

## Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at Fanshawe College



# Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at Fanshawe College

*A Guide for Applicants and Students*

*FANSHAWE COLLEGE*

FANSHAWE COLLEGE PRESSBOOKS  
LONDON ONTARIO



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# Contents

About This Guide	1
Land Acknowledgement	2
Learning Outcomes	iii
 <u>Chapter 1: Understanding PLAR</u>	
1.0 PLAR Overview	7
1.1 What is PLAR?	10
1.2 Type of experience eligible for PLAR	11
1.3 Benefits of PLAR	12
1.4 Implications of PLAR	14
1.5 How is Learning Assessed for PLAR credit?	15
1.6 PLAR Resources for Students	17
 <u>Chapter 2: PLAR vs Credit Transfer</u>	
2.0 PLAR vs Credit Transfer	21
 <u>Chapter 3: The PLAR process at Fanshawe</u>	
3.0 How do I know if I am eligible to apply for PLAR?	29
3.1 PLAR Fee	31
3.2 Steps to apply for PLAR at Fanshawe	32
3.3 How long does the PLAR process take?	34
3.4 PLAR Contacts for more information	36
 <u>Chapter 4: PLAR for Indigenous, Military, and International Students</u>	
4.0 Assessment of Indigenous knowledge through PLAR	39
4.1 Assessment of Military Experience through PLAR	41
4.2 Assessment of life and work experience through PLAR for international students	43
 <u>Chapter 5: Bulk PLAR Pilot Project</u>	
5.0 Bulk PLAR Pilot Project Overview	47
5.1 Bulk PLAR Process	48

## [Chapter 6: PLAR FAQ's](#)

<a href="#">6.0 PLAR FAQ's</a>	<a href="#">53</a>
--------------------------------	--------------------

<a href="#">Version History</a>	<a href="#">57</a>
---------------------------------	--------------------

# About This Guide

This guide provides an overview of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process at Fanshawe College, as well as available PLAR resources for current and prospective Fanshawe students. It is recommended that you consult the guide prior to applying for PLAR. Depending on your level of familiarity with PLAR, you can consult the entire guide, or portions of it, as needed.

## Attribution

This open resource has been written, compiled and edited by Fanshawe's Centre for Teaching and Learning in partnership with the [OER Design Studio](#) and the [Library Learning Commons](#) at [Fanshawe College](#) in London, Ontario. This work is part of the FanshaweOpen learning initiative and is made available through a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#) unless otherwise noted.



## Acknowledgements

The following individuals contributed the content for this guide:

- Admissions and Pathways Advisors
- Brian Malott, *Indigenous Career Consultant, Institute of Indigenous Learning*
- Mary Harrison, *Former Director, Centre for Academic Excellence*
- Gabriela Kongkham-Fernandez, *Former Pathways Coordinator, Centre for Academic Excellence*
- Kristen Young, *Bulk PLAR Project Coordinator, Quality Partnerships*
- Christine Spicer, *Manager, Quality Partnerships*

## Collaborators

This project was a collaboration between the contributors (listed above) and the team in the OER Design Studio at Fanshawe. The following staff and students were involved in the creation of this project:

- Hadeel Abuhajer, *Instructional Design Student*
- Robert Armstrong – *Graphic Design*
- Jenn Ayers – *Project Coordinator*
- Shauna Roch – *Project Manager*

# Land Acknowledgement

Fanshawe College is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Lotinuhsyuní, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton Nations. In Fanshawe's work of facilitating student mobility and the recognition of prior learning, the College acknowledges that prior learning assessment and recognition is an Indigenous concept that has served, and continues to serve, as a tool that values Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing while acknowledging holistic lifelong learning. Fanshawe is committed to strengthening how the recognition of prior learning can support Indigenous students who face additional barriers to post-secondary education as a result of the ongoing harms of colonization. Thanks to colleagues in the Institute of Indigenous Learning who support Fanshawe's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, including through their support for this project, which has strengthened Fanshawe's recognition of prior learning processes and resources to better serve Indigenous student success.



# Learning Outcomes



## Learning Outcomes

- Define PLAR and its purpose and benefits
- Identify the difference between PLAR and credit transfer at Fanshawe and determine which process relates to your situation
- Describe the two broad methods of assessments commonly used in PLAR
- Outline the steps involved in the PLAR process at Fanshawe and identify available resources
- Determine if PLAR is the right process for you, based on your type of prior learning, your future education and career goals, and the potential implications of PLAR
- Discuss Indigenous and military experience as potential sources of prior learning for the purpose of obtaining academic credit
- Identify potential implications of PLAR on the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) for international students



# CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING PLAR

## Chapter Outline

- [1.0 PLAR Overview](#)
- [1.1 What is PLAR?](#)
- [1.2 Type of experience eligible for PLAR](#)
- [1.3 Benefits of PLAR and Student Testimonial](#)
- [1.4 Implications of PLAR](#)
- [1.5 How is learning assessed for PLAR credit?](#)
- [1.6 What resources can I access to help me in the PLAR process?](#)



# 1.0 PLAR Overview

# WHAT IS PLAR?



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 to determine if your learning-through-experience is eligible for college credit towards the requirements of a college course or program.



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



## 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 Fanshawe College course/program outcomes, and of a breadth and depth that reflects college-level learning.



## BENEFITS!

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



## GET STARTED WITH PLAR!

The Admissions and Pathways Advisors in the Advising Centre are the central contact for PLAR. The Advisors can answer general PLAR questions and will guide you through the application process. Make your appointment today!

