CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF EASTERN ONTARIO
www.cdsbeo.on.ca

BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

204 Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Mature Students (PPM132)

DIRECTIONAL POLICY

Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Mature Students (mPLAR) (PPM132)

Date Approved:

September 2026

Projected Review Date:

September 2031

Directional Policy Alignment:

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Mature Students (mPLAR) (PPM132) procedure falls under the Board's directional policy Nurturing & Protecting Catholic Education by ensuring an environment that is reflective of Catholic social teaching and positively contributing to the achievement and well-being of all students.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition of Mature Students procedure falls under the Board's Directional Policy Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education by reflecting our priority of creating safe, loving, inclusive learning for all members of our Catholic Schools. We believe that everyone has the capacity to learn and realize their potential through our diverse opportunities for learning.

CDSBEO Strategic Plan

Purpose

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby mature students may obtain secondary credits for prior learning. These credits can be applied towards earning the Ontario Secondary School Diploma

(OSSD). The goal of mPLAR is to help mature students remove barriers to achieving an OSSD and efficiently move forward to sustainable employment, post-secondary education, and/or apprenticeship. The mPLAR process provides a process by which the prior experiences of adult learners, both formal and informal, can be recognized for secondary credit, minimizing duplication of learning, saving the learner time and costs, and providing them with an enhanced pathway to high school graduation.

Diploma Requirement for Mature Students

OSSD Under Ontario Schools diploma requirements

- A mature student working towards the OSSD under Ontario Schools who has not already successfully completed each of the four Grade 11 and 12 compulsory credit requirements, must obtain a credit that meets the compulsory credit requirements under Ontario Schools in each of the following:
    - English, Grade 11 – Only one of the following substitutions 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, Grade 11 or 12 – no substitution is permitted.
    - Computer Studies, Science, Technology Education or Math, Grade 11 or 12.

The secondary school literacy graduation requirement

- As per Ontario Schools, all students are required to meet the secondary school literacy graduation requirement. Mature students may meet this by successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or enrolling directly in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) without attempting the OSSLT.

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).

OSSD under OSIS diploma requirements

- If the mature student has fewer than 26 credits, and attended high school in Ontario prior to 1999, they may choose to apply for

  - PLAR for Mature Students or
  - Opt for the Mature Credit Assessment
- Principals will determine which compulsory credit requirements (if any) must be completed by a mature student to earn the OSSD under OSIS diploma requirements. The principal will refer to OSIS, 6.14 Equivalent Standing for Mature Students, at their discretion (See Appendix A).

Secondary school graduation diploma requirements (SSGD)

- A mature student who entered an Ontario Secondary School program before September 1, 1984, may continue to work towards the SSGD. The process for assessing equivalent credit allowances and granting credits that are described in OSIS will apply to mature students working towards the SSGD (See Appendix A).

Principles

Grade 9/10 Equivalency Process

- Students participate in induvial assessments consisting of five subject-based assessments, as needed, for the purpose of granting Grade 9 or 10 credits.
- Up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits may be granted through the Grade 9 or 10 equivalency process at the discretion of the principal following individual assessments. A maximum of 4 credits (English, Math, Science, and History/Geography) can be granted for successful completion of each individual assessment. All five assessments must be written to earn the full 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits.

Grade 11/12 Equivalency and Challenge Process

- Through the equivalency process, students participate in an evaluation of their credentials, other appropriate documentation, and evidence from jurisdictions within and outside Ontario for the purpose of granting credit for Grade 11 or 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum.
- Through the challenge process, students' prior learning is evaluated using assessments for the purpose of granting credit for Grade 11 or 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum. The Board is not required to provide opportunities for mature students to challenge for credit those courses that are not actually taught in schools operated by the Board.
- Up to 10 of 14 Grade 11 and 12 credits may be granted through either the equivalency or challenge process combined.
- A minimum of four Grade 11 and 12 credits must be earned by taking the necessary course, with the following exception: at the discretion of the principal, mature students

who present evidence of a completed Certificate of Apprenticeship and/or Certificate of Qualification issued by Skilled Trades Ontario and/or a completed post-secondary diploma and/or degree from an accredited Canadian post-secondary institution may qualify for up to 30 credits and an OSSD under Ontario Schools.

- Following the equivalency or challenge process, any remaining required credits may be earned by taking the required courses.
- 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.

Action Required

1) Each secondary school course calendar shall contain information regarding mPLAR for credit and opportunities for challenge.
2) Interested students who are actively pursuing their OSSD must meet the Guidance and/or the School Principal to discuss the process of mPLAR and to determine appropriate next steps.
3) The interested student completes the application form and provides the required documentation.
4) After a review of the mature students' existing documentation and evidence of prior learning, principals will determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that a mature student needs to meet diploma requirements, and determine how the PLAR process can best be applied.
5) Through the equivalency process, students participate in an evaluation of their credentials, other appropriate documentation, and evidence from jurisdictions within and outside Ontario for the purpose of granting credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum.
6) Through the challenge process, students' prior learning is evaluated using assessments for the purpose of granting credit for Grade 11 or 12 courses developed from the most recent Ontario curriculum.
7) Students registered with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) may be granted a period of up to two (2) years from the point of initial application to complete all components of the Mature Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (mPLAR) process. Applicants from outside the Board must enroll in a CDSBEO secondary or continuing education program in order to access mPLAR. The process will commence upon enrolment, at which point timelines for completion will be established.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Ensuring alignment with the Nurturing and Protecting Catholic Education Directional Policy and reviewing this Administrative Procedure as part of its regular policy and procedures review cycle.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with this Administrative Procedure.

Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:

- Ensuring principals are consistent with the application of this Administrative Procedure.
- Ensuring that any employee for whom they have supervisory responsibility is aware of the requirements under this Administrative Procedure.
- Report to the Ministry in the October board reports the types of equivalency and challenges provided to mature students. Superintendent will also report the types of PLAR assessments delivered during the school year (such as, estimates, revised estimates, and financial statements). Including:
    - The number of mature students who received an individual assessment as part of the equivalency process for up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits during the school year (one assessment in its entirety per mature student per fiscal year only).
    - The number of mature students who received an evaluation of their credentials as part of the equivalency process for up to 10 Grade 11 and 12 credits during the school year (one assessment per mature student per fiscal year).
    - The number of completed challenges for prior learning evaluated for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses (up to 10 courses per student, or the equivalent in half-credit courses), whether successfully or unsuccessfully completed.

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Guarantee that all eligible mature students are offered access to the mPLAR process.
- mPLAR procedures for mature students will be carried out under the discretion of the school principal, who has the authority to grant credits. The principal is responsible for the implementation of mPLAR in accordance with this procedure and with support from the St. James Catholic Education Centre.

Record Keeping:

- Ensuring the Cumulative Tracking form is included in the student's OSR.
- Ensuring that equivalent credits for mature students are recorded on the "Cumulative Tracking Record" form for Grade 11 and 12 credits (Appendix C).
- 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 disciplines in which these credits have been obtained, as well as failures and withdrawals (Appendix B).

Guidance Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that every mature student is informed of the policies and procedures related to the individual assessment through the equivalency process for mature students, including policies and procedures for recording results in the Ontario Student Record (OSR) and on the Ontario Student Transcript (OST). Consideration should be given to mature students with significant gaps in their education.
- In the event that a student who has initiated the PLAR process transfer to the Continuing Education Program, guidance staff will ensure that a copy of the PLAR application and assessment plan is shared with the receiving school to support continuity of programming.

Grade 9 and 10 Equivalency Credits:

- Providing mature students with an application form to initiate the Grade 9/10 PLAR assessment process. (See Appendix D).
- Determining and granting the number of credits a student needs, up to 16 or successful completion of up to two years of secondary school that are comparable to Ontario Grade 9 and 10 curriculums.
- Determining and granting the number of Grade 9 and 10 credits following an individual assessment through the equivalency process.
- 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 some or all five individual assessments before being granted any Grade 9 and 10 credits. This will consist of assessments in English, Mathematics, Science and Canadian History and Canadian Geography combined. A maximum of 4 credits can be granted for successful completion of each individual assessment.
- 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 judgment, has met the requirements for the OSSC, as specified in the Ontario Schools regarding the Ontario Secondary School Certificate.

Grade 11 and 12 Equivalency Credits:

- Ensuring that every mature student is provided with an application form for the equivalency process for mature students (See Appendix E) as well as materials that indicate what is expected in the Grade 11 and 12 courses (such as curriculum expectations) for which the student wishes to be granted credits.
- Evaluating 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.

- Determining 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 Grade 11 or 12 course in the most recent Ontario curriculum.
- Recommended whether equivalency should be granted.
- The following types of credentials and other documentation may be accepted for the purpose of determining whether to grant Grade 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 education or training institution (i.e. Skilled Trades Ontario) or a government ministry (for example, a secondary school, a provincial college of applied arts and technology, a university, a ministry of education training).
    - Other appropriate documentation of learning gained from other programs, courses or work and volunteer service as well as life experience such as parenting.

Record Keeping:

- Ensuring the results of a mature student's individual assessment are recorded on a Cumulative Tracking form Grade 9 and 10 credits (See Appendix B).
- For challenges for credit for Grade 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 form (see Appendix C).
- For challenges for credit for Grade 11 and 12 courses, passing and failing percentage grades will be entered on the student's Ontario Student Transcript. No notification will be entered on the transcript if the student withdraws from the challenge processes.

Progress Indicators

- Consistently applied mPLAR process for mature students working towards their OSSD.
- Increased credit accumulation through mPLAR process leading to successful completion of their OSSD.
- Improved student retention and student success in credit accumulation and achievement.

Definitions

- **Mature Students:** 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).
- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Process (PLAR) for Mature Students:** 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 to earn credits toward the OSSD.

- **Challenge:** The process whereby mature students' prior learning is evaluated and reported for the purpose of granting credit(s) and percentage grade for a Grade 11 or 12 courses developed from a provincial curriculum policy document published in 1999 or later.
- **Equivalency:** The process where mature students participate in an assessment of their prior learning credentials for granting credits towards their OSSO.
- **Reasonable Evidence:** Documentation that the curriculum expectations of the course have already achieved as well as related Catholic Graduate Expectations and that the student would likely be successful in the challenge process.

Related Documents

• Appendix A - Ontario Schools Intermediate and Senior Division Equivalent Standing for Mature Students

• Appendix B - Cumulative Tracking Record: Equivalency Process for Grade 9 and 10 credits

• Appendix C - Cumulative Tracking Record: Equivalency Process for Grade 11 and 12 credits

• Appendix D - Application for Assessment for Grade 9 and 10 Credits through the Equivalency Process

• Appendix E - Application for Assessment for Grade 11 and 12 Credits through the Equivalency Process

References

- Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements | ontario.ca
- Policy/Program Memorandum 132 | Education in Ontario: policy and program direction | ontario.ca