

Reference Document

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Advisor

Employment Situation Review Report

Québec 

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Advisor

Employment Situation Review Report

Formation professionnelle et technique
et formation continue

Direction générale des programmes
et développement

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INTRODUCTION

The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) has undertaken a number of initiatives in line with the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* in order to renew the process used for prior learning assessment and recognition. These initiatives have been designed to attain the overall objective of the Action Plan, "To implement a diversified series of organizational methods to ensure access to recognition of prior learning services in every region of Québec."¹

In this context, the MELS/school board/CEGEP prior learning assessment and recognition committee has prepared a development plan for the human resources involved in the process. As a result, training the advisors who work with individuals requiring prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) services was identified as a priority in order to ensure access to such services.

This employment situation review will be the basis for developing a program for training the professionals working within the vocational and technical training systems. The main objective of this offer is to ensure that the target population has access to quality services, while allowing the system to develop expertise in prior learning assessment and recognition and trained professionals to act as resource persons in their respective organizations or regions.

The MELS therefore invited PLAR advisors and their supervisors to a three-day workshop.

The group's mandate was to establish a general description of the occupation of PLAR advisor, specifying the occupational tasks and operations, defining the conditions and requirements for performing the tasks, and finally, identify the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required to practise the profession.

This report covers each of these aspects and also includes some training-related suggestions. It was validated by participants in the job analysis workshop for PLAR advisors.

1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Action Plan for Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 2002), p. 26.

1. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OCCUPATION

1.1 Limitations of the Analysis and Definition of the Occupation

Participants in the job analysis workshop decided to describe the different tasks carried out by PLAR advisors, without regard to the type of position held (education advisor, guidance counsellor, or other).

Participants also agreed to examine activities related to the recognition of prior scholastic and experiential (or extracurricular) learning, both in vocational and technical training. They decided not to describe teaching-related tasks, nor those conferred to other categories of employment, such as school organization technicians, academic advisors or content specialists.

Workshop participants agreed on the following definition of the occupation:

PLAR advisors in vocational and technical training work in public and private educational institutions.

They adhere to the values and principles inherent in prior learning assessment and recognition, and comply with legal and regulatory frameworks as well as ministry and institutional policies.

Advisors' responsibilities primarily involve the reception and guidance of individuals requiring their services throughout the process, prior learning assessment and recognition, the coordination of evaluation activities as well as the planning, organization and coordination of training.

In this context, advisors train and supervise professional and support staff in providing services and developing appropriate instruments used in prior learning assessment and recognition. They design the materials required to develop services or collaborate in their development. They are responsible for the promotion of their services with their various clients as well as establishing partnerships in order to meet a variety of needs.

1.2 Main Characteristics of the Profession

Qualities sought

PLAR advisors must have very good communication and listening skills, be open-minded, be able to work in teams, respect others, and be tactful and diplomatic.

They must also show creativity in their work, given the diversity of situations and problems they encounter. Moreover, because they are required to deal with many files, they must possess

rigorous work methods, a sense of fairness, the ability to adapt, as well as good information organization and management skills.

Types of clients and needs

The demographic and social characteristics of individuals requiring the services of a PLAR advisor are quite diverse. Obviously, these individuals are adults, but their ages and work experience differ: they may be employed, unemployed or in school; their educational levels may vary or they may come from diverse religious or ethnic backgrounds (with the different citizenship statuses that this situation implies).

Because these individuals have different personal and work life situations—women returning to the job market, military personnel at the end of their careers, daycare personnel training to meet new regulatory requirements, young employees in the computer field are constantly required to update their skills, as well as employees who have lost their jobs and are being reclassified—all have different needs/reasons for wanting to have prior learning recognized.

Types of requests

Workshop participants identified two types of requests related to prior learning assessment and recognition: those from individuals wishing to earn a vocational or technical training diploma—Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS), Diploma of College Studies (DCS), Attestation of Vocational Specialization (AVS) or an Attestation of College Studies (ACS); and those from individuals wishing to have one or more competencies recognized.

Responsibilities

PLAR advisors have numerous responsibilities.

Generally, they see to the application of and compliance with legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks related to prior learning assessment and recognition, as well as the completion of each step in the process.

More specifically, advisors define mandates and assign them to the various staff, supervise the development of evaluation tools used in recognizing prior learning and competencies, and collaborate with administrative personnel in hiring human resources.

As with all professional personnel, advisors must define their own individual workplan.

Currently, advisors seldom work exclusively on files dealing with prior learning assessment and recognition. Usually, they perform other tasks related to their position (as education advisors, guidance counsellors, or other).

Criteria related to work quality

Numerous criteria are used to verify the quality of the work performed by PLAR advisors.

Some criteria concern the services offered: the manner in which applications are received and the relationship established with the client, respect of confidentiality, the ability to carry out to completion the process of recognizing prior learning and competencies for as many candidates as possible, and the ability to reach new clients.

