

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certificate Program



Candidate Guide



SIAS

SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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The Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certificate Program is dedicated to removing barriers and broadening the access to programs at SIAST. We believe that adults acquire knowledge and skills through life and work experience that may align with courses within our programs.

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Why consider a PLAR assessment?

PLAR refers to the combination of flexible ways of evaluating people's lifelong learning, both formal and informal against a set of established standards. You can receive academic credit for your relevant lifelong learning. The Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certificate program recognizes prior learning in a number of ways.

We recognize:

- Previous formal learning from an accredited training institution through transfer of credit.
- Previous informal learning or experiential learning through a comprehensive prior learning and recognition process.

What are the PLAR options?

To be eligible for PLAR, an applicant must first register or already be registered as a SIAST student.

Individual Course Challenge

If you have within the past three years successful experience in the business field, and have learned the skills and knowledge for **one or more** of the Entrepreneurship and Small Business courses, you may apply to be assessed for each applicable course.

Fees:

- There will be a charge for each individual course assessment.
- For a listing of the specific PLAR fees in the PLAR database, check the [PLAR database](#) or call SIAST and ask to speak to the PLAR advisor/counsellor assigned to the ESB program at: 1-866-467-4278 or 1-866-goSIAST.

How many courses can be challenged through PLAR in the Entrepreneurship and Small Business Certificate program?

Currently there are 3 out of 27 certificate courses with PLAR challenges available. You may challenge as many of these courses as you are able to prove prior skills and knowledge through assessment.

Which courses are PLAR-ready?

Certificate Program Profile		
Course	PLAR Challenge Available	PLAR Challenge Not Available
BKPG 140 – Bookkeeping for Small Business		X
BKPG 141 – Automated Simulation		X
BKPG 142 – Small Business Expenses		X
BUS 148 – Negotiations		X
BUS 153 – Credit and Collections		X
BUS 154 – Operational Strategy		X
BUS 155 – Business Plan Preparation		X
BUS 156 – Small Business Document Preparation		X
BUS 157 – Advanced Document Preparation		X
CEXP 142 – Discovering Entrepreneurship 1		X
CEXP 144 – Discovering Entrepreneurship 2		X
CEXP 145 – Discovering Entrepreneurship 3		X
FIN 145 – Financial Statement Analysis		X
FIN 146 – Locating Financing		X
FIN 149 – Financial Strategy		X
FIN 150 – Small Business Financial Projections		X
HR 145 – Human Resource Strategy		X
MGMT 150 – Leadership		X
MKTG 148 – Selling Skills	√	

MKTG 153 – Marketing Research		X
MKTG 154 – Four P’s of Marketing		X
MKTG 155 – Marketing Strategy		X
MKTG 156 – Electronic Marketing		X
PD 143 – Professionalism		X
PR 145 – Customer Service	√	
PRAC 159 – Practicum	√	
SYST 147 – Automated Accounting		X

**Note: Some courses common to multiple programs at SIAST (i.e. computers, communications, math, and sciences) are managed by Associated Studies Faculty. To see if the shared courses in your program are PLAR-ready, visit the “PLAR-ready Courses” link on the [PLAR homepage](#) for further details.

For assistance call SIAST and ask to speak to the PLAR advisor/[counselor](#) assigned to the ESB program at: 1-866-467-4278 or 1-866-goSIAST.

Is PLAR available at any time of the year?

PLAR challenges are currently being offered for selected courses. PLAR challenges for PRAC 159 can only be completed once a student has completed the prerequisite classes. Students should plan for the PLAR challenge approximately 4-6 weeks in advance of the course classroom delivery start date.

Is it *easier* to challenge a course through PLAR - OR - take the course?

Neither is easier. By using PLAR you may reduce the repetition of studying information that you already know. The PLAR process allows you to demonstrate knowledge you already have.

PLAR is not an easy way to certification, rather a “different” way to obtain certification. Your personal level of skill and experience will dictate which courses you choose to challenge. The self-audit section found later in this guide will help you decide if you have a good match of skill and knowledge for a specific course.

