closed captions.
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- All H5P activities that include images, videos, and/or audio content meet the accessibility requirements for those media types.

Font

- Font size is 12 pt or higher for body text.
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There are currently no known accessibility issues.

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UNDERSTANDING PLAR

Chapter Outline

- [PLAR Overview](#)
- [What is PLAR?](#)
- [Power of PLAR](#)

PLAR OVERVIEW

WHAT IS PLAR?



PLAR stands for
**Prior Learning
Assessment
and
Recognition**

It is the process used by post secondary institutions to assess the knowledge and skills that learners have gained through work and life experiences to determine if that learning is eligible for credits.



PLAR uses a variety of tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate, and when appropriate, demonstrate their learning.



WHAT IS ELIGIBLE

- Work Experience
- On-the-job training
- Self-study
- Volunteer experience
- Military training

REQUIREMENTS

The learning being assessed through PLAR should be current, relevant to the institutions program/course outcomes and of a breadth and depth that reflects required level of learning.

BENEFITS

- Saves time
- Promotes self-confidence
- Increases access to education
- May reduce costs
- Supports career development
- May reduce course load



Getting Started!

The Pathways Advisor at your institution is a great place to start. They can answer general questions and will guide the process.

NOTE: Learners who are seeking credits for courses taken through another institution will need to follow the Credit Transfer Process rather than PLAR.

“What is PLAR?” by Robert Armstrong, [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

Image Description

Title: “What is PLAR?”

Main Section: PLAR stands for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. It is the process used by the college to assess the knowledge and skills you have gained through work and life experience. This helps determine if your learning through experience is eligible for college credit toward a course or program requirement.

PLAR Tools Section: PLAR uses a variety of tools to help you reflect on, identify, articulate, and, where appropriate, demonstrate your learning.

Three Subsections:

What’s Eligible?

- Work experience
- On-the-job training
- Self-study
- Volunteer experience
- Military training
- Engagement with First Nations, Métis, or Inuit knowledge systems and traditions

Requirements: The learning to be assessed through PLAR should be current, relevant to the College course/program outcomes, and demonstrate the breadth and depth of college-level learning.

Benefits:

- Saves time
- Promotes self-confidence
- Increases access to education
- May reduce school costs
- Could shorten the time to complete a college program
- Supports career development
- May lighten course loads

Get Started with PLAR: The Pathways Advisor at your institution is a great place to start. They can answer general questions and guide you through the application process.

Important Note: Learners who are seeking credit for courses taken through another institution will need to follow the Credit Transfer process.

Media Attributions

- WHAT IS PLAR

WHAT IS PLAR?

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

PLAR stands for **P**rior **L**earning **A**ssessment and **R**ecognition. It is a process used by colleges and universities to assess the knowledge and skills that have been gained through work, volunteering, training, and life experiences to determine if a learner is eligible for college credits.

Prior learning assessment and recognition is known by many names. The following is a list of some of the more common terms in Canada.

- **PLAR** – Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition*
- **RPL** – Recognition of Prior Learning
- **PLA** – Prior Learning Assessment
- **APL** – Accreditation of Prior Learning
- **AEPL** – Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
- **VPL** – Validation of Prior Learning
- **RPCL** – Recognition of Prior Certified Learning

* Most post-secondary institutions in Ontario use PLAR or RPL

Regardless of the term that is used, the process is the same for most post-secondary institutions in Ontario.

- Learners must be able to **describe** how their **knowledge** and **experience** is relevant to a course or program.
 - Learners should use **examples** from their work, volunteering, previous education and training, or life experiences to explain what they know and what they can do.
 - PLAR may look different depending on the course.
 - Some courses will require a *Challenge Evaluation* (a type of assessment) and some require the creation of a *Portfolio*, which is a collection of relevant evidence of experience, including certificates, samples of work, or written reflections and stories about what a learner knows.
 - More information about challenge evaluations, assessments and portfolios is provided throughout this guide.
 - If you already have credits from another college or university, you may be eligible for transfer credit.
-

Defining RPL



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtorplforfaculty/?p=27>

The Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA), a national organization that advocates for the recognition of prior learning, uses this official definition:

“Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment

and recognition of prior learning. The learning may be formal, informal and/or experiential. The context of the learning is not key to the process as the focus is on the learning. The RPL process can be undertaken for several purposes, including self-knowledge, credit or advanced standing at an academic institution, for employment, career planning or recruitment.”

[-Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment \(2024\)](#)

POWER OF PLAR

PLAR is a powerful tool that can have significant impacts beyond just the learner going through the PLAR process. Some of the benefits of PLAR include the following:



Accelerated Education: They can advance faster by receiving credit for existing knowledge and skills.



Personal Empowerment: Validates lived experience and builds confidence in learners, and can make education feel relevant and attainable.



Reduces Barriers: Lowers obstacles to entry for non-traditional and mature learners; creates pathways for individuals who thought higher education was out of reach by reducing course workload and streamlining access.



Increased Financial Stability: Reduces tuition costs and the amount of time that the students need to be on campus. In turn, learners may be able to keep working while completing their coursework concurrently and dedicate free time to other obligations (e.g., financial, family, personal.)



Reduces Redundancies and Repetition: Eliminates re-learning of content already mastered, saving time and effort, and engagement. David Ausubel's [cognitive assimilation theory](#) posits that the most critical factor in learning is “what the learner already knows”, and that meaningful learning occurs when new concepts are assimilated into this prior knowledge, rather than memorized by rote.



Support Career. Recognition of skills can help with planning education and career goals.



Lighten the Workload. Fewer courses mean more time to focus on the classes that matter most.

Approaching PLAR from an Indigenous model also carries unique benefits, in addition to the benefits that already exist. Such benefits include:

1. **Community Alignment:** Learning pathways reflect and honour community values and priorities.
2. **Cultural Identity and Growth:** Affirms Indigenous knowledge systems and supports cultural continuity.
3. **Relevant Assessment:** Evaluation methods are culturally appropriate and contextually meaningful.
4. **Access and Equity:** Removes systemic barriers and expands participation for Indigenous learners.

Media Attributions

- hour glass
- confidence
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- piggy bank
- repeat
- career
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GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

Chapter Outline

- [What Counts as Learning](#)
- [PLAR in Post Secondary](#)
- [The Purpose of PLAR](#)
- [PLAR Process Overview](#)
- [Decolonizing Education](#)
- [PLAR Considerations](#)
- [PLAR Best Practices](#)
- [Adopting a PLAR Mindset](#)

WHAT COUNTS AS LEARNING?

Defining Learning

One of the benefits of PLAR is that it can help broaden perspectives on what qualifies as learning. Take a moment to reflect on the last time you learned something.

What comes to mind? Did you think of:

- Your time in an academic setting?
- The last professional workshop you attended?

Did you consider something you learned that did **not** take place in an academic setting? Did you think of:

- When you learned to drive a car?
- A new recipe you mastered?

As you will discover, learning is not limited to a formal or classroom setting.

Different Types of Learning

There are a variety of types of learning and learning contexts that can be considered when it comes to PLAR.

Formal Learning

Formal learning is typically the most familiar in post-secondary institutions. Formal learning is structured and enables participants to expand their knowledge, skills, and abilities. It is often instructor led, and has clear objectives and goals. This type of learning also regularly includes some sort of assessment of knowledge and skills.



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Informal Learning

Informal learning is a type of learning that generally takes place outside of formal training and educational settings. It can be totally unplanned, and it does not have to have clear goals or objectives. It can even be self-directed by the learner, and does not require an instructor, such as learning a new language, world travel, or learning a new technology. This could also include volunteer work, creative work such as writing, or performances, caring for others, including parenting, elder care, or supporting someone with a disability.



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Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is the process of learning through experience, but can more narrowly be defined as ‘learning through reflection on doing’. Experiential learning is connected to the world outside of education settings, though this type of learning is often a goal in post-secondary education. Many informal learning opportunities can become experiential with reflection; hands-on learning can be a form of experiential learning but does not necessarily involve students reflecting on their process. The key here is the reflection of the learning that makes it experiential.



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THE PURPOSE OF PLAR

- **Validation:** The process recognizes the education and training (or learning) needs of employers and employees related to important workplace based skills or knowledge.
- **Skills and Knowledge Demonstration:** The formal assessment process provides a chance for learners to demonstrate their competencies.
- **Academic Recognition:** Formally credits learning, which demonstrates achievement of skills and knowledge.
- **Career Advancement:** The process can help to identify learning gaps and develop specific learning plans to fill them.

To learn more about how PLAR can be applied in current contexts, check out this article in the Irish Farmers Journal:

[Recognition of prior learning is enabling access to education](#)

PLAR IN POST-SECONDARY

Now that you have a better understanding of what PLAR is, think about how this concept can be applied to an academic setting.

PLAR is a way for individuals to reflect on their life, work, and educational experiences in a way that helps them to recognize the knowledge and skills that they have gained through those various experiences.

The fundamental purpose of PLAR is rooted in the belief that someone should not be required to re-learn material they already know, and should have an opportunity **provide evidence of their existing competence**. Atlantic Technological University (ATU) advocates for PLAR as a means to increase accessibility to qualifications that align better with both **personal achievements and necessary industry standards**:



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtorplforfaculty/?p=99#h5p-1>

The PLAR process can be used to fulfill requirements of an educational or training program, occupational or professional certifications, or entry into specific labour markets, but it can also be relevant for people seeking career development, promotion, healing, and personal reflection.