[fanshawec.ca/booknow](http://fanshawec.ca/booknow) • 519-452-4277 • [advising@fanshawec.ca](mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca)

## PLEASE NOTE:

PLAR does not apply when you are seeking credit for courses taken at another college or university. Post-secondary credits can be assessed through the Transfer Credit process.

The official College policy on PLAR is Policy A124: Recognition of Prior Learning

## 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 Fanshawe 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 Admissions and Pathways Advising Centre is the central contact point for PLAR. Advisors can answer general questions and guide you through the application process. To schedule an appointment, visit [fanshawec.ca/booknow](https://fanshawec.ca/booknow) or call 519-452-4277, or email [advising@fanshawec.ca](mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca).

Important Note: PLAR does not apply when seeking credit for courses taken at other colleges or universities. Post-secondary credits can be assessed through the Transfer Credit process.

At the bottom right, it mentions the official college policy on PLAR (Policy A124: Recognition of Prior Learning).

# 1.1 What is PLAR?

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

- You must be able to **describe** how your **knowledge** and **experience** is relevant to the Fanshawe College course.
- You should use **examples** from your job, volunteering, previous education and training, or life experiences to explain what you know and what you can do.
- PLAR may look different depending on the course.
  - Some courses will require a *Challenge Evaluation* (a type of test) and some require you to create a *Portfolio*, which is a collection of relevant evidence of experience, including certificates, samples of work, or write about what you know.
  - More information about Challenge Evaluations and Portfolios is provided in this guide.
- If you already have credits from another college or university, you may be eligible for transfer credit. See the [Transfer Credit process](#) to learn more.

*The official College policy on PLAR is Policy A124: Recognition of Prior Learning, available on the College website via the College Policy Manual [A124 Recognition of Prior Learning \(fanshawec.ca\)](https://fanshawec.ca/policy/A124)*

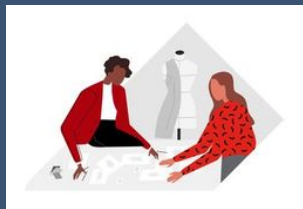
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## 1.2 Type of experience eligible for PLAR



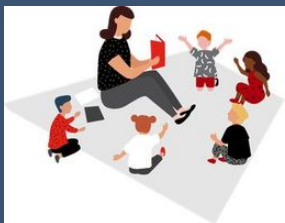
Work, volunteer, or training in any field (paid or unpaid)



Creative work, such as writing, design, demonstrations, or performances



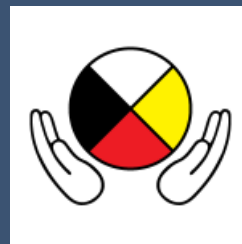
Self-study, such as learning new technology, travel and language study, or starting a business



Caring for others, including parenting, elder care, or supporting someone with a disability



Military or public service training, including service in the regular forces, reserves, cadets, or as an employee



Cultural and traditional learning within First Nations, Métis, or Inuit knowledge systems and communities

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## 1.3 Benefits of PLAR



**Save time.** You don't need to repeat courses or re-learn what you already know.



**Build confidence.** PLAR recognizes your learning from work, community involvement, and cultural experiences.



**Open doors.** Having your prior knowledge recognized can make starting or continuing college easier.



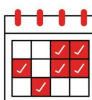
**Lower costs.** You only pay for the courses you still need, which can reduce tuition.



**Finish faster.** PLAR can shorten the time it takes to complete your program.



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



**Lighten your workload.** Fewer extra courses mean more time to focus on the classes that matter most.

## Student Testimonial



“After over 30 years since last sitting in a classroom and at the age of 51, I made the exciting decision to pursue post-secondary education. [...] Having spent my entire career in Office Administration and knowing that I would have to complete courses online on a part-time basis, I contacted the Registrar’s Office at Fanshawe College – London Campus. An appointment was set up with one of their very knowledgeable & friendly advisors to come in and discuss my educational path. Going into the appointment, I was fairly confident that I had enough of a knowledge base to complete at least 4 of the courses through PLAR. To my surprise, I was informed that I could challenge up to 75% of the courses for a flat fee. By the end of the meeting and a few words of encouragement, I had enrolled

in the one-year Office Administration program and decided to challenge 75% of the courses through PLAR. [...] Because I live 2 hours outside of London, I was able to write the PLAR tests at the Fanshawe-Simcoe Campus, a half hour from my home. I successfully passed the maximum amount of PLAR courses within a 4-month time frame. From that first meeting in London to graduation less than a year from when my journey began, it was a stress-free, enjoyable and seamless process. It is a daunting thing to return to the classroom all these years later, let alone do it online. The support staff at both campuses and professors went above and beyond to set me up for success. Their knowledge and genuineness in wanting to see me succeed confirmed I chose the right College to continue my education. The skills I have learned through this program have definitely further enhanced my job performance. [...] An opportunity for a promotion [also] became available at my workplace!”

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# 1.4 Implications of PLAR

It is important that you understand how PLAR credits are recorded on your transcript and how this may impact other aspects of your education:

## Grades and GPA

- If you pass a PLAR portfolio or challenge exam, it shows on your transcript just like any other course grade. It also counts toward your GPA.
- Your transcript will not say that the credit came from PLAR.
- If you do not pass a PLAR challenge, it will not appear on your transcript and does not affect your GPA.



## Special cases (regulated professions or further study)

- Sometimes, instead of a grade, you may see a **“P” (pass)** on your transcript. This does not affect your GPA.
- A failed PLAR attempt will not show on your transcript.
- Important: some professional groups, universities, or colleges may not accept a “P” grade. Always check in advance how your grade will appear and whether it will be accepted.