Other criteria concern administrative duties, such as compliance with budget and funding rules, sufficient volume of activities, effective resource management and information organization, as well as compliance with institutional standards, requirements and specific policies regarding prior learning assessment and recognition.

Finally, the ability to solve problems, to be innovative and to maintain ongoing relationships with partners and business are also indicators of quality work.

Collaboration

Given that teamwork is often required, PLAR advisors work directly with numerous persons, including other PLAR advisors, education advisors and guidance counsellors.

PLAR advisors also work with content specialists in regular or contractual positions. The type of relations that PLAR advisors have with these specialists is affected by the fact that prior learning recognition advisors often participate in hiring these specialists.

It should also be noted that, at the college level, content specialists may come from the main discipline of the program, contributory disciplines or from general education, and that some may also be departmental coordination representatives.

Advisors also collaborate with support staff (e.g. office clerks, school organization technicians, storekeepers, laboratory attendants) and, as needed, with college academic advisors as well as administrative personnel (those in charge of training, finance or material resources).

They work with people outside their institution, including personnel from other educational institutions, from various federal or provincial government departments, or from various professional orders or bodies responsible for issuing accreditation or qualification certificates (e.g. Red Cross, Commission de la construction du Québec, Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail).

Furthermore, when the educational institution's clients include businesses and organizations, PLAR advisors may also work with human resources departments, employer and union representatives and job reclassification committee members, for example.

Finally, for promotional and developmental purposes, advisors may meet with subcontractors, such as graphic artists, publicists and training consultants.

Materials used

PLAR advisors work with a number of documents: those supplied by clients as supporting documents (e.g. identification papers, diplomas, résumés, reference letters); those used for prior learning assessment and recognition (e.g. candidate files, description forms, conditions for recognition, evaluation forms and companion guides).

They also use instruments to determine prior learning and competencies as well as to organize training: programs of study, course outlines, examinations and certification guides (for secondary school studies), course grids or competency-course correspondence tables (for college studies), policies, regulations and funding forms, as well as institutional policies and regulations.

In terms of computers, advisors use word-processing, browser, e-mail, database and spreadsheet software, as well as specialized software such as *Echo* and *SOS*.

1.3 Working Conditions

Work schedule

PLAR advisors generally work during regular office hours, but may be called upon to work occasional evenings or weekends in order to be available to clients, especially for reception and information activities.

Their workload may also exceed the regular 35 hours per week.

Conditions for entering the job market

Employers hiring PLAR advisors look for candidates with good knowledge of the process for recognizing prior learning and competencies, training programs, regulatory frameworks, pedagogy and andragogy. Workshop participants believe that communication and helping relationship skills as well as expertise in project management are also desired qualifications.

Some advisors may also have prior experience as content specialists.

Most of the time, individuals starting out in the field of prior learning assessment and recognition are hired as part of an institution's regular staff, or on contract with the possibility of renewal. But this does not mean that their workload consists primarily of files related to prior learning assessment and recognition, even though this is what they were hired for.

Their first tasks often involve the reception of candidates as well as activities associated with determining candidates' prior learning and competencies.

PLAR advisors belong to the union of non-teaching professionals and their salary scale is the same as that for education advisors and guidance counsellors.

Stress factors

A heavy workload and high expectations on the part of clients and administrative staff are sources of stress and professional exhaustion.

Advisors may also feel isolated in their work because, in some institutions, they are the only professionals responsible for providing PLAR services.

2. Analysis of Tasks and Operations

Workshop participants described the tasks and operations that they perform at work and reached a consensus (see the table in Section 2.1).

The tasks are numbered from 1 to 8, vertically in the table. The operations are numbered horizontally and in the usual sequence in which the associated task is carried out.

Section 2.2 lists the sub-operations, that is, the actions that describe the elements involved in performing an operation.

Participants worked in teams to identify the sub-operations, which were then validated by the entire group.

2.1 Table of Tasks and Operations

1. PROVIDE INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH INFORMATION ON PLAR SERVICES	1.1 Inform the individual, business or organization of the goal of PLAR and what the process entails	1.2 Analyze the needs of the individual, business or organization	1.3 Hold an individual or group meeting	1.4 Provide the candidate with support in preparing his or her file
2. DETERMINE THE CANDIDATE'S PRIOR LEARNING AND COMPETENCIES	2.1 Analyze the candidate's file	2.2 Forward the file to the content specialist	2.3 Organize and supervise competency validation interviews	2.4 Produce the prior learning and competency file
	2.5 Provide the candidate with information on his or her prior learning and the competency development plan	2.6 Ensure that the declaration of secondary school student enrollments is transmitted		
3. COORDINATE THE EVALUATION OF THE CANDIDATE'S COMPETENCIES	3.1 Approve the evaluation strategies	3.2 Plan the evaluation activities	3.3 Supervise the evaluators	3.4 Participate in defining training needs
	3.5 Notify the candidate of the results of the evaluation and propose training activities	3.6 Provide the candidate with support during the process		
4. PLAN, ORGANIZE AND COORDINATE THE CANDIDATE'S TRAINING ²	4.1 Establish the candidate's training plan	4.2 Select methods for acquiring competencies	4.3 Develop methods for acquiring competencies, if needed	4.4 Seek sources of funding
	4.5 With the candidate, agree on methods for acquiring competencies	4.6 Participate in organizing the training, or organize it	4.7 Integrate the candidate into the training	4.8 Follow up candidate files

