

## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING – CREDIT COURSES

Section:	Academic/Student (AC)
Subject:	Student Performance and Behaviour
Legislation:	
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**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**President and CEO**

### POLICY

The policy of the Board of Governors is to recognize the importance of student learning pathways. This includes recognizing a student's prior learning, knowledge and current competence where appropriate and possible, and pursuing articulation opportunities both for SAIT graduates and for students coming to SAIT.

## PROCEDURE

### DEFINITIONS

#### Block transfer

Where a student who has successfully completed a credential or a group of courses at one post-secondary institution (or member institution of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer) is awarded transfer credit for a group of courses that collectively satisfies part of the requirements for another credential. This group of courses must have an academic wholeness and integrity that can be related meaningfully to a program at another post-secondary institution. Based on overall equivalence to a defined set of course and/or program learning outcomes, block transfer enables transfer students to enter a program with advanced standing.

#### Challenge examination

A comprehensive examination that encompasses the major components or learning outcomes of a course.

#### Course equivalency

A SAIT course that is determined to be at least 80% equivalent to another SAIT course.

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<b>Credit ("CR")</b>	For the purpose of this procedure, a credit, or "CR" grade, is a grade assigned to a student who has received recognition of their prior learning.
<b>Credit bank</b>	A form of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) where pre-assessed training (non-formal) is eligible for PLAR credit to a specific program.
<b>Credit course</b>	A course that is part of a program approved by the Alberta government, and that has a credit value associated with it. It is included in the calculation of a student's grade point average.
<b>Grade point average</b>	The measure of a student's SAIT academic achievement. It can be calculated in three ways, as set out in procedure <a href="#">AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses</a> .
<b>Informal learning</b>	The knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that a student has acquired through life/work experience, as demonstrated through one or more of an oral exam or interview, performance assessment, product assessment, portfolio assessment, demonstration, self-assessment, external evaluation or worksite assessment.
<b>Junior course</b>	A course focused on building introductory or foundational knowledge or basic skills.
<b>Letter of permission</b>	An evaluation and pre-approval process for students seeking to enroll in a course(s) at another institution and to receive transfer credit towards their SAIT program, as determined by the Office of the Registrar.
<b>Non-credit course</b>	A non-credit course is not part of an Alberta government-approved program, and does not have a credit value associated with it. It is not included in the calculation of a student's grade point average.
<b>Non-formal learning</b>	The knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that students have acquired from non-credit courses, on-the-job training and professional workshops, as demonstrated through oral exam or interview, performance assessment, product assessment or portfolio assessment.

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**One-way course  
equivalency**

A SAIT course that is determined to be at least 80% equivalent to another SAIT course, but not vice versa.

**Portfolio**

Formal documentation and other supporting evidence (informal learning and/or non-formal learning) that provides validation of prior learning.

**Prior learning assessment  
and recognition (PLAR)**

A process for the institutional assessment, identification, documentation and recognition of a person's knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning and experience in relation to a course's learning outcomes, by way of a challenge examination, credit bank or portfolio submission. Upon successful demonstration of learning outcomes, credit is awarded towards a learner pathway that can be used towards a program's requirements.

**Recognition of prior learning  
(RPL)**

All learning that a person acquires throughout their life and includes transfer credit, course equivalency and prior learning assessment and recognition.

**Residency**

The number of credits that a student must complete at SAIT in order to be awarded a credential for a SAIT program of study.

**Student**

A person who has a SAIT ID number and a student record.

**Student record**

A record created for a person who has confirmed that person's intention to attend SAIT, and which allows that person to be eligible to register for SAIT courses.

**Transfer agreement**

An agreement between two post-secondary institutions — a from (sending) institution and a to (receiving) institution — that specifies how the from (sending) institution's course or program will be accepted for transfer credit at the to (receiving) institution. It can take the form of transfer decisions or a block transfer.

**Transfer credit**

Upon successful demonstration of course transferability and applicability, credit is granted for a specific SAIT course(s) based on a course(s) completed at another post-secondary institution. Credit may be awarded through a transfer decision or a block transfer.