## OSAP (financial aid)

- If PLAR credits reduce your course load below full-time, your OSAP eligibility could change.
- Contact [Financial Aid and Student Awards](#) if you're unsure.



## International students (Post-Graduation Work Permit)

- Using PLAR may lower your course load, create gaps in your studies, or shorten your program length.
- This can affect your eligibility for a Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) or reduce how



- long it is valid.
- The International Office can give advice, but they cannot guarantee PGWP approval or duration.
- More information is available on the [PLAR module for international students](#).

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# 1.5 How is Learning Assessed for PLAR credit?



*Photo by [Ben Mullins](#), [Unsplash License](#).*

When you apply for PLAR, a faculty member who is an expert in the subject will review your knowledge and skills. They will compare what you know and can do with the learning outcomes of a specific course or program.

There are two main ways your learning can be assessed:

## 1. Challenge Evaluation

A challenge evaluation lets you show what you know by completing an assessment. This option works best if your learning closely matches the course content and you feel confident in your knowledge and skills.

**Examples of challenge evaluations include:**

- **Written exam:** Answer questions about course topics.
- **Oral exam:** Talk with an evaluator about what you've learned.
- **Project or presentation:** Complete a task or present your work.

- **Skill demonstration:** Show your abilities in a hands-on way.
- **Interview:** Share your experiences and how they connect to the course.
- **Essay:** Write about what you've learned and how you learned it.

## 2. Portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of documents that tells the story of your learning. This option works well if you've built knowledge and skills over time through work, volunteering, or personal experiences.

**A portfolio often includes:**

- **Résumé:** Your work and volunteer experience related to the specific course.
- **Employment letters:** Proof of your responsibilities and achievements.
- **Samples of work:** Projects, reports, or other materials you created.
- **Certificates or training records:** Evidence of professional learning.
- **Life history or goals paper:** A short summary of your key learning experiences and your future goals.
- **Educational plan:** How PLAR fits into your program of study.
- **Learning outcomes comparison:** A description of how your experience matches the course requirements.
- **Demonstration of knowledge:** The portfolio may also require you to complete a task relevant to the course material, such as answer questions related to a case study, demonstrate your communication skills, or walk through a scenario where you need to make decisions.

The purpose of both the challenge evaluation and the portfolio are to allow you to demonstrate that you already have the knowledge and experience that you would have gained by participating in the course for which you are seeking PLAR credit.

To learn more about how to build your portfolio, see the [Portfolio Guidelines](#).

**Not sure which option is right for you?**

Don't worry! Fanshawe advisors and faculty members will help you understand whether a Challenge Evaluation or Portfolio is the best fit for the course for which you are seeking credit.



## 1.6 PLAR Resources for Students



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### PLAR Advising

The Admissions and Pathways Advisors are the central contact for PLAR. The Advisors can answer general PLAR questions and will guide you through the application process. Appointments can be made online at [www.fanshawec.ca/booknow](http://www.fanshawec.ca/booknow) by phone at 519-452-4277 or email at [advising@fanshawec.ca](mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca).

### PLAR Learner Self-Assessment Template

The [Self-Assessment Template](#) is a resource to help you determine whether you are a suitable candidate for PLAR for a specific course. To use it, you need to have the course learning outcomes. They can usually be found on your course outline, and by following [these instructions](#).

## PLAR Learner Guides

A PLAR Learner Guide is a resource to help you decide whether you should move forward with a PLAR application. Learner Guides are developed for specific courses and contain general PLAR information, as well as detailed course information relevant for applicants wishing to PLAR the specific course. Not all courses eligible for PLAR will have a PLAR Learner Guide.

[Book an appointment](#) with an Admissions and Pathways Advisor or contact your Program Coordinator to inquire about PLAR and see if a PLAR Learner Guide is available for the course you wish to PLAR.

## Portfolio Guidelines

If the assessment method for your course(s) is a portfolio, you can use the Advising Centre's portfolio guidelines to help you collect your materials and develop your portfolio. Please see the [Portfolio Guidelines](#) for more information.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/plarinfofanshawestudents/?p=84#oembed-1>*

Video: [Prior Learning Assessment Recognition – How to use the Self Assessment Tool](#) by [Fanshawe OER Design Studio](#) [4:05] *transcript available*



# CHAPTER 2: PLAR VS CREDIT TRANSFER

## Chapter Outline

[2.0 PLAR vs Credit Transfer](#)



## 2.0 PLAR vs Credit Transfer



### Type of Eligible Learning

#### PLAR

Learning gained from life and work experience such as on-the-job-training, military service, community-based volunteer activities, exposure to Indigenous knowledge systems, and self-directed study.

#### Credit Transfer

Learning gained from formal education completed through a recognized post-secondary institution, such as a college or university.

Courses from another Fanshawe program may be eligible for Internal Credit. To learn more, visit [Transfer Within Fanshawe | Fanshawe College](#)

Courses from another recognized college or university may be eligible for External Credit. To learn more, visit: [Transfer to Fanshawe | Fanshawe College](#)



### Assessment Methods

#### PLAR

Completion of one or more of the following assessment methods:

*Challenge Evaluation:* a faculty member will measure your learning against course or program learning outcomes through one or more of the following methods: written exam, oral presentation, interview, skills demonstration, etc.

*Portfolio:* a collection of materials you organize and develop to demonstrate how you applied the knowledge and skills described in the course or program learning outcomes.

[See more details about portfolio and challenge evaluation.](#)

#### Credit Transfer

Submission of one or more of the following documents:

*Student transcript:* official record of the post-secondary credit courses that you have successfully completed.

