

Understanding MPLAR: Facts, Tips, and Support for LBS Leads

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WHO IS A MATURE STUDENT?

- A student who is at least 18 years of age on or after January 1st of the current school year

WHAT IS MPLAR FOR MATURE STUDENTS?

- MPLAR = Prior Learning and Recognition for mature students. *Policy and Procedure Memo 132 (PPM-132)*
- MPLAR is an equivalent credit granting process for eligible students.
- MPLAR recognizes and values the knowledge and skills Mature Students have acquired in their daily life and/or through employment outside a traditional school setting.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN GOALS OF MPLAR?

- ✓ Remove barriers to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)
- ✓ Minimize the duplication of learning
- ✓ Save the adult learner time so they can move forward to sustainable employment and/or post-secondary education including apprenticeship



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR MPLAR?

- Mature students who started Grade 9 in 1999 under Ontario Secondary Schools (OSS) or later or students new to Ontario after 2004 with the purpose of obtaining an OSSD with fewer than 26* credits
- Mature students previously enrolled under process Circular H.S.1 or Ontario Schools Intermediate Senior (OS:IS) who opt for MPLAR
- A student who is at least 18 years of age on or after January 1st of the current school year enrolled in a program with the purpose of obtaining an OSSD with fewer than 26* credits

*a student who provides evidence of a completed Canadian post-secondary diploma or degree or an apprenticeship from an accredited Canadian institution can earn up to 30 credits.

WHAT IS THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS TO EARN MPLAR CREDITS?

It involves three components: Assessment at the 9/10 level and Assessment at the 11/12 level, including Equivalency, and/or Challenge



9/10 Assessment Equivalency Process

- Students participate in an individual assessment consisting of individual subject-based assessments (English, Canadian Geography, Canadian History, Math and/or Science)
- Can earn up to 16 prior learning equivalent credits (PLEs)



11/12 Equivalency Credits

- An eligible student can earn up to 10* senior equivalent credits through a formal application process documenting work, volunteer, and other education-related experiences that may be considered for credit.

*up to 14 for those students who provide evidence of a completed Canadian post-secondary diploma or degree or an apprenticeship from an accredited Canadian institution



Challenge

- Students may request a challenge for prior learning for the purpose of granting credits with a grade.
- This is a formal application process pending Principal approval.

ARE MPLAR CREDITS APPLIED TO THE ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA?

- Yes. They appear on the Mature Student's transcript as:
 - Grade 9 and 10 credits show as a block of credits under PLE1N or PLE99 depending on student management system.
 - Grade 11 and 12 credits show individually with the course code with EQV as the grade.

WHAT IF A STUDENT HAS COMPLETED A CERTIFICATE OF APPRENTICESHIP OR A POST-SECONDARY DIPLOMA OR DEGREE BUT REQUIRES THEIR OSSD?

- Relevant certificates of apprenticeship issued by Skilled Trades Ontario and/or diplomas or degrees issued by accredited and recognized Canadian postsecondary institutions may be eligible for up to 30 credits.
- Graduation requirements, including literacy and community service hours under OSSD 1999 are required.

DO ALL SCHOOL BOARDS OFFER MPLAR?

- Yes, all boards must develop and implement policies and procedures related to the equivalency and challenge process. If an LBS program isn't connected with a credit granting program, they can consult with the appropriate administrator to determine which school board in their area is offering MPLAR.

IS THERE A COST?

MPLAR is free for residents of Ontario and for those who meet one of the following criteria:

- ✓ Refugee claimant
- ✓ Permanent resident
- ✓ Convention refugee
- ✓ Canadian citizen

International visitors may have to pay a fee.



Mature Students Transitioning between LBS, MPLAR and Credit

For many mature students, the journey from enrolling in an adult education program to graduating with an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) can feel overwhelming. Enrolling in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program provides a critical foundation—equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to successfully transition to credit-based courses. The structured support of the **LBS Instructor** plays a key role in this process.

