

FACULTY OF ARTS DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE STUDIES RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (PRACTICUM PROGRAM) INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR STUDENTS

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is for those who have acquired significant knowledge and skills outside the formal university classroom. This policy is designed to be congruent with the University of Regina PLAR Policy as well as with other related Faculties such as Education and Social Work.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a program that awards credit for learning you have acquired through your professional and personal life, skills training, and volunteer experiences.

PLAR credit will be assessed and awarded under the guidelines addressed in this package for undergraduate-level, university credit practicum programs only. Credit will not be awarded for experience alone. It will be awarded for demonstrated learning, which includes knowledge, skills, and abilities. Students must clearly demonstrate an ability to critically reflect on the knowledge gained through experience.

What is PLAR/RPL?

"Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a systematic process which uses a variety of tools to help learners reflect to identify, articulate and demonstrate learning for the purpose of gaining recognition by educational institutions, workplaces, credentialing organizations, regulatory bodies and others." (Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment CAPLA,

http://recognitionforlearning.ca/practitioner/aboutPLAR.php).

"The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process - also referred to as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition or PLAR - is designed for people who have acquired significant knowledge and skills outside formal university classrooms. RPL or PLAR or PLA (Prior Learning Assessment) is a "process of identifying, assessing and recognizing what a person knows and can do for the purpose of awarding academic credit". (Canadian Labour Force Development Board, 1999). In some cases, skills training and personal and professional development, which has not led to a degree, certificate or diploma, can be recognized through RPL." (www.uregina.ca/rpl)

"Learning does not always take place in the classroom, it also happens on the job, at home, and in the community. The recognition of prior learning is a reliable process that takes into consideration ALL learning by examining what a person knows and can do. This learning includes:

- Formal Learning structured, intentional, and achieved through credit-based programs/courses;
- ❖ Non-Formal Learning intentional and gained through participation in noncredit courses; workplace-based training, or workshops.

- Informal Learning incidental and gained through life experience, workplacebased tasks, volunteer activities, self-study, hobbies, family responsibilities, etc.;
- Experiential Learning either intentional or incidental and encompasses the concepts of non-formal and informal learning." (http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca/rpl)

Eligibility Criteria

As of September 1, 2023, students applying for credit for JS290 (Introductory Practicum), must:

- Be fully admitted to the Justice Studies Program
- ❖ Have a minimum of 1 year of full-time waged or unwaged (voluntary) human service experience (approximately 2000 hours), which has been completed in the past ten (10) years, and at least 300 hours directly related to human services in justice-related fields.
- Contact the Practicum Coordinator prior to the relevant practicum application deadline to discuss their intent to apply for PLAR credit and, if needed, participate in the placement planning process and
- ❖ Clearly demonstrate in their PLAR application how they have met the objectives and competencies for JS290.

Students applying for credit for JS490 (Advanced Practicum), must:

- ❖ Be fully admitted to the Justice Studies Program
- ❖ Have a minimum of 2 years of full-time waged or unwaged (voluntary) human service experience (approximately 4000 hours), which has been completed in the past ten (10) years, and at least 700 hours directly related to human services in justice-related fields.
- Contact the Practicum Coordinator prior to the relevant practicum application deadline to discuss their intent to apply for PLAR credit and, if needed, participate in the placement planning process and
- Clearly demonstrate in their PLAR application how they have met the objectives and competencies for JS490.

The Justice Studies Department recognizes that human service work occurs in a variety of settings, including organizations, institutions, collectives, communities, and coalitions. A diversity of experience is highly valued in this process.

Students who have completed practica, internships, or co-operative education work experiences in a diploma or certificate program may draw from their learning from these practice experiences in their portfolios. Students are, however, encouraged to apply for transfer credit consideration for those practica and internship experiences completed at other post-secondary institutions first. Students who have completed non- (or low-) credit co-op work experiences are encouraged to consider PLAR applications only.

PLAR Application Deadlines:

Prospective PLAR applicants may submit their application documents to the University of Regina's PLAR office at any time, but are strongly encouraged to do so well prior to deadlines for applications to the JS 290 and JS 490 program. Suggestions are:

- December 15th for consideration prior to JS 290 or JS 490 eligibility in the subsequent Fall Term.
- May 1st for consideration prior to JS 290 or JS 490 eligibility for the subsequent Winter Term.

