

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

# PLA MATERIALS

*module 8*



P R I O R   L E A R N I N G   A S S E S S M E N T   I N   B R I T I S H   C O L U M B I A

## PLA MATERIALS

*module 8*

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Main entry under title:

Prior learning assessment : PLA training modules

"Produced by the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology for the  
Province of British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training."  
ISBN 0 7718 9509 7

1. College students - Rating of - British Columbia. 2. Academic  
achievement - British Columbia - Evaluation. I. British Columbia.  
Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.  
II. Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology.

LB2351.4.C3P74 1997      378.1'664'09711      C97-960272 6

**Produced by the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology**  
for the Province of British Columbia  
Ministry of Education, Skills and Training

Copyright © 1997  
Province of British Columbia  
Ministry of Education, Skills and Training

Permission is granted to reproduce handouts and transparency  
masters provided that credit is given to the source and to the  
Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training.

**To order copies of this publication contact:**

Marketing Department  
Open Learning Agency  
4355 Mathissj Place  
Burnaby, British Columbia  
Canada V5G 4S8  
Telephone: 604-431-3210  
Toll-free: 1-800 663 1653  
Fax: 604-431-3381  
Email: [catalogue@ola.bc.ca](mailto:catalogue@ola.bc.ca)  
Order number: PLA001

**For further information regarding**  
**Prior Learning Assessment in British Columbia contact:**  
Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology  
Sixth Floor, 1483 Douglas Street  
Victoria, British Columbia  
Canada V8W 3K4  
Website: <http://www.ctt.bc.ca>

# Table of Contents

---

Introduction to This Module .....	1
<i>Facilitation Plan</i> .....	2
<i>Warm-up</i> .....	2
Identifying Materials .....	4
Determining Priorities .....	7
Developing Priority Items .....	8
Presentation & Feedback .....	9
Action Steps .....	10
Wrap-up .....	11
 <b>Appendix I: Handouts</b>	
H1a—Options for PLA Materials .....	13
H1b—Options for PLA Materials .....	15
 <b>Appendix II: Transparency Masters</b>	
T1—Purpose .....	17
T2—PLA Materials .....	19
T3—Options for PLA Materials .....	21
T4—Criteria for Decisions .....	23
T5—Developing PLA Materials .....	25
T6—Feedback .....	27



This module enables participants to systematically identify and develop the support materials needed by candidates, faculty and administrators.

At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify the purpose of different types of support materials needed by candidates, faculty and administrators
- Begin to develop appropriate materials for these groups
- Develop strategies to complete the development of the materials

The material in this module can be comfortably presented in a workshop of up to 24 participants, with at least:

- 1 each from Registrar, Admissions, Records (3)
- 1 from Reception, 2 from Student Services (3)
- 3 from Advising (3)
- 3 from Faculty (3)
- 3 Administrators (Manager/Program Head/Research) (3)

Participants should have a basic understanding of PLA, through background reading and/or participation in previous PLA training, such as Module 1: *Introduction*. During the introduction it might be helpful to give an overview of the PLA process at your institution.

During this module, participants will have opportunities to:

- Categorise by function the materials needed for a smooth PLA process at your institution
- Place the materials into an order of priority for development and production
- Develop good working drafts of some high-priority items
- Develop strategies for completion of development and production of the materials identified

- ! Before the session begins, clearly print a list of options for PLA Materials (H1a and H1b) on several flip-chart stands around the room or attach the flip-chart pages to the walls at eye level.

## Facilitation plan

9:00 am:	Warm-up
9:30 am:	Identifying Materials
10:30 am:	Break
10:45 am:	Determining Priorities
12:00 pm:	Lunch
1:00 pm:	Developing Priority Items
2:00 pm:	Presentation & Feedback
3:00 pm:	Break
3:15 pm:	Action Steps
3:35 pm:	Wrap-up

You can introduce the schedule for the module based on your own ideas or patterned after the suggested plan. The timing for each part of the module is included as a guide. It can, of course, be adjusted to fit your circumstances. A full day is ideal, but the module can be adapted depending on the needs and range of knowledge of workshop participants. Review the plan of the module with the participants, confirming when breaks will be, the time the day will end, and any other “housekeeping” details that are necessary.

! *Since this module involves the identification and development of materials, it is a good idea to bring along materials to have at hand for participants:*

- *PLA materials in use at your institution (application forms, registration forms, calendar, course outlines—whatever a regular student needs) to use as guidelines*
- *PLA materials already in use in other institutions. Try to obtain originals to see colour, format, and so on.*
- *Boxes of dot labels (1/2 inch), 5–6 different colours*
- *Blank overhead transparencies*

## Warm-up

It is important to begin the module by having participants meet and introduce one another (this includes you, the facilitator), and have some interaction.





