



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #354.0, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students

WORKING DOCUMENT

Executive Summary

Board Policy and Procedure #354.0, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (MPLAR) recognizes that adult learners and eligible early school leavers have acquired knowledge and skills through formal and informal experiences outside of the Ontario school system and regular day school structure. This prior learning may be equated with the current Ministry of Education Curriculum. The Board offers the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (PLAR) equivalency and challenge process as a way to recognize and acknowledge this learning.

What has changed?

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students is mandatory for all eligible mature students who are enrolled in Ontario schools. The definition of a mature student in Policy/Program Memorandum 132, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students – Revised Mandatory Requirements has been revised to align with Bill 52 Learning to 18, Education Amendment Act, 2006. A mature student is a student who is at least 18 years of age on or after January 1 of the current school year and who is enrolled in a program for the purpose of obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The out of school for ten months requirement has been removed.

There is recognition of Canadian Post-Secondary credentials. Students who have recognized Canadian post-secondary credentials may obtain 13 Grade 11 and 12 credits through the challenge and equivalency process combined.

Students can now challenge for a previously failed course.

Major changes to the document:

All Students who turn 18 up to and including August 31 of the current school year with fewer than 26 credits are MPLAR eligible. This change includes students attending regular day school programs and all Continuing Education programs. Staff at Continuing Education Services will support the MPLAR process for students in regular day school programs.

Relevant post-secondary diplomas and degrees from accredited Canadian post-secondary institutions can be substituted for a maximum of three of the final four courses.

Mature students have the option to enroll directly in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course without attempting the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

Principals will determine, at their discretion, the number of hours of community involvement activities that a mature student working towards an OSSD has to complete (i.e., between 0 - 40).

Students are no longer allowed to substitute any Grade(s) 9, 10, 11 or 12 course for the four Grade 11 and 12 compulsory credit requirements for the OSSD. No substitution is permitted for Grade 11 English; however, students may substitute a maximum of three English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Literacy Development (ELD) credits towards the four compulsory English courses. The fourth credit must be for a Grade 12 compulsory English course. No substitution is permitted for Grade 12 English and Grade 11 or 12 Mathematics.

Who is affected by these changes and what is the impact on current practice?

All stakeholder groups listed below.

Implementation timelines: Immediate.

Lead Superintendent(s)/Subject Matter Expert(s): Coordinating Superintendent of Education Curriculum and Instructional Services and Continuing Education, Superintendent of Education, Programs Continuing Education Services

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy and Procedure

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Superintendents
- Secondary School Principals
- Parents/Guardians
- Mature Students

Relationship to Board Priorities

By providing responsive, alternative methods for mature students and eligible early school leavers to earn credits, this policy supports the goals of the Director's Action Plan to raise the achievement and well-being of day school students who are underserved and underperforming by providing effective instruction and assessment that reflects students' identities, lived experiences, strengths, needs and interests.

Timelines and Next Steps

This policy was scheduled for first review at the October 3, 2022 Policy and By-Law Standing Committee meeting.

Providing Feedback

Questions about this policy and/or procedure should be raised with your principal, manager or supervisor. If additional clarification is required, principals, managers and supervisors may contact the lead superintendent and/or subject matter expert and Trustee Services.

In accordance with [Board Policy 285.0, Board Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documents](#), the Board welcomes all comments and suggestions on Board policy.

Input is an important component of the review process. If you feel a policy and/or procedure needs to be revised, feedback may be submitted through the school council or by submitting the online form. In your response please:

- outline clearly the specific section(s) of the policy and/or procedure in which you are not comfortable,
- suggest specific alternate wording to reflect your position, and
- identify the reason(s) for your concern(s).

Specific recommendations or questions about the review process should be submitted using the online form or sent to the Policy Officer via email at policy.committee@yrdsb.ca, or via telephone at 905-727-0022 extension 2570 or in hard copy at [The Education Centre – Aurora](#).

Legislative Context

[The Education Act](#)

[Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 Policy and Program Requirement, 2016](#)

[Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions \(Grades 7-12/OACs\): Program and Diploma Requirements, 1989 \(OSIS\)](#)

Related Documents

[Policy #325.0 Continuing Education](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board.



Board Policy #354.0

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students

WORKING DOCUMENT

1. Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board believes in life-long learning; learning that can and does occur beyond the regular school day. Recognizing that adult students have acquired skills and knowledge through formal and informal experiences outside of the Ontario school system structure, the Board offers the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (MPLAR) process as a way to recognize this learning.

2. Application

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students policy applies to mature students aged 18 or older who have acquired fewer than 26 credits and are working towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. It recognizes formal and informal learning that can be recognized for secondary school credits thereby providing students with an enhanced pathway to high school graduation leading to post-secondary education, including apprenticeship training and employment.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students policy in accordance with the priorities in the Trustees' Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the approved review cycle; and
- b) understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students policy, as required.