Assessment Process

The PLAR process is facilitated by the RPL Program Coordinator, who is housed in the Recognition of Prior Learning Centre. The provision of support for PLAR applicants as provided by the RPL Centre is three-fold:

- 1. Preparing, conducting, and providing feedback on assessments of prior learning
- 2. Facilitating portfolio development
- 3. Providing support to students throughout the PLAR process

An individual interested in seeking credit for prior learning is strongly encouraged to contact the Recognition of Prior Learning Centre (see www.uregina.ca/rpl for contact information) or a Faculty of Arts academic advisor. The RPL Centre will assist students with the process of facilitating a focused application. The approval of credit is at the discretion of the Associate Dean or designate.

Portfolios are typically assessed/evaluated by two (2) faculty members of the Justice Studies Department. They will use the form titled "Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for Academic Credit" (See appendix B). This process is to ensure a fair and balanced assessment/evaluation of the PLAR application.

Preparing Your Portfolio

Portfolios submitted for RPL credit will follow the format identified by the Recognition of Prior Learning Centre. Detailed information on portfolio format and content is available on the PLAR Centre website https://www.uregina.ca/cce/studentservices/admitted/plar.html

Preparing your portfolio takes a significant amount of time, thought, and reflection. Be sure to allow sufficient time to collect the required artifacts, develop the written sections, and have a colleague or friend review your portfolio prior to submission. Based on the experiences of previous students who have prepared RPL portfolios for JS290, you can expect to take up to 3 months to compile your portfolio.

In preparing the content outlined in the document above, students applying for credit for JS290 or JS 490) are expected to provide evidence of knowledge, skills, and abilities regarding the objectives of the course (see Appendix A) and the competencies identified in the JS290 or JS 490) field placement evaluation form (see Appendix C).

You are encouraged to include pieces of information that would provide insight into your learning about self, human services practice, and social justice. This may include previously collected evaluation forms from participants in groups/workshops you have facilitated, letters from previous 'clients' which attest to your human services practice, editorials, notes/entries which capture how you have engaged with the complexities of practice, etc. **Due to the power differential inherent in the 'client' – human services**

worker relationship, you are asked not to solicit a reference or evaluation from service users.

Please also delete any identifying information when submitting materials respecting people with whom you have worked.

The following are some questions that may be used to guide your reflection. **Please note:** You are not expected to relate your full personal life history, just those events/experiences which have particularly shaped your views:

- What life experiences have shaped your views on human services and social justice?
- How has your understanding of your social, political, and historical location and identities, both facilitated and constrained your ability to practice social justice?
- What theoretical frameworks/paradigms have informed your understanding of human services work and social justice?
- How have you and how has your human service practice changed over time to become more critical, self-reflective, and radical/anti-oppressive?
- How have you benefited from/been complicit in the marginalization of others (for instance Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ, differently-abled persons, etc.)?
- Reflect on a time in your human service practice when you responded in an oppressive manner. What was your learning about "social justice" as a result of this incident? What was your learning about "self"? How did you ultimately address this? Explain how this learning has directed your current practice. You may want to reflect here on how you were socialized to regard individuals who are seen as "other" in our society as different.
- ❖ Provide an example from your practice of when you successfully challenged an existing service, policy, practice, or decision which you found oppressive. How did you come to recognize this service or policy etc. as problematic? What form did the challenge take? What, in your mind, made the challenge successful? What was your primary learning from this experience? In hindsight, is there anything you would do differently? Your critical inquiry should rely heavily on social justice theory as well as practice.
- ❖ How Justice Studies work is currently and historically implicated in maintaining structural inequalities related to Indigenous people, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and other markers of identity? Who benefits, and how, from our current approaches to social services? As part of your response, consider the current political, provincial, and federal climate; consider as well how power is used to keep large groups of people marginalized.
- ❖ In what traditional Indigenous people territory is your community located? If your work has primarily been within a non-First Nations group/organization/institution, describe and critique the protocols which have been developed when working with First Nations in your area. If no protocols have been established, examine why this is so, and what you see as possibilities for change here.
- ❖ What does the term social justice mean to you? How have you demonstrated being challenged in participating in social justice activities? E.g., What constrains you from being a "radical" worker? How are you engaged with these constraints?