PLAR PROCESS OVERVIEW

If you are not familiar with PLAR, then the process of what's required of the faculty and learners involved can seem overwhelming.

This diagram is meant to serve as a guide that can be referred to throughout the PLAR process.

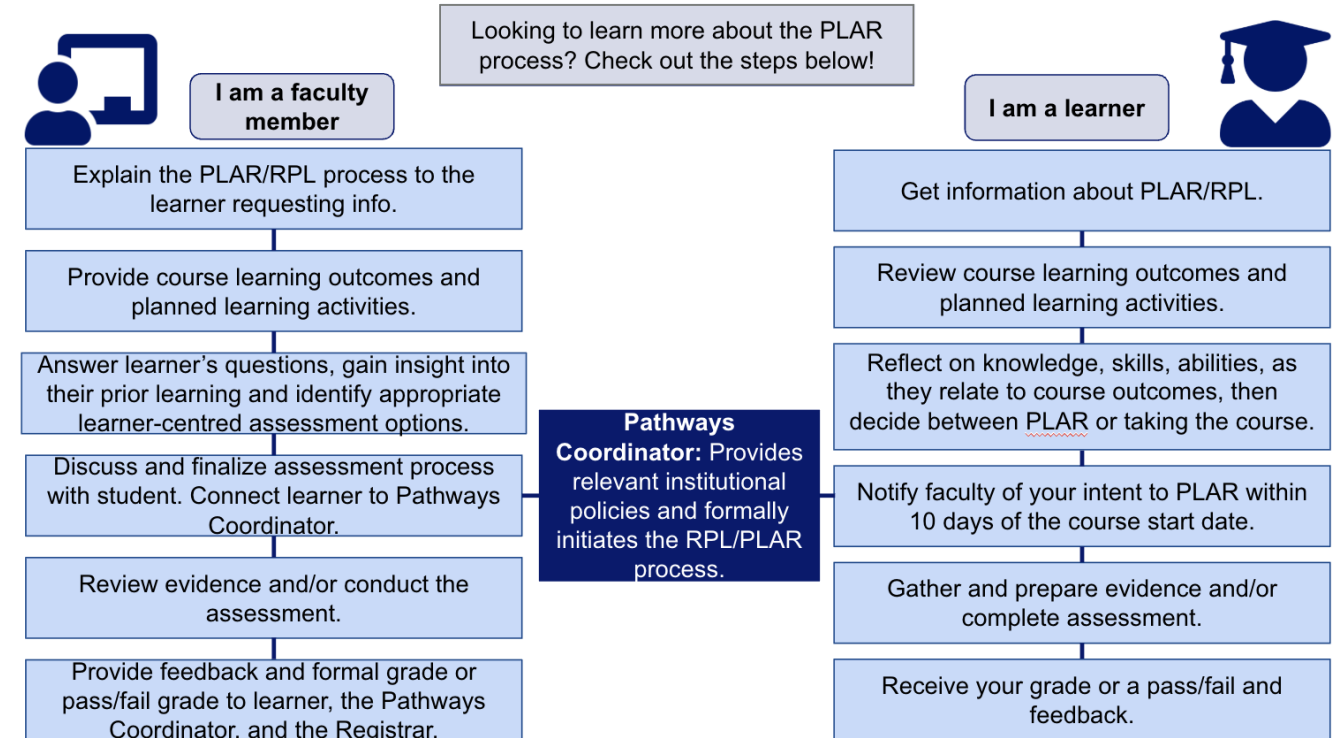


Image Description

I am a faculty member:

- Explain the PLAR/RPL process to the learner requesting info.
- Provide course learning outcomes and planned learning activities
- Answer learner's questions, gain insight into their prior learning and identify appropriate learner-centred assessment options
- Discuss and finalize the assessment process with students. Connect the learner to the Pathways Coordinator
- Review evidence and/or conduct the assessment
- Provide feedback and formal grade or pass/fail grade to learner, Pathways Coordinator and the Registrar

Pathways Coordinator

- Provides relevant institutional policies and formally initiates the RPL/PLAR process

I am a learner

- Get information about PLAR/RPL
- Review course learning outcomes and planned learning activities
- Reflect on knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to the course outcomes, then determine between PLAR and taking the course
- Notify faculty of your intent to PLAR the course within 10 days of the course start date
- Gather and prepare evidence and/or complete the assessment
- Receive your grade and or pass/fail and feedback

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DECOLONIZING EDUCATION

Decolonizing Education

Decolonizing is often something that we associate with Indigenous rights and reconciliation.

While it is a key element of reconciliation, it is also broader than that.

Decolonizing education is rethinking how we function as a system.

PLAR challenges traditional gatekeeping by:

Recognizing diverse learning pathways.



Expanding what counts as knowledge.



Increasing access and equity.



Recognizing multiple ways of knowing and showing knowledge.



PLAR acts as a form of decolonization by challenging the Western-centric view that valid learning only occurs within accredited, settler-colonial institutions.

By recognizing knowledge gained through life, work, community, and land-based experiences, PLAR disrupts colonial hierarchies of knowledge, validating Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing.

Image Description

Title: “Decolonizing Education”

Main Section: Decolonizing is often something that we associate with Indigenous rights and reconciliation. While it is a key element of reconciliation, it is also broader than that. Decolonizing education is rethinking how we function as a system. PLAR challenges traditional gatekeeping by:

- Recognizing diverse learning pathways
- Expanding what counts as knowledge
- Increasing access and equity
- Recognizing multiple ways of knowing and showing knowledge

PLAR acts as a form of decolonization by challenging the Western-centric view that valid learning only occurs within accredited, settler-colonial institutions. By recognizing knowledge gained through life, work, community, and land-based experiences, PLAR disrupts colonial hierarchies of knowledge, validating Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing.

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- Decolonizing Education

PLAR AND INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING

When co-designed with communities, PLAR validates experiential, place-based, and intergenerational knowledge.

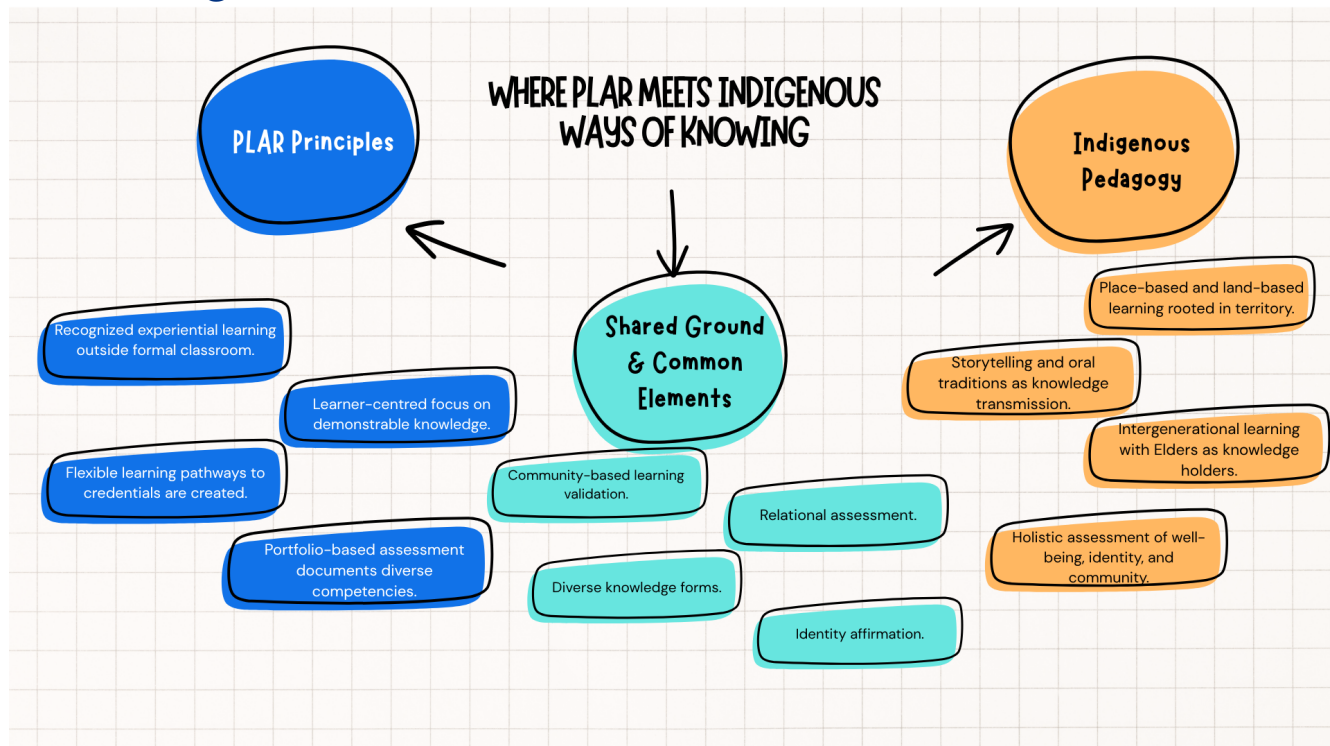


Image Description

Title: “Where PLAR Meets Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Three Subsections:

PLAR Principles

- Recognized experiential learning outside a formal classroom
- Learner-centred focus on demonstrable knowledge
- Flexible learning pathways to credentials are created
- Portfolio-based assessment documents diverse competencies

Shared Ground and Common Elements

- Community-based learning validation
- Relational assessment
- Diverse knowledge forms
- Identity affirmation

Indigenous Pedagogy

- Place-based and land-based learning rooted in territory
- Storytelling and oral traditions as knowledge transmission
- Intergenerational learning with Elders as knowledge holders
- Holistic assessment of well-being and community

Media Attributions

- Where PLAR Meets indigenous ways of knowing

PLAR CONSIDERATIONS

Familiarity vs. Competency

It is important to note that these two terms are not equal.

