Policy History	
Policy No. AC6	
Approving Jurisdiction: Senate	
Administrative Responsibility: Provost and Vice President Academic	
Effective Date: September 1, 2020	

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
Procedures

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **Academic Advisor**: University staff that are available to guide students in selecting and planning effective programs of study for credential completion, career training and university transfer through individual appointments, as well as to provide referrals to other members of the university community.

2. **Academic Levels**: KPU offers four levels of academic programming: preparatory, vocational, undergraduate, and graduate. Undergraduate coursework recognizes upper and lower level courses as follows:
    a. Lower Level: undergraduate coursework numbered 1100 to 2999.
    b. Upper Level: undergraduate coursework numbered 3000 to 4999.

3. **Advanced Standing**: The status given to a student who is granted the authority to commence a program with credit granted for certain components of the program in recognition of previously completed studies or prior learning.

4. **Articulation**: According to the BC Council on Admission and Transfer (BCCAT), articulation in the context of course transfer allows multiple sectors or branches of post-secondary education, each with its own distinctive characteristics, to function as a system. Through the process of articulation, institutions assess courses offered at other institutions to determine whether to grant course credit toward their own programs or credentials. Articulation is therefore the process, while transfer credit is the end result.

5. **Block Transfer**: A transfer agreement in which a predetermined number of transfer credits is granted to transferring students who have successfully completed a certificate, diploma, or a group of courses at another institution. Generally, block transfer is used to award credit for courses that, as a group, are recognized as having an academic wholeness or integrity and that collectively satisfy part of the requirements for another credential.

6. **Direct (Assigned) Credit**: Where credit is awarded for a specific course. Direct credit may be used towards meeting prerequisite(s) or specific degree completion requirements.

7. **Methods of Learning**:

    a. *Formal learning*: Learning that is usually developed and facilitated by professional educators traditionally offered within educational institutions.

b. *Informal learning*: Learning that takes place through work and life experiences. Learning activities are not structured or officially evaluated.

c. *Non-formal learning*: Learning usually offered by a sector, professional group or a company to deal with specific training needs. Formal assessment may or may not be included.

8. **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**: is a systematic credit granting process used to evaluate and recognize prior learning. The process involves the identification, documentation, assessment, verification, and recognition of relevant knowledge and skills acquired through previous informal and non-formal learning, work, and life experiences, and formal learning that is ineligible for transfer credit when determining equivalency for KPU credit. The relevant learning is assessed and evaluated relative to the learning outcomes of a particular course or program.

9. **PLAR Assessor**: A PLAR assessor is a faculty member who is a subject matter expert in the field who will conduct the assessment.

10. **PLAR Department Consultant**: A PLAR department consultant is a faculty member who will conduct a pre-assessment to determine if the request will be evaluated by a PLAR assessor.

11. **Recognized Institutions / Organizations**: the following are considered recognized for the purposes of evaluating and awarding transfer credit and PLAR at KPU:

    a. Member institutions of the BC Council on Admission and Transfer (BCCAT)
    b. Canadian public post-secondary institutions
    c. Member institutions of Universities Canada
    d. International institutions considered accredited or recognized in their country, as determined by the Office of the Registrar through accreditation reference materials or the Ministries of Education in that country
    e. College Board (Advanced Placement program)
    f. The International Baccalaureate (International Baccalaureate programs)

    Any institution or organization that does not meet the above criteria may have formal recognition requested through the Senate Standing Committee on Academic Planning and Priorities (SSCAPP).

    The Office of the Registrar will determine whether an institution is recognized based on whether one or more of the above criteria have been met. All other institutions are considered unrecognized. This would include, but is not limited to:

    a. Private institutions that do not meet any of the criteria above
    b. Any educational institution or other organization that is not a post-secondary institution (e.g., secondary schools, professional organizations).

12. **Transfer Credit:** The granting of credit within the same academic level for similar or equivalent coursework undertaken at another recognized institution.

13. **Unassigned (Unspecified) Credit:** Credit granted when no direct equivalent is offered at KPU. Unassigned credit is discipline specific, where a corresponding discipline at KPU exists. Where a corresponding discipline does not exist, Faculty-level credit may be granted. Unassigned credit is granted at the appropriate year level and may be used towards meeting elective requirements.