- Please draw on actual examples from your practice when responding to these questions.
- What are your beliefs about the human services worker/client relationship? How have you acted on your beliefs within your human services practice? An exploration of your ability to practice across differences is essential here.
- ❖ Provide an example of your written work that demonstrates your ability to write clearly and critically. This might include a report or assessment that you have conducted in your work; a letter to the editor; a submission to a newsletter; a proposal; a letter on behalf of a "client" etc. Please delete all identifying information to protect confidentiality. If no such writing is available to you, discuss with your assessor what evidence you might submit here to demonstrate this competency. For instance, you might want to write a simulated letter or short article for a newspaper outlining your concern regarding a social justice issue in your community that you are aware of.
- ❖ Provide an example from your practice of where your personal and political ethics were challenged. Discuss the nature of the conflict, what you did, and what you would do differently if given the opportunity. What learning did you extract from this experience, and how has this learning directed your current practice? Think here in particular about ethical issues around differences that challenged the status quo.

Since we acknowledge a diversity of ways of learning, we also want to honor the many ways students may be able to demonstrate their learning. If you want to demonstrate your understanding of competency in a creative, artistic, non-linear, or oral manner please consult the RPL Coordinator around the options available for this.

Assessment Criteria

Students applying for RPL credit for JS290 and/or JS 490 are required to submit a portfolio that demonstrates learning, including knowledge, skills, and abilities. JS290 and JS 490 are made up of two components: the field placement and the integrative seminars. Therefore, in addition to human service experience, students seeking prior learning credit for JS290 or JS 490 must demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on this experience and integrate theory and practice, as articulated in the objectives for the course (see Appendix A). The individual assessing the application for credit may request additional information from the applicant; this may be provided in writing or through an interview.

To be eligible for prior learning credit, students must also be familiar with various Justice Studies frameworks such as anti-racist, anti-heterosexist, feminist, anti-colonialist, anti-ableist, and other approaches, and be able to demonstrate how they have integrated these frameworks within their practice. As such, for each of the competencies identified in the assessment form, assessors will consider how well your portfolio incorporates the following elements:

Critical self-reflection, i.e., an understanding of how one's own social, political and historical location impacts practice especially with those who have been relegated to the margins (in regards to class, gender, sexuality, race, physical and mental ability, etc.).

- Ability to critique and make visible one's anti-oppressive practice through the use of actual examples from one's work, especially as they relate to your work with those who have historically been oppressed, such as people living in poverty, Indigenous peoples, trans people, etc.
- Knowledge, integration, and critical analysis of anti-oppressive frameworks and theories. Demonstrate clearly how theory and practice come together for you, and how anti-oppressive theory informs your work.
- ❖ Ability to generalize previous learning to current practice. Showcase what you have learned to date about working across differences, and how this has informed your practice. Engagement with the complexities and contradictions of practice. Examining contradictions, both personally and politically, is crucial within an anti-oppressive analysis. You are encouraged to critically interrogate both your own contradictions as you see them in your practice as well as "mainstream" human services practices and assumptions, which are evident in the workplace. This means thinking deeply about how your own past experiences of learning, socialization and mainstream human services practice might be at odds with anti-oppressive practice.
- Clear, concise, and organized writing, including proper APA referencing of outside materials. References to learnings and readings from previous courses, especially those focusing on Anti-oppressive practice and other practice theories and approaches are essential here.

APPENDIX A JS 290 AND JS 490 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. JS290 – Introductory Practicum

Course Description and Goals

JS 290 is an introduction to professional practice in an approved justice organization (e.g., CBOs; corrections; policing; emergency services; youth; women; immigrants; etc.).

