

## CWQA Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policy

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic credit granting process that recognizes and accredits previous or prior learning. The process involves the identification, documentation, assessment, verification, and recognition of relevant knowledge and skills acquired through your formal and informal study, work, and life experiences. The relevant learning is assessed and evaluated relative to the learning outcomes of a particular course or program. PLAR is to be distinguished from the transfer of academic credit process, in that PLAR focuses on the evaluation of experiential learning.

PLAR is different from receiving transfer credits. Transfer credits may be granted to a learner who has taken a similar or equivalent course at another formal educational institution. A transfer credit is granted on the strength of a transcript from the institution, which verifies that the learning has been formally acquired and evaluated.

### Benefits of PLAR

- You will be on a "fast track" towards your certification
- You won't have to repeat your learning
- You may save time and money
- You will clarify your educational plans and goals
- You will grow and develop as a life-long learner
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**Learning from Life and Work Experiences**

**+**

**Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition**

**=**

**Recognized Credit**

### Are You Eligible for PLAR?

In accordance with the CWQA certification policy, applicants must be at least 19 years of age or have earned a provincial Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent. You do not have to be enrolled in the CWQA MEP program to access PLAR, but if you receive credit for courses through PLAR you must go through the regular admission process in order to gain entrance into a CWQA MEP program. PLAR is normally sought by certified professionals continuing their studies or upgrading their certifications, rather than by new employees continuing or beginning their water treatment studies.

Table 1: Students looking for PLAR shall look to the following for guidance

Designation	Possible Exemption
CWQA Certified Professionals	CWQA will grandfather all previous CWQA granted certifications. Any member intending to advance using the MEP program will have to take the appropriate challenge exams and exercises to come up to currency before proceeding as necessary. (see Table 2)
MOE Operator (current lic)	Exempted from Basics and Fundamentals but

	must take the Field Testing and Analysis and challenge the CWT exam <i>A student can still take the Basics and Fundamentals MEP modules for CEU credits pending approval from the MOE.</i>
Lic. Plumber	Exempted from the Installer module, but must take Basics, Fundamentals, the Installation field course and challenge the installer exam
OReg 903 Class 1-4	Must take the Basics, Fundamentals Current driller curriculum does not complete the CWQA MEP Basics modules items.
Engineer	No exemptions
Specifiers, Architects and Designers	No Exemptions
Regulators, Inspectors	No Exemptions must take at least the Basics and Fundamentals MEP Modules for general information. <small>c Pr22 Ontario Plumbing Inspectors Association Inc. Act, 1996</small>

### How do I demonstrate my prior learning so I can get MEP module credit?

You can demonstrate your learning in a variety of ways including previous CWQA certifications. You are responsible for providing documentation that demonstrates the validity of your learning, or to participate in an assessment methodology deemed appropriate to the course, the content, and the learning being measured. The assessment method may vary depending upon the nature of the course or program and takes into consideration that different methods of assessment are available. The program administrator will assist you regarding which method is best for the subject you are trying to obtain credit for through PLAR.

Two of the most popular methods of demonstrating learning are the challenge test or exam and the portfolio-assisted challenge.

The tests or exams are developed by CWQA and used to measure your knowledge and skills in a particular subject area. The MEP's learning outcomes in the course outline are used as the basis for the assessment process.

The portfolio is a collection of information, which you create, that helps organize and document your ongoing applicable certifications, licenses and professional designations.

### How do I access PLAR?

The CWQA Office is your first point of contact for enquiries regarding the PLAR process. Staff in the Registrar's Office will:

- explain the PLAR procedures to you
- provide guidance regarding application procedure(s) and fees
- refer the student to the appropriate academic school (subject or program coordinator) to arrange specific assessment processes

- refer students seeking to develop prior learning portfolios for assistance from a PLAR Facilitator in the Centre for Learning and Teaching.

### **If I decide to register for PLAR, what are the next steps?**

We recommend that you attempt a PLAR prior to formal course or program registration. This gives you the time you need to gather information, find out requirements, and discuss the process with CWQA.

Once your PLAR registration form is complete and the PLAR fee is paid, the information will be forwarded to the CWQA assessor who will contact you usually by phone or by e-mail to arrange to meet with you and begin the assessment. The PLAR fee (approximately \$50) must be paid prior to forwarding the assessment form on your behalf. This fee is non-refundable. Once you have completed the assessment, the faculty will sign the form, insert your grade (this may be either Pass/Fail designation or a percentage grade).

If you were successful in your assessment, the outcome will be inserted in your Grade record and mailed to the address on file. Unsuccessful attempts (failures) will not be inserted on your record. You must wait one calendar year to reattempt an unsuccessful PLAR.

### **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Flowchart**

1. Inquire about the PLAR process at the CWQA's Office. The office may direct you to further assistance and information.
2. If you wish to proceed, review the course outline carefully and speak to the course instructor to discuss possible PLAR options. You may PLAR more than one course/module.
3. If you wish to proceed, pay the PLAR fee of approximately \$50 in the CWQA Office. The office will notify the instructor/mentor that fees have been paid and the assessment process begins.
4. Once your PLAR registration is complete the information will be forwarded to the instructor/mentor who will contact you to set up the assessment with you.
5. Upon receipt of application, fees and completed assessment, the CWQA Office will notify you, in writing, of the PLAR results and credits granted, normally within 10-15 working days
6. An appeal process is available in the event you wish to challenge the assessment.

Table 2: CWQA Grandfathering

<b>CWQA Course</b>	<b>Currency Requirement</b>
CWQA Basics	New course
CWQA Fundamentals	NO Additional requirements for previous CWTs
Installer	New course. Previous holders of the CI course are recommended to take the MEP's installer course with the Canadian content as Code and requirements have changes under the plumbing code.
Sales	New Course
RO/membranes	NO Additional requirements for previous CWTs
Filtration	NO Additional requirements for previous CWTs
Disinfection	NO Additional requirements for previous CWTs
Distillation	NO Additional requirements for previous CWTs