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**Transfer decision**

Evaluation of an individual course or courses taken at one post-secondary institution and used towards a program at another post-secondary institution.

**Transfer student**

A student who has previously earned credit at one or more post-secondary institutions and who is transferring that credit to another post-secondary institution to continue a program of study

**Two-way course equivalency**

Two SAIT courses that are determined to be at least 80% equivalent to each other, also referred to as reciprocal course equivalencies.

**GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

1. A student wishing to obtain recognition of prior learning towards a credit course may do so through transfer credit, course equivalency recognition or prior learning assessment and recognition (challenge examination, credit bank or portfolio submission of prior non-formal or/and informal learning).
2. A student who wishes to apply for recognition of prior learning towards a credit course must be pursuing a SAIT credit credential as defined in procedure [AC.2.17.1 Credentials](#). A student who is registered in a course but who is not seeking a SAIT credential may request a pre-requisite waiver.
3. The Office of the Registrar (OTR) manages the recognition of prior learning processes for credit courses.
4. Recognition of prior learning that is awarded towards a credit course is for that course alone, and not for that course's prerequisites or corequisites.
5. This procedure does not apply to:
  - a) The recognition of prior learning for non-credit courses: see procedure [AC.3.18.2 Recognition of Prior Learning – Non-Credit Courses](#).
  - b) The recognition of prior learning for apprenticeship courses (with the exception of the apprenticeship diploma programs): students must contact Alberta Industry and Training for information on recognition of their prior learning.

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6. SAIT recognizes the apprenticeship credentials in the Alberta Credential Framework through the provisions of the *Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act*. Completion of technical training, as recognized by SAIT's Certificate of Accomplishment, is one of the requirements for apprentices to receive their designation of Journey person, which allows them to write the Red Seal Exam and to receive their Red Seal Endorsement from Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT).
7. Fees for the recognition of prior learning processes are specified in the SAIT Fee Schedule, are representative of the services performed in the recognition of prior learning process and are not refundable. Fees and fee deadlines are posted on [sait.ca](http://sait.ca)
8. Recognition of prior learning approvals are subject to the 50 percent residency requirement as set out in procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
9. Recognition of prior learning cannot be used to administer partial credits towards a SAIT course.

## PROCEDURE

### A. Transfer Credit and Course Equivalency

1. Transfer credit and course equivalency are determined by reviewing and comparing the content of the course from another post-secondary institution (in the case of transfer credit) or from SAIT (in the case of course equivalency) with the content of the SAIT course towards which credit or equivalency is being sought, in relation to factors including but not limited to:
  - a) Course description;
  - b) Topics/subjects covered in the course;
  - c) Learning outcomes and objectives;
  - d) Assessments/evaluations;
  - e) Course credits;
  - f) Course hours;
  - g) Course role and depth of learning (in relation to courses in SAIT's degree programs).

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2. Course equivalencies should be identified during the program design/redesign and curriculum change processes, so that existing courses can be used in a new or redesigned program and new courses are not unnecessarily created.
3. Eligibility of students and courses:
  - a) To be considered for transfer credit, courses must generally have been completed at a public government-recognized post-secondary institution other than SAIT or at a SAIT-recognized training facility. Courses completed at a private institution may be considered for transfer credit if that institution has the authority to grant credentials by act of the provincial/territorial legislature or the international equivalent or through a government-mandated quality assurance mechanism.
  - b) A grade is required for the course to be eligible for transfer credit. Transfer credit shall not usually be granted for a course where the transcript reflects a special grade such as ATT, AUD, P, etc. However, students may still be eligible for recognition of such prior learning as set out in section B of this procedure.
  - c) Students may use one or more external credit courses to apply for credit for one or more SAIT courses
  - d) Transfer credit may be awarded on a block transfer basis or on a course-to-course basis. Course equivalencies are awarded on a course-to-course basis only.
  - e) A student who has been academically withdrawn from SAIT and who has taken courses at another post-secondary institution during the period of academic withdrawal may be eligible to apply for transfer credit for those courses towards SAIT courses, as per the requirements of this procedure. The student is required to obtain a letter of permission through [transfer.options@sait.ca](mailto:transfer.options@sait.ca) to ensure that the external transfer credit will be applicable towards their SAIT program.
  - f) A student who has been academically withdrawn cannot graduate on transfer credits. They must return to SAIT for at least one term as set out in procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
  - g) A student who has been suspended from SAIT due to academic misconduct and who has taken courses at another post-secondary institution during that suspension is not eligible to apply for transfer credit for those courses towards SAIT courses.
  - h) A student who has been suspended from SAIT due to non-academic misconduct and who has taken courses at another post-secondary institution during that suspension may be eligible to apply for transfer credit for those courses towards

