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| University of Prince Edward Island | Policy Number: FNDE-018 |
| Policy Title: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT RECOGNITION (PLAR) | Pages - 9 |
| Authority: Foods and Nutrition Program | Version Date: January 2026 |
| Creation Date: January 2000 | Review Date: January 2027 |

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process by which interns admitted to the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program may apply for recognition of prior learning through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

PLAR provides interns with the opportunity to receive credit for relevant work or volunteer experience completed within the three (3) years prior to entry into the program, where such experience demonstrates achievement of entry-level competencies required for dietetic practice as outlined in the Integrated Competencies for Dietetic Education and Practice (ICDEPs), Version 3.0.

This process supports recognition of meaningful prior experiential learning in areas relevant to dietetic practice, including supervisory, leadership, management, food service, and nutrition education roles

2. Scope

This policy applies to all interns accepted into the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program who wish to seek recognition of prior learning completed before the program start date.

PLAR applies only to practicum components of the program and does not apply to required academic coursework or degree requirements.

3. Responsibility

Professional Practice Coordinator is responsible for

- Informing interns of the PLAR process
- Reviewing initial submissions
- Determining whether submissions warrant progression from Step I to Step II;
- Coordinating the formal assessment process, including the establishment and facilitation of the PLAR Review Committee.
- Communicating decisions in writing.

The Internship Director is responsible for supporting final decision-making where required.

Interns are responsible for

- Preparing complete and accurate submissions;
- Clearly mapping their experience to the ICDEPs Version 3.0 competencies and performance indicators;
- Providing evidence of work completed; and
- Obtaining required letters of attestation from supervisors or managers.

4. Policy

Interns accepted into the UPEI Integrated Dietetic Internship Program will be informed of the opportunity to apply for PLAR at the program's orientation held in early February.

Interns who can demonstrate achievement of entry-level competencies through relevant paid or volunteer experience completed within the three (3) years prior to program entry may be granted credit for a portion of the practicum program.

Credit will be awarded by reducing the required practicum time within the relevant placement area.

To be eligible for consideration, all PLAR documentation must be submitted at least two (2) months prior to the Level I start date of the internship program.

PLAR submissions must demonstrate:

- achievement of ICDEPs competencies
- sufficient depth and duration of experience
- clear evidence of the intern's personal role and level of responsibility
- experience obtained within the required timeline

5. Procedures

Step I: Initial Submission (Preliminary Review)

Interns seeking PLAR consideration must submit initial written documentation to the Professional Practice Coordinator within two (2) weeks of the program's orientation meeting.

This must include:

- A cover letter describing the learning, work, or volunteer experience;
- A description of each relevant project, daily activity, or responsibility;
- The intern's level of involvement and accountability; and

- Identification of the supervisor or manager where appropriate.

The Professional Practice Coordinator will review the submission to determine whether the activities described reasonably reflect the competencies claimed.

If the submission warrants further consideration, the intern will be invited to proceed to Step II: Comprehensive Portfolio Submission.

Step II: Comprehensive Portfolio Submission

The final PLAR portfolio must be submitted at least two (2) months prior to the internship program start date or one (1) month after the program's orientation, whichever comes first.

The portfolio must include:

1. Cover Letter and Reflection

A detailed overview of the project(s), work, or volunteer activities completed, along with a reflection highlighting areas of greatest learning and how the experience enhances readiness for dietetic practice. Interns must include the timeline for which the work was completed, including the number of hours they completed.

2. Competency Mapping

A structured mapping of each activity or project to the relevant ICDEPs Version 3.0 competencies and performance indicators, including (see example submission template below):

- the specific competency achieved
- the exact activity demonstrating the competency

3. Detailed Description of Activities

A clear step-by-step description of activities, sequenced in the order completed, with explicit detail regarding the intern's role, independence, and decision-making responsibilities.

4. Supporting Evidence

Where appropriate, supporting documentation may include:

- revised menus
- staff schedules
- brochures
- slide presentations

- reports
- photographs (with all identifying information removed)

5. Draft Review

Once completed, the intern will submit a draft to the Professional Practice Coordinator for review.

If the submission meets the required guidelines, the intern will proceed to supervisor verification.

6. Supervisor Verification

The manager or supervisor where the prior learning was obtained must review the final submission and provide a signed letter of attestation confirming the accuracy of the experience, responsibilities, and hours described.

Preferably, the manager or supervisor is a Registered Dietitian; however, another qualified expert in the relevant area of practice may provide verification where appropriate.

External Review and Final Decision

Following supervisor verification, the PLAR submission will be reviewed by a practicing Registered Dietitian with expertise in the relevant area of practice.

The reviewer will provide:

- confirmation of competency achievement
- a recommendation regarding whether credit should be granted
- the recommended amount of practicum time reduction

The Professional Practice Coordinator will make the final decision regarding whether PLAR credit is granted and the amount of time awarded.

Where the Coordinator's decision differs from the external reviewer's recommendation, the Internship Director will be consulted and will make the final decision.

Decision and Documentation

The intern will be notified of the PLAR decision in writing.

Where PLAR credit is granted, the internship placement schedule will be revised accordingly.