The goal of a practicum placement is to offer students an opportunity to integrate theory in practice by applying the knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) acquired during their formative, university, academic years.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will have the underpinning for the KSAs required in professional practice. During the semester, student assignments are geared to acquiring professional learning and practice strategies:

- Self-reflective practice;
- Understanding others;
- Leadership and system thinking skills.
- Community communication skills;
- Cultural competency; and,

The above objectives are reviewed in class. Readings and other resources will be provided to orient the discussions. Students, then, will have the opportunity to demonstrate (via assignments) their learning and practice:

- Students acquire information about the Department of Justice Studies;
- Students are able to plan for and manage their program of courses;
- Students gain some information about career opportunities in the justice field;
- Students expected behavioral and attitudinal conduct is reviewed.

2. JS 490 Advanced Practicum

Course Introduction and Course Objectives

Students frequently ask questions about the nature of their practicum. *Is doing a practicum volunteering? If I dislike my placement, am I placed with the wrong organization? A practicum is an unpaid job!* "For my field placement to be useful, is it related to the career I am pursuing (Kiser, 2012)?" These questions, and others, are grounded in a misconstruction of the purpose of a practicum or internship (the terminology is *discipline-dependent*).

A practicum is an environment for experiential learning, the integration of theoretical knowledge to proven practices. It takes place in a *community classroom*. A practicum connects students to a professional and human service community, a network of professional disciplines, and organizations. It is, when best applied, the practice of

classroom-related knowledge, skills, and attitudes; understanding complex ideas and writing about them; research skills; analysis and synthesis of ideas; self-evaluative skills; presentation or verbal skills; and critical thinking skills. Students in the Advanced Practicum are expected to exhibit the highest standards of professional practice at their field placements.

As pre-service professionals, students are expected to:

- Conduct themselves in a manner that aligns with the expectations of their field placement, organization (i.e., following policies and protocols);
- Act ethically, respect staff and clients' privacy.
- A personal appearance that is suitable for the environment and the organization's culture.
- Ask questions (demonstrate inquisitiveness) and solicit assistance when needed.
- Show a capacity to work independently and show initiative
- Wanting to be a member of human service, organizational team and,
- As one of the ambassadors from the Department of Justice Studies and the University of Regina.

These objectives and achieving them are not intended to be exhaustive. More objectives can be added to a student's practicum learning discussion with a student's practicum supervisor. The list below (after the next paragraph) is the core of objectives, expressed as questions, for all students.

This course asks students to apply their academic experience to a professional and human service, organization community in a justice setting, *learning about and from the staff and clients*. In addition to the required textbook, other possible sources of learning are in parenthesis.

- 1. Are you ethically competent? (course: professional ethics);
- 2. Do you use supervision effectively? (Courses on understanding human behaviour; establishing a meaningful dialogue with your professors.);
- 3. Are you sensitive to culturally diverse ideas; worldviews? (Courses related to discrimination; First Nations courses; religious studies courses; etc.);
- 4. How well do you learn from experience? Are you flexible? Can you adapt to new situations based on past events? (Introductory practicum; employment experiences).
- 5. Do you have a communication plan to intervene with clients, at meetings, etc.? Are you prepared for your practicum before arriving? (Professional Communication and Writing course; other similar courses);
- 6. Is self-care a regular part of your life; are you self-aware of how others see you the image and message you convey; and are you introspective, self-reflecting, and evolving your identity? (Practicum courses)
- 7. What is your plan to bring closure to your field placement and setting out on your career? (See the required text). Have you reviewed your learning objectives to ensure you are meeting your supervisor's expectations?
- 8. Is your cover letter, resumé in order? That is, does it conform to an expected format (chronological, functional, or combination) and contain critical information for prospective employers to review? (Discuss this with the course Instructor or your field supervisor for ideas).

APPENDIX B

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT – JS290 (Introductory Practicum) to be completed by the faculty assessor

requirement:

If additional information needed, indicate the

Explain additional requirement:

1. Interview:—— 2. Assignment/Exam: ——

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT – JS290 (Introductory Practicum)

STUDENT

Name:

Student ID:		
Faculty: Arts		
Program: Justice Studies		
ASSESSMENT		
Original Certificates or Transcripts Checked?	Yes	No
Portfolio Assessed?	Yes	No
2 or more years of human service experience in last 10 years	Yes	No
Interview Conducted?	Yes	No
Other?	Yes	No
Comments:	1	

