

# CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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## PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION FOR MATURE STUDENTS PROCEDURES

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### 1. Policy

It is the policy of Lakehead District School Board (LDSB) to evaluate a mature student's skills and knowledge against the expectations outlined in current Ontario curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) through an Assessment, Challenge and/or Equivalency Process.

### 2. Definitions

#### 2.1 Mature student (as of February 1, 2022):

- 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 OSSD.

2.2 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) 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 provincial curriculum in order to earn credits towards the OSSD.

#### 2.3 For Grades 9 or 10 credits, the equivalency process is as follows:

- individual assessment consisting of four subject based assessments, as needed, for the purpose of granting Grades 9 or 10 credits.

For Grades 11 or 12 credits, both the equivalency process and the challenge process are as follows:

- an evaluation of student credentials, other appropriate documentation and evidence from jurisdictions within and outside Ontario for the purpose of granting credit for Grades 11 or 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum; and
- through the challenge process, prior learning is evaluated using assessments for the purpose of granting credit for Grades 11 or 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum.

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PROCEDURES****3. Processes for PLAR Grades 9/10, and Grades 11/12 Equivalency and Challenge****3.1 PLAR Grades 9 and 10 Process**

The principal or designate will:

- ensure that every mature student is informed about the policies and procedures related to the individual assessment through the equivalency process for mature students, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST);
- determine the number of credits a student needs, up to 16 Grades 9 and 10 credits, based on the review of transcripts indicating successful completion of up to two years of secondary school that are comparable to Ontario Grades 9 and 10; and
- determine the number of Grades 9 and 10 credits to be granted following an individual assessment through the equivalency process.

A maximum of 16 Grades 9 and 10 credits may be granted to a mature student at the discretion of the principal following an individual assessment.

Each mature student who does not have transcripts indicating successful completion of the first two years of secondary school in the Ontario education system – or equivalent – will be required to successfully complete up to four individual assessments before being granted any Grades 9 and 10 credits. This will consist of assessments in English, mathematics, science, and Canadian history and Canadian geography combined.

The principal may grant a maximum of four Grades 9 and 10 credits for demonstrated achievement in each of the subject based assessments (one of which covers two subject areas – Canadian history and Canadian geography combined). Students can earn up to four credits for each of the subject based assessments. If the principal grants fewer than four credits for any of these subject based assessments, the principal will determine how the student will obtain the remaining credits.

Each mature student who has evidence of partial completion of the first two years of secondary school in the Ontario education system – or equivalent – will be required to successfully complete an individual assessment in the outstanding subject areas (such as, English, mathematics, science, and/or Canadian history and Canadian geography combined) in order to earn the credits required to bring the total up to 16 Grades 9 and 10 credits.

The principal may grant, at their discretion, the Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) to a mature student following an individual assessment, if the student, in the principal's judgement, has met the requirements for the OSSC, as specified in Ontario schools regarding the OSSC.

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- ensure that mature students are informed about policies and procedures related to the evaluation of credentials through the equivalency process for mature students, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the OSR and on the OST;
- ensure that every mature student is provided with an application form for the equivalency process for mature students, as well as materials that indicate what is expected in the Grades 11 and 12 courses (such as the curriculum expectations) for which the student wishes to be granted credits;
- evaluate each application in consultation with the student and appropriate school staff (for example, subject teachers) to determine whether the student should begin the equivalency process;
- determine whether there is a direct relationship between the credentials and/or other appropriate documentation presented by the student and the curriculum expectations for a specific Grades 11 or 12 course in the most recent Ontario curriculum; and
- determine whether equivalency should be granted.

**3.2.2 The following types of credentials and other documentation may be accepted for the purpose of determining whether to grant Grades 11 and 12 credits through the equivalency process:**

- formal transcripts as well as Certificates of Apprenticeship and/or qualification for apprenticeships granted by an accredited educational or training institution or a government ministry (for example, a secondary school, a provincial college of applied arts and technology, a university, a ministry of education or training); and
- other appropriate documentation of learning gained from other programs, courses, or work and volunteer service as well as life experience such as parenting.