The final PLAR decision letter and supporting documentation will be retained in the intern's file in accordance with the Retention of Records Policy.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Professional Practice Coordinator and Internship Director to ensure alignment with accreditation standards, competency requirements, and program needs.

Sample Submission

PLAR – Food Provision Level I

Name of Organization:

Facility Location:

Date of Submission:

Practice Experience Overview

Use this section to describe your role, the practice setting, and your responsibilities in your own words. Focus on what you did. Be sure to include the dates of the experience and the approximate number of hours worked in this setting.

For example:

“I had the opportunity to work in [insert practice setting] from [insert timeline or dates worked], where I completed approximately [insert number of hours]. During this time, I developed practical skills and professional insight that strengthened my readiness for Food Provision Level I competencies. My role included responsibilities such as [describe your daily tasks using your own language].”

Examples of tasks I regularly completed included:

- food preparation, meal assembly, service, inventory, sanitation, and quality checks
- working specific shifts or service periods
- supporting therapeutic diets, texture modifications, allergies, or other food restrictions
- communicating meal changes, substitutions, or service issues with team members

This experience helped me better understand [describe what you learned about food systems, workflow, teamwork, food safety, or the role of nutrition services].”

Include Real Examples

Use specific examples from your work to strengthen this section and clearly demonstrate your experience. Strong examples help reviewers understand the depth of your learning and how your experience aligns with Food Provision competencies.

Consider including examples such as:

- a particularly busy service period you helped manage
- a workflow problem you helped identify or solve
- a time you ensured a meal met a specialized nutrition need
- a quality, food safety, or sanitation issue you recognized and addressed
- an example of working collaboratively with team members to maintain service flow

Suggested Supporting Evidence

Where possible, include examples of real workplace materials such as:

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| <p>Professionalism and Ethics Competencies: 2.01–2.12</p> | <p>Describe how you demonstrated professionalism, confidentiality, accountability, ethics, and scope awareness. Use examples. “In my role, professionalism was demonstrated by [describe how you maintained reliability, respect, confidentiality, and accountability]. I followed workplace policies related to [food safety, privacy, sanitation, infection control, documentation, communication, etc.]. A strong example of professionalism from my work was: [Insert a real example of a situation where you used professional judgment, escalated a concern, protected confidentiality, or recognized scope limits.]” For example, you might describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redirecting a therapeutic diet question to the dietitian • identifying an allergy risk • reporting an unsafe food handling practice • maintaining confidentiality in a shared service environment |
| <p>Communication and Collaboration Competencies: 3.01–3.07</p> | <p>Focus on how you communicate with clients, staff, supervisors, and interdisciplinary teams.</p> |

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| | <p>“In my practice setting, effective communication was essential for [describe your communication responsibilities]. I communicated with [food service staff, supervisors, clients, nursing staff, volunteers, community partners, etc.] to support safe and timely food service delivery.</p> <p>A strong example from my work includes: [Insert a real example where communication prevented an error, improved workflow, solved a problem, or supported client needs.]”</p> <p>You may wish to describe examples such as: clarifying a meal discrepancy communicating stock shortages adapting communication for someone with hearing or language barriers documenting a service issue for the next shift</p> |
| <p>Management and Leadership Competencies: 4.01-4.08</p> | <p>Even without a formal leadership title, describe how you showed initiative, organization, decision-making, and responsibility.</p> <p>“In my role, I demonstrated leadership through [describe initiative, independent work, workflow organization, problem-solving, mentoring, quality improvement, etc.]”</p> <p>A strong real example would be: [Describe a time you independently solved a workflow issue, improved efficiency, supported onboarding, identified a systems issue, or contributed to smoother service.]</p> <p>Examples could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reorganizing a prep process • identifying repetitive trayline errors • helping orient a new staff member • suggesting improvements to service flow • noticing waste trends and proposing solutions |
| <p>Food Provision Competencies: 7.01-7.04</p> | <p>This is where specific operational examples are especially important. Show what you directly did in food provision.</p> <p>“My food provision experience included [describe meal production, trayline,</p> |

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| | <p>decentralized service, cafeteria, community meals, inventory, menu implementation, etc.]. A strong competency example from my work was:</p> <p>[Insert a detailed real example of ensuring the right meal reached the right client, supporting modified texture diets, managing allergens, checking food temperatures, handling production changes, or maintaining quality.]”</p> <p>Consider using examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responding to a last-minute diet change • implementing a texture-modified meal correctly • identifying a trayline error before service • using standardized recipes or production sheets • supporting menu substitutions during shortages • monitoring food temperatures during transport |
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Final Reflection

This section should sound personal and reflective. Use your own voice.

“Overall, this experience strengthened my readiness for Food Provision Level I by helping me develop [insert your own reflections on food systems, teamwork, therapeutic diets, leadership, food safety, quality, workflow, or the role of the dietitian].

A key strength I developed was [insert your own insight], and an area I continue to strengthen is [insert a meaningful learning goal].”

Key PLAR Advice for Applicants

The strongest submissions always include:

1. your own words
2. specific real examples from practice
3. evidence from your workplace
4. clear reflection on what YOU learned
5. proof of hours and role responsibilities

The reviewer must be able to answer:

“Can I clearly see what this learner personally did, how often, and how it demonstrates competency?”