B. PROCEDURES

1. **Academic Standards**

   a. *Articulation*
      i. Articulation agreements will be established at the same academic level in which the coursework is offered.

      ii. Articulation decisions made by the adjudicating body upon review of detailed course outlines are normally considered final. Requests for an additional review will only be considered if the student submits additional relevant information along with a written request and rationale for a second review.

      iii. Articulation requests may be initiated by recognized institutions.

      iv. Articulation decisions are typically precedent-setting and will be recorded in KPU's transfer database.

      v. Articulation agreements remain active for a maximum of ten years for post-secondary credit courses from recognized institutions.

   b. *Transfer Credit*
      i. Transfer credit will be recognized based on the discipline in which it was completed.

      ii. Credit awarded will be at the same academic level it was completed.

      iii. Coursework completed at an unrecognized institution will not be assessed for transfer credit.

      iv. Transfer credit may be in the form of direct (assigned) course credit, discipline credit, or unassigned credit. It may be awarded at any academic level in which credit courses and programs are offered at KPU.

      v. Transfer credit decisions are recognized by KPU regardless of a student's program, but the application of transfer credit for any particular program or credential is determined by the department responsible for the program.

      vi. Transfer credit will usually be limited to courses completed at a recognized institution within 10 years from the term of admission. This timeline may be shorter for programs with external professional requirements. Coursework completed outside the stated timeframe may be eligible for credit through the relevant discipline.

      vii. Students are responsible for working with an academic advisor to determine if and how transferred courses apply toward satisfying graduation requirements.

   c. *PLAR*
      i. Awarding PLAR credit is at the discretion of the program or department.

      ii. Assessment method(s) must be appropriate for the subject or skill area, targeted to the learning outcomes, competencies, skills, or outcomes of the course, and reflective of the level of achievement expected of any student.

      iii. PLAR credit is awarded for learning that is directly applicable to the student's declared program of study. Should a student change programs, all or some of the PLAR credit previously awarded may no longer apply to the new area of study. Conversely, the student may be able to apply for additional PLAR credit that was not appropriate under the previous program of study.

iv. Credit will be awarded for learning equivalent to the standards required by the program(s) in which the credit is sought.

v. A student may not obtain PLAR credit for any course in which the student was registered at KPU within the previous eight (8) months.

2. **Eligibility**

   a. Applicants and/or students who have completed academic courses at a recognized institution may request a transfer credit assessment.

   b. Individuals applying for PLAR must first be formally admitted to KPU. Applicants, and current students considering PLAR are encouraged to explore possibilities with an academic advisor.

3. **Required Documents**

   a. All requests for transfer credit require the submission of official documentation. Exceptions may be made when it is not possible for a transcript to be sent directly to KPU, provided the Office of the Registrar can reasonably determine the document's authenticity.

   b. A transcript is considered to be official only when it is sent directly to KPU from the originating institution or issuing body. Hard copies must be received in the original sealed envelope signed by the institution or bearing an official stamp or seal or they will be deemed unofficial.

   c. Documents submitted to KPU become the property of Kwantlen Polytechnic University and are normally not returned to the student. In cases where documents are irreplaceable, the documents will be returned to the student provided the student requests return of the documents upon submission. Electronic images of documents will be retained by KPU.

   d. In cases where a more detailed assessment is required by either the applicant or a program area, the applicant will be asked to provide detailed course outlines or program information as necessary.

   e. If the issuing institution is not able to provide an official document in English or French, KPU may request the student to arrange to have the document translated by a BC certified translator. In this instance the documents should be sent directly from the issuing institution and KPU will provide the student with a copy for translation.

   f. It is the student's responsibility to provide a course outline / syllabus as needed to evaluate courses for transfer. For documents that are not in English or French, a translation by a certified translator is required.

4. **Authority and Responsibility**

   a. The decision-making authority is the same whether a request is student-initiated or initiated by an institution through the BC transfer system.

   b. The Office of the Registrar has the responsibility to maintain a record of precedent-setting decisions.

   c. The Office of the Registrar has the authority and responsibility to equate the students' grades to KPU's grading system, and to record all transfer credit decisions and appropriate grades in each student's permanent student record.

5. **Assessment**

   In order to maximize a student's ability to satisfy program requirements and/or course pre-requisites, when assessing for transfer credit or PLAR direct credit will be granted whenever possible rather than unassigned credit.

   a. *Transfer Credit*
      i. Review of a course outline for articulation shall be based on equivalency of knowledge and skills or learning outcomes and it is expected that a course be comparable in breadth and depth in its essential features. Not all elements of the curriculum need be identical and departments shall employ the widest possible latitude in recommending transfer approval while respecting the academic integrity of KPU courses and programs.

      ii. A rationale must be provided when decisions are not precedent-setting, or when transfer credit is denied.

      iii. In support of a student's admission, registration and program planning, KPU endeavours to ensure timely evaluation of transfer credit within the following timelines:

         1) Up to six weeks to assess credit and provide a response to students.