3.2 The Director of Education is responsible for:

- a) implementing the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students policy as per the requirements of [Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Policy and Program Requirements, 2016](#) and [Policy/Program Memorandum 132](#).
- b) developing and implementing policies and procedures related to the equivalency and challenge processes and ensuring that a clear statement is published in school programs and course calendars.

3.3 The Superintendents are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (MPLAR) equivalency and challenge opportunities are available to all eligible students; and
- b) supporting the application of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students policy at each school.

3.4 Secondary School and Continuing Education Services Principals are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that students who are 18 years of age on or after January 1st of the current school year and eligible early school leavers are aware of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (MPLAR) opportunities; facilitating the application of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students policy;
- b) ensuring that students who engage in the MPLAR challenge process meet the eligibility requirements; and
- c) ensuring that teachers are hired to support the MPLAR assessment, equivalency and challenge processes.

3.5 Students are responsible for:

- a) complying with the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students program expectations.

4. Definitions

4.1 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for mature students is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby mature students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in the provincial curriculum in order to earn credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

4.2 Mature Student

A mature student is a student who is 18 years of age or older on January 1 of the current school year, who is enrolled in a program for the purpose of obtaining an OSSD and has fewer than 26 credits.

4.3 Early Leavers

School Leavers are students in grades 9-12+ who have left school but have not completed their OSSD.

5. Contact

Curriculum and Instructional Services

6. History

Working Document: November 2022



Board Procedure #354.1

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students

1. Procedure Statement

This procedure outlines the process for implementing the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (MPLAR) program in secondary school and Continuing Education programs.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 The Director of Education shall:

- a) allocate staff and resources to support the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students procedure.

2.2 Coordinating Superintendent of Education, Curriculum and Instructional Services and Continuing Education shall:

- a) ensure that Continuing Education Services implements the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students (MPLAR) procedure; and,
- b) ensure MPLAR procedures will be carried out under the direction of the Principal of Continuing Education Services.

2.3 Superintendents of Education shall:

- a) ensure all schools are meeting the responsibilities of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students procedure for both their current students and eligible early leavers.

2.4 Continuing Education Services shall:

- a) work in partnership with Curriculum and Instructional Services to ensure MPLAR awareness and the development of equivalency and challenge materials;
- b) ensure teacher staffing support is available to prepare students for the assessment, equivalency and challenge processes;
- c) provide professional development support for teachers conducting MPLAR assessments, equivalencies and challenges as required;
- d) work with secondary and Continuing Education schools to support the application, assessment, equivalency and challenge processes and assist in the reporting of MPLAR credits; and,
- e) work with Principals to ensure that mature students who do not have appropriate documentation of prior learning owing to extraordinary circumstances (e.g., students

who are refugees) will receive advice and/or referral to an appropriate service provider concerning the gathering and giving of evidence (see [The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials for more information](#)).

2.5 Curriculum and Instructional Services shall:

- a) support Continuing Education Services in hiring teachers to conduct MPLAR assessments, equivalencies and challenges; and,
- b) work in partnership with Continuing Education Services to ensure MPLAR awareness and the development of equivalency and challenge materials.

2.6 Principals of Secondary Schools and Continuing Education Services shall:

- a) inform students and parents where applicable, that they are responsible for initiating the MPLAR process and for satisfying all of the requirements;
- b) inform every student applicant of the policies and procedures related to MPLAR assessments, equivalencies and challenges;
- c) provide interested students with an application form and the curriculum documents necessary for the MPLAR process;
- d) assess submitted applications collaboratively with the student, school staff, and Continuing Education Services to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether MPLAR assessment, equivalency or challenge should occur;
- e) monitor students through the MPLAR process and grant MPLAR credits according and upon completion of the MPLAR Plan; and,
- f) file the appropriate MPLAR application and tracking forms in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) and update the student's Ontario Student Transcript (OST).

2.7 Principal of Continuing Education Services shall:

- a) ensure teacher staffing support is available to prepare students for the assessment, equivalency and challenge processes;
- b) determine if mature students have any previous secondary school enrolments in Ontario;
- c) evaluate each application in consultation with the student and/or parents/guardians, where applicable, and with appropriate school staff to determine whether reasonable evidence for equivalencies or a challenge exists and whether a MPLAR challenge should occur;
- d) engage students in the Grade 9 and 10 equivalency process, if required;
- e) engage students in the Grade 11 and 12 equivalency and/or challenge process, if required; and,
- f) upon receiving results from a challenge, ensure that the MPLAR Record of Assessment of Challenge for Credit for a Course is maintained in the student's OSR and the OST is updated.

2.8 Principal of Continuing Education Services shall:

- a) determine their interest and eligibility to participate in the MPLAR process;

- b) apply for the MPLAR process through their home school (under the age of 21) or directly to Continuing Education Services (over the age of 21);
- c) complete the MPLAR Process Application indicating that they intend to participate in an assessment, equivalency and/or intend to challenge a credit;
- d) provide all required documentation in timely fashion; and
- e) follow and complete the personalized MPLAR plan.

3. Contact

Curriculum and Instructional Services
Continuing Education Services

4. History

Drafted: November 2022