### Activity

Begin by asking participants to form pairs, and ask them to introduce each other and share their expectations of the module.

Then have each participant introduce his or her partner and expectation of the module to the large group.



Clarify and briefly discuss the purpose of this module using transparencies **T1** and **T2**.

Check with the group to see if these purposes match the expectations they identified in Warm-up.

In the large group, ask each participant to speak to one expectation, issue or concern he or she may have about the module. Capture these on a flip-chart, and refer to them throughout the day and in the Wrap-up.

You will need to address the expectations, challenges, and issues that participants may have about the module. This will assist you in further planning and adapting the module.

**!** *If participants have been involved with other PLA sessions, they are familiar with the Parking Lot. Review the concept of the Parking Lot sheet that is used for short-term storage of out-of-context or contentious ideas. At the conclusion of the day any items remaining in the Parking Lot should be analysed to determine how they should be addressed.*

## Identifying Materials

60 minutes

Quickly review the stages of the PLA Module in BC. You may wish to refer to the transparency and handout in Module 1 (**T5** and **H1**). As you discuss the stages in the model, identify the departments or areas in your institution relating to the stage (such as: enquiries about PLA may involve candidates, advisors, student services, and marketing).

Participants will see that materials might require input from different areas.



Refer to the Options for PLA Materials (**H1a**, **H1b** and **T3**). Discuss how the list is organised by sequence of stages as outlined in the PLA Module. If you have used the complete list, explain that the group can add or strike out materials that do not fit for their institution.



Ask the question:

*"Are these the support materials that you need at each stage of the PLA process?"*

Refer to the list of PLA Materials that you have hand-written on flip-charts and posted around the room.



### Activity

After the discussion on PLA materials, divide the participants into smaller groups—by department, job function or a mix of different roles. If each group represents a mix of different areas, members will have to decide on one specialty. The number of groups will vary according to how many participants you have and how wide a cross-section of areas they represent. Ideally, there should be at least four groups representing four different specialty areas. If necessary, combine two smaller groups.

Have each group select a colour from the selection of coloured dot labels you have provided. Assign one colour per specialty area, such as red dots for student services needs, blue dots for faculty needs, and so on.

Have participants go through the list of PLA materials sticking their dots beside any identified material that fits their specialty (such as red dots beside student services needs and blue by faculty needs). Note that for some materials on the list there will be several different-coloured dots.

*! As facilitator, circulate among the participants helping them make their decisions. You could carry a sheet of white dot labels to cover over any accidents. (It is hard to pull the dots off, once stuck to flip-chart paper!)*

Participants should keep a list of the items they have labelled to take back to their groups.



### Break

**15 minutes**



### Activity

Have the participants return to their tables in their coloured-dot groupings (such as Student Services, red dots).

Working together from the lists created in the previous activity, have each group compile one functional list of all the materials identified as part of their group. Once they have done this, ask them to put the items in order of priority for development and production.



Ask the groups to determine the essential, critical materials that candidates, assessors, advisors, admissions and student services actually need. Refer to transparency **T4**.

- ! *Circulate among the groups, helping as needed. On a side table present sample materials you have collected prior to the event. Examples: promotional brochures, application forms, portfolio development courses, course outlines, calendar entries, and student portfolios.*

Circulate among participants once more to see how they are doing. They should have a final list of all the materials they have identified, in order of priority.

Then ask one member of each group to write their list on a flip-chart for the whole group to see. Each group should also identify two items of highest priority to work on further today.

Then call the whole group together. Show the materials you have put out on the tables. Groups can then select the examples that fit into their chosen priorities. Back in the small groups, participants can now review the samples with the idea of using them to develop their own materials.

Discuss the points on the transparency “Developing PLA Materials” (T5), using some of the examples on the tables as examples of each point.

Let the groups know that after lunch they will work on developing a working draft for each of the two materials on top of their priority list.



**Lunch**

**60 minutes**

## Developing Priority Items

60 minutes



Using transparency **T5**, emphasise the points that groups must focus on when developing their materials at this draft stage.

Decide how to structure groups for the development session. You may wish to continue with the same small groups or mix the groups up again—it will depend on how many participants you have and what the mix was in the previous activity.

Refocus the groups on the two items they have selected as priorities. Invite the participants to decide how they wish to accomplish the task of developing these materials.

They could break into twos or threes with the same needs, or mix up roles: an advisor, a faculty member and a student services clerk could work on a Faculty Assessor Manual or an Orientation for Candidates package.