         2) An additional six weeks (maximum) for the departments to review course outlines and notify the Office of the Registrar of the decision, as required.

      iv. Applicants may request a transfer credit evaluation as part of their Application for Admission to KPU, and have the option of making a subsequent request up until completion of 30 credits at KPU after which time transfer credit for coursework completed prior to admission will not be evaluated.

      v. KPU students may request transfer credit beyond completion of 30 credits at KPU for coursework completed after the commencement of studies at KPU with a Letter of Permission.

      vi. All transfer credit assessments must be complete before a student applies to graduate.

   b. *PLAR*
      i. PLAR will be assessed by qualified faculty with expertise in the relevant curriculum area.

      ii. Credit will be based on the PLAR assessor's evaluation and will be awarded for demonstrated learning, which includes knowledge, skills and abilities; credit will not be awarded for experience alone.

      iii. Assessments for units of credit intended to satisfy program requirements are based on program-level learning outcomes.

      iv. In the event an assessment is unsuccessful, reasons must be provided.

      v. KPU recognizes the following methods of assessment for PLAR:

         1) Examinations
            a) Challenge exams
               A test or exam (written or oral) that is designed to validate the knowledge of the candidate as it relates to course requirements. A challenge exam may be the same test or exam given to students who formally attend the course. It is limited to questions that are directly related to the learning objectives/outcomes of the course.

b) Standardized tests
   Similar to a Challenge Exam. However, this test or exam is usually developed by someone other than the PLAR assessor. It is focused around widely recognized standards (as set by a department or professional/sectoral organization) that are equivalent to the course objectives.

2) Competency Based Assessments
   a) Products/Portfolios
      Documents or objects that have been produced by the candidate and demonstrate tangible proof of accomplishment. These may include, but are not limited to, reports, videos, illustrations, prototype models, or an artist's portfolio. Students may be asked to demonstrate abilities or answer questions about the portfolio by the PLAR assessor.
   b) Demonstration
      Simulation or actual presentation of candidate's abilities, which may be live, recorded, or videotaped. The demonstration may include, but is not limited to, such activities as presenting a speech, role-playing a situation, creating a document on computer, giving a musical performance, performing a lab experiment, interviewing a client, operating equipment, or completing a procedure.
   c) Interview
      The PLAR interview is focused around course objectives and may include techniques such as open-ended questions, case studies, and prepared analyses. The interview is used to clarify areas of learning, and may be used in parallel with other methods, as a sole method of assessment, and/or as a means to ensure authenticity of products.
   d) Worksite assessment
      The candidate is observed performing tasks as a part of normal work routine, or as specifically assigned, in the place of work. Assessment is normally made by faculty assigned to a candidate, but may also be made by a work supervisor or field expert. If performed by an external assessor, it may be followed up by a self-assessment and/or interview with a PLAR assessor.
   e) Industry-Based Evaluation
      Credit may be awarded through recognition of pre-assessed training based on established agreements with select employers, training organizations, Continuing Studies programs, recognized Credit Banks, or Red Seal certifications.
   f) External Evaluation
      Assessment provided by an expert other than Kwantlen faculty. Assessment method may include, but is not limited to, performance evaluation, letter of validation, or worksite assessment, and may require follow-up by faculty.
   g) Self-assessment
      Assessment performed by the candidate, usually with the aid of an established form or questionnaire. Normally requires a parallel assessment by a field expert and/or PLAR assessor.

6. **Granting Transfer Credit**

   a. *For individual post-secondary courses:*
      i. Credit for individual courses is given in most situations where equivalencies to KPU courses have been established.

      ii. When courses have been articulated for precedent-setting transfer to KPU, Office of the Registrar staff will grant transfer credit according to the articulation agreements retained in the KPU transfer database and/or the BC Transfer Guide. When precedent-setting transfer has not been established, the following guidelines will be used:

         1) When there are no current articulation agreements for a credit course taken at a recognized institution, and the discipline is offered at KPU, students are expected to provide detailed course outlines for departmental review. A faculty member designated by the discipline will determine if the course transfers for direct (assigned) credit.

         2) When a student is unable to provide detailed course information, Office of the Registrar staff may grant unassigned discipline/Faculty credit at the lower level for undergraduate-level courses from a recognized institution.

         3) The Dean responsible for the most closely related discipline may approve assigned or unassigned upper-level credit after consultation with faculty. When KPU offers the discipline, it is the responsibility of the faculty member designated by that discipline to decide what upper level credit, if any, will be granted.

      iii. When a course from another recognized institution is deemed equivalent to a KPU course, credit normally will be assigned as follows:

         1) Courses completed at recognized institutions will normally be given transfer credit for credits comparable, but not necessarily identical in number to the number of credits given at the originating institution. For example, a two-semester course or two one-semester courses would normally receive the equivalent of two semesters of credit (i.e., at least 6 credits) at KPU.

         2) Courses with equivalent learning outcomes will normally be given the same number of credits as the KPU course.