2. Workshop participants preferred not to make a distinction between the missing components of education or training, additional training and customized training, and used the term "training" to refer to the "content" to be acquired.

5. COORDINATE THE WORK OF CONTENT SPECIALISTS IN DEVELOPING PLAR EVALUATION MATERIALS	5.1 Train content specialists in the PLAR process	5.2 Direct the development of evaluation materials	5.3 Participate in field-testing the materials	5.4 Organize material validation sessions
	5.5 Participate in material implementation sessions	5.6 Participate in training sessions on prior learning assessment and recognition		
6. DESIGN FOLLOW-UP, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION TOOLS	6.1 Keep up-to-date in matters related to PLAR	6.2 Determine the follow-up, support and supervision tools that need to be developed	6.3 Develop follow-up, support and supervision tools	6.4 Implement the use of follow-up, support and supervision tools
	6.5 Validate follow-up, support and supervision tools			
7. PROMOTE PLAR SERVICES	7.1 Increase awareness of PLAR	7.2 Participate in developing a promotional plan for PLAR	7.3 Collaborate in developing promotional tools	7.4 Create a communications network
	7.5 Foster the collaboration of personnel, administrations and departments	7.6 Organize promotional activities	7.7 Participate in evaluating the promotional activities	
8. PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPING AND OPERATING PLAR SERVICES	8.1 Look for development opportunities	8.2 Participate in developing regional services	8.3 Develop an annual action plan	8.4 Prepare projects related to PLAR
	8.5 Prepare offers of services	8.6 Coordinate human resources	8.7 Participate in developing or managing budgets	8.8 Participate in developing policies, procedures and rules regarding PLAR

2.2 Additional Information

TASK 1: Provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services

Operations	Sub-operations
1.1 Inform the individual, business or organization of the objectives of PLAR and what the process entails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to a request for prior learning assessment and recognition. • Use various information tools.
1.2 Analyze the needs of the individual, business or organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather preliminary information verbally or on the Internet, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the sector of activity – the level of education, etc. • Refer the candidate to an appropriate service or organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – PLAR service – another educational institution – the admissions department, etc. • Invite the person(s) concerned to a meeting.
1.3 Hold an individual or group meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan the meeting. • Determine the documents required for the meeting. • Arrange the logistics of the meeting. • Explain to the candidate how to prepare his or her file. • Organize a self-evaluation activity, if required. • Invite the content specialist, if a group meeting is held. • Refer the candidate to other services, if applicable.

Operations	Sub-operations
1.4 Provide the candidate with support in preparing his or her file.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the content of a candidate’s file. • Specify the institution’s requirements regarding the supporting documents needed for the file. • Demystify the process and help the candidate feel comfortable. • Organize a self-evaluation activity, if required. • Receive the candidate’s file and verify the individual’s eligibility.

TASK 2: Determine the candidate’s prior learning and competencies

Operations	Sub-operations
2.1 Analyze the candidate’s file.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the content of the file. • Confirm the candidate’s eligibility. • Consult laws and regulations. • Ensure that a comparative analysis is performed. • Ensure that equivalencies and substitutions are granted (for college studies). • Ensure that qualification certificates are valid (e.g. attestation of professional specialization in construction, first-aid certificate, etc.). • Verify the nature of the request for recognition by consulting the description forms, self-evaluation forms or the portfolio.
2.2 Transfer the file to the content specialist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the content specialist with information on the file. • Provide the content specialist with the materials required for the interview (in particular, the interview checklist). • Provide the content specialist with support and supervision in preparing for the interview.
2.3 Organize and supervise competency validation interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that a competency validation interview is held. • Provide the candidate with support in preparing for the interview. • Record information on the interview in the file.
2.4 Produce the prior learning and competency file.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information from the validation interview. • With the content specialist, prepare the prior learning and competency file. • Establish a personalized competency development plan. • Decide whether the process will be pursued or terminated.