Familiarity or **Awareness** is the quality or state of being aware, or the understanding that something exists.

On the other hand, **Competency** is the possession or display of relevant skill or technique.

There is a difference between familiarity and demonstrating competence. For example, the experience of working in McDonald's does not automatically translate to a sous chef position.

Experience does not always lead to knowledge.

Respecting PLAR

CAPLA indicates that it is critical that all those involved in PLAR assessment must have confidence in the process. In other words, as a faculty member, you should not have any doubt that the learners you are awarding credit or recognition truly have the knowledge and competencies they claim they do.

PLAR BEST PRACTICES

Understanding the PLAR policies and processes at your respective institution is important. For guidance on best practices for successful implementation, the following list from [Quality Assurance for the Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) in Canada – THE MANUAL](#), can also be considered.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtorplforfaculty/?p=290#h5p-2>

ADOPTING A PLAR MINDSET

As a faculty member, consider involvement in the PLAR process as spectrum of knowledge and familiarity. As you learn and engage in the PLAR process, you will likely find yourself at different points of this spectrum depending on the context of usage. For example, your position on this spectrum may look different between a course you are teaching, an assessment you are grading, and a learner you are working with.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtorplforfaculty/?p=296#h5p-3>

You can use this guidebook to reflect on your practice and how you might move towards achieving transformative practice.

DESIGNING ASSESSMENTS FOR PLAR

Designing Assessments for PLAR

- [Foundations of PLAR Assessments](#)
- [Best Practices for Creating Assessments](#)
- [Assessment Types](#)
- [Pause and Reflect](#)
- [Assessment Criteria](#)
- [Additional Considerations](#)
- [Aligning Assessments with Course Learning Outcomes](#)
- [Designing Outcome-Based Assessments](#)
- [Ensuring Flexibility and Inclusivity](#)
- [Building Assessments](#)
- [Rubrics and Evaluation Criteria](#)
- [Pause and Reflect](#)

FOUNDATION OF PLAR ASSESSMENTS

Recall the foundational principles of PLAR. These same principles can be applied to creating assessments for PLAR.



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BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING ASSESSMENTS

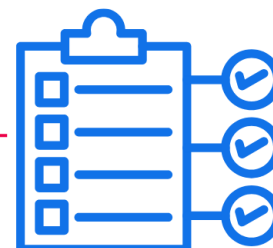
CREATING ASSESSMENTS:

Best Practices

1. Prioritize learning outcomes over specific learning activities and assessments

It's important to try and maintain broader perspective when considering what might be the most appropriate assessment method. Take a step back to consider alternate demonstrations of skills and competencies outside of the activities and assessments that are established in the class.

Is there a different option that aligns well with learning outcomes?



2. Use backwards design

Once you have considered the learning outcomes and aligning this with your assessment method, work on building your rubric.

3. Multiple assessors, wherever possible, where subjectivity concerns may arise

Whenever possible, it is recommended to use other subject matter experts as assessors when the assessment you are using could be considered subjective. Subjective assessment types include skills demonstration, videos presentations, case studies, role plays, etc.



4. Verbal interview to support authenticity, depth, and breadth of written assessments.

If the best assessment method for the PLAR candidate is a written submission, conducting a verbal interview after they submit their writing is considered best practice.

This can be helpful in addressing potential concerns around AI, as well as to confirm depth and breadth of competencies.

5. Third party confirmation of submission where applicable.

Consider onsite videos of the learner performing skills, letters of reference from those who have worked with them, or an attestation letter from their supervisor.

These are just a few examples of suitable options to have a third party confirm the circumstances of their PLAR submission.



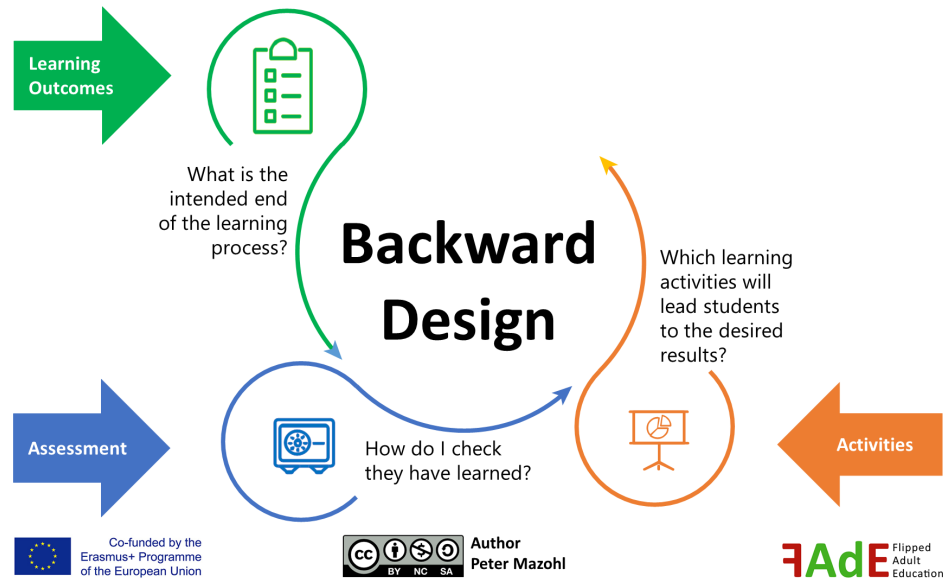
Image Description

Title: Creating Assessments: Best Practices

Main Section:

1. **Prioritize learning outcomes over specific learning activities and assessments:** It's important to try and maintain broader perspective when considering what might be the most appropriate assessment method. Take a step back to consider alternate demonstrations of skills and competencies outside of the activities and assessments that are established in the class. Is there a different option that aligns well with learning outcomes? If backward design is not a familiar concept, or if a reminder of this framework is needed, check out the backward design infographic.
2. **Use backwards design:** Once you have considered the learning outcomes and aligning this with your assessment method, work on building your rubric.
3. **Multiple assessors, wherever possible, where subjectivity concerns may arise:** Whenever possible, it is recommended to use other subject matter experts as assessors when the assessment you are using could be considered subjective. Subjective assessment types include skills demonstration, videos presentations, case studies, role plays, etc.
4. **Verbal interview to support authenticity, depth, and breadth of written assessments:** If the best assessment method for the PLAR candidate is a written submission, conducting a verbal interview after they submit their writing is considered best practice. This can be helpful in addressing potential concerns around AI, as well as to confirm depth and breadth of competencies.
5. **Third party confirmation of submission where applicable:** Consider onsite videos of the learner performing skills, letters of reference from those who have worked with them, or an attestation letter from their supervisor. These are just a few examples of suitable options to have a third party confirm the circumstances of their PLAR submission.

Aligning assessments to outcomes is an important part of the assessment creation process, which often utilizes backwards design. For a brief overview on what backwards design entails, check out the image below:



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- Best Practices for Creating Assessments

ASSESSMENT TYPES

There are a variety of assessments that are suitable for assessing PLAR candidates. The best assessment option for your learner will depend on the assessments in the course being challenged, and the related learning outcomes. Common examples of PLAR assessments include:

- Challenge Exam/Final Exam
- Case Studies/Scenarios/Role Plays
- Interview
- Skills Demonstration (In-person or Video)
- Comprehensive Assignments
 - Written
 - Essay
 - Portfolio
 - Presentation

For more thorough descriptions of these assessment types, please visit the [Resources](#) sections of this guidebook.

Whereas PLAR assessments often focus on proving knowledge in ways that can be documented and measured (e.g., portfolios, written reflections, mapped competencies), Indigenous approaches to assessment are much more relational, contextual, and grounded in lived experience and responsibility to knowledge.

Despite these differences, there are some assessment types that share traits of both frameworks. These differences and similarities are highlighted in the image below.