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SAIT courses, as determined by the Registrar and as per this procedure. The student is required to obtain a letter of permission through [transfer.options@sait.ca](mailto:transfer.options@sait.ca) to ensure that the external transfer credit will be applicable towards their SAIT program.

4. Limitations:

- a) Transfer credit may be granted for courses taken up to a maximum of ten academic years prior to the student's program start date for transfer credit. However, the associate dean responsible for the course may set a shorter or longer credit time limitation according to the course's discipline and currency.
- b) Course equivalency can be used to meet a program's graduation requirements if the course was taken within the program's completion timelines as set out in procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression - Credit Courses](#) or if the course was part of a credential that is an admission requirement of the program.
- c) Where no transfer agreement exists, junior courses may be eligible for transfer credit if a student has been awarded a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree from an accredited Canadian institution, as determined by the Office of the Registrar when transfer credit is requested.
- d) Only a credit course can be used as transfer credit or course equivalency towards another credit course.
- e) Course equivalency may be one-way, whereby one course is considered equivalent to a second course but not vice versa.
- f) A student must have achieved a mark of at least 63% or equivalent in the course(s) for which the student seeks transfer credit.
- g) No more than two courses may generally be combined for transfer credit or course equivalency towards one SAIT course; for transfer credit, each individual grade must meet the minimum 63% or equivalent grade requirement. However, the OTR and the school/department may agree in appropriate cases to combine more than two courses towards one SAIT course.
- h) The course must be a minimum 80% match to the content of the SAIT course towards which transfer credit or course equivalency is sought, subject to the following exceptions:
  - i) If a SAIT program has an elective requirement, transfer credit may be granted for courses from an academic discipline or from a subject area within a

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discipline that meet the elective requirements of that SAIT program, and those courses are not required to meet the 80% content match to a specific SAIT course. The school/department responsible for teaching that area or discipline makes the decision whether or not to grant transfer credit.

- ii) If a SAIT program has a transfer agreement with another post-secondary institution, credit is based on the agreement as a whole, as per section B.3 of procedure [AC.3.18.3 Articulation](#).
  - iii) If the dean/director responsible for the course has determined that a 70% content match is permissible for an introductory course.
  - i) A course may only be utilized once for transfer credit. It can be applied for the full value of the credit equivalence.
5. A student may request transfer credit, course equivalency and/or PLAR towards a course within their program by the end of the student's second term of enrolment in their program, through [transfer.options@sait.ca](mailto:transfer.options@sait.ca), with the exception of transfer credit obtained through Study Abroad or for courses completed at another post-secondary institution as approved by the Office of the Registrar and/or confirmed by a Letter of Permission. Note that if a student is currently registered in the course for which they are requesting transfer credit, course equivalency, or PLAR, the request must be made either by the end of the add/drop period (to qualify for a tuition refund if the transfer credit is granted) or by the midpoint of the course in all other cases.
  6. It is the student's responsibility to provide full and complete information as SAIT requires about the course(s) they are seeking to apply as transfer credit towards a SAIT course, in order to support SAIT's assessment of that prior coursework. This may include, for instance, detailed course outlines and other course materials.
  7. At the student's request, the OTR or the academic chair/coordinator responsible for the course towards which the student is seeking transfer credit or course equivalency will provide the student with the course outline for that course.
  8. The academic chair/coordinator is responsible for reviewing and assessing the student's request for transfer credit or course equivalency within ten business days of receiving that request, using the Transfer Credit/Course Equivalency Evaluation Rubric in Schedule B, an Associated Document to this procedure. This timeline is particularly important in the case of a student's request that is submitted before SAIT's add/drop deadline.
  9. The academic chair/coordinator or designate will notify the OTR of the transfer credit or course equivalency decision. If the decision is denied, the academic