Operations	Sub-operations
2.5 Provide the candidate with information on his or her prior learning and the competency development plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the candidate with information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – his or her prior learning and competencies – the development of his or her competencies • Verify the candidate’s interest in committing to the process. • Listen to the candidate and provide reassurance, if needed.
2.6 Ensure that the declaration of secondary school student enrollments is transmitted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer the file to the office clerk or school organization technician.

Note:

This task is more complex when dealing with immigrant candidates. At the college level, certain operations are also more complex given that no correspondence has been established between competencies and learning activities or courses.

TASK 3: Coordinate the evaluation of the candidate’s competencies

Operations	Sub-operations
3.1 Approve the evaluation strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the budgetary guidelines. • Discuss evaluation strategies and approve them.
3.2 Plan the evaluation activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the human and material resources required. • Ensure that evaluation tools may be adapted or request exemptions, if needed. • Organize how the evaluation activities will take place. • Prepare the schedules. • Notify the candidate of the schedule. • Record the results. • Forward any evaluation results. • See to the financial management of evaluation activities.
3.3 Supervise the evaluators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the evaluators with any relevant information. • Guide the evaluators throughout the process. • Ensure that a rigorous approach is adopted throughout the process. • Evaluate the process.
3.4 Participate in defining training needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the candidate’s evaluation results. • Compare the results with respect to a competency, course or program. • Record the information.
3.5 Notify the candidate of the results of the evaluation and propose training activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a meeting with the candidate. • Ensure that the candidate follows the proposed activities.
3.6 Provide the candidate with support during the process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer pedagogical guidance related to the evaluation under way. • Offer support.

TASK 4: Plan, organize and coordinate the candidate's training

Operations	Sub-operations
4.1 Establish the candidate's training plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the candidate's training needs. • Categorize the training needs.
4.2 Select methods for acquiring competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify training options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – during the day – in the evening – on-line training – customized training – work-study program – on-the-job training – distance education – other • Verify the feasibility of the different training options in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the number of places available – the cost – the type of pedagogical approach used – the candidate's needs and profile
4.3 Develop methods for acquiring competencies, if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the need for developing methods. • Estimate the material and financial resources required. • Verify the budgetary rules.
4.4 Seek sources of funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List possible sources of funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – MELS – Emploi-Québec – Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles – businesses – other • Select methods of funding. • Prepare funding or subsidy applications.

Operations	Sub-operations
4.5 With the candidate, agree on methods for acquiring competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the candidate with the different options for acquiring competencies. • Help the candidate make choices. • Record the choice(s). • Verify that there is room in the training option selected.
4.6 Participate in organizing the training, or organize it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the different training needs to the administrators of the educational institutions concerned. • Learn about the schedules of the various institutions. • Ensure that resources are available. • Ensure follow-up. • Notify candidates and content specialists.
4.7 Integrate the candidate into the training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that candidates enrol in the training. • Provide the candidates with information on the training (schedule, operating rules, etc.).
4.8 Follow up on candidate files.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the candidate's evaluation results and ensure that they are communicated, if applicable. • Review and adjust the training plan with the candidate in the event that a competency is not acquired. • At the end of the PLAR process, forward the file in order to transmit certification data (for the college level).

Note:

In some colleges, PLAR advisors are responsible for organizing training (Operation 4.6), and not just participating in organizing it. Those working in vocational training tend to participate in rather than completely organize the training. However, workshop participants believe that the responsibility for organizing training will increase in coming years.

TASK 5: Coordinate the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials

Operations	Sub-operations
5.1 Train content specialists in the PLAR process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate workshops. • Compile relevant documents related to PLAR. • Produce reference materials related to PLAR.
5.2 Direct the development of evaluation materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the mandate is clearly understood. • Assign the mandate. • Establish deadlines. • Provide technical support. • Ensure pedagogical and administrative follow-up. • Verify the quality of the materials developed.
5.3 Participate in field-testing the materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the conditions for field-testing the materials. • Create a pilot group. • Manage the field-testing. • Record the comments.
5.4 Organize material validation sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a meeting schedule. • Send documentation. • Hold meetings. • Gather opinions. • Make the necessary adjustments.
5.5 Participate in material implementation sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the content specialists.

Operations	Sub-operations
5.6 Participate in training sessions on prior learning assessment and recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the needs. • Communicate the needs to the administrations. • Keep apprised of professional development activities offered.

Note:

This task is difficult to perform when the PLAR advisor is not a specialist in measurement and evaluation. Operations 5.2 and 5.4 may be carried out under the responsibility of an educational institution or the MELS.