Methods of assessing prior learning

Assessment methods measure an individual's learning against course learning outcomes. The assessment methods listed below are the ones most commonly used, but other forms of flexible assessment may be considered. These assessments may include one or a combination of the following assessment tools:

- Product Validation & Assessment
- Challenge Exam
- Standardized Tests
- Performance Evaluations (including skill demonstrations, role plays, clinical applications, case studies)
- Interviews and Oral Exams
- Equivalency (evaluations of learning from non-credit training providers)
- Evidence or Personal Documentation Files (providing evidence of learning from life and work experiences and accomplishments)

If I live out of town, do I have to travel to a main campus to do PLAR?

There will be times that you will need to meet with the program on campus. However, we will try to keep travel to a minimum.

What if I have a disability & need equity accommodations?

At SIAST, we understand that sometimes services must be provided to students in a variety of ways to achieve the goals of fair representation. Therefore, the range of services provided for Education Equity students is as diverse as the needs of those students. We strive for equity (not uniformity) and provide varied services for students with differing needs. If more information is required, please contact a SIAST counsellor at a campus closest to you or refer to the SIAST Web site:

<http://www.siastr.sk.ca/siastr/servicesforstudents/>

Are there other methods to gain SIAST course credits for prior learning?

Transfer Credit

Yes, SIAST will grant credit for previous training that is similar in content, objectives, and evaluation standards to SIAST training. **Transfer of credit** is different from the PLAR process. Transfer Credit guidelines may be found at:

<http://www.siastr.sk.ca/siastr/admissions/transfercredit.htm>

It is the student's responsibility to check with [Registration Services](#) for specific campus procedures on this policy. For specific information and guidelines regarding transfer of credit, contact a SIAST educational counsellor.

Currently, there are no established transfer credits for the Entrepreneurship and Small Business program.

Note: An online Provincial Transfer Credit Guide will soon be available www.saskcat.ca.

Equivalency Credit

Equivalency credit refers to the application of credit you may have earned in a previously taken SIAST course to your current SIAST course. Apply at registration services for *equivalency credit*. This process should also be completed prior to your PLAR challenge. If these credits cannot be used for *equivalency credit*, you may use these accredited courses as part of your evidence for your PLAR challenge.

Currently, there are no established equivalency credits for the Entrepreneurship and Small Business program.

If you are a recent high school graduate who has completed the Information Processing modules, check the Saskatchewan Learning Web site http://www.sasklearning.gov.sk.ca/docs/info_pro03/siastr.html for the Articulation Agreement between SIAST and Sask. Learning. You may be eligible for transfer credit towards the Standardized Introductory Computer courses.

Contact us

If more information is required, please contact a designated PLAR counsellor at a campus closest to you.