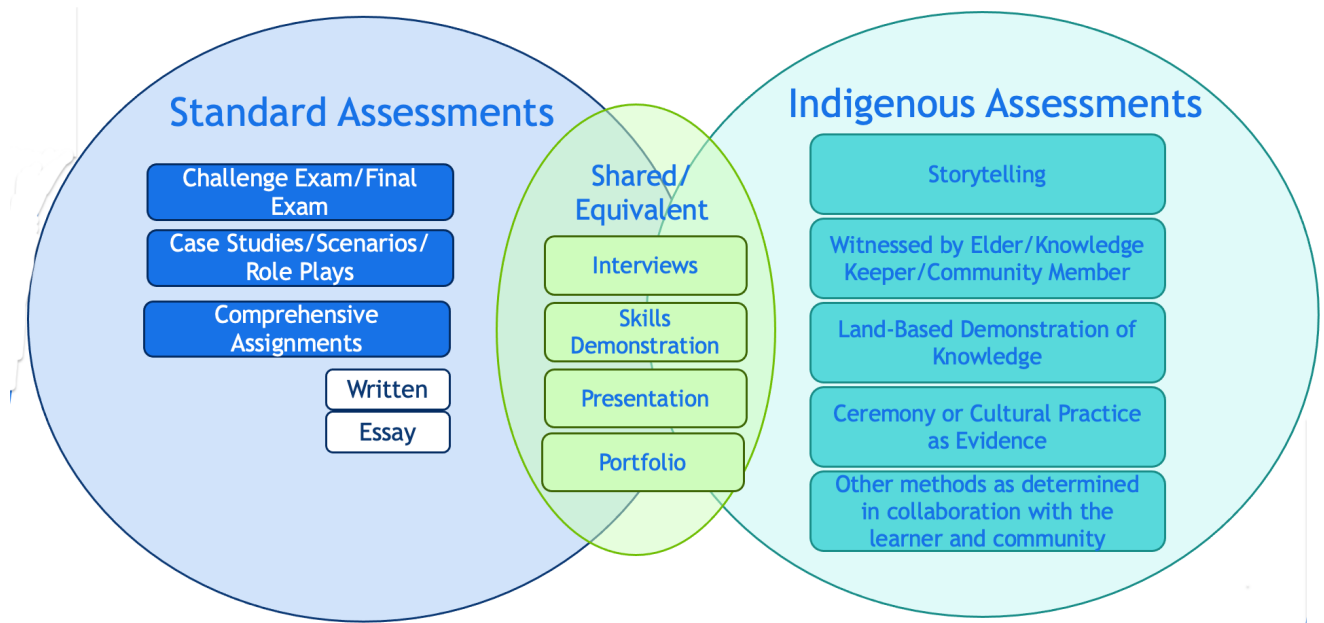


Image Description

Title: Assessment Types

Main section: Standard assessments include challenge/final exams, case studies, scenarios, or role plays, and comprehensive assignments, which could be in written or essay format.

Indigenous assessments often include storytelling, witness by an elder, knowledge keeper, or community member, a land-based demonstration of knowledge, a ceremony or cultural practice as evidence, or other methods determined in collaboration with the learner and community.

Assessments that share traits are commonly used in both frameworks include interview, skills demonstration, presentation, and portfolio.

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- PAUSE AND REFLECT -

PLAR often focuses on proving what you know in ways that can be documented and measured (i.e., portfolios, written reflections, mapped competencies).

Indigenous approaches to assessment are much more relational, contextual, and grounded in lived experience and responsibility to knowledge.

Think of a course you have taught, or that you will be teaching. Review the list of Assessment Types depicted on the previous page.



- Which assessments have you used in this course in the past?
- Are there different assessment types that would align with your learning outcomes?
 - Is there a combination of assessment types that would work in the course?

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ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Two important criteria when designing relevant PLAR assessments include learning outcomes and employability criteria.



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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to learning outcomes and employability standards, you can also use this list as a reference point for important considerations as you move through the assessment creation process.

- **Graduate Attributes:** How do the skills, knowledge and competencies of the PLAR candidate align with the graduate attributes established by the program?
- **Program of Study:** How does the course being considered for PLAR fit into the program of study? Are foundational concepts for the program taught in this course only, or will they be covered again elsewhere in the program?
 - **To assist with this information, you may need to consult your program map.*
- **Case-by-Case Basis:** What is the fairest assessment type for each candidate and for each course? Different circumstances must be part of this process without compromising quality or institutional standards.
- **Essential Employability Skills:** Will all the essential employability skills be met for the program in other courses, or does this need to be addressed? Are there pre-requisites or co-requisites to consider?

ALIGNING ASSESSMENTS WITH COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

When aligning course learning outcomes to assessments, Bloom's Taxonomy is a common point of reference. The image below combines Bloom's Taxonomy and the hierarchy of assessing with the Indigenous learning outcomes framework.

Referring to this framework does not mean that learners need to be categorized on one side or another. Rather, this graphic is meant to highlight the connections between both frameworks, and these characteristics of learning can overlap regardless of who the learner is.

Aligning Assessments with CLO's



Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) | Indigenous Framework informed by: LaFever, 2016 | Sutherland & Swayze, 2012 | Fellner, 2018 | Yunkaporta, 2009

Image Description

Title: Aligning Assessments with CLOs

Main section: There are connections at each level of Bloom's Taxonomy and Indigenous Learning Outcomes Framework. These connections include:

- Remembering and Being & Belonging
- Understanding and Doing & Practicing
- Applying and Reflecting
- Analyzing and Integrating
- Evaluating and Responsibility
- Creating and Transforming

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DESIGNING OUTCOME BASED ASSESSMENTS

The next step in designing outcome-based assessments is reviewing any of the tools you may already have access to.

- Do a **scan of the existing assessments** in the course to inform PLAR/RPL assessment.
 - Is there an assessment that has already been used in the course that could be used as is or modified? (e.g., final exam).
- Consider a **variety of assessment types** as they relate to the experience of the candidate.
 - Is there an assessment type that would best suit the candidate and their experience that still covers the learning outcomes of the course?
- It is best to **work backwards** from the outcomes to avoid "tunnel vision", or become fixated on one assessment type.
 - Consider the outcomes that must be demonstrated as more important over the delivery or learning activities of the course.

ENSURING FLEXIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Ensuring flexibility and inclusivity in PLAR work is an important baseline requirement that benefits all learners, not just those who may require it. Drawing from a universal design for learning (UDL) perspective, using multiple formats of assessment whenever possible is one way to design for flexibility in PLAR.

If you are unfamiliar with the concept of UDL, watch the video for a brief overview.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtorplforfaculty/?p=175#oembed-1>

Additional considerations for ensuring flexibility and inclusivity throughout the PLAR process include the following:

- Use appropriate language that matches the level of thinking required
- Acknowledge that lived experiences may not fit traditional documentation formats
- Familiarize yourself with resources so that the PLAR process is clear and supportive
- Committing to privacy and confidentiality of those involved, which includes the materials submitted and stories shared

BUILDING ASSESSMENTS

When developing PLAR assessments, the goal is to measure whether a learner can demonstrate the same knowledge, skills, and competencies as a learner who completed the course. Remember PLAR assesses learning, not simply experience.

Key Steps:

- Start with course learning outcomes.
- Select the appropriate assessment method. Which assessment strategies best evaluate the required outcomes?
- Develop clear guidelines/expectations (rubric).
- Document the assessment process. Ensure expectations, criteria, and decisions are clearly documented.

RUBRICS AND EVALUTATION CRITERIA

Having a clear rubric with concise criteria aligned to learning outcomes is a useful tool for the PLAR process. Some key points to consider when creating rubrics include:

- The rubric can help clarify learning outcomes clearly for the PLAR candidate
- Each area of competency should be reflected and weighted, which can help to clearly distinguish triangulation
- A well-designed rubric affects the flexibility of assessment methods that can be used

Note: Depending on your assessment, it may be appropriate to share your rubric with the candidate as a tool for guidance. Other situations may call for only using your rubric for marking and sharing with the feedback.

For examples of well-designed rubrics and associated assignments, please visit the [Resources](#) section of this guidebook.

ASSESSING PRIOR LEARNING

[What is Assessment of Prior Learning](#)

[Role of the Assessor](#)

[Competencies of An Effective PLAR Assessor](#)

[Ministry Requirements](#)

[Considerations for Getting Started](#)

[Tips for First Time PLAR Assessors](#)

WHAT IS ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING

As we begin to think about assessing learning, it is important to remember that assessors need to focus on what the learner can demonstrate regarding their knowledge and skills rather than focusing on what was taught in the course. This shift requires familiarity with the course learning outcomes, and the ability to interpret different forms of evidence. An assessor ensures that learning acquired outside traditional classrooms is evaluated rigorously, fairly, and consistently against academic standards.

In relation to post-secondary institutions, assessment of prior learning means:

- Awarding academic credits on the basis of learning that occurred in the past
- Credits awarded by an educational institution
- Credit is considered equal to the credit awarded from a course or program

ROLE OF THE ASSESSOR

A PLAR assessor is responsible for evaluating a candidate's prior learning to ensure that they receive fair and appropriate recognition for knowledge and skills gained outside of formal education. This role requires a strong understanding of course requirements, including the course learning outcomes (CLOs), to accurately align a candidate's experience with the expected standards.



The assessor reviews and assesses a range of assessment types, such as challenge assessments, portfolios, skills demonstrations, and/or interviews, to gather sufficient evidence of competencies. Based on this evaluation, the assessor determines whether the course learning outcomes have been met. If the evidence falls short of the required learning, then the assessor can identify gaps and suggest supplementary evidence or further training needed.

Finally, they are responsible for documenting the assessment process and outcomes, and submitting grades or decisions in accordance with institutional policies.

Media Attributions

- Microsoft Word Images

COMPETENCIES OF AN EFFECTIVE PLAR ASSESSOR

As post-secondary institutions shift towards life-long learning and learner-centred models, the role of the PLAR assessor has grown. Assessors must possess a unique blend of expertise, critical judgement and ethical awareness. They are tasked with interpreting evidence that is often varied and contextual and requires fairness, consistency, and confidentiality, while avoiding bias and maintaining the integrity of qualifications.