TASK 6: Design follow-up, support and supervision tools

Operations	Sub-operations
<p>6.1 Keep up-to-date in matters related to PLAR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in training activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – forums – conferences – training workshops • Consult information sources. • Discuss issues with education partners.
<p>6.2 Determine the follow-up, support and supervision tools that need to be developed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing tools. • Determine the training needs. • Define the type of tools to be developed according to the need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – satisfaction survey – statistical compilation – evaluation follow-up grids – competency acquisition (progress) grids – various reports
<p>6.3 Develop follow-up, support and supervision tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the elements to be included in the tool. • Organize the information. • Format tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – on paper – electronically, etc.
<p>6.4 Implement the use of follow-up, support and supervision tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the various tools available to the individuals concerned. • Show the various individuals how to use the tools. • Record the data.
<p>6.5 Validate follow-up, support and supervision tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather users' comments. • Make any necessary corrections. • Validate any corrections made.

TASK 7: Promote PLAR services

Operations	Sub-operations
7.1 Increase awareness of PLAR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the principles and philosophy of PLAR.• Dispel misconceptions regarding PLAR.• Persuade the various decision-makers and partners of the importance of recognizing prior learning and competencies as part of a vision of continuing education and training.• Participate in discussion panels aimed at promoting prior learning assessment and recognition.
7.2 Participate in developing a promotional plan for PLAR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze the promotional needs of PLAR services.• Propose promotional objectives or means.• Formulate an opinion on the promotional plan to be diffused.
7.3 Collaborate in developing promotional tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify target clientele.• Establish promotional strategies.• Determine the content of promotional tools.• Participate in designing tools.
7.4 Create a communications network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify partners.• Present PLAR services.• Establish collaborative partnerships
7.5 Foster the collaboration of personnel, administrators and departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer information meetings on PLAR.• Make partners aware of the stakes involved in certain steps of the PLAR process.• Specify the expected outcome of collaborative activities.

Operations	Sub-operations
7.6 Organize promotional activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a calendar for promotional activities. • Follow up the promotional budget. • Implement activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – information sessions – participation in trade shows or fairs – mass mailings, etc.
7.7 Participate in evaluating the promotional activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See to the collection of data. • Assess the promotional activities. • Analyze the results. • Propose improvements, if required.

TASK 8: Participate in developing and operating PLAR services

Operations	Sub-operations
8.1 Look for development opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network with economic partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – employers – unions – professional orders – Emploi-Québec – MELS – other • Make a survey of the needs of potential candidates.
8.2 Participate in developing regional services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in meetings. • Issue opinions. • Gather information. • Influence administrators.
8.3 Develop an annual action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define courses of action. • Determine a priority among these courses of action. • Draft an action plan. • Have the action plan approved.
8.4 Prepare projects related to PLAR.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in department meetings. • Prepare, or collaborate in preparing, a draft project in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establish the clientele profile – estimate the availability of resources – perform a preliminary cost assessment – identify sources of funding – establish partnerships • Have the draft project approved.
8.5 Prepare offers of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the steps involved in carrying out the project. • Produce a draft schedule. • Select the tools. • Estimate costs. • Write the offer. • Submit the offer for approval.

Operations	Sub-operations
8.6 Coordinate human resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the human resources required. • Participate in hiring human resources. • Explain the mandates. • Organize the training of support staff and content specialists. • Participate in identifying the hiring criteria.
8.7 Participate in developing or managing budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to budget forecasts. • Authorize expenses or have them approved. • Ensure that the budget is respected.
8.8 Participate in developing policies, procedures and rules regarding PLAR.	

3. Performance Conditions and Performance Criteria

The performance conditions of a task refer to the conditions under which the task is carried out. They generally include information on where the task is to be carried out, the level of autonomy required of the candidate, the reference documents and materials used, and occupational health and safety considerations.

Performance criteria are used to evaluate the aspects that are essential to carrying out a task in a satisfactory manner. These criteria often refer to the ability to work independently, the amount of time required to perform a task, quantity and quality of work completed as well as appropriate attitudes and behaviours.

Participants worked in small groups to identify the performance conditions and performance criteria, which were then validated in a plenary session.

TASK 1: Provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In educational institutions, businesses and organizations • For all types of clients • Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education and training, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services • In collaboration with content specialists, teachers and support staff • Using information materials, description forms, programs of study, administrative standards as well as ministerial and institutional databases • Using office automation software, the Internet and the Web sites of educational institutions • This task involves the risk of exhaustion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear explanations • Establishment of a relationship of trust with individuals • Compliance with administrative standards • Respect for the needs of the client • Respect of confidentiality

TASK 2: Determine the candidate’s prior learning and competencies

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In educational institutions, businesses and organizations • For all types of clients • Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services • In collaboration with content specialists, guidance counsellors, academic advisors, school organization technicians and office clerks • Using the <i>Cahiers d’attribution des équivalences</i>, course outlines, statements of marks, comparative analyses of foreign studies, the <i>Cahiers de l’enseignement collégial</i>, competency-course correspondence tables, the <i>Education Act</i>, the <i>College Education Regulations</i>, <i>SOS</i> and <i>ÉCHO</i> databases, etc. • Using the Internet, PLAR file management sites, and sites of the educational institutions • This task is a source of stress due to the reactions of candidates and the complexity of situations. It involves the risk of verbal aggression from disappointed candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills • Good listening skills • Ability to work in a team • Methodical work methods • Rigorous file analysis and follow-up • Complete files • Compliance with the decisions of other duly recognized institutions • Compliance with standards • Respect for the client • Respect of confidentiality