*Course outline(s):* document of essential course information for each of the course(s) you previously completed and are seeking credit for.



## Minimum Passing Grade

### PLAR

Same as the minimum passing grade of the course for which you are attempting to receive PLAR recognition.

### Credit Transfer

Internal Credit: A minimum passing grade must be achieved.

External Credit: A minimum grade of 60% or C must be achieved.

Some courses or programs may have exceptions to the minimum grade as defined in [Policy A112: Course Grade System](#).



## College Enrolment

### PLAR

You *do not need to be enrolled* in a Fanshawe college program in order to apply for PLAR.

### Credit Transfer

You *need to be enrolled* in a Fanshawe College program in order to apply for Internal or External Credit.



## Application Deadline

### PLAR & Credit Transfer

You are strongly encouraged to apply prior to enrolling in the course in order to ensure appropriate lead time for your PLAR assessment to be completed or the Credit Transfer to be evaluated.

If you are already enrolled in the course, the PLAR and Credit Transfer application deadline is the 10th day of class. NOTE: If applying for PLAR, you should continue to attend class until you receive a successful PLAR outcome in order to ensure the course requirement is met.



## Fee

### PLAR

Non-refundable [PLAR fee](#) is applied.

### Credit Transfer

No fee to apply for Internal or External Credit at Fanshawe.



## Residency Requirement

### PLAR & Credit Transfer

All college programs except for bachelor's degrees: You can receive credit for up to 75% of a college program through PLAR and/or Transfer Credit, depending on the nature and extent of your learning and how well your knowledge and skills match the course learning outcomes of the courses in the program. You must be enrolled in and complete a minimum of 25% of the program credit units at Fanshawe to meet the College Residency Requirement in accordance with [Policy A112: Course Grade System](#).

Bachelor's degree programs: Degree programs are subject to the requirements established by the [Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board \(PEQAB\)](#). Current PEQAB requirements, as of June, 2022, indicate institutions cannot grant PLAR credit for more than 50% of the total number of the credits of the four-year program. Transfer credits for previous formal postsecondary education may amount to more than 50% of the degree program ([PEQAB, 2019](#), p. 26 & note 13). Per [Fanshawe's Policy A112: Course Grade System](#), you must be enrolled in and complete a minimum of 25% of the program credit units at Fanshawe to meet the College Residency Requirement.

To find the Residency Requirement for your program, [find your Fanshawe program page](#), once on the program page, scroll down to the Courses section, then click on View all courses and scroll down to Program Residency.



## GPA Implications

### PLAR

Credits awarded through PLAR are usually recorded on your transcript in the same way that credits are normally recorded for each course and are used in the Cumulative GPA calculation.

Where it is not possible to use the normal grading system, a “P” (pass) is used. When a “P” is recorded on the transcript, it does not contribute to the GPA calculation. Note that some professional organizations, universities, and other institutions may not accept the “P” grade.

Unsuccessful PLAR attempts are not recorded on a transcript and do not count in the GPA calculation.

---

### Credit Transfer

Internal Credits and External Credits are not used in the cumulative GPA calculation.



## OSAP Implications

### PLAR & Credit Transfer

If your course load drops below that of a full-time student because of credits earned through PLAR, Internal or External Credit, your eligibility for financial assistance through the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) might be affected. For questions about OSAP eligibility, contact [Financial Aid and Student Awards](#).



## PGWP Implications

### PLAR & Credit Transfer

International Students: credits earned through PLAR, Internal or External Credit may impact your Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) eligibility and/or the length of its validity if the credits:

- shorten the length of your program of study
- create a gap (i.e., a non-registered term) in the middle of your program
- and/or reduce your course load to part-time registration





# CHAPTER 3: THE PLAR PROCESS AT FANSHAWE

## Chapter Outline

- [3.0 How do I know if I am eligible to apply for PLAR?](#)
- [3.1 PLAR Fee](#)
- [3.2 Steps to apply for PLAR at Fanshawe](#)
- [3.3 How long does the PLAR process take?](#)
- [3.4 PLAR Contacts for more information](#)



## 3.0 How do I know if I am eligible to apply for PLAR?



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You may be eligible to apply for PLAR, if:

- The course(s) you would like to PLAR is/are eligible for PLAR
- You are a current or prospective Fanshawe College student
- Your previous life and work experience align with the learning outcomes of a specific Fanshawe College course or set of courses:
  - Review the course learning outcomes, found in the course outline for any courses that you are considering challenging by PLAR. Course Outlines can be requested via the [Course Outlines page](#) on the Fanshawe website.
  - Assess your knowledge and skills against the learning outcomes of any Fanshawe College course using the [PLAR Self-Assessment Template](#) to determine whether you are a suitable candidate for PLAR for any given course.
- You meet the College [residency requirement](#).

Keep in mind that even though you may be eligible to challenge a course by PLAR, PLAR has [implications](#) that you should consider.



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/plarinfofanshawestudents/?p=108#oembed-1>*

Video: [Prior Learning Assessment Recognition – How to use the Self Assessment Tool](#) by [Fanshawe OER Design Studio](#) [4:05] *transcript available*

## 3.1 PLAR Fee

A **non-refundable** PLAR fee is applied per course in accordance with Ministry directives. This fee applies to both the challenge evaluation and the portfolio assessment methods. If you're challenging eight or more courses, the Admission and Pathways Advisors will present you with available options.

Refunds are not issued if you fail to prove that you have met the learning outcomes or decide to take the course after applying for PLAR. Please ensure you understand the expectations of the PLAR process before deciding to apply for PLAR.