The following is a list of competencies highlighting the knowledge, skills and characteristics of an effective PLAR assessor.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtorplforfaculty/?p=593#b5p-6>

MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR PLAR

The [Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security \(external\)](#) outlines best practices to assist colleges in meeting prior learning assessment and recognition requirements. They include the following:

Minimum number of credits permitted through RPL/PLAR at the college level 75%

- Learners are required to be enrolled in and complete a minimum of 25% of the courses in a program to receive a diploma or certificate from a college. Degrees require 50% residency.

Learners must meet the minimum general admission requirements

- This ensures that the learner has the foundational skills and competencies necessary to succeed in the program.

Do not need to be enrolled in the program to engage in RPL/PLAR

- This supports flexibility and reduces barriers to entry by allowing learners to explore options before committing to a program.

Credits awarded should be transcribed the same way as other program courses

- This ensures consistency, transparency, and equal recognition of achievement. It also reinforces that PLAR credits must meet the same academic standards as course-based credits. A failed PLAR attempt will not show up on a transcript.

No indication that credits were acquired through prior learning assessment

- Transcripts should not distinguish between credits earned through formal coursework and those earned through PLAR. This supports equity and avoids potential bias or stigma.

Passing grade for the course is the passing grade for the prior learning assessment

- The minimum passing grade for a course should be the same benchmark for PLAR assessments. The grade will count towards a GPA.

PLAR should be made available for as many courses as possible

- If a course is to be excluded from PLAR, the reasons and considerations should be clearly documented for the student.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GETTING STARTED

Clarifying Learning Outcomes

Clarifying learning outcomes begins with a careful review of both course and program outcomes to ensure alignment and relevance. This involves distinguishing between “essential” course learning outcomes, which represent the core knowledge or skills learners must demonstrate, and learning activities, which may enhance understanding but are not critical for success. It is also important to ensure that all outcomes are framed in ways that are both measurable and observable so they can be assessed consistently and transparently.

Determining Appropriate Evidence

Determining appropriate evidence requires identifying acceptable types of documentation that demonstrate achievement of the outcomes. This includes considering the authenticity and credibility of the evidence provided, ensuring it genuinely reflects the learner’s own work and abilities. At the same time, a balance must be struck between gathering sufficient documentation to support assessment decisions and avoiding an excess that may create unnecessary information without adding value.

Ethical and Professional Considerations

Ethical and professional considerations are central to the assessment process. Assessors must avoid conflicts of interest and ensure fairness across all candidates, applying criteria consistently. It is also essential to recognize potential biases, whether related to cultural context, professional background, or other factors, to support equitable evaluation. Throughout the process, upholding academic standards remains a key responsibility to ensure the integrity and credibility of the outcomes being assessed.

Common Challenges and Practical Solutions

- **Challenge:** Insufficient or unclear evidence
 - Consider requesting targeted additional documentation, attestation letters, or other forms of documentation
- **Challenge:** Difficulty equating experience to outcomes

- Consider using multiple methods of assessments including an interview to elicit more information from the learner
- **Challenge:** Time constraints
 - Consider using standardized rubrics and templates
- **Challenge:** Uncertainty in judgment
 - Consider consulting peers or PLAR coordinators

TIPS FOR FIRST TIME PLAR ASSESSORS

PLAR assessment is both rigorous and learner-centered. Your role is to balance fairness, flexibility, and academic integrity—recognizing real learning wherever it occurs, while ensuring it meets established standards. The following is a list of tips to keep in mind as you are getting started.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/introtoplforfaculty/?p=648#h5p-7>

SUMMARY

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is an academic process used to evaluate and acknowledge learning that individuals have acquired outside of formal educational settings. This may include workplace experience, professional training, independent study, volunteering, and other life experiences. The goal of PLAR is to formally recognize this learning by awarding academic credit or advanced standing where appropriate.

For faculty, understanding PLAR involves recognizing that the core principle remains consistent across contexts: assessment is based on demonstrated learning aligned with course or program outcomes, not simply on experience alone. Faculty play a critical role in ensuring that standards of academic quality and rigor are upheld through fair, transparent, and evidence-based assessment practices.

At the same time, it is important to note that PLAR implementation varies by institution. While the underlying concept is shared, each college establishes its own:

- Policies and eligibility criteria
- Assessment methods (e.g., portfolios, challenge exams, interviews)
- Processes for submission, evaluation, and credit awarding
- Roles and responsibilities for faculty and administrative units

As a result, faculty should be familiar with their institution's specific PLAR guidelines, procedures, and supports. This ensures consistency, equity, and alignment with institutional expectations while maintaining academic integrity.

In practice, PLAR offers faculty an opportunity to:

- Support diverse learners by recognizing meaningful prior learning
- Engage in flexible and inclusive assessment approaches
- Contribute to learner pathways that value both formal and informal education

While PLAR is grounded in a shared commitment to recognizing valid and relevant prior learning, its successful application depends on faculty understanding both the core principles and the specific institutional frameworks that guide its implementation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources offer examples of assessment strategies, evaluation rubrics, and condensed information that can support consistency and quality in PLAR decision-making.

Please note that the examples are for **information purposes only**. They are intended to illustrate possible approaches and support your understanding of PLAR practices. They should not be used as prescriptive templates or applied without consideration of your specific disciplinary context, institutional policies, and course learning outcomes.

Faculty are encouraged to adapt these resources thoughtfully, ensuring that all PLAR assessments remain aligned with academic standards and reflect the integrity of the credential.

[FAQ](#)

[Developing PLAR Assessments](#)

[PLAR Assessment Descriptions](#)

[Aligning Bloom's Taxonomy and PLAR Assessments](#)

[CULN1005 PLAR Sample Assessment and Rubric](#)

[ECEP1010 PLAR Sample Assessment and Rubric](#)

[INDG2003 PLAR Sample Assessment and Rubric](#)

[PROF1026 PLAR Sample Assessment and Rubric](#)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does PLAR matter in post-secondary education?

PLAR reduces duplication of learning and accelerates program completion. It supports adult learning and pathways that improve access, equity, and student retention.

Is PLAR required in Ontario colleges?

Yes. Under MCU expectations, Ontario colleges must:

- Provide students with access to PLAR processes
- Ensure processes are fair, transparent, and timely
- Apply consistent academic standards across programs

How does PLAR support the Ontario college mandate?

PLAR supports Ontario colleges by enhancing access to education for diverse learners, promotes workforce development and upskilling, and supports pathways between education, employment, and training.

What role do faculty play in the PLAR process?

Faculty typically assess PLAR applications, ensuring assessments meet course learning outcomes while maintaining academic standards and rigor. Faculty may be involved in the development of the PLAR assessment.

Is PLAR the same as credit transfer?

No. PLAR assesses informal or experiential learning (e.g., workplace experience) while credit transfer grants credit for formal learning completed at another institution

What standards are used to assess PLAR?

PLAR assessments must be valid, reliable, fair and equitable, transparent, and documented.

Does PLAR award grades?

PLAR applications are awarded the same grade scheme as a learner that took the course.

How many credits can a learner earn through PLAR?

Ontario Colleges require residency which means 25% of courses in a program must be taken through that college. Learners can PLAR up to 75% or a program.

Is PLAR extra work for faculty?

Yes, PLAR involves additional time. However, there is generally compensation associated with PLAR assessment.

How is academic integrity maintained?

Assessment development includes structured assessment methods that align with course learning outcomes. Subject matter experts are contracted as assessors.

Can learners appeal a PLAR decision?

Yes, typically, learners can formally appeal a PLAR decision. They must follow the college's academic appeals policy and process.

DEVELOPING PLAR ASSESSMENTS

What is PLAR

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of prior learning. The learning may be formal, informal and/or experiential. Learners should have the ability to demonstrate that they have already achieved the required learning outcomes for a course.

How PLAR Works

Learners applying for PLAR typically submit evidence that demonstrates their prior learning. This may include portfolios, workplace documentation, certifications, skills demonstrations, structured interviews or challenge assessments and exams. Faculty members play an essential role in the PLAR process by creating assessments and reviewing submissions to determine whether the demonstrated learning meets the course learning outcomes.

Developing PLAR Assessments

When developing PLAR assessments the goal is to measure whether a student can demonstrate the same knowledge, skills and competencies as a student who completed the course. Remember PLAR assesses learning, not simply experience.

Key Steps:

- Start with course learning outcomes
- Select appropriate assessment method. Which assessment strategies best evaluate the required outcomes.
- Develop clear criteria and rubrics
- Document the assessment process. Ensure expectations, criteria and decisions are clearly documented

PLAR, Transfer Credits and Advanced Entry

PLAR	Assessment of learning gained outside of formal post-secondary education
Transfer Credit	Credit granted for courses completed at another recognized post-secondary institution
Advanced Entry	Admission to a later stage of a program based on previously completed education or credentials

Quality Standards

A strong PLAR Assessment should:

- ✓ Align with the course learning outcomes and competencies
- ✓ Ensure the level of difficulty is equivalent to the course
- ✓ Should accurately measure the knowledge, skills and competencies required for the course
- ✓ Be flexible
- ✓ Be accessible
- ✓ Be consistent
- ✓ Acknowledge learner's backgrounds and experiences
- ✓ Be based on documented evidence, not years of experience alone

Avoid

- ✗ Granting credits for experience alone
- ✗ Lowering or raising the level of knowledge required in the course
- ✗ Using unclear or inconsistent criteria
- ✗ Assessing content instead of outcomes

What is PLAR: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of prior learning. The learning may be formal, informal and/or experiential. Learners should have the ability to demonstrate that they have already achieved the required learning outcomes for a course.