**3.3 PLAR Grades 11 and 12 Challenge Process****3.3.1 The principal or designate will:**

- ensure that mature students are informed about the challenge process, and that they are responsible for initiating the challenge process for the purpose of obtaining Grades 11 and 12 credits, and for satisfying all of the requirements;

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- ensure that every mature student is informed about policies and procedures related to challenging for credit, including policies on and procedures for recording results in the OSR and on the OST;
  - ensure that every mature student is provided with an application form, as well as materials that indicate what is expected in the Grades 11 and 12 courses (such as the curriculum expectations) for which the student wishes to challenge for credit;
  - evaluate each application in consultation with the student and appropriate school staff (for example, subject teachers) to determine whether reasonable evidence for success exists and whether the challenge should occur;
  - determine whether the student should challenge for credit for a specific full or half-credit course;
  - develop formal examinations and other assessment strategies to conduct the challenge;
  - conduct the challenge (such as, the use of formal examinations and of other appropriate assessment strategies); and
  - evaluate and report on the student's performance, including awarding the appropriate credits and percentage grade to the OST.
- 3.3.2 Principals must ensure that only teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers conduct the PLAR challenge process.
- 3.3.3 The challenge process is an evaluation process. It may not be used as a way for students to improve their mark in a course for which they have already earned a credit.
- 3.3.4 Mature students may challenge for credit a maximum of ten Grades 11 and 12 courses in provincial curriculum. However, they may obtain no more than ten Grades 11 and 12 credits through the challenge and equivalency processes combined. There is no maximum on the number of credits that may be obtained in any one discipline.
- 3.3.5 For those mature students who have recognized Canadian postsecondary credentials, they may obtain 13 of the 14 Grades 11 and 12 credits through the challenge and equivalency processes combined.
- 3.3.6 Mature students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to the principal that they would likely be successful in the challenge process, in accordance with criteria established in this memorandum, and with policies and procedures established by the Board. In cases where a mature student disagrees with the decision of the principal about whether the student should challenge for credit, the mature student may ask the appropriate supervisory officer to review the matter.

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- 3.3.7 Students with music certificates that are accepted for credits in Ontario schools, Music Certificates Accepted for Credits, are not required to challenge for credit for the appropriate music courses but are granted credits in accordance with Ontario schools.
- 3.3.8 Credit will be granted only for the specific course for which the student has successfully challenged for credit.
- 3.3.9 A student cannot be granted credits through the challenge process for any of the following courses:
- a course for which the student has already earned a credit but for which they wish to improve the mark;
  - a course in any subject if a credit has already been granted in a later grade;
  - a course for which there is significant overlap with a course for which credit has been granted;
  - a transfer course;
  - a locally developed course;
  - a cooperative education course;
  - a course in English as a second language (ESL), English literacy development (ELD), or Anglais pour débutants (APD), if the student has one or more credits in English from the curriculum for English for Grades 9 to 12 (such as the documents for English-language schools or the documents for French-language schools) or from the curriculum guidelines;
  - a course in Programme d'appui aux nouveaux arrivants (PANA), Actualisation linguistique en français (ALF) or French as a Second Language (FSL), if the student has one or more credits in Français from the curriculum for Grades 9 to 12; and
  - the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course.
- 3.3.10 A student will be permitted to challenge for credit for a specific course a second time after a reasonable interval, if the student can provide reasonable evidence to the principal that they are likely to be successful after having benefited from additional study.
- 3.3.11 Assessment and evaluation through the PLAR process will be based on the curriculum expectations and the achievement charts in the Ontario curriculum. Assessment and evaluation must be based on all the strands in a course and on all categories of knowledge and skills and the descriptions of achievement levels given in the achievement chart that appears in the curriculum for the discipline. A student's level of achievement will be recorded as a percentage grade on the OST in the same way as achievement in other courses.