TASK 3: Coordinate the evaluation of the candidate’s competencies

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In educational institutions, businesses and organizations • For all types of clients • Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services • In collaboration with the personnel in charge in businesses, content specialists, evaluators, academic advisors, storekeepers, laboratory attendants, school organization technicians and office clerks • Using evaluation tools, the <i>Politique de reconnaissance des acquis et des compétences</i>, institutional policies regarding the evaluation of learning, budgetary rules and any other relevant document • Using office automation and teaching management software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication with all partners • Correct application of andragogical principles • Choice of evaluation activities according to the persons concerned • Good organizational skills • Rigour • Ability to solve problems • Observance of deadlines • Respect for the client • Respect of confidentiality

TASK 4: Plan, organize and coordinate the candidate's training

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In educational institutions, businesses and organizations• For all types of clients• Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services• Based on the candidate's learning profile, evaluation results, activity programming in the schedule, programs of study and competency-course correspondence tables• Using office automation software, student management/follow-up software (<i>GEC</i> or <i>COBA</i>, <i>SOS</i>, <i>JADE</i>, etc.) and the Internet• This task is a source of stress and involves the risk of exhaustion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective communication with clients• Ability to work in a team• Realistic training plan• Training plan that meets needs• Range of options• Feasible options• Accuracy of results transmitted• Good organizational skills• Creativity• Quality of documents used• Client satisfaction• Compliance with budgets• Respect for the client• Respect of confidentiality

TASK 5: Coordinate the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In educational institutions • For all types of clients • Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services • In collaboration with content specialists, measurement and evaluation consultants, evaluators, academic advisors, storekeepers, laboratory attendants, school organization technicians and office clerks • Using evaluation tools, the <i>Politique de reconnaissance des acquis et des compétences</i>, institutional policies regarding the evaluation of learning, budgetary rules and any other relevant document • Using office automation and teaching management software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication with all partners • Ability to work in a team • Good organizational skills • Rigour • Ability to solve problems • Clarity of documents • Creativity • Respect of deadlines • Respect for the client

TASK 6: Design follow-up, support and supervision tools

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In educational institutions • For all types of clients • Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services • In collaboration with content specialists, computer personnel, academic advisors, school organization technicians and office clerks • Referring to existing grids and learning profiles • Using office automation software, the Internet, the candidates' sites and PLAR file management sites • This task involves risks associated with using a computer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily accessible information • Quality writing • Creativity • Clarity of tools • Coherence of tools • Adaptability of tools • Effectiveness of tools • User-friendliness of tools

TASK 7: Promote PLAR services

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In educational institutions, businesses and public organizations and premises • For all types of clients • Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services • In collaboration with socioeconomic partners, the institution’s communication officer, teachers, content specialists, academic advisors and support staff • Relying on rules and procedures applicable to PLAR, referential frameworks, the Internet, Web sites of educational institutions, government orientations, ministry policies and orientations, and administrative standards • Using office automation software • This task may cause feelings of isolation and involves the risk of exhaustion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication with various persons • Language adapted to clients • Creativity • Compliance with regulations applicable to the different levels of education • Compliance with the institution’s regulatory frameworks • Observance of deadlines • Compliance with promotional plan • Compliance with budget guidelines

TASK 8: Participate in developing and operating PLAR services

Performance conditions	Performance criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In educational institutions, businesses and organizations• Under the supervision of the assistant director, the director of studies or director of the vocational training centre, the director of continuing education, the coordinator of continuing education or the director of business services• In collaboration with MELS personnel, employers, representatives of unions and professional orders as well as Emploi-Québec personnel• Using strategic planning, institutional policies, documents on job market integration (Emploi-Québec) and workforce plans• Using office automation software• This task is a source of stress and involves the risk of exhaustion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective communication• Ability to work in teams• Offer of services that meets needs• Completion of projects• Client satisfaction• Compliance with budgets

4. Additional Information on the Tasks

Workshop participants individually evaluated the percentage of time spent on each task, the risk of making errors as well as the consequences of making errors when performing the tasks. This information was then used to weight the tasks.

Participants based their evaluation on their experience and put themselves in the place of the client, institution or business. The information presented here must therefore be interpreted with caution and be used for information purposes only, as it is not statistically representative.

4.1 Time Spent on Tasks

Participants answered the question “What percentage of their time do PLAR advisors spend on each task?”

