

## **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

**EFFECTIVE DATE**     **January 8, 1998**

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Advanced Credit (Transfer Credit) and Challenge Exams are implemented by the Dean of Student Experience and the appropriate Department.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) are implemented in concert with the Vice President Academics and Research, Dean of Student Experience and the appropriate Dean and Department.

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Grande Prairie Regional College will recognize previous learning through acquired knowledge, skills and competencies as a result of formal, informal, and non-formal learning and experience. Outcomes from these activities may be assessed and students may be awarded academic credit for GPRC courses or be given unspecified credits which may count towards overall program outcomes.

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### **CROSS-REFERENCE:**

Statute of Limitations  
Grading Policy

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### **PURPOSE**

It is essential that all students be given an opportunity to have previous learning acquired through knowledge, skills and competencies, recognized. This policy has been established to provide guidelines for the assessment of outcomes activities.

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### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students on any campus.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Advanced Credit** – Recognition of formal learning completed at another institution as it appears on a transcript.

**Challenge Exam** – A comprehensive written exam used by the student to demonstrate knowledge and competencies specific to a course.

**Credit:** The quantitative measure or weight assigned to the “amount of learning” a student receives through the combination of lectures, tutorials, labs, etc.

**Credit Load** – the number of credits a student is currently enrolled in any one semester.

**Curriculum Credits** – The number of credits a student is taking that is specific to the requirements of the student’s program.

**Formal Learning** – Knowledge and competencies acquired through graded and credited work; normally appears on transcripts.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** – A measure of a student’s weighted average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total credits attempted.

**Informal Learning** – Non-credit learning experiences; does not normally appear on transcripts.

**Non-Formal Learning** – Knowledge and competencies gained through life and work experiences.

**PLAR** – The process used to recognize knowledge and competencies acquired through informal and non-formal learning.

**Prior Learning** – Learning acquired by formal, informal and non-formal learning experiences.

**Statute of Limitations** - An assigned time period in which one course is still acceptable towards program requirements.

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## PROCEDURES/RULES STATEMENT

Advanced standing will normally be awarded for courses in certificate or diploma programs. The authority to grant advanced credit for courses within the university transfer area lies with the universities awarding the degree, with the exception of the BScN collaborative degree program.

Credits earned through advanced standing will not be used in computing the student's Grande Prairie Regional College grade point average (GPA).

Credits earned through advanced standing may not be included in a current credit load for the purpose of maintaining full-time student status. If a student is applying for a student loan or award and needs to be in full-time attendance, it may be necessary for the student to substitute other courses to maintain full time status.

The maximum number of credits awarded through Advanced Standing must not exceed 50% of the curriculum credits for a GPRC certificate or diploma program. Exceptions must be approved by the Dean of the appropriate Division or School.

Advanced standing may be granted through the completion of Advanced Credit, a Challenge Examination, or Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. Forms are available through the Registrar's Office.

Any application for prior learning recognition (ie Advanced Standing, PLAR, or Challenge Exam) should be made prior to the first day of classes.

### 1. Advanced Credit

Advanced Credit or Transfer Credit is recognized for formal learning where credit is granted towards a GPRC program or credential on the basis of equivalent course work completed at a recognized institution.

- 1.1 This type of advanced standing is granted to applicants who have completed the equivalent of some Grande Prairie Regional College course work externally at another institution or internally in a different program at this College, including course work used toward a certificate or diploma in a different program. Advanced credit will be evaluated from source documents only (i.e. official transcripts received directly from the issuing institution). Advanced credit will not be granted for credit that appears as transferred credit on another institution's transcript.
- 1.2 Only courses in which the applicant has achieved a passing grade as determined by the sending institution will be considered. The College

reserves the right to determine the minimum passing grade required for approval.

- 1.3 While the College may accept for Advanced Credit a course with a minimum passing grade as determined by the sending institution, individual program progression and or course prerequisite criteria may exclude a student from the next level of study.
- 1.4 Advanced Credit granted will be noted on the student's Grande Prairie Regional College transcript as program specific credit and will be course specific credit if equivalent to a specific GPRC course, or as unspecified if the learning outcomes are not equivalent to a specific GPRC course but do satisfy program outcomes.
- 1.5 Certain courses, such as computing courses, and certain programs may have statutes of limitation limiting the life of the course for Advanced Credit. Exceptions may be approved by the Chairperson of the appropriate Department.
- 1.6 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that satisfactory documentation, such as official transcripts and course outlines, are received in sufficient time for review. Failure of an applicant to disclose previous post-secondary studies may result in loss of the opportunity to receive Advanced Credits.
- 1.7 Students registered in a program at GPRC who wish to register as a visiting student with another institution for a course or courses with the intent of transferring the credits towards the program at GPRC, are expected to obtain a Letter of Permission from the Registrar's Office, which will outline the institution and course(s) in which the student may register, the GPRC course(s) which will be granted Advanced Credit upon successful completion, and an official transcript from the original institution. A request for a Letter of Permission may be initiated with the Chairperson of the Department.
- 1.8 Appeals with respect to Advanced Credit are part of the College's general appeal policies and practices.

## 2. Challenge Examinations

Some programs will allow students who demonstrate knowledge in the subject matter of a particular course to seek credit through challenge exams.

- 2.1 The student must present, to the Chairperson of the Department, the eligibility criteria upon which they feel they are capable of successfully passing a challenge exam.
- 2.2 Only courses scheduled during the academic semester may be challenged.
- 2.3 Challenge examination fees are normally 50% of the regular tuition fee.
- 2.4 Challenge examinations will be set and graded by the department and a grade assigned for the academic semester in which the challenge exam is completed.
- 2.5 Credit awarded through Challenge examinations will apply only to the designated course and will not constitute awarding of credit of any prerequisite to that course.
- 2.6 A student is not eligible for a challenge exam in a course for which a grade has been received.

### 3. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Students may be granted advanced standing for informal and non-formal learning experiences, such as life/work experience and non-credit courses, through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. PLAR is done on a course-by-course basis.

- 3.1 The student obtains the PLAR application from Student Services and submits this to the Chairperson of the Department. The chairperson, in consultation with content experts when required, is responsible for determining whether a student application for PLAR meets established eligibility criteria.
- 3.2 It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform themselves of the PLAR process and fees, and to demonstrate their knowledge in the subject matter of a particular course by various means including, but not limited to, interviews, oral examinations, portfolio or evidence file assessment, special project, practical and/or laboratory demonstrations. There must be a minimum 80% match to the curriculum of the course(s) for which credit is sought.
- 3.3 Once documentation has been received, a decision should be made within ten working days.

3.4 Credit awarded through PLAR will apply only to the designated course and will not constitute awarding of PLAR credit of any prerequisite to that course.

3.5 PLAR fees are normally 50% of the regular tuition fee, to be paid prior to the commencement of the PLAR assessment.

#### 4. Badges

Some programs will allow students who complete an approved cluster of non-credit courses offered by continuing Education to acquire curriculum credits for a GPRC certificate or diploma program.

4.1 The student may acquire a list of approved badges from Student Services.

4.2 The student must successfully complete all coursework toward the prescribed badge within the statute of limitations.

4.3 Upon completion of an approved badge, the student may apply for curriculum credits toward a GPRC certificate or diploma program.

#### 5. Transcripts

5.1 When it is not possible to arrive at a grade, "CR", credit, is used.

5.2 Credits earned by the applicant through Challenge examinations and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition will be indicated on the student record as "E, Grade awarded by special assessment".

5.3 Unsuccessful attempts will not be transcribed.