For the current fee, visit the College PLAR website at [www.fanshawec.ca/plar](http://www.fanshawec.ca/plar).

## 3.2 Steps to apply for PLAR at Fanshawe



"Steps To Apply" by Robert Armstrong [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#). [Click to enlarge](#)

The specific steps to get your learning assessed through PLAR may vary slightly depending on the program of study and courses involved. The steps below are a general guideline.

1. Review the [Course Outline](#) for the course(s) you would like to PLAR.

2. Contact an Admissions and Pathways Advisor in the Advising Centre by phone at 519-452-4277 or email at [advising@fanshawec.ca](mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca) or book appointment at [www.fanshawec.ca/booknow](http://www.fanshawec.ca/booknow).
3. Meet with the Program Coordinator or a faculty member in the program in which you intend to use the PLAR process.
4. Self-assess your prior learning against the learning outcomes of the course(s) you would like to PLAR, using the self-assessment section of the relevant PLAR Learner Guide (if available), and/or the [Learner Self-Assessment Template](#).
5. File your PLAR application with the Advising Centre and pay the PLAR application fee. The PLAR fee is **non-refundable**, and it applies to both the challenge evaluation and the portfolio assessment.
6. Submit/complete the required PLAR assessment by the specified deadline.

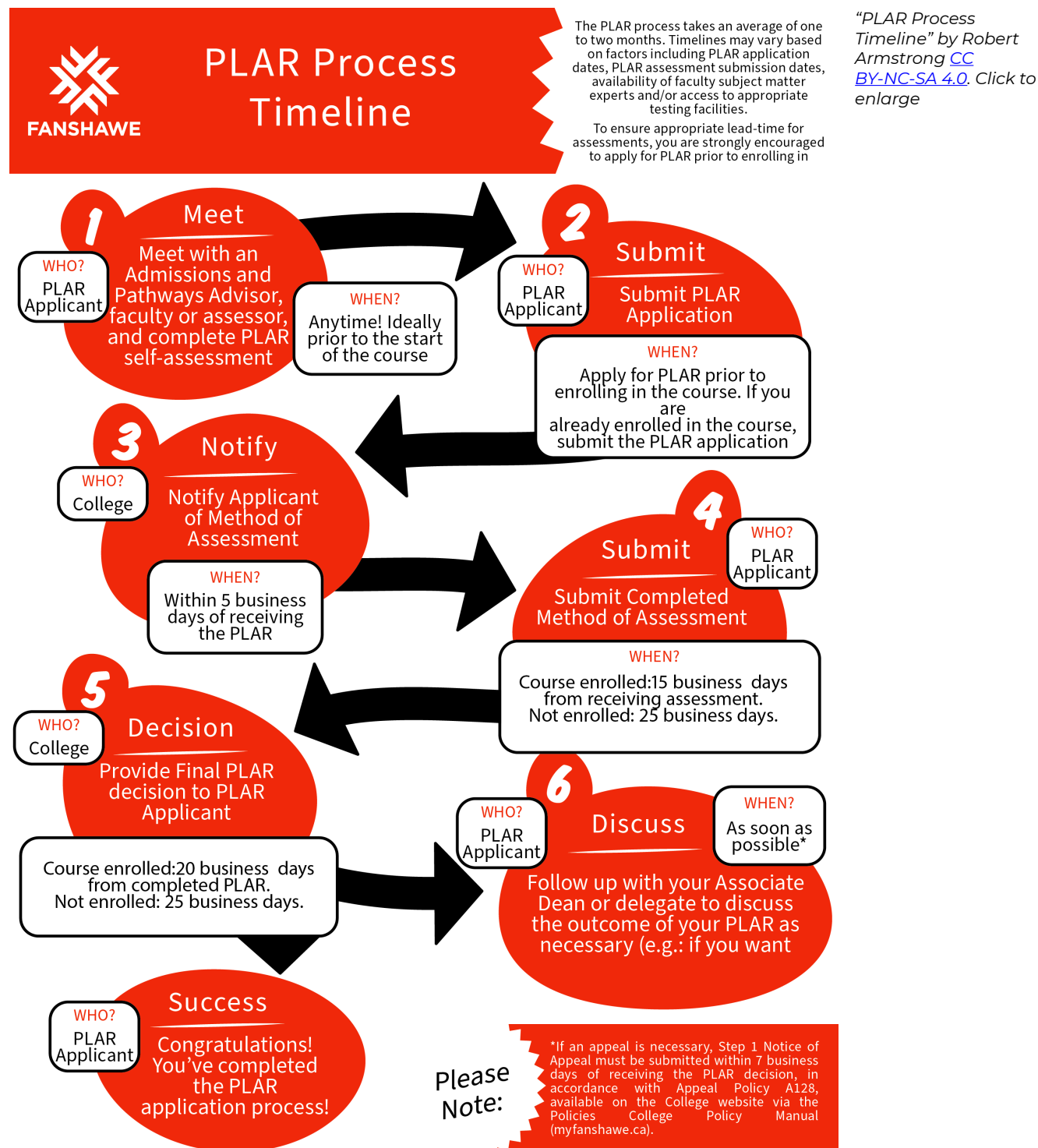
**NOTE:** While the College fully supports and endorses the opportunity for applicants and students to acquire credits through assessment of prior learning, the onus rests with the learner to clearly demonstrate that the prior learning under review is sufficient to be credited.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/plarinfofanshawestudents/?p=114#oembed-1>

Video: [Prior Learning Assessment Recognition – How to use the Self Assessment Tool](#) by [Fanshawe OER Design Studio](#) [4:05] *transcript available*

## 3.3 How long does the PLAR process take?





At Fanshawe, PLAR timelines are prescribed to support timely PLAR assessments. The PLAR process takes an average of one to two months. Timelines may vary based on factors including PLAR application dates, PLAR assessment submission dates, availability of faculty subject matter experts and/or access to appropriate testing facilities. In order to ensure appropriate lead time for assessments, you are strongly encouraged to apply for PLAR prior to enrolling in the course(s) you would like to PLAR.