2. Determine the candidate’s prior learning and competencies	20.3%
3. Coordinate the evaluation of the candidate’s competencies	18.1%
1. Provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services	15.6%
4. Plan, organize and coordinate the candidate’s training	13.6%
5. Coordinate the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials	10.2%
8. Participate in developing and operating PLAR services	7.9%
6. Design follow-up, support and supervision tools	7.7%
7. Promote PLAR services	6.6%

4.2 Risk of Making Errors

Participants answered the question “How likely is it that an advisor will make an error when performing this task?”

4. Plan, organize and coordinate the candidate’s training	2.7
5. Coordinate the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials	2.6
8. Participate in developing and operating PLAR services	2.5
2. Determine the candidate’s prior learning and competencies	2.4
3. Coordinate the evaluation of the candidate’s competencies	2.0
6. Design follow-up, support and supervision tools	2.0
7. Promote PLAR services	2.0
1. Provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services	1.3

Legend

1. *Very unlikely*: very little risk of making an error
2. *Unlikely*: little risk of making an error
3. *Likely*: considerable risk of making an error
4. *Very likely*: high risk of making an error

4.3 Consequences of Making Errors

Participants answered the question “What are the consequences for the business, clients and workers of making errors when performing this task?”

4. Plan, organize and coordinate the candidate’s training	3.7
2. Determine the candidate’s prior learning and competencies	3.6
3. Coordinate the evaluation of the candidate’s competencies	3.6
5. Coordinate the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials	3.4
1. Provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services	3.3
8. Participate in developing and operating PLAR services	2.7
6. Design follow-up, support and supervision tools	2.5
7. Promote PLAR services	2.3

Legend

1. *Quite minimal*: the consequences of making errors when performing this task are quite minimal for the business, clients and workers.
2. *Minimal*: the consequences of making errors when performing this task are minimal for the business, clients and workers.
3. *Significant*: the consequences of making errors when performing this task are significant for the business, clients and workers.
4. *Very significant*: the consequences of making errors when performing this task are very significant for the business, clients and workers.

4.4 Weighting of Tasks

This weighting of tasks is based on the results of the three preceding questions.

2. Determine the candidate's prior learning and competencies	175.4
4. Plan, organize and coordinate the candidate's training	135.9
3. Coordinate the evaluation of the candidate's competencies	130.3
5. Coordinate the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials	90.2
1. Provide individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services	66.9
8. Participate in developing and operating PLAR services	53.3
6. Design follow-up, support and supervision tools	38.5
7. Promote PLAR services	30.4

5. Required Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Behaviours

5.1 Knowledge

Knowledge of PLAR

Workshop participants indicated that knowledge of the following is essential to performing tasks: background on PLAR; the concepts and terminology to be used; the evaluation principles to be applied; the procedures to follow; and the companion guides and tools to be used.

Knowledge of legal and regulatory frameworks

Knowledge of various documents (e.g. the *Education Act*, the basic school regulations, budgetary rules, programs of study, certification documents, the *Cahiers d'attribution des équivalences*) is useful, especially for determining prior learning and competencies (Task 2); coordinating evaluation activities (Task 3); planning, organizing and coordinating training (Task 4); and participating in developing policies, procedures and regulations concerning prior learning assessment and recognition (Operation 8.8).

Knowledge of education systems abroad

In certain situations, knowledge of the education systems of other countries may be an asset.

Knowledge of client characteristics

Obviously, a good understanding of the characteristics of the different types of clients is helpful in practising the occupation. This knowledge is especially relevant in the case of immigrants (culture, ethnic background and religion) as well as persons with handicaps or individuals in minority or marginal situations.

Knowledge of pedagogy

Knowledge of pedagogical trends, pedagogical support and supervision, the competency-based approach and the integration of learning is useful when advisors coordinate the evaluation of a candidate's competencies (Task 3); plan, organize and coordinate a candidate's training (Task 4); and coordinate the work of content specialists in developing evaluation materials (Task 5). This knowledge also indirectly applies to determining an individual's prior learning and competencies (Task 2).

Knowledge of andragogy

Knowledge of the principles and concepts related to andragogy such as accountability, the educational helping relationship, or the various learning methods for adults is essential for performing the tasks and operations that require contact with clients and for developing evaluation materials.

Knowledge of career counselling

Workshop participants believe that the occupation requires the application of knowledge related to career counselling, such as psychology and vocational development, career planning and counselling techniques. This knowledge is primarily used in the reception, referral and support of candidates.

Knowledge related to measurement and evaluation

Knowledge related to measurement and evaluation, in particular, concepts, docimology principles, and evaluation tools and strategies, is important in developing evaluation materials and coordinating the evaluation of competencies.