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chair/coordinator will provide a clear rationale outlining the areas where there are deficiencies (for example, which outcomes were not demonstrated adequately or at all) so that the student understands the reason for the decision. The OTR will notify the student of that decision.

10. The OTR will record an approved transfer credit as a credit (CR) on the student's academic record. The credit received is not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA), as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
11. Course equivalencies that are reciprocal (two-way equivalency) are automatically calculated in the degree audit. Course equivalencies that are one-way require the student to see their academic advisor for a graduation requirements adjustment. The grade received in the equivalent course will be included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA), as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
12. A student should register in, continue attending, and not drop or withdraw from the course until the student has been advised of the results of their request for transfer credit or inquiry about course equivalency.
13. A student who receives transfer credit or course equivalency towards a course in which the student is registered and who is eligible to drop or withdraw from the course is responsible for ensuring that they are dropped or withdrawn from the course.
14. If a student is unsuccessful in obtaining transfer credit or course equivalency and wishes to challenge that decision,
  - a) The student is required to submit a written response to the academic chair/coordinator within five calendar days of receiving notification of the decision. The written response shall include the assessment comments provided by the academic chair/coordinator, along with the student's rationale for challenging the decision supported by specific evidence to refute that assessment. If the challenge results in the approval of the transfer credit, the academic chair/coordinator must inform the Office of the Registrar.
  - b) If the situation cannot be resolved, the student may formally appeal the decision in writing to the dean/director or designate responsible for that course within five business days of receiving the academic chair/coordinator's response. The written appeal shall include the assessment and the academic chair/coordinator's challenge decision, along with the student's rationale for appealing that decision supported by specific evidence to refute the assessment and challenge decision.

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- c) The dean/director or designate has the discretion to decide if a face-to-face meeting is required. If so, the student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual for advice and support; in general, however, only the student speaks on the student's behalf.
- d) The dean/director or designate shall advise the student and the academic chair/coordinator in writing of their decision and the rationale for that decision within seven business days of receiving the student's appeal. If the appeal results in the approval of the transfer credit, the academic chair/coordinator must inform the Office of the Registrar.
- e) The decision of the dean/director or designate is final and binding.

## **B. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**

### **1. Challenge Exams**

- a) Limitations:
  - i) The decision to create a challenge examination for a credit course is at the discretion of the school/department delivering that course.
  - ii) A student must satisfy all course pre-requisites before taking a challenge examination for that course.
  - iii) A student cannot write a challenge examination for a course that the student has already failed.
  - iv) A student cannot write a challenge examination for a course that the student has already passed, unless the student passed that course:
    - More than five years ago, in the case of a course that is part of a Certificate program, or
    - More than seven years ago, in the case of a course that is part of a Diploma or an Applied Degree program, or
    - More than ten years ago, in the case of a course that is part of a Bachelor's Degree program.
  - v) A student may attempt only one challenge examination per course.