Assessment Scale

	1	2	3	4	5
	Unsatisfactory	Marginal or inconsistent	Reliable and usually consistent	Reliable and consistent	Exceptional, showing innovation and adaptability
Unsatisfactory/Fail			Satisfactory/Pass	5	

Based on the assessment criteria above, please provide a numerical evaluation of the student's competency in the following areas as demonstrated in their portfolio, interview, and/or assignment:

1. Understanding of service delivery systems and the ability to work within them.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Understanding of and the ability to use a range of formal and informal resources.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Positive use of justice principles, values, ethics and knowledge in professional interactions.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Ability to develop helping relationships, solve problems and communicate effectively in professional interactions.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Ability to make effective use of supervision including the ability to integrate feedback.					
	1	2	3	4	5
6. Ability to effectively manage the assigned workload and employ effective written communication skills.				d and employ effective	
	1	2	3	4	5
7. Open approach to learn	7. Open approach to learning, self-awareness and professional development.				ofessional development.
	1	2	3	4	5
Comments:					
			1		
					,
					,

	Faculty/Department:
	Title(s):
	Name of Assessor(s):
	Signature of Assessor(s):
	Date:
	CREDIT HOURS TO BE AWARDED
	Course(s):
	Credit Hours:
	Elective Hours:
	Total Credit Hours Awarded:
	APPROVAL
	Name of Head of Department or designate approving assessment:
	Approval Signature: Date:
	Note: Please return a copy of the approved assessment form to the RPL office.
	PL Office Use Only:
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Sent to R/O □□

PLAR records updated □□

Assessor payment(s) processed □□

APPENDIX C

JS290 EVALUATION FORM

University of Regina Introductory Practicum (JS290) Practicum Evaluation

(Skills that students needs to demonstrate in PLAR application)

The purpose of the Introductory Practicum (JS290) is to provide students with an initial exposure to the field of Justice Studies. The expectations are to provide students with an opportunity to learn about working in an organization, to develop skills in working with clients and to examine their personal values.

STUDENT NAME:
STUDENT ID #:
NAME OF STUDENT'S FIELD PLACEMENT ORGANIZATION:
FIELD SUPERVISORS NAME:
DATE:

Evaluation Criteria

Points	Evalenation
Points	Explanation
	Outstanding performance with very strong evidence of: an insightful
_ (- ()	and comprehensive grasp of the organization's mandate; an
5 (90 to 100)	exceptional ability to make sound decisions; an excellent ability to
	organize, analyze, synthesize and integrate theory into practice; and
	to express ideas both in speech and writing.
	Very good performance with strong evidence of: thorough grasp of
4 (80 to 89)	the organization's mandate; clear ability to make sound decisions;
4 (00 to 09)	good capacity to organize, analyze, synthesize, and integrate theory
	into practice; and to express ideas both in speech and writing.
	Average performance with evidence of: a substantial knowledge of
3 (70 to 79)	the organization's mandate; ability to make a decision; a capacity to
3 (70 to 79)	organize, analyze, and to integrating theory into practice; and to
	express ideas both in speech and in writing.
	A satisfactory performance with evidence of: adequate knowledge of
	the organization's mandate; ability to make decisions with
2 (60 to 69)	supervision; a moderate ability to organize, analyze and to integrate
	theory into practice; and to express ideas in speech and writing.

1 (50 to 59)	A barely acceptable performance with evidence of a familiarity with an organization's mandate; some evidence to make decisions under supervision; minimal capacity to organize, to analyze and to integrate theory into practice; some ability to express ideas in speech and writing.
0 (< 50)	Unacceptable performance. Failing work.
No Paper (NP)	"IN" and "NP" grades are submitted at the discretion of the instructor. "IN" grades mean that due to extenuating circumstances the student was unable to meet all course requirements. "NP" grades typically say that student has abandoned the course; this may happen at any time up to the final examination and due dates.

Evaluating Student performance and progress

By considering the student's goals agreed upon between the student and the field supervisor, evaluate the following as applicable:

General

1. Was the student able to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and abilities required by the organization to perform at an entry level position? What specific knowledge, skills and abilities did the student acquire?