         3) If a student is awarded transfer credit for a course AND takes the same course at KPU, both courses will become part of the student's academic record. Only the higher grade will be recognized for credit and in the calculation of the student's GPA.

      iv. Special Types of Courses:

         1) Clinicals, practica, field study courses, internships, and cooperative education courses will be awarded transfer credit according to any existing articulation agreements. When no agreements exist, no transfer credit is assigned; however, the appropriate designate for the discipline may articulate courses from recognized institutions that are comparable to KPU courses as per the guidelines above. Such decisions are considered precedent-setting and will be recorded in KPU's transfer database.

b. ***For block transfer:***
   i. Applicants with a post-secondary undergraduate credential or a vocational certificate or diploma from a recognized institution may be considered for block credit in situations where a formal partnership agreement exists, or in exceptional circumstances where course credit cannot readily be established.
   ii. The following guidelines are used to establish block credit:

   1) The amount of block credit assigned will depend upon the length of the program for which the credential was awarded. For each period of study equivalent to two semesters of full-time study at KPU, programs may receive a block of up to 30 credits. The total number of credits assigned will not exceed the number of credits (equated to the KPU credit system) granted at the originating institution.

   2) A student granted block credit will be assigned direct and/or unassigned credit for individual courses within the block as determined by the Office of the Registrar.

   3) Undergraduate, lower-level credit is given for programs KPU classifies as undergraduate programs (except when upper-level credit is approved by the appropriate designate for the discipline); vocational or preparatory-level credit is given for programs that are non-academic.

c. ***For Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate:***
   i. Secondary school graduates admitted to KPU who have completed Advanced Placement subjects will receive advanced standing in accordance with the table of course equivalencies established in consultation with faculty and published by the Office of the Registrar.
   ii. Secondary school graduates admitted to KPU who have completed International Baccalaureate subjects will receive advanced standing in accordance with the table of course equivalencies established in consultation with faculty and published by the Office of the Registrar.

d. ***For recognition of PLAR previously awarded at a recognized institution:***
   i. KPU may accept credit earned through PLAR from all recognized Canadian post-secondary institutions. Such credit will be recognized and awarded as PLAR and may be in the form of direct (assigned) course credit, discipline credit, or unassigned credit. It may be awarded at any academic level in which credit courses and programs are offered at KPU.

7. **Support and Training**

   a. PLAR training and support will be provided to all employees involved in the PLAR process as part of a quality PLAR system.

   b. Transfer Credit training and support will be provided to all employees involved in the transfer credit process.

8. **Grading and Recognition**

   a. ***Transfer Credit***
   i. All transferable courses and corresponding grades, equated to the KPU grading system, are recorded on the student's academic record and form the transfer GPA,

ii. The official KPU transcript will indicate the transferred courses, the grade, and the number of credits for which transfer credit is granted.

iii. Once transfer credit has been awarded and posted to the student's academic record, KPU will not amend/change the transfer credit that has been awarded.

iv. Duplicate transfer credit will not be awarded. Students who have completed equivalent courses at multiple institutions will be granted transfer credit once, for the highest grade achieved.

v. When a student has repeated a course at another recognized post-secondary institution, KPU will not grant transfer credit again for the same course. Students wishing to repeat a transferred course to achieve a higher grade must complete the course at KPU.

b. **PLAR**

i. For PLAR assessments, grades will be awarded in accordance with KPU policy.

ii. Academic credit awarded through the PLAR process will appear on a student's KPU transcript.

iii. Duplicate PLAR credit will not be awarded.

iv. Academic credit awarded through the PLAR process will appear as part of a student's individual My Action Plan (MAP) credential audit, indicating the program requirements for which PLAR is applicable.

v. Transcripts reflect the PLAR credit being granted and will count as credits attempted and taken, but not for GPA calculations.

vi. PLAR credit is not applicable towards a term's course load and does not apply toward eligibility for full-time or part-time student status, Dean's Honour Roll, student financial aid, awards and/or scholarships.

vii. Credits granted as part of the PLAR process may be used to satisfy admission requirements, registration pre-requisites and/or curricular requirements for graduation.

viii. PLAR candidates must fulfill assessment requirements within four (4) months of an application. If the candidate's assessment is unsuccessful, the candidate may be reassessed if evidence of additional learning is provided, and upon consultation with a PLAR department consultant.

c. **PLAR Fees**

i. Fees are representative of the services performed in the PLAR assessment process and not solely based on the amount of credit awarded.

ii. Students are responsible for all associated costs involved with the PLAR process.

C. RELATED POLICIES AND BYLAWS

Bylaw 4 *Fees*
AC6 *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)*
AR2 *Admission*
AC14 *KPU Credential Framework*
FM8 *Student Tuition and Fees*