Step	Action	Who	When
1	Meet with an Admissions and Pathways Advisor, faculty or assessor, and complete PLAR self-assessment	PLAR Applicant	Anytime, but ideally, prior to the start of the course(s) you intend to PLAR
2	Submit PLAR Application	PLAR Applicant	<b>All students are strongly encouraged to apply for PLAR prior to enrolling in the course</b> If you are already enrolled in the course, you must submit the PLAR application by the <b>10th day of class</b>  If you are not yet enrolled in the course, you can submit the PLAR application anytime
3	Notify Applicant of Method of Assessment	College	Within 5 business days of receiving the PLAR application
4	Submit Completed Method of Assessment	PLAR Applicant	Within 25 business days after Method(s) of Assessment has been assigned if you're not yet enrolled in the course.  If you're already enrolled in the course, submit the completed method of assessment within 15 business days.
5	Provide Final PLAR decision to PLAR Applicant	College	Within 25 business days of receiving a completed PLAR from the applicant if the student is not yet enrolled in the course. If the student is already enrolled in the course, the college will provide a decision within 20 business days.
6	Follow up with your Associate Dean or delegate to discuss the outcome of your PLAR as necessary (e.g., if you're not satisfied with the PLAR decision)	PLAR Applicant	As soon as possible*  *If an appeal is necessary, Step 1 Notice of Appeal must be submitted within 7 business days of receiving the PLAR decision, in accordance with Appeal <a href="#">Policy A128: Student Academic Appeals</a> .

Detailed timelines can be found on Fanshawe's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

## 3.4 PLAR Contacts for more information

<p><i>For all <b>general PLAR</b> questions, or to apply:</i></p>	<p><b>Admissions and Pathways Advisors</b></p> <p>Appointments can be made by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone: 519-452-4277</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca">advising@fanshawec.ca</a></li> <li>• Online: <a href="https://fanshawec.ca/booknow">fanshawec.ca/booknow</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>For questions on how to <b>PLAR military</b> experience or training:</i></p>	<p><b>Admissions and Pathways Advisors</b></p> <p>Appointments can be made by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone: 519-452-4277</li> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca">advising@fanshawec.ca</a></li> <li>• Online: <a href="https://fanshawec.ca/booknow">fanshawec.ca/booknow</a></li> <li>• More Information: <a href="#">Military-Connected Campus</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>For questions on how PLAR can affect your <b>Post-Graduation Work Permit Eligibility</b> (International Students)</i></p>	<p><b>Student Life Coordinators, International Office</b></p> <p>Appointments can be made by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online: <a href="https://fanshaweinternational.as.me">fanshaweinternational.as.me</a></li> </ul>
<p><i>For <b>Indigenous students</b> interested in learning more about PLAR and the portfolio process</i></p>	<p><b>Indigenous Career Consultant or Indigenous Academic Advisor, The Institute of Indigenous Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brian Malott: <a href="mailto:b_malott@fanshawec.ca">b_malott@fanshawec.ca</a> Indigenous Career Consultant</li> </ul>

# CHAPTER 4: PLAR FOR INDIGENOUS, MILITARY, AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## Chapter Outline

- [4.0 Assessment of Indigenous knowledge through PLAR](#)
- [4.1 Assessment of Military Experience through PLAR](#)
- [4.2 Assessment of Work and Life Experience through PLAR for International Students](#)



## 4.0 Assessment of Indigenous knowledge through PLAR



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As an Indigenous student, you may have previous work experience or non-formal training. You may also have learning, skills, and abilities directly derived from your Indigenous customs, practices and lived experiences. If any of this learning aligns with the learning outcomes of a particular College course or set of courses, you may be eligible to apply for college credit for that course(s).

To see the benefits of PLAR, see [benefits of PLAR](#).

### The Portfolio Process

The PLAR portfolio process described in chapter one has been traditionally used in different educational, workplace, and community settings to assess adults' significant learning experiences. The portfolio process is

rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, as an effort to validate Indigenous individuals' learning journey.<sup>1</sup> Today the portfolio process may offer an opportunity to document learning from an Indigenous lens. In particular circumstances, the portfolio can be a tool for personal, educational, and or career self-assessment through which cultural knowledge and practices could be reflected upon, documented in relation to specific learning competencies, and potentially recognized for college credit.

Thompson and Zakos' International Indigenous Recognition of Prior Learning RPL Practitioner Manual (2021) provides Indigenous peoples with practical portfolio development models to document their knowledge, skills and abilities through a cultural lens.

## Further Information

For Indigenous students interested in learning more about PLAR and the portfolio process, please contact:

Brian Malott  
Indigenous Career Consultant  
[b\\_malott@fanshawec.ca](mailto:b_malott@fanshawec.ca)  
[The Institute of Indigenous Learning](#)



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/plarinfofanshawestudents/?p=149#oembed-1>*

Video: [Prior Learning Assessment Recognition – How to use the Self Assessment Tool](#) by [Fanshawe OER Design Studio](#) [4:05] *transcript available*

1. Thompson, K. T., & Zakos, P. (Eds). (2021). The International Indigenous Recognition of Prior Learning: RPL Practitioner Manual. Epic Press.