Knowledge of the workplace

Knowledge of the different occupations, work settings, standards and conditions for practising trades as well as occupational health and safety rules is important in the field of PLAR. This knowledge plays a role in determining prior learning and competencies as well as in developing evaluation tools adapted to client characteristics and promotional strategies.

Knowledge of psychology

Interpersonal and helping relationship skills, and the ability to motivate and to interpret verbal and nonverbal language are important because they are used, among other things, to provide candidates with information on their prior learning and competencies and their competency development plan (Operation 2.5), to communicate evaluation results and propose training activities (Operation 3.5), to support candidates in their process (Operation 3.6), to determine with them the methods for acquiring competencies (Operation 4.5), and to create a communications network (Operation 7.4).

Knowledge of administration and management

Knowledge of project and human resources management (hiring, training and providing support), as well collective agreements and quality control principles and standards is useful in performing tasks that involve planning, organizing and coordinating candidates' training (Task 4); coordinating the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials (Task 5); designing follow-up, support and supervision tools (Task 6); and participating in the development and operation of PLAR services (Task 8).

Knowledge of marketing

There are two types of marketing knowledge: theoretical and conceptual knowledge (e.g. target markets, clienteles, approaches and strategies) and practical knowledge (e.g. advertising, means of communication and the media).

This knowledge is useful in providing individuals, businesses and organizations with information on PLAR services (Task 1), promoting these services (Task 7), looking for development opportunities (Operation 8.1), and preparing offers of services (Operation 8.5).

Knowledge of computers

The occupation requires basic knowledge of word-processing, browser, e-mail, database, spreadsheet and specialized software.

Advisors are generally users of computers; however, they occasionally act as producers, when developing follow-up, support and supervision tools (Task 6).

Knowledge of communication

The ability to clearly formulate a message, adapt their level of communication to each individual, use active listening and paraphrasing techniques, and interpret nonverbal signs is useful in a number of tasks, especially those related to contact with clients.

Knowledge of French³

The occupation requires in-depth knowledge of French because advisors must write numerous documents and revise texts prepared by content specialists. Advisors also use concepts and terms specific to PLAR as well as the competency-based approach, which necessitate mastery of the language (definition of words and interpretation of taxonomy levels).

This knowledge is essential for producing or coordinating written work, be it evaluation materials, follow-up, support and supervision tools, promotional materials, offers of services or documents related to planning, policies, procedures or regulations related to PLAR.

Knowledge of English

English is considered an asset in the occupation.

3. It should be noted that the workshop participants work in French-speaking establishments and that the situation regarding the use of French and English differs in English-speaking institutions.

5.2 Cognitive Skills

Problem solving

Advisors must have excellent problem-solving skills given clients' specific needs, the various situations encountered, the variety of programs of study in question, etc.

Analysis and synthesis

These skills are essential in performing a number of tasks and operations.

Creativity

This skill is important in all development activities, especially with respect to coordinating the work of content specialists in developing PLAR evaluation materials (Task 5); designing follow-up, support and supervision tools (Task 6); promoting PLAR services (Task 7); participating in developing and operating PLAR services (Task 8); as well as developing methods for acquiring competencies, if needed (Operation 4.3).

Planning

The ability to prioritize, manage their time and establish realistic deadlines is important in practising the occupation, among other things, in order to:

- hold individual or group meetings
- organize and supervise competency validation interviews
- plan evaluation activities
- establish candidate training plans
- participate in developing a promotional plan for PLAR services
- collaborate in developing promotional tools
- organize promotional activities
- develop an annual action plan
- coordinate human resources

Logic

This skill is especially important when analyzing files, developing tools and establishing the order in which candidates will complete their training.

5.3 Psychomotor Skills

Effective data entry skills are an asset.

5.4 Perceptive Skills

Participants feel that no specific perceptive skills are required for practising the occupation.

5.5 Socioaffective Attitudes and Behaviours

Communication

The ability to remain calm and be sincere, polite and open-minded is especially important in the work of a PLAR advisor.

Advisors also need a sense of conviction in order to be able to promote PLAR services, both within their educational institution and with the clientele.

Occupational health and safety prevention

Workshop participants believe that observance of ergonomic rules when using a computer workstation as well as good stress management skills will help prevent posture problems and professional exhaustion.

Professional ethics

Workshop participants believe that the absence of prejudice, a rigorous application of the process as well as respect for individuals, principles of equity, confidentiality and professional limits represent important ethical values for the occupation.

6. Training-Related Suggestions

When asked about training needs, workshop participants specified that the tasks and operations related to evaluation instruments and planning and organizing training should be the focus of future training sessions.

They also emphasized that more in-depth knowledge of project management, career counselling and the job market would be very useful for advisors.

With regard to an initial training program, participants indicated that training in PLAR should be offered at the graduate level and lead to a certificate or master's degree. They also thought that the training should be offered through distance or on-line education and should focus on practical work.