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- b) A student may register in a challenge examination at any time before the midpoint of that credit course. However, if the student is registered in the course which the student is challenging and wishes to receive a tuition refund if the challenge examination is successful, the student must register for the challenge examination before the end of the add/drop period for that course, as outlined in procedure [AC.3.18.1 - Schedule A - Challenge Examination Process](#).
- c) A student wishing to take a challenge examination for a course shall inquire with the Office of the Registrar to determine if a challenge examination for that course is available. The Office of the Registrar will then confirm with the academic chair/coordinator if a challenge examination is available for that course. At the student's request, either the Office of the Registrar or the academic chair/coordinator will provide the student with the course outline for the course which the student is seeking to challenge. The Office of the Registrar shall:
  - i) Advise the student of the fee for the challenge examination.
  - ii) Process the completed Challenge Examination Request form.
  - iii) Credit the student account with the challenge examination fee.
  - iv) Inform the academic chair/coordinator that student would like to proceed with challenge examination.
- d) The academic chair/coordinator or designate will oversee the creation of the challenge exam within 2 business days.
- e) Testing Services will notify student to schedule/book and complete the examination within 10 business days of receiving the challenge exam. The challenge examination must be completed within ten business days of registering in the examination or an "F" or "NP" grade will be entered for the examination.
- f) A student who misses a scheduled challenge exam is not eligible for a fee refund or for rescheduling of the examination, unless the student's absence is excused as per procedure [AC.3.8.1 Attendance Requirements](#). A student may be required to submit corroborating documents to the academic chair/coordinator to substantiate the reason for the absence.
- g) The student must submit all portions of the challenge examination when the student takes the examination. Challenge examinations will not be returned to students.

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- h) The school/department that creates the challenge examination is responsible for storing the examination and for arranging for its invigilation and marking.
- i) The school/department shall mark the challenge examination within ten business days of the student attempting the examination.
- j) The minimum grade required to pass a challenge examination for a course is the minimum grade required to pass the course itself. The academic chair/coordinator will inform the OTR of the student's final mark in the challenge examination.
- k) The OTR will record a student's successful challenge examination as a credit (CR) on the student's academic record. The credit received is not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA), as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#). The OTR will work with accrediting or regulatory bodies to provide the letter grade for a challenge examination as those bodies require.
- l) A student should register in, continue attending, and not drop or withdraw from the course until the student has been advised of the results of the challenge examination.
- m) A student who successfully completes a challenge exam for a course in which the student is registered and who is eligible to drop or withdraw from the course is responsible for ensuring that they are dropped or withdrawn from the course.
- n) Challenge examinations may be appealed within 30 calendar days of receipt of the grade, as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
- o) Procedures [AC.3.4.3 Student Academic Conduct](#) and [AC.3.4.4 Student Non-Academic Conduct](#) apply to all students completing or attempting a challenge examination.
- p) A summary of the procedure to challenge a credit course is set out in Schedule A, an Associated Document to this procedure.

## 2. Credit Bank

- a) Limitations:
  - i) The decision to which education or training is eligible for PLAR- Credit Bank is at the discretion of the school/department delivering the program.

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- ii) The previous education or training must be a minimum 80% match to the curriculum of the predetermined course(s) towards which credit is awarded.
  - b) A student who is enrolled in a SAIT program may be awarded a set number of credits towards one or more SAIT courses in that program if a preapproved pathway has been determined and pre-assessed related to previous education, including continuing education credit or non-credit programs or training from employers or private training organizations.
  - c) A student may apply for PLAR-Credit Bank towards their program at any time before the midpoint of the term, during the first two terms of enrollment in the program, through [transfer.options@sait.ca](mailto:transfer.options@sait.ca). However, if the student is registered in the course for which the credit bank exists and wishes to receive a tuition refund if granted recognition of that prior learning, the student must apply for PLAR-Credit Bank before the end of the add/drop period for that course.
  - d) It is the student's responsibility to provide full and complete information as SAIT requires, in order to support SAIT's validation of that prior education or training.
  - e) The OTR will notify the student that PLAR-Credit Bank is available.
  - f) The OTR will record an approved credit as a credit (CR) on the student's academic record. The credit received is not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA), as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
  - g) A student should register in, continue attending, and not drop or withdraw from the specified course(s) until the student has been advised of the PLAR-Credit Bank pathway specific to their program.
  - h) A student who receives PLAR-Credit Bank towards a course(s) in which the student is registered and who is eligible to drop or withdraw from the course is responsible for ensuring that they are dropped or withdrawn from the course.
3. Portfolio Submission
- a) Students may use their non-formal and informal learning to apply for credit towards one or more SAIT courses if their learning is sufficient in content and meets the requirements of the SAIT course towards which credit is sought. Credit is granted for current knowledge, skills and abilities demonstrated to have arisen from non-formal and informal learning. Currency will depend on the nature of the program and course for which credit is being sought.