Kelsey Campus, Saskatoon, SK
(306) 933-6445 or 1-866-467-4278

Palliser Campus, Moose Jaw, SK
(306) 694-3266 or 1-866-467-4278

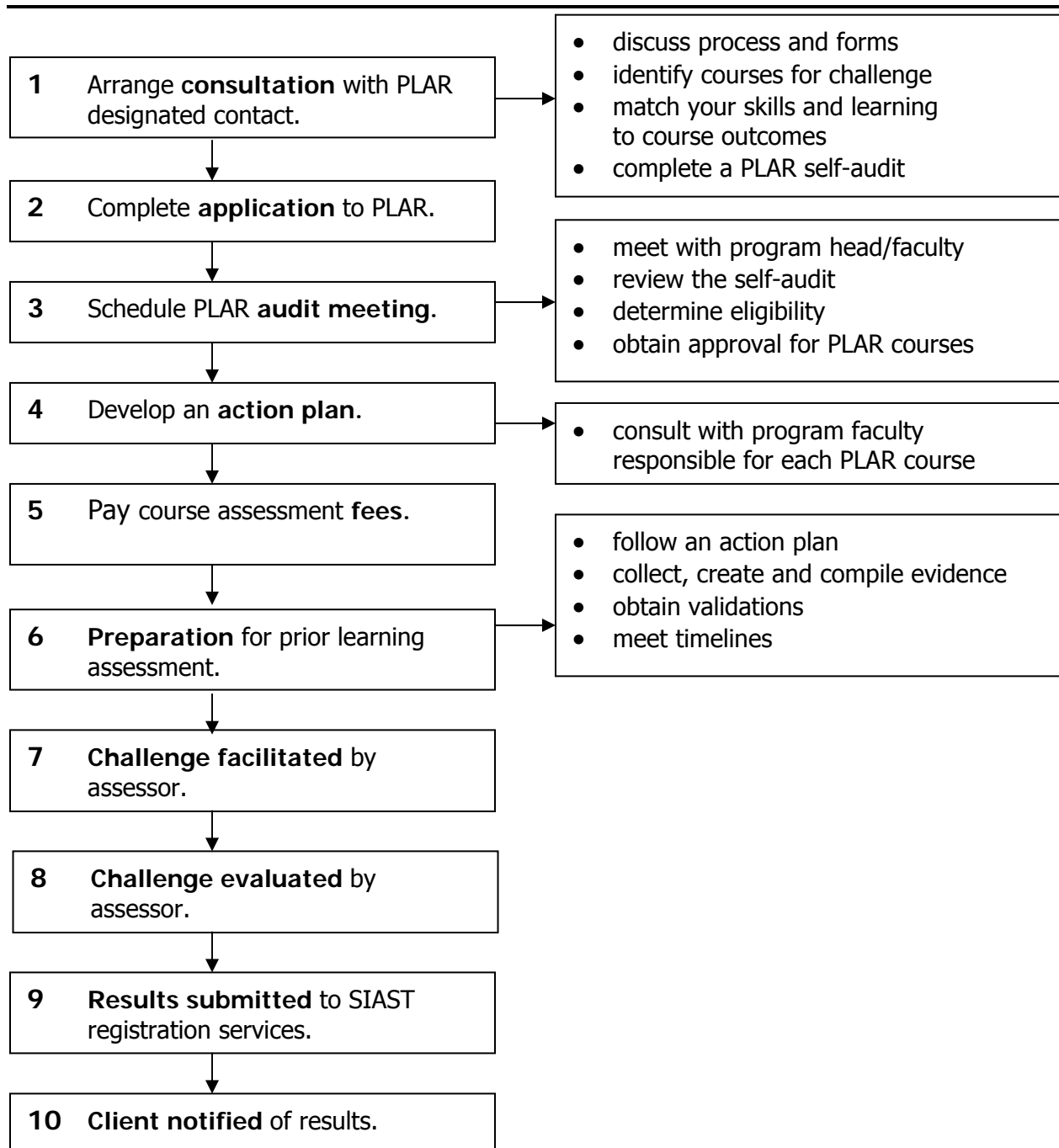
Wascana Campus, Regina, SK
(306) 798-1267 or 1-866-467-4278

Woodland Campus, Prince Albert, SK
(306) 953-7132 or 1-866-467-4278

The PLAR process

Note: To be eligible for PLAR, candidates must be enrolled in a SIAST course or program.

Candidate Process For Prior Learning Assessment



Guiding principles for developing a PLAR evidence file

1. As you begin the PLAR process you will be advised if any evidence is required. This will be identified in your [action plan](#). Check with the PLAR designated contact **before** you begin to gather evidence.
2. Evidence must be valid and relevant. Your evidence must match the learning outcomes identified for each course.
 - a. It is your responsibility to create, collect and compile relevant evidence – if required.
3. Learning must be current – within the past three years.
4. The evidence should demonstrate the skills and knowledge from your experiences.
5. The learning must have both a theoretical and practical component.