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Media Attributions

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PLAR ASSESSMENT METHOD DESCRIPTIONS

Note on the Use of PLAR Methods

All PLAR assessment methods must be explicitly aligned with the course learning outcomes. Regardless of the method selected, assessments should be designed to ensure learners demonstrate both the breadth (range of content areas) and depth (level

of complexity, critical thinking, and application) of knowledge and skills required by the course.

Evidence must be sufficient, relevant, authentic, and current to support a valid assessment decision.

- **Challenge Exam:** A formal, timed assessment—often written or online—that measures a learner’s knowledge of course content without requiring course participation. It evaluates whether the learner has already achieved the required learning outcomes through prior experience or study.
- **Case Studies/Scenarios/Role Plays:** Applied assessment methods where learners analyze realistic situations or participate in simulated interactions. These approaches evaluate problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills by requiring learners to demonstrate how they would respond in authentic or workplace-relevant contexts.
- **Comprehensive Assignment:** A multi-part assessment that integrates knowledge and skills across several learning outcomes. It may draw on theory, practice, and reflection, allowing learners to demonstrate depth and breadth of prior learning in a structured format.
 - **Project:** A sustained piece of work completed over time that results in a tangible product or outcome (e.g., report, plan, design, or prototype). Projects assess the ability to apply knowledge, manage tasks, and produce work relevant to real-world contexts.
 - **Essay:** A structured written response that demonstrates critical thinking, analysis, and understanding of a topic. Essays allow learners to articulate and support ideas using evidence, often connecting prior experience to theoretical concepts.
- **Interview:** A structured or semi-structured conversation between the assessor and learner. The learner explains, reflects on, and provides examples of their prior learning. Interviews can clarify evidence, assess depth of understanding, and validate claimed competencies.
- **Skills Demonstration:** A performance-based assessment where learners physically or virtually demonstrate specific skills in real time. This method evaluates practical competence and the ability to apply knowledge in authentic or simulated tasks.

- **Presentation:** An oral or multimedia delivery in which the learner communicates knowledge, experience, or project outcomes to an audience. Presentations assess understanding, organization of ideas, and communication skills, often including opportunities for questions and discussion.
- **Portfolio:** A curated collection of evidence gathered over time that demonstrates learning, skills, and achievements. Portfolios may include documents, work samples, reflections, and third-party validations. They allow learners to showcase prior learning holistically and align it with course or program outcomes.

Recommended Combinations

To ensure breadth, depth, and validity, PLAR often uses combined methods:

- Portfolio + Interview → Strong for experiential learning
- Challenge Exam + Interview → Confirms depth beyond recall
- Skills Demonstration + Questions/Presentation → Verifies understanding behind performance
- Project + Reflection (Essay or Interview) → Captures both product and thinking

ALIGNING BLOOMS TAXONOMY AND PLAR ASSESSMENTS

Bloom's Taxonomy and PLAR Assessment Methods

PLAR Assessment Method	Blooms Level	Action Verbs
Challenge Exam Exams typically cover lower to mid-levels but can touch higher levels depending on question type.	Knowledge, Comprehension, Analysis (lower level)	<i>defines, identifies, lists, recalls, states</i> (Knowledge) <i>explains, describes, summarizes, translates</i> (Comprehension) <i>compares, differentiates, categorizes, analyzes</i> (Analysis)
Case Studies/Scenarios/Role Plays These assessments are strong for practice based and higher order thinking.	Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Creating	<i>applies, demonstrates, uses, solves</i> (Application) <i>analyzes, differentiates, prioritizes, outlines</i> (Analysis) <i>evaluates, justifies, critiques, supports</i> (Evaluation) <i>creates, devises, generates, constructs</i> (Creating)
Interviews Interviews assess thinking processes, judgment, and communication.	Comprehension, Analysis, Evaluation	<i>explains, expresses,</i> (Comprehension) <i>distinguishes, infers, examines</i> (Analysis) <i>defends, justifies, evaluates</i> (Evaluation)
Skills Demonstration Focus on practical application and decision making.	Application, Analysis	<i>demonstrates, operates, prepares, uses, applies</i> (Application) <i>examines, detects, differentiates, prioritizes</i> (Analysis)
Written Assignment Demonstrate comprehension, make connections to practice, examine issues in depth, and justify their conclusions in writing.	Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation	<i>describes, summarizes, paraphrases</i> (Comprehension) <i>explains, applies, illustrates</i> (Application) <i>analyzes, outlines, differentiates</i> (Analysis) <i>critiques, evaluates, supports</i> (Evaluation)

Bloom's Taxonomy and PLAR Assessment Methods

PLAR Assessment Method	Blooms Level	Action Verbs
Essay Focuses strongly on critical thinking, evidence-based justification, and synthesizing ideas to create a coherent argument.	Analysis, Evaluation, Creating	<i>analyzes, compares, contrasts</i> (Analysis) <i>defends, critiques, concludes, justifies</i> (Evaluation) <i>creates, composes, organizes, synthesizes</i> (Creating)
Portfolio Demonstrates the ability to apply skills, analyze growth, evaluate learning, and create a cohesive representation of achievement and professional readiness.	Analysis, Evaluation, Creating	<i>categorizes, organizes, deconstructs</i> (Analysis) <i>evaluates, justifies, appraises</i> (Evaluation) <i>creates, revises, compiles, designs</i> (Creating)
Presentation Evaluates a learner's ability to explain concepts clearly, apply knowledge in communication, respond thoughtfully to questions, and design an engaging presentation format.	Application, Analysis, Evaluation, Creating	<i>demonstrates, uses, explains</i> (Application) <i>illustrates, distinguishes, outlines</i> (Analysis) <i>justifies, critiques, supports</i> (Evaluation) <i>creates, designs, organizes, composes</i> (Creating)

CULN 1005 PLAR SAMPLE: ASSESSMENT AND RUBRIC

Course Description

Whether you have spent years cooking without ever being formally taught or have never held a knife before, this course covers the basics in culinary techniques. In these weekly, hands-on labs, we will have you slicing and dicing, sautéing and braising, making classical sauces and much more in a food-safe, organized manner. Your learning will be supported through faculty-led demonstrations in small classes with lots of one-on-one mentorship using carefully curated recipes.

Course Learning Outcomes

CLO 1: Apply techniques of basic small quantity food preparation accurately and efficiently.

CLO 2: Apply safe food handling, preparation, and sanitation principles.

Assessment Overview

Students will demonstrate their fundamental culinary techniques, applying industry standards of safe food handling, workplace safety and kitchen sanitation. This skills assessment will confirm that the learner has

the competency and skills to proceed into CULN 1002, where advanced culinary techniques are taught and assessed. This assessment encourages practical application.

Part 1: Skills Assessment

The following skills can be demonstrated in a variety of ways including an in-person skills demonstration in the Loyalist College kitchen, verified video recording produced by the student or another appropriate modality approved by the assessor.

1. **Station setup:** reflects basic safety and sanitation principles
2. **Knife skills:** accurate knife skills demonstrating classic cuts such as large, medium and small dice (i.e. an onion), brunoise, bâtonnet, allumette, and julienne
3. **Pan Skills:** sweat, pan sear, sauté, shallow fry, braise
4. **Sauces:** béchamel, tomato, velouté, mayonnaise
5. **Starch Cookery:** pasta (dry/fresh), potato (i.e. puree), rice (i.e. pilaf, risotto)
6. **Poultry Butchery:** whole chicken breakdown into “refined” 8-cut (incisions at joints), “butterflied”; stuffed & trussed with bread dressing
7. **Breakfast Cookery:** clarified butter, French omelette, poached egg, fried egg
8. **Fish & Shellfish Cookery:** pan sear, bread/crumb and fry (i.e. shrimp, sole)

Part 2: Interview

- Schedule and participate in an interview with the assessor to discuss the skills demonstration from Part 1 and to answer additional questions about kitchen equipment, safe food handling, sanitation etc. You will be expected to explain the following:
 - **Pan skills/cooking methods:** describe various methods of cooking (sweat, pan sear, sauté, shallow fry, braise) and identify their appropriate applications
 - **Stocks:** describe traditional production methods for vegetable, fish, chicken and veal stocks, differentiating between light and dark stocks.
 - **Roux thickening:** differentiate between the 3 types of roux (white, blonde, dark) and describe how to thicken a sauce with a roux
 - **Safe Food Handling:** identify industry standards for holding food at various stages of receiving, storing and production. Identify safe internal cooking temperatures for various products, and safe food handling best practices
 - **Sanitation:** describe standard daily kitchen sanitation procedures
 - **Equipment:** identify common pieces of equipment typically found in a professional kitchen (i.e. meat slicer, immersion blender, gas burner, combi oven etc.) and describe and/or demonstrate

standard operating procedure for each

Suggested Interview Questions for the Assessor *(do not share with learner prior to the interview)*

1. Compare and contrast “sauté” and “sweat” as cooking methods.
 2. Describe the process for shallow frying a crumb-coated protein.
 3. Describe the braising process, including examples of types of meats that are typically braised and why.
 4. How does one achieve a clear stock vs a cloudy one?
 5. What is the fat to flour ratio typically used when producing a roux? How is a roux incorporated into a liquid to effectively thicken it without lumps?
 6. What temperature should a walk-in cooler be kept at?
 7. What is the safe internal temperature for cooked poultry?
 8. Describe the process for clarifying butter.
 9. Describe the standard operating procedure for using and cleaning a meat slicer.
-