### Activity

The groups are now ready to get down to the serious work.

Using the examples of what is in use at your institution, and samples from other institutions, the participants should be able to develop solid, workable drafts of two items, which they will present in a creative way to the large group for feedback

Have blank overhead transparencies and fresh flip-chart paper available for participants to show a draft of their materials to the group.

## Presentation & Feedback

60 minutes



Groups will present one item that they have developed.

In preparation, review points about providing feedback on transparency T6. Ask the participants to allow each group to finish its presentation before giving feedback.

Give each group 10 minutes to present its draft materials. If time permits encourage another presentation from each group, with the second item that has been developed.

Make sure there is time for all participants to have a chance to have their contribution reviewed for feedback.

**Break**

**15 minutes**



## **Action Steps**

**20 minutes**

---

Consolidate lists completed today into a new PLA materials list, in order of priority.

Develop a budget for approval to include:

- Research costs
- Production plan

Ask for four or five volunteers to be on a committee to develop the materials. Try for one volunteer from each area. Encourage a diversity of roles and activities.

Develop an appropriate time frame. Then agree on date for the first meeting. Ask for a volunteer to chair the committee (or ask the PLA Coordinator if your institution has one).



Thank everyone for coming. Be encouraging.

Make sure that you:

- Review the purpose of the module
- Address the Parking Lot of issues, concerns, and questions
- Ask everyone to complete an evaluation form and to be frank with suggestions and comments on what they liked and didn't like
- Collect the evaluation forms and follow-up with the materials committee at its first meeting



# Options for PLA Materials

---

## Institutional readiness

- Calendar copy
- Brochure
- Advertising
- Orientation: presentation materials
- Institutional policies
- Flow chart
- Web Site

## Enquiry

- Orientation session/package for PLA (paper based and on-line)
  - what is PLA?
  - what can it do?
  - how does it work here?
  - how to decide what to do
  - self-assessment questionnaire
  - samples: course outlines, learning outcomes statements
  - checklist
  - next steps
  - how to apply for PLA
- Assessment methods information
- Course outlines
- Available support services
- Web Site

## Application

- PLA application form
- Student handbook
- Advising manual (handbook)
- Program-area criteria information
- Candidate orientation-session materials

**H1a**





## Options for PLA Materials (cont.)

---

### Candidate preparation

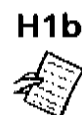
- Assessment Options
- Learner's assessment-preparation guide (including guidelines for portfolio development)
- Evidence requirements
- Sample request for validation letters
- Challenge-exam guidelines, learning outcomes, course outlines, sample examinations
- Application for assessment form
- Learning outcomes, objectives, skill standards
- Candidate tracking forms
- Record of assessment awards

### Assessment

- Assessor handbook
  - departmental/program area guidelines
  - institutional policies
  - assessment methods information
  - evaluation worksheets
  - assessment summary sheet
  - credit recommendation form
  - sample learning outcomes for courses
  - grading guidelines
  - assessor worksheets
- Assessment completion forms
- Top-up recommendation sheet
- Assessed-credit award-notification forms
- Learning contract sheet

### Post-assessment

- Candidate notification-of-results form
- Transcript-notation criteria
- Candidate evaluation forms
- Candidate tracking forms
- Formal review procedures



**H1b**



# Purpose

---

**This module enables participants to systematically identify and develop the support materials needed by candidates, staff, faculty and administrators.**

T1



17





# PLA Materials

---

**At the end of this module, participants will be able to:**

- ✓ Identify the purpose of different types of support materials
- ✓ Begin to develop appropriate materials
- ✓ Develop strategies to complete the development of materials

**T2**



19



# **Options for Materials**

- ✓ **Institutional readiness**
- ✓ **Enquiry**
- ✓ **Application**
- ✓ **Candidate preparation**
- ✓ **Assessment**
- ✓ **Post-assessment**

**T3**





# **Criteria for Decisions**

- ✓ **Critical**
- ✓ **Important**
- ✓ **Nice to have**
- ✓ **Not needed here**
- ✓ **We already have it**
- ✓ **We can get it from \_\_\_\_\_**

**T4**



23



# **Developing PLA Materials**

**Focus on identifying:**

- ✓ Key messages
- ✓ User expectations
- ✓ Outline/Organization
- ✓ Introductory paragraph
- ✓ Creative visuals
- ✓ Alternate delivery methods

**T5**



25





# **Feedback**

---

- ✓ **Consistent messages**
- ✓ **Valid reflection**
- ✓ **Fulfilled purpose**
- ✓ **Complete/Anything missing?**
- ✓ **User-friendliness**
- ✓ **Bias-free?**

**T6**



27