While student success is a collective effort involving many staff members, it is often the **LBS Instructor** who creates that first supportive environment that empowers learners. Through encouragement, support, and skill-building, LBS Instructors help students build the **confidence and resilience** needed to overcome barriers, support the MPLAR process, and move forward to successfully earn the credits required for their OSSD.



Navigating the Journey: A Step-by-Step Start for Mature Learners

(sample only – each program will have its own procedures)



1

STEP 1: GATHER ACADEMIC RECORDS

The mature student begins by collecting their most recent **high school transcript or status sheet**, any **post-secondary transcripts and diplomas**, and other relevant **certificates or training documents**.

2

STEP 2: DETERMINE MPLAR ELIGIBILITY

If the student has **fewer than 26 credits**, they should locate the nearest **Adult and Continuing Education (A&CE)** school that offers **MPLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition)** services.

3

STEP 3: FULFILL LITERACY REQUIREMENTS

The student must either **pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT)** or **enroll in and successfully complete the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)**.

4

STEP 4: COMPLETE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT HOURS

The **school principal** will assess and determine the number of **community involvement hours** required for the student, if any.

5

STEP 5: TRANSCRIPT REVIEW

A **Guidance counsellor** will review the student's transcript to identify whether **MPLAR credits** are needed and if the student would benefit from support through the **Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)** program.

6

STEP 6: DEVELOP AN EDUCATIONAL PLAN

The **Guidance counsellor** and **LBS Instructor** will collaborate to create a **personalized educational plan** that outlines the necessary steps for the student to earn their **Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)**.

7

STEP 7: MAINTAIN ONGOING COMMUNICATION

Frequent communication between the student and staff ensures clarity around the **MPLAR process**, credit requirements, and overall progress toward graduation.

8

STEP 8: COMPLETE MPLAR ASSESSMENTS

The student may complete **MPLAR assessments** within the **LBS program**, which provides structured support and allows for continuous academic progress.



LBS in Action: Supporting Learners Through the MPLAR-to-Credit Transition

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: THE ROLE OF THE LBS INSTRUCTOR



The LBS classroom serves as a bridge between a learner's prior educational and life experiences and the expectations of the MPLAR process and credit-based coursework. Instruction is designed to close learning gaps and build the foundational skills necessary for academic success.



The LBS environment fosters self-esteem and confidence, enabling learners to process feedback constructively through supportive dialogue. Learners develop strategies and tools that help them apply new knowledge across various contexts—whether in future credit courses, further education, or employment.



Many mature learners face complex, competing priorities that can hinder their ability to complete PLAR or credit requirements. The flexibility of the LBS program and its individualized approach to instruction play a critical role in learner retention and success. Through collaboration with Guidance, the LBS Instructor ensures that each learner receives tailored support and that appropriate PLAR assessments and documentation for senior equivalency credits are completed and presented effectively.



FACILITATING INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLANS

Each learner in the LBS program follows a personalized learning plan, developed through collaborative discussions between the learner, the LBS Instructor, and Guidance. The LBS Instructor identifies gaps in literacy and numeracy and works with the learner to create a plan with measurable outcomes.

Task-based activities are designed to build the competencies needed for both MPLAR assessments and credit course success. These activities also help learners see the relevance of their learning in everyday life and prepare them for future goals beyond secondary school.

INTEGRATING LBS, MPLAR, AND CREDIT PATHWAYS

The LBS program introduces learners to the concept of earning credits through task-based activities that build the skills and knowledge required for MPLAR assessments. These activities are aligned with the expectations of both MPLAR and credit courses.

LBS Instructors document learner participation. Those who complete a minimum of 90-110 hours in the program may be eligible for one senior credit toward their OSSD. Ongoing assessment within the LBS program helps determine a learner's readiness for MPLAR and credit coursework. This information is shared with Guidance to collaboratively plan the learner's next steps toward graduation.

Milestones and Culminating Tasks serve as measurable indicators of progress, allowing learners to self-assess their readiness for MPLAR and credit transitions. Literacy instruction is delivered through diverse methods, helping learners understand their own learning processes and transfer those skills effectively into academic and real-world settings.