2. Was the student able to demonstrate problem-solving skills affecting: clients, peers, supervisors and other organizations? (Note: Consider the degree to which the student was able to show initiative and independence)



3. What did the student learn about justice roles and responsibilities: In the hosting organization? In other organizations?



4. Was the student able to work independently? Was the student able to work collaboratively? Did the student accept and act on feedback?



5. Was the student able to fit into the organization? That is, build proper and working relationships with a supervisor, coworkers, clients and other organizations?



6. Is the student learning or enhancing specific skills or techniques (e.g., interviewing, assessment, referral, and group work, etc.)?



7. Is the student participating in the organization's activities? Is the student able to contribute (e.g., budgeting, administration, board meetings, staff meetings, and grant writing, other)?



Critical Thinking

8. Is the student able to draw meaning and identify the advantages and disadvantages of particular policies?



9. Is the student able to make informed decisions: distinguishing between opinion and fact and personal question beliefs in the light of new information?



Applies Knowledge and Skills

10. Is the student able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate policy and procedures?



11. Is the student able to adapt and apply policies based on the needs of the client and professionals within the organization?



Professional Writing

12. Does the student appropriately use grammar in speech and writing? Can the student effectively communicate ideas in speech and writing?



Justice Issues

13. Does the student demonstrate an understanding of the justice issues facing the organization?



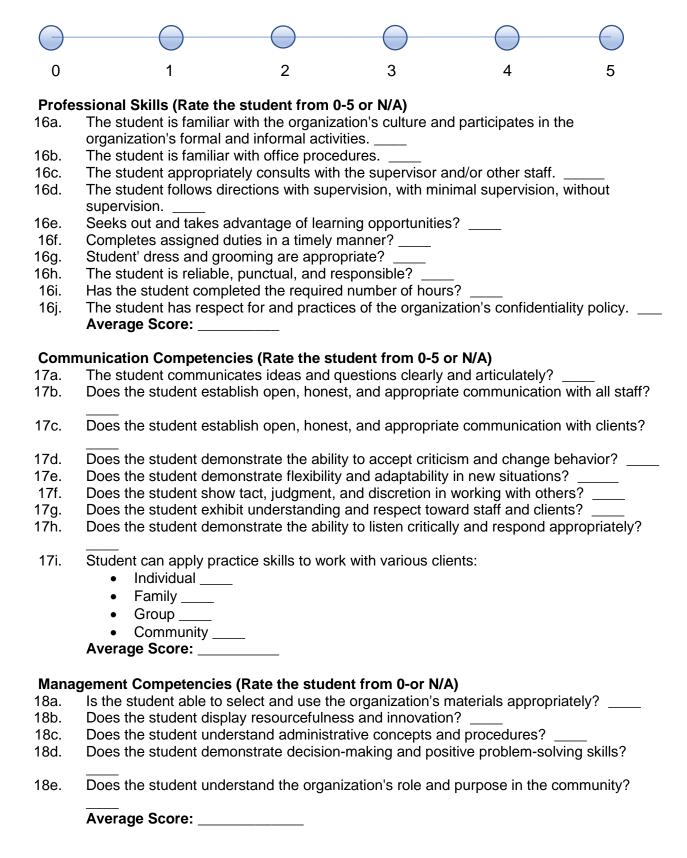
Organization Skills and Abilities

14. Does the student show organizational and time management skills; and completes assignments on time, etc.?



Technology

15. Does the student demonstrate an appropriate skill level in using technology such as word documents, databases, etc.?



Resources:

- Harrison, M.J., (2018). Best Practices in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition in Ontario Colleges & Universities (http://capla.ca/rpl/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/MaryHResearch-Report_Best-Practices-in-PLAR2019_PDF.pdf).
- 2. PLAR Portfolio Guide https://www.uregina.ca/cce/assets/docs/pdf/flexible-credit/plar-portfolio-guide.pdf
- 3. Portfolio Declaration Page https://www.uregina.ca/cce/assets/docs/pdf/flexible-credit/plar/plar-cover.pdf
- 4. Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) https://capla.ca/

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- Trowler, P. (1996). Angels in the marble? Accrediting prior experiential learning in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. *21*(1), 17 30.