## 4.1 Assessment of Military Experience through PLAR



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### College Credit for Military Service

As a current or former member of the Canadian Armed Forces, your military service may be recognized as a source of prior learning for the purpose of obtaining academic credit for specific courses within a Fanshawe program. The learning gained from your military experience might align with your military trade (e.g., cook or aviation technician) or it might be a result of your progression through the military ranks (e.g., leadership skills) and not tied to a particular trade. Regardless of the type of experience, your learning must align with the learning outcomes of one or more specific Fanshawe courses within the program you would like to be admitted to. You also need to meet the admission requirements of a college program in order to gain admission into that program.

## Admission into College Graduate Certificate Programs – Maple Scholar

If you are a current or former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who has successfully completed Developmental Period 2 (DP2) and either have attained or are eligible for promotion to the next rank or above, you may be eligible for admission into several Fanshawe graduate programs: your military experience will be considered as having met the requirement of a prior diploma or work experience necessary for admission into selected Fanshawe's graduate certificate programs. You do not need to apply for PLAR to participate in Maple Scholar. As part of Maple Scholar, you do not receive college credits for your DP2 experience.

### Further Information

For inquiries about the PLAR process, or the Maple Scholar initiative

Admissions and Pathways Advisors

Advising Centre

Appointments can be booked by phone at 519-452-4277 or email at [advising@fanshawec.ca](mailto:advising@fanshawec.ca) or online at [www.fanshawec.ca/booknow](http://www.fanshawec.ca/booknow)

[Military-Connected Campus | Fanshawe College](#)



*One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/plarinfofanshawestudents/?p=156#oembed-1>*

Video: [Prior Learning Assessment Recognition – How to use the Self Assessment Tool](#) by [Fanshawe OER Design Studio](#) [4:05] *transcript available*



## 4.2 Assessment of life and work experience through PLAR for international students



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As an international student, you can apply for PLAR, whether your learning from experience occurred within or outside of Canada. However, you must be aware that the PLAR process can:

- shorten the length of your program of study
- create a gap (i.e., a non-registered term) in the middle of your program
- and/or reduce your course load to part-time registration

Any of the situations above can negatively impact your Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) eligibility and/or the length of its validity.

PLAR is not currently recognized by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. Decisions on PGWP applications are made at the discretion of the Immigration Officers.

If you have previous post-secondary education from a recognized university, you can also apply for transfer

credit. [See PLAR vs Transfer Credit](#). The same considerations described above with regard to the PGWP apply to transfer credits. Remember, you will also need to meet Fanshawe's [residency requirement](#).

## Further Information

For international students interested in the PLAR process and inquiries about the PGWP

Student Life Coordinators

Fanshawe International office

Appointments can be made online at: <https://fanshaweinternational.as.me/>

**Please note:** the International Office can provide guidance but is unable to guarantee PGWP eligibility and/or the length of its validity.

# CHAPTER 5: BULK PLAR PILOT PROJECT

## Chapter Outline

- [5.0 Bulk PLAR Pilot Project Overview](#)
- [5.1 Bulk PLAR Process](#)



# 5.0 Bulk PLAR Pilot Project Overview

Fanshawe College received [ONCAT](#) (Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer) funding in 2024 to create an assessment process where entire programs of study could be assessed in one process. The Early Childhood Education program offered at the Clinton site and the Educational Support program offered at the Woodstock Campus were selected to participate in this pilot. This project recognized prior learning acquired outside the classroom by expanding the course-by-course assessment to allow applicants to PLAR based on program learning outcomes more easily. Learners were supported in their employment mobility through a flexible and efficient assessment of prior learning.

## What is Bulk PLAR?

Course by course based PLAR assessment has historically been the ideal way to transparently assess vocational knowledge. Bulk PLAR targets highly experienced applicants who are looking to challenge over seven courses based on their experience outside of the classroom. Through this pilot project, applicants with extensive experience in the Early Childhood Education field and Educational Support field were provided an opportunity to apply to have their skills assessed against their entire program of study.

## Benefits of Bulk PLAR

### Participants

The equitable new form of assessment allowed applicants to use their vocational skills to fast-track their diploma completion while continuing to work within the industry. Through the Bulk PLAR Pilot Project, the Bulk PLAR fee of \$750 was covered for up to 5 students who demonstrated extensive knowledge and experience within their field. Students were provided with a flexible environment, allowing them to complete their credentials in a timely manner without having to sacrifice their personal or professional responsibilities. By adding an academic credential to a well-established professional resume, students gain mobility and stability within their workforce.

### Industry

The labour market impact of regulating our skilled workforce is paramount and has a direct impact on local labour market needs. Greater mobility, earning potential and career-related satisfaction create a strong workforce invested in professional and personal development.

# 5.1 Bulk PLAR Process

## Application Process for Bulk PLAR Pilot Project:

### Step 1

Applicant contacts Fanshawe College with resume and applies for the Bulk PLAR assessment.

### Step 2

Applicant completes a self-assessment outlining examples of workplace experience that align with all Vocational Learning Outcomes of the program.

### Step 3

Applicant meets with faculty to determine if the self-assessment provides enough vocational background to prepare for the full assessment.

### Step 4

Faculty determines the approval of the applicant and if the assessment process begins.

### Step 5

Applicant completes assessments based on criteria and timelines provided

### Step 6

Faculty grades the assessments and determines what courses the applicant will be given credit for and what courses they will need to complete

### Step 7

Applicant works with the Office of the Registrar to begin the registration process.