Types of evidence

There are three types of evidence used to support your PLAR request:

1. Direct evidence – what you can demonstrate for yourself.
2. Indirect evidence – what others say or observe about you.
3. Self-assessment – what you say about your knowledge and experience.

Ensure that you provide full evidence to your ESB faculty assessor so that your prior learning application is assessed appropriately. Well organized, easy to track evidence will also ensure that none of the evidence is missed or assessed incorrectly.

Here are some examples of evidence that you may be requested to submit as part of your evidence file (if required):

- written descriptions and analysis
- experience (activity) outlines
- resume
- workplace observations
- workplace validations
- work samples

All documents that are submitted to SIAST may be returned to the student after the final results have been given and the grade appeal deadline of seven days has passed. A copy of transcripts and certificates may be included in your evidence file, but be prepared to show original documents at the PLAR audit meeting for validation.

How long will it take to prepare evidence for PLAR?

Since the requirements are different for each course, and each candidate has different experiences, the amount of time it takes to prepare your evidence will vary.

Steps to complete a self-audit

1. Read through the Levels of Competence as listed below.

Levels of Competence:

Mastery: I am able to demonstrate the learning outcome well enough to teach it to someone else.

Competent: I can work independently to apply the learning outcome.

Functional: I need some assistance in using the outcome.

Learning: I am developing skills and knowledge for this area.

None: I have no experience with the outcome.

Learning Outcomes	Competency Level				
For each learning outcome listed, please self-evaluate your competency levels and record in the appropriate column	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None

2. Take a few minutes and read through the following self-audit for each course you are interested in as a PLAR candidate.
3. Check your level of competence as you read through each of the learning outcomes for each course. The information will help you in your decision to continue with your PLAR application.
4. In order to be successful in a PLAR assessment, your abilities must be at the competent or mastery level for the majority of the learning outcomes. Some things to consider when determining your level of competence are:
 - How do I currently use this outcome?
 - What previous training have I had in this outcome – Workshops, courses, on-the-job?
 - What personal development or volunteer experience do I have in this area?

Be prepared to explain the reason you chose this level if asked by an assessor.

5. Bring the completed self-audit to a consultation meeting with the program head or faculty member in [step 3 – PLAR process](#) of the Candidate Process for Prior Learning Assessment.

Self-audit Guide(s)

MKTG 148 - Selling Skills

Credit Units: 1.00

You will learn about the importance of selling skills in small business. You will examine the attributes of successful salespeople, identify the steps involved in the sales process and develop a sales plan. You will practice selling and dealing with objections.

MRTG 148 - Selling Skills Mastery: I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. Competent: I can work independently to apply the outcome. Functional: I need some assistance in using the outcome. Learning: I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. None: I have no experience with the outcome.	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
1. Explain the Role of Selling in a Small Business.					
▪ List the reasons personal selling improves small business					
▪ Examine the forms of personal selling					
2. Identify the Personal Attributes that Contribute to Sales Success.					
▪ Understand the attributes of successful salespeople					
3. Identify Selling Opportunities Within the Marketplace.					
▪ Understand the sales approach					
▪ Learn selling opportunities					
▪ Identifying customer needs					
▪ Learn to close the sale					
4. Practice the Selling Process.					
▪ Learn to sell in the retail marketplace					
▪ Learn how to get referrals					
▪ Understand how to evaluate your sales process					

PLAR Assessment Methods If you qualify for PLAR, you may be asked to demonstrate your learning in one or more of the following ways. Be prepared to discuss the expectations during a consultation meeting.

PLAR Assessment Methods: (one or both of the following as assigned)

1. Evidence File

- a. Provide evidence of training in Selling Skills, including original certificate(s), and information from the training provider detailing the topics covered, time requirements, etc. The information provided will be compared to the learning outcomes within the Selling Skills Course.
- b. Provide a record of work experience including dates of employment, supervisor's name and contact information, and detailed description of duties, focusing on use of selling skills.

A Challenge Exam may be used to assess for gaps in the evidence file.