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- b) Limitations:
- i) The decision as to which courses are eligible for PLAR-Portfolio is at the discretion of the school/department delivering that course.
  - ii) Where a student is applying for credit based on work experience, a minimum of one year full-time or equivalent relevant work experience is generally required.
  - iii) PLAR-Portfolio must be a minimum 80% match to the curriculum of the course(s) towards which credit is sought.
- c) PLAR-Portfolio learning for which credit is sought may be used in combination with credit courses taken at another institution(s).
- d) If a student has failed a SAIT course, the student may subsequently apply for PLAR-Portfolio of the learning that the student has acquired since failing the course.
- e) A student may apply for PLAR-Portfolio towards a course at any time before the midpoint of that course, during the first two terms of enrollment in their program, through [transfer.options@sait.ca](mailto:transfer.options@sait.ca). However, if the student is registered in the course towards which PLAR-Portfolio is being sought and wishes to receive a tuition refund if granted recognition of that prior learning, the student must apply for PLAR before the end of the add/drop period for that course.
- f) It is the student's responsibility to provide full and complete information as SAIT requires about their PLAR-Portfolio, in order to support SAIT's assessment of that prior non-formal and informal learning.
- g) At the student's request, the OTR or the academic chair/coordinator responsible for the course towards which the student is seeking credit will provide the student with the course outline for that course.
- h) The academic chair/coordinator responsible for the course towards which credit is sought is responsible for overseeing the assessment of that student's request, within ten business days of receiving that request, using the PLAR-Evaluation Rubric in Schedule C, an Associated Document to this procedure.
- i) The academic chair/coordinator will notify the OTR of the PLAR-Portfolio decision. The OTR will notify the student of that decision.

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- j) The OTR will record an approved credit as a credit (CR) on the student's academic record. The credit received is not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA), as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#).
- k) A student should register in, continue attending, and not drop or withdraw from the course until the student has been advised of the results of their application for non-formal or informal learning credit.
- l) A student who receives PLAR-Portfolio towards a course in which the student is registered and who is eligible to drop or withdraw from the course is responsible for ensuring that they are dropped or withdrawn from the course.
- m) If a student is unsuccessful in obtaining credit and wishes to challenge that decision,
  - i) The student is required to submit a written response to the academic chair/coordinator within five calendar days of receiving notification of the decision. The written response shall include the assessment comments provided by the academic chair/coordinator, along with the student's rationale for challenging the decision supported by specific evidence to refute that assessment. If the challenge results in the approval of the transfer credit, the academic chair/coordinator must inform the Office of the Registrar.
  - ii) If the situation cannot be resolved, the student may formally appeal the decision in writing to the dean/director or designate responsible for that course within five business days of receiving the academic chair/coordinator's response. The written appeal shall include the assessment and the academic chair/coordinator's challenge decision, along with the student's rationale for appealing that decision supported by evidence to refute the assessment and challenge decision.
  - iii) The dean/director or designate has the discretion to decide if a face-to-face meeting is required. If so, the student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual for advice and support; in general, however, only the student speaks on the student's behalf.
  - iv) The dean/director or designate shall advise the student and the academic chair/coordinator in writing of their decision and the rationale for that decision within seven business days of receiving the student's appeal. If the appeal results in the approval of transfer credit, the academic chair/coordinator must inform the Office of the Registrar.

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- v) The decision of the dean/director or designate is final and binding.

## **ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

Schedule A	<a href="#">Challenge Examination Process</a>
Schedule B	<a href="#">Transfer Credit/Course Equivalency Evaluation Rubric</a>
Schedule C	<a href="#">Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Evaluation Rubric</a>

## **POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE**

AC.3.18	<a href="#">Recognition of Prior Learning policy</a>
AC.3.18.2	<a href="#">Recognition of Prior Learning – Non-Credit Courses procedure</a>
AC.3.18.3	<a href="#">Articulation procedure</a>

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