Part 1: Skills Demonstration Rubric

Criteria	Excellent 85 – 100%	Good 70 – 85%	Satisfactory 60 – 70%	Developing 50-60%	Unsatisfactory 49% and below
Clarity of Explanations	Clearly and confidently answers questions and explains concepts.	Mostly clear with minor gaps.	Somewhat clear with gaps.	Very basic explanation with limited clarity.	Unclear or incomplete responses.
Techniques Questions	Demonstrates a deep understanding of techniques and their accurate application.	Demonstrates an understanding of techniques and their accurate application.	Somewhat demonstrates an understanding of techniques and their accurate application.	Very basic understanding with gaps.	Misunderstands or cannot explain techniques.
Safety & Sanitation	Demonstrates a deep understanding of safety and sanitation in the kitchen.	Demonstrates an understanding of safety and sanitation in the kitchen.	Somewhat demonstrates an understanding of safety and sanitation in the kitchen.	Very basic understanding with gaps.	Misunderstands or cannot explain.
Safe Food Handling	Demonstrates a deep understanding of safe food handling.	Demonstrates an understanding of safe food handling.	Somewhat demonstrates an understanding of safe food handling.	Very basic understanding with gaps.	Misunderstands or cannot explain.
Kitchen Equipment	Demonstrates a deep understanding of standard pieces of kitchen equipment and can describe standard operating procedures for all.	Demonstrates an understanding of standard pieces of kitchen equipment and can describe standard operating procedures for all.	Somewhat demonstrates an understanding of standard pieces of kitchen equipment and can somewhat describe standard operating procedures for all.	Very basic understanding with gaps.	Misunderstands or cannot explain.

Part 2: Interview Rubric

Criteria	Excellent 85 – 100%	Good 70 – 85%
Workstation Organization	Station is extremely organized, excess clutter cleared between tasks, knives and other tools are organized.	Station is mostly organized, excess clutter cleared between tasks, knives and other tools are organized.
Follows instructions/recipe	Verbal and written instructions, including recipes, are followed accurately.	Verbal and written instructions, including recipes, are mostly followed accurately.
Techniques	Techniques are applied accurately as per industry standard.	Techniques are mostly applied accurately as per industry standard.
Presentation/Plating	Final products are presented in a tidy, professional manner as per industry standard.	Final products are mostly presented in a tidy, professional manner as per industry standard.
Safe Food Handling & Sanitation	All safe food handling and sanitation principles are applied accurately as per industry standard.	Safe food handling and sanitation principles are mostly applied accurately as per industry standard.

ECEP1010 PLAR SAMPLE: ASSESSMENT AND RUBRIC

Course Description

This course introduces knowledge and skills in authentic observation that are necessary to becoming reflective and responsive early educators. The significance of the observation cycle and how this contributes to reflective practice and quality of early learning experiences is examined. A variety of observation strategies that enable the discovery and understanding of children's learning, interests, and potential are introduced. Observation of the early environment as the "third teacher" will also be explored. Students are encouraged to discern the appropriateness of observation strategies in varying contexts in order to identify strengths and challenges in children and the learning environment. Through this critical process, they will learn to ascertain how children and families may benefit from further support and resources.

Course Learning Outcomes

CLO 1: Describe the significance of the observation cycle for reflective and responsive practice in early education.

CLO 2: Explain the role of professionalism and ethics in observing, recording, and sharing children's information.

CLO 3: Articulate the principles and practice of writing authentic observations and interpretations recognizing the subjective nature of this process.

CLO 4: Demonstrate the use of a variety of observation strategies to document and identify children's strengths, interests, and challenges, including the learning environment.

Assessment Overview

Students will compile a portfolio of authentic child observations using a variety of strategies. They will accompany this with a reflective analysis that demonstrates understanding of the observation cycle, ethical considerations, and the subjective nature of interpretation. This assessment encourages practical application, critical thinking, and professional reflection.

Part 1: Observations

- Collect four to six completed observations that follow various strategies (anecdotal records, running records, learning stories, checklists etc). Ensure you have parental permission and centre permission to share these observations.
- Each observation must include the following:
 - Contextual information (setting, time, activity and reason for observation)
 - Objective description of the child's activities
 - Interpretation of the activities linking to developmental theory
 - Reflection on how this information responsive practices

Part 2: Reflection

- Write an analysis that addresses the following:
 - The observation cycle and its role in planning and responsiveness
 - Ethical and professional considerations when documenting children's learning
 - The subjective nature of interpretation and strategies to reduce bias

Part 3: Interview

- Schedule and participate in an interview with the assessor to discuss Part 1 & 2. You will be expected to explain the following:
 - Your observation choices, strategies used and what you learned

- Your interpretations and how you address bias and subjectivity
- Demonstrate your understanding of ethical and professional responsibilities when observing and documenting children's learning

Suggested Interview Questions for the Assessor *(do not share with learner)*

1. Can you walk me through how you applied the observation cycle in your portfolio?
 2. How did your observations influence your thinking about responsive planning or practice?
 3. How did you ensure your interpretations were authentic and respectful of the child?
 4. In what ways did you try to minimize bias and/or subjectivity in your observations?
 5. Why did you choose the observations strategies you used?
 6. How does the learning environment influence what you observe?
 7. What ethical considerations did you think about while observing and documenting?
 8. What did you learn about yourself and as observer through this process?
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Part 1 & 2 Rubric

Criteria	Excellent 85% – 100%	Good 70% – 85%	Satisfactory 60% – 70%	Developing 50% – 60%	Unsatisfactory 49% & Below
Observation Cycle Understanding	Clearly explains all stages with insightful connections to practice.	Explains most stages with relevant examples.	Basic explanation with limited connection to practice.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Professionalism & Ethics	Demonstrates deep understanding of ethical principles and confidentiality.	Addresses key ethical issues with some depth.	Mentions ethics but lacks depth or clarity.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Authenticity & Interpretation	Observations are rich, objective, and interpretations are well-supported.	Mostly objective with thoughtful interpretations.	Some subjectivity or vague interpretations.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Variety of Strategies	Uses diverse strategies effectively and reflects on their use.	Uses several strategies with some reflection.	Limited variety or superficial use.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Reflective Analysis	Deep, critical reflection with strong links to theory and practice.	Clear reflection with some theoretical links.	Basic reflection with few connections.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.

Part 3: Interview Rubric

Criteria	Excellent 85% – 100%	Good 70% – 85%	Satisfactory 60% – 70%	Developing 50% – 60%	Unsatisfactory 49% & Below
Clarity of Explanation	Clearly and confidently explains choices and concepts.	Mostly clear with minor gaps.	Basic explanation with limited clarity.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Understanding of Observation Cycle	Demonstrates deep understanding and application.	Shows good understanding with some application.	Basic understanding with limited application.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Ethics and Professionalism	Thoughtful discussion of ethical responsibilities.	Addresses ethics with some insight.	Mentions ethics but lacks depth.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Reflection and Interpretation	Insightful reflection on subjectivity and interpretation.	Reflects with some insight.	Basic reflection, limited depth.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.
Engagement in Interview	Actively engages, responds thoughtfully and professionally.	Engages with minor prompting.	Responds but lacks depth or engagement.	Some required elements are present, but more information is required.	Insufficient Evidence.

NOTE: For developing level, additional information would be required before a grade would be applied.

INDG2003 PLAR SAMPLE: ASSESSMENT AND RUBRIC

Course Description

Guided by Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action on healthcare, the aim of this course is to share meaningful and culturally appropriate ways to work collaboratively and appropriately with Indigenous populations within healthcare. This course is an educational resource that is designed for healthcare learners. The goal is to provide them with strategies for applying this content in their educational study and future healthcare practices.

Course Learning Outcomes

CLO 1: Explain the foundational perspectives of wellness of Indigenous people in Canada and the implications for health outcomes.

CLO 2: Identify and analyse biases, racism and discrimination in healthcare in order to respectfully respond.

CLO 3: Integrate a deeper understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and being within healthcare.

CLO 4: Identify specifically Indigenous rights and services within healthcare.

CLO 5: Demonstrate culturally safe healthcare practices specific to Indigenous people.

Assessment Overview

The *Knowledge Bundle* is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and understandings they already carry that align with this course. Rather than completing traditional coursework, students can create a bundle that reflects their lived experiences, community teachings, and prior learning. This project honours Indigenous ways of knowing by recognizing that knowledge is relational, experiential, and often grounded in community, land, and lived practice.

Part 1: Bundle

Bundles are significant within many Indigenous cultures because they represent living knowledge. They are not just objects, but carriers of stories, responsibilities, and relationships. In this way, a bundle is both a repository of knowledge and a reflection of identity, holding teachings that are passed down, lived, and continually renewed over time. Students will collect/include 2–4 pieces that represent their knowledge.

Examples might include:

- Audio recording of a story or teaching
- Photos (with appropriate permissions)
- Artwork or symbolic representation
- Written reflections or journals that may include descriptions of community roles or responsibilities

Part 2: Learning Connections

Demonstrate how your prior learning meets the course learning outcomes.