## **Assessment Process**

There are three parts to the assessment (approximately 20 hours to complete):

1. Portfolio – An electronic portfolio comprising between 20-50 components
2. Challenge Exam – An online exam of between 107 – 279 questions
3. Interview – An interview of between 24-64 questions.





# CHAPTER 6: PLAR FAQ'S

## Chapter Outline

[6.0 PLAR FAQs](#)



## 6.0 PLAR FAQ's



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### PLAR FAQs

Click on each of the following questions to learn more about PLAR at Fanshawe.

#### 1. What is the institutional policy guiding PLAR at Fanshawe?

PLAR processes and practices at Fanshawe are guided by [Policy A124, Recognition of Prior Learning](#).

The College's PLAR process is designed to accurately, fairly and equitably assess your experiences to determine if such learning minimally meets college-level learning standards. Assessors balance the need to protect College credentials and community interests against the need to fairly recognize prior learning as college-level.

## 2. Are all courses at Fanshawe eligible for PLAR?

Fanshawe strives to make PLAR available for as many credit courses as possible in programs eligible for funding. Due to restrictions from particular regulatory bodies, or the nature of the course, some courses are not PLAR eligible. If a course is not eligible for PLAR, the reasons and considerations will be documented in the Course Outline.

## 3. What is a Course Outline?

A course outline is a summary document of essential information for each Fanshawe course, which includes learning outcomes and evaluations in a standardized format. They are a primary resource for students to identify key information for their courses. As a PLAR candidate, you can use course outlines to review the learning outcomes of the course(s) you are considering challenging by PLAR and to self-assess your learning against those learning outcomes before filing a PLAR application.

Course outlines for Fanshawe courses are publicly available. You can request course outlines at our [Pathways and Transfer Credit webpage](#).

## 4. What is residency requirement?

Residency is the minimum percentage of courses in a college program you need to complete in the program at Fanshawe to be eligible to graduate with the program's

credential. According to Fanshawe College policy A122 [[A122 Graduation from Approved College Programs \(fanshawec.ca\)](#)] to be eligible for any College credential you must be enrolled and complete at least 25% of that program's credit units at Fanshawe College. This means the number of credits you can attain through PLAR and/or credit transfer cannot be more than 75% of that college program. Degree programs must follow the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) [[Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board \(peqab.ca\)](#)] guidelines.

#### 5. What are PLAR Learner Guides and how do I find them?

A PLAR Learner Guide is a resource for candidates and students to help them decide whether they should move forward with a PLAR application. Learner Guides are developed for specific courses and contain general PLAR information, as well as detailed course information relevant for applicants wishing to PLAR the specific course. Not all courses eligible for PLAR will have a PLAR Learner Guide.

**[Book an appointment](#)** with an Admissions and Pathways Advisor or contact your Program Coordinator to inquire about PLAR eligibility and see if a PLAR Learner Guide is available for the course you wish to PLAR.

#### 6. Can I use my prior learning to PLAR the admission requirements of a Fanshawe program?

At Fanshawe, PLAR is used to assess your informal and non-formal learning for the purpose of granting academic credit. If you are successful at challenging one or more courses in a program through PLAR, you must still meet the admission requirements of the College program to register in that program.

#### 7. How does PLAR impact my OSAP eligibility?

If you receive OSAP funding and your course load drops below that of a full-time student because of credits earned through PLAR, eligibility for financial assistance through the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) may be impacted. For questions about OSAP eligibility, contact [Financial Aid and Student Awards](#).

8. I failed my PLAR attempt, what are my options?

“Where an applicant or student has been unsuccessful in challenging or passing a course, PLAR cannot be utilized for that course.” Fanshawe students may also appeal PLAR assessment decisions in accordance with policy [A128: Student Appeals](#). Applicants who wish to challenge a PLAR assessment decision should contact the Academic School.

9. My program is in a regulated profession, can I still apply for PLAR?

Some regulatory bodies limit the applications of PLAR in regulated programs. If your program is in a regulated profession, please inquire directly with the regulatory body regarding possibilities and recognition of the PLAR process. You can also contact your Program Coordinator.

10. Can I PLAR a portion of a course if I meet some of the learning outcomes, but not all?

At Fanshawe, PLAR cannot be used to challenge a portion of a course. The PLAR process at Fanshawe is tightly connected to the course learning outcomes of a specific course or set of courses. To be eligible for PLAR credit, your learning needs to match at least 75% of the learning outcomes of a college course. If your learning aligns with some, but not all, of the learning outcomes of a course, you may not be eligible for course credit.

# Version History

This page provides a record of changes made to the open textbook since its initial publication. If the change is minor, the version number increases by 0.1. If the change involves substantial updates, the version number increases to the next full number.

Version	Date	Change	Affected Web Page
1.0	18 October 2022	Publication	
1.1	2 October 2024	Updates to pages based on policy changes.	<a href="#">1.1 What is PLAR? – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at Fanshawe College (pressbooks.pub) – policy A124</a> <a href="#">2.0 PLAR vs Credit Transfer – Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at Fanshawe College (pressbooks.pub) – policy A1123.0 How do I know if I am eligible to apply for PLAR?</a> <a href="#">3.1 PLAR Fee</a> <a href="#">3.3 How long does the PLAR process take?</a> <a href="#">5.0 PLAR FAQ's</a>
1.2	6 December 2024	Added Chapter 5: Bulk PLAR Pilot Project. Chapter 5 was renumbered Chapter 6: PLAR FAQ's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Chapter 5: Bulk PLAR Pilot Project</a> and corresponding pages in this chapter.</li></ul>