

A Student's Guide to Prior Learning Assessment

(PLA or PLAR)

*Are you thinking about becoming student,
getting into a training program,
signing up for college, or enrolling at university?*

*Chances are you know some of the stuff that will be covered.
Chances are, through life and work experiences,
you've acquired an inventory of skills and knowledge.*

*You should be able to take advantage of that.
A quality education or training agency will offer you a PLA or PLAR service.
You may get around some prerequisites or get advance credits through
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.
This could shorten your training program
and reduce your fees.*

*Sounds good, doesn't it?
It is good!*

*Before you sign up for the process
-- because it won't be fast or easy --
there are some things you should look in to.*

Here's what you need to know.

1. The PLAR service should welcome you and treat you like an individual, not a number.
2. The process should focus on what you have learned, not what you have done. You will need to think long and hard about where you've worked and how you've spent your time to determine the skills and knowledge that you've acquired.
3. The process should be fair and equitable. There should not be any discriminatory language or attitudes.
4. You should get the feeling that the process will make the best use of your time and money, and you should ask for examples of other people's experiences.
5. The process should be spelled out clearly, and have a very good chance of meeting your expectations.
6. You should know exactly what your learning will be judged against -- criteria like course or program outlines.
7. The process isn't about getting special treatment. The process should be as reliable and respectable for others as for you.

8. The assessment processes - e.g., tests or occupational requirements-- should be well-recognized by an official body like a professional organization.
9. The people who test you should have special training to do PLAR.
10. You should have options, e.g., a challenge exam, a portfolio, a demonstration; and you should have a say in which option you'd prefer.
11. If your learning is formally recognized through PLAR, it should not show up differently on your transcript or employment record.
12. Your PLAR credit should be treated the same in new institutions, education systems or provinces you move to.
13. The PLAR process is not and should not be mandatory. It is an opportunity for you.
14. If you are not satisfied with the outcomes of the process, you should have the opportunity to appeal the decision.

*Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition
is a process of identifying and assessing
what a person knows and can do.*

*In some provinces it's called PLA,
and in others, it's PLAR. Same thing, really.*

*Good education and training begins with PLA or PLAR,
according to those who represent adult students.*

*There are standards a PLAR service should meet.
You'll find the standards at www.PLAR.com.*

*Through PLA or PLAR,
you may be able to get credit for
what you already know and can do.*

A Consumer's Service of...



... leaders in PLA / PLAR at www.FuturEd.com