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3.3.12 Assessment and evaluation strategies for the challenge process must include formal examination (70% of the final mark) and a variety of other assessment strategies appropriate for the particular course (30% of the final mark). The formal examination must have a balance between written work and practical demonstration that is appropriate for the subject/discipline. Other assessment strategies may include evaluation of written assignments, demonstrations/performances, laboratory work, quizzes, and observation of student work. The principal is responsible for developing and administering the formal examination and for determining which assessment strategies are most appropriate for each course for which a student is challenging for credit.

**4. Diploma Requirements**

4.1 If a mature student who is working towards the OSSD under Ontario schools has not already successfully completed each of the four Grades 11 and 12 compulsory credit requirements, a mature student must obtain a credit that meets the compulsory credit requirement(s) under Ontario schools in each of the following:

- English, Grade 11 – only the following substitution is permitted:
  - students may count a maximum of three credits in ESL or ELD towards the four compulsory credits in English;
  - the fourth credit must be for a Grade 12 compulsory English course;
- English, Grade 12 - no substitution is permitted;
- Mathematics, Grades 11 or 12 - no substitution is permitted; and
- Computer Studies, Science, Technological Education, or Math, Grades 11 or 12.

**4.2 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Requirement**

As per Ontario schools, all students are required to meet the secondary school literacy graduation requirement in order to earn an OSSD.

Mature students should be encouraged to meet the literacy graduation requirement by successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). Mature students also have the option to enroll directly in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) without attempting the OSSLT.

**4.3 Community Involvement Requirement**

Principals will determine, at their discretion, the number of hours of community involvement activities that a mature student who is working towards the OSSD under Ontario schools may have to complete (between 0 and 40).

**5. PLAR Preparation and Support**

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- 5.1 Ontario's Guidance and Career curriculum provides opportunities to strengthen students' skills and plays a central role by providing students with the tools they need for success in school, in the workplace, and in their daily lives. To support mature students with the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in the PLAR process, school boards may, at the recommendation of the principal, leverage courses such as Advanced Learning Strategies: Skills for Success After Secondary School (GLS4O/GLE4O/GLE3O) to help prepare students for the PLAR process. At the recommendation of the principal, a mature student may be enrolled in the GLE courses without an Individual Education Plan (IEP). In lieu of the IEP, principals are to ensure that such students are designated with the Mature Student Flag for reporting in OnSIS. Expectations are to be modified to support learner readiness for the Grades 9 and 10 equivalency process, as well as the development of the equivalency application for Grades 11 and 12 courses.

Note: Students may receive only one credit for Grade 12 Advanced Learning Strategies, either for GLS4O or for GLE4O.

### 6. Record Keeping

- 6.1 All entries on the student's OST must be made in accordance with the Ontario Student Transcript Manual (2013).
- 6.2 Principals will ensure that the results of a mature student's individual assessment are recorded on the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form for Grades 9 and 10 credits.
- 6.3 Principals will ensure that equivalent credits for mature students are recorded on the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form for Grades 11 and 12 credits. Boards will ensure that the appropriate PLAR "Cumulative Tracking Record" forms for mature students are maintained and included in the student's OSR. These forms are intended to track the number of credits that a mature student has obtained through the equivalency and challenge processes and the disciplines in which these credits have been obtained, as well as failures and withdrawals.
- 6.4 Principals will also ensure that:
- for challenges for credit for Grades 11 or 12 courses, the student's passing percentage grade, failing percentage grade, or withdrawal from the challenge process must be entered on the appropriate tracking record forms; and
  - for challenges for credit for Grades 11 and 12 courses, passing and failing percentage grades will be entered on the student's OST. No notation will be entered on the OST if the student withdraws from the challenge process.

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These procedures shall be reviewed in accordance with 2010 Policy Development and Review Policy.

<b><u>Cross Reference</u></b>	<b><u>Date Approved</u></b>	<b><u>Legal Reference</u></b>
Policy/Program Memorandums No. 132 and Ontario Secondary Schools, s. 6.6 and 8.2	December 14, 2004  <b><u>Date Revised</u></b>  June 28, 2011 February 27, 2018 <i>February 22, 2022</i>	