2. Challenge Exam – passing mark of 60% is required:

- a. Demonstrate through written assignments an understanding of customer service skills by applying these concepts in relation to previous work experience

PR 145 - Customer Service

Credit Units: 2.00

You will examine the value of customer service and retaining customers through service. The course content includes the principles of good customer service, telephone skills, handling complaints, assertiveness and dealing with difficult people.

PR 145 - Customer Service Mastery: I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. Competent: I can work independently to apply the outcome. Functional: I need some assistance in using the outcome. Learning: I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. None: I have no experience with the outcome.	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
1. Describe the Communication Process.					
▪ Learn the steps in the communication process					
2. Integrate Customer Service Into your Business Plan.					
▪ Learn the trends, benefits and customer expectations of customer service					
3. Demonstrate Customer Service Skills in Person and Over the Telephone.					
▪ Develop customer service skills					
▪ Learn telephone customer service skills					
4. Apply Conflict Resolution Techniques to Handle Complaints and Difficult Customers.					
▪ Learn the top 10 customer complaints					
▪ Develop skills to deal with difficult customers					
▪ Learn conflict management skills					

PLAR Assessment Methods: If you qualify for PLAR, you may be asked to demonstrate your learning in one or more of the following ways. Be prepared to discuss the expectations during a consultation meeting.

- 1) Evidence File
 - a) Provide evidence of training in Customer Service, including original certificate(s), and information from the training provider detailing the topics covered, time requirements, etc. The information provided will be compared to the learning outcomes within the Customer Service Course.
 - b. Provide a record of work experience including dates of employment, supervisor’s name and contact information, and detailed description of duties, focusing on Customer Service Skills.

A Challenge Exam may be used to assess for gaps in the evidence file.

- 2) Challenge Exam – passing mark of 60% is required:
 - a) Demonstrate through written assignments an understanding of customer service skills by applying these concepts in relation to previous work experience.

PRAC 159 - Practicum**Credit Units:** 8.00

You will spend four weeks (unpaid) in a business similar to the one you want to start. You will have an opportunity to observe the operations of the business and evaluate your business plans against an actual operating business.

PRAC 159 - Practicum Mastery: I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. Competent: I can work independently to apply the outcome. Functional: I need some assistance in using the outcome. Learning: I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. None: I have no experience with the outcome.	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
1. Demonstrate the Work Skills and Attitude Required of a Successful Entrepreneur.					
2. Apply the Human Resources Strategy of a Small business.					
3. Apply the Marketing Strategy of a Small Business.					
4. Apply the Operational Strategy of a Small Business.					
5. Apply the Financial Strategy of a Small Business.					
6. Assess the Key Practices Observed in the Practicum and Relate Them to Your Proposed Business.					

PLAR Assessment Methods If you qualify for PLAR, you may be asked to demonstrate your learning in one or more of the following ways. Be prepared to discuss the expectations during a consultation meeting.

Performance Evaluation - PLAR Candidate will complete both (a) and (b)

- 1) Proof of successful completion of prerequisite courses in ESB; record of work experience including dates of employment, supervisor's name and contact information, and detailed description of job duties.
- 2) Demonstration through written assignments and employment audit (supplied by assessor) an understanding of marketing, operational, financial and human resources theory by applying these concepts in relation to the previous work experience.

Suggested Resources:

1. PRAC 159

Learning Outcome 2: Texts or Web Site Information on Human Resources Theory

Learning Outcome 3: Texts or Web Site Information on Marketing Theory

Learning Outcome 4: Texts or Web Site Information on Business Operations Theory

Learning Outcome 5: Texts or Web Site Information on Business Financial Management Theory

2. PR 145

Texts or Web Site Information on Customer Service Theory

i.e.: Saskatchewan Tourism Education Council <http://www.stec.com>

3. MKTG 148

Texts or Web Site Information on Selling Skills

i.e.: Dale Carnegie Training <http://www.dalecarnegie.com>