- For each outcome: Provide a brief explanation of how you meet it and include evidence from your experiences (stories, examples, artifacts)
- Examples of evidence:
 - Participation in ceremony or community practices
 - Work or volunteer experience
 - Supporting family/community members
 - Teachings from Elders or Knowledge Keepers
 - Land-based practices

Part 3: Community Involved Witness/Accountability

Invite a *witness* to engage with your bundle. This could be: an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, a community member, a peer or mentor

- They provide a short reflection:
 - What they learned from your bundle
 - How your knowledge is demonstrated
 - Any teachings or connections they see

This honours Indigenous approaches to validation and accountability.

Part 4: Self-Reflection

Reflect on your learning journey:

- What did you learn about your own knowledge through this process?
 - How does your knowledge align with Indigenous perspectives of health and well-being? How can we support both Indigenous and western medicines?
 - How will you carry this knowledge forward in your practice?
-

Bundle Rubric

Criteria	Strongly Demonstrated	Developing	Emerging
Connection to Learning Outcomes	Clear, meaningful connections between lived experience and course outcomes; well-explained and grounded.	Some connections present; may be general or uneven.	Limited or unclear connections to outcomes.
Depth of Reflection	Thoughtful, insightful reflection; shows growth, responsibility, and future application.	Reflection present but mostly descriptive; some insight.	Minimal reflection; largely descriptive.
Relationality & Lived Experience	Strong connection to relationships (community, land, family, spirit); honours sources of knowledge.	Some acknowledgement of relationships; not fully explored.	Limited or unclear connection to relationships.
Respectful Engagement	Demonstrates respect, care, and cultural awareness in engaging Indigenous perspectives.	Generally respectful; may be surface-level.	Limited awareness of respectful engagement.
Representation of knowledge (Bundle)	Bundle components are meaningful, purposeful, and enhance understanding.	Relevant components included; connections may be unclear.	Limited or unclear representation of knowledge.
Relational Accountability (Witness) (if applicable)	Witness adds meaningful insight; shows accountability to community.	Witness is present but limited connection.	Witness is missing or unclear. (<i>if required</i>)

PROF1026 PLAR SAMPLE: ASSESSMENT AND RUBRIC

Course Description

Putting yourself “out there” to find a job can be very intimidating, but don’t worry – we’ve got you covered! In this course, you will learn the best ways to search for fulfilling employment. You will be introduced to resume and cover letter writing and gain an understanding of how to navigate the application process in a way that sets you apart. You will learn and practise impactful interview techniques, develop your own portfolio and start to build a professional network that can last a lifetime.

Course Learning Outcomes

CLO 1: Identify their own primary strengths and weaknesses

CLO 2: Identify personal career objectives

CLO 3: Create an effective professional Portfolio

CLO 4: Apply effective interview techniques to job interview situations

CLO 5: Describe the principles of workplace wellness as they apply to job retention

CLO 6: Describe how to build, grow and maintain a professional network

Assessment Overview

Based on a job posting that is aligned with the student's own professional skillset, competencies, and career goals they will compile a professional portfolio of artifacts that support and demonstrate their capabilities; this portfolio will include a resume and cover letter that are specifically tailored to the job posting. They will present the professional portfolio as part of an interview with the assessor. This assessment encourages practical application, critical thinking, and professional reflection.

Part 1: Professional Portfolio

- Collect 6-10 artifacts that support your job application (relevant certifications such as Safe Food Handler's Certificate, Smart Serve, sample menus the student has worked on or produced, photos of dishes etc.). Assemble and present the artifacts in a portfolio that is organized and professional looking. Provide a written (digitally generated) explanation for each artifact, indicating its' relevance to the position. Ensure you have provided credit to relevant chefs if the ideas/menus are not your own creation but items you have produced under their guidance.
- Each artifact must include the following:
 - Contextual information (setting, date, activity)
 - Description of the artifact
 - Explanation of why the artifact is relevant to the position of the job posting

Part 2: Interview

- Schedule and participate in an interview with the assessor to discuss Part 1 and answer the interview questions below. You will be expected to:
 - Identify your primary strengths and weaknesses and indicate how they relate to the selected job posting
 - Identify your career objectives and how the position of the job posting will help you reach those goals
 - Describe each of the artifacts included in the portfolio and identify how they each support your job application
 - Describe your understanding of "workplace wellness" in your chosen field
 - Identify ways in which you will develop, grow and maintain your professional network
 - Answer 10 standard job interview questions in a clear, professional way that would support your hire for the specific job posting chosen

Suggested Interview Questions for the Assessor *(do not share with learner prior to the interview)*

1. Identify your 5 key strengths and provide an example of each.
2. Identify your 5 key weaknesses and explain how you are working to strengthen your capacity in each of these areas.
3. Where do you see yourself professionally in 5 years? 10 years? What steps will you need to take to achieve these goals?
4. Identify 5 strategies you can apply to maintain your wellness as an employee in the hospitality industry.
5. Identify 5 ways in which you will develop, grow and maintain your professional network in this industry.

Standard Job Interview Questions for Mock Interview

1. Briefly describe your skills and experience as they relate to this position.
 2. Describe your ideal work environment.
 3. Describe what teamwork means to you and its importance in carrying out the duties of this position.
 4. How do you handle stress and pressure?
 5. Provide an example of conflict in the workplace that you have experienced and what you learned from that situation.
 6. What are your long-term career aspirations and how does this position fit into those?
 7. Think of a time when you were asked to act on your own without very much direction as to how to proceed. Describe how you approached the situation.
 8. What does the term “customer service” mean to you? How have you applied it in past positions you have held?
 9. What would you consider to be a professional weakness of yours? What strategies do you have in place to manage this weakness?
 10. What is it about our company that makes you want to work with us?
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Part 1: Portfolio Rubric

Criteria	Excellent 85% – 100%	Good 70% – 85%	Satisfactory 60% – 70%	Developing 50%-60%	Unsatisfactory 49% and below
Artifacts	10 relevant artifacts have been provided that very clearly demonstrate the student's skills/ experience as they relate to the job posting.	6-10 relevant artifacts have been provided that demonstrate the student's skills/ experience as they relate to the job posting.	6-10 relevant artifacts have been provided that vaguely demonstrate the student's skills/ experience as they relate to the job posting.	6-10 artifacts have been provided. Relevance to the student's skills/ experience as they relate to the job posting are somewhat unclear.	Fewer than 6 artifacts have been included and/or their relevance to the job posting is completely unclear.
Context, Description and Interpretation	Each artifact includes: contextual information, artifact description and explanation of relevance to the posting that is very clearly expressed.	Each artifact includes: contextual information, artifact description and explanation of relevance to the posting that is clearly expressed.	Each artifact includes: contextual information, artifact description and explanation of relevance to the posting that is somewhat clearly expressed.	Each artifact includes: contextual information, artifact description and explanation of relevance to the posting that are somewhat unclear.	The contextual, descriptive or interpretations are missing or completely unclear.
Organization and Formatting	The portfolio has been organized, formatted, and presented in an extremely professional manner.	The portfolio has been organized, formatted, and presented in a professional manner with 1-2 minor opportunities for improvement.	The portfolio has been organized, formatted, and presented in a somewhat professional manner with 3-4 minor opportunities for improvement.	Several areas of the portfolio lack organization or formatting finesse.	The portfolio has not been organized and/or formatted in a professional manner.

Part 2: Interview Rubric

Criteria	Excellent 85% – 100%	Good 70% – 85%	Satisfactory 60% – 70%	Developing 50% – 60%	Unsatisfactory 49% & Below
Strengths: Clarity of Explanation	Clearly and confidently explains 5 strengths and provides strong examples of each.	Explains 5 strengths and provides examples of each.	Limited explanation of 5 strengths and provides limited examples of each.	Very basic explanation with minimal clarity.	Unclear or incomplete responses.
Weaknesses: Clarity of Explanation	Clearly and confidently explains 5 weaknesses and provides strong improvement strategies for each.	Explains 5 weaknesses and provides improvement strategies for each.	Limited explanation of 5 weaknesses and provides limited improvement strategies for each.	Very basic explanation with minimal clarity.	Unclear or incomplete responses.
5–10-year Career Objectives	Clearly and confidently explains 5- and 10-year career objectives and explains the steps necessary to achieve these goals in detail.	Explains 5- and 10-year career objectives and explains the steps necessary to achieve these goals.	Limited explanation of 5- and 10-year career objectives, and steps necessary to achieve these goals.	Very basic explanation with minimal clarity.	Unclear or incomplete responses.
Workplace Wellness	Clearly and confidently provides 5 detailed strategies to maintain workplace wellness as an employee in the hospitality industry.	Provides 5 strategies to maintain workplace wellness as an employee in the hospitality industry.	Limited explanation of 5 strategies to maintain workplace wellness as an employee in the hospitality industry.	Very basic explanation with minimal clarity.	Unclear or incomplete responses.
Professional Network	Clearly and confidently provides 5 strategies to develop, grow and maintain a professional network in the hospitality industry.	Provides 5 strategies to develop, grow and maintain a professional network in the hospitality industry.	Limited explanation of 5 strategies to develop, grow and maintain a professional network in the hospitality industry.	Very basic explanation with minimal clarity.	Unclear or incomplete responses.
Engagement in Job Interview Questions	Actively engages, responds thoughtfully and professionally to all questions.	Engages with minor prompting.	Responds but lacks depth or engagement.	Requires significant prompting.	Passive or disengaged in interview.