

Business Information Systems

PLAR Candidate Guide

Prior Learning Assessment and
Recognition (PLAR)



Tomorrow
in the making.

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Saskatchewan Polytechnic

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The Business Information Systems is dedicated to removing barriers and broadening the access to programs at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. 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 Business Information Systems 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 Saskatchewan Polytechnic student.

Option A: Individual course challenge

If you have 2 or more years of successful experience in the business field, and have learned the skills and knowledge for **one or more** of the Business Information Systems 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, check the [PLAR database](#) or call Saskatchewan Polytechnic and ask your PLAR consultant. Contact information for PLAR consultants is listed on page 9.

How many courses can be challenged through PLAR in the Business Information Systems program?

Currently we have 7 courses with PLAR challenges available. There is no limit. 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?

Business Information Systems program profile			
COURSE CODE	COURSE NAME	PLAR Challenge(s) available through program	PLAR Challenge(s) not available
	* Associated Studies courses *	*see note below*	
ACCT 122	Introductory Financial Accounting 1	✓	
ACCT 225	Managerial Accounting	✓	
ADMN 220	Organizational Behaviour	✓	
BCOM 120	Business Communications I*	✓*	
BCOM 121	Business Communications II*	✓*	
COMP 122	Introduction to Programming for Information Systems		X
COMP 123	Introduction to Business Computing		X
COMP 214	Project Management		
COMP 215	Internet Application Development		
COMP 232	Structured Software Development and Legacy Systems		
COMP 233	Object Oriented Programming Concepts		X
COMP 234	Database		X
COMP 235	Internet Application Development 2		X
COMP 236	Operating Systems and Environment Configuration		X
COMP 237	Systems Analysis and Requirements Management		X
COMP 249	Information Security, Privacy and Ethics		X
COMP 253	Systems Project		X
COMP 254	Computer Architecture and Data Communications		X
COMP 255	Visual Application Development		X
COMP 258	Object Oriented Software Development		X
COMP 259	Mobile Application Development 1		X
COMP 262	Mobile Application Development 2		X
COOP 150	Co-operative Education Work Term		X
HR 236	Organizational Change	✓	
JOBR 120	Job Readiness		
STAT 120	Business Statistics	✓	

Is PLAR available at any time of the year?

PLAR challenges are currently being offered from September to June of each school year.

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 Saskatchewan Polytechnic, 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 Saskatchewan Polytechnic counsellor at a campus closest to you or refer to the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Web site: [Accessibility Services](#)

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

Transfer Credit

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

<http://saskpolytech.ca/admissions/resources/transfer-credit.aspx>

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 [Saskatchewan Polytechnic educational counsellor](#).

Equivalency Credit

Equivalency credit refers to the application of credit you may have earned in a previously taken Saskatchewan Polytechnic course to your current Saskatchewan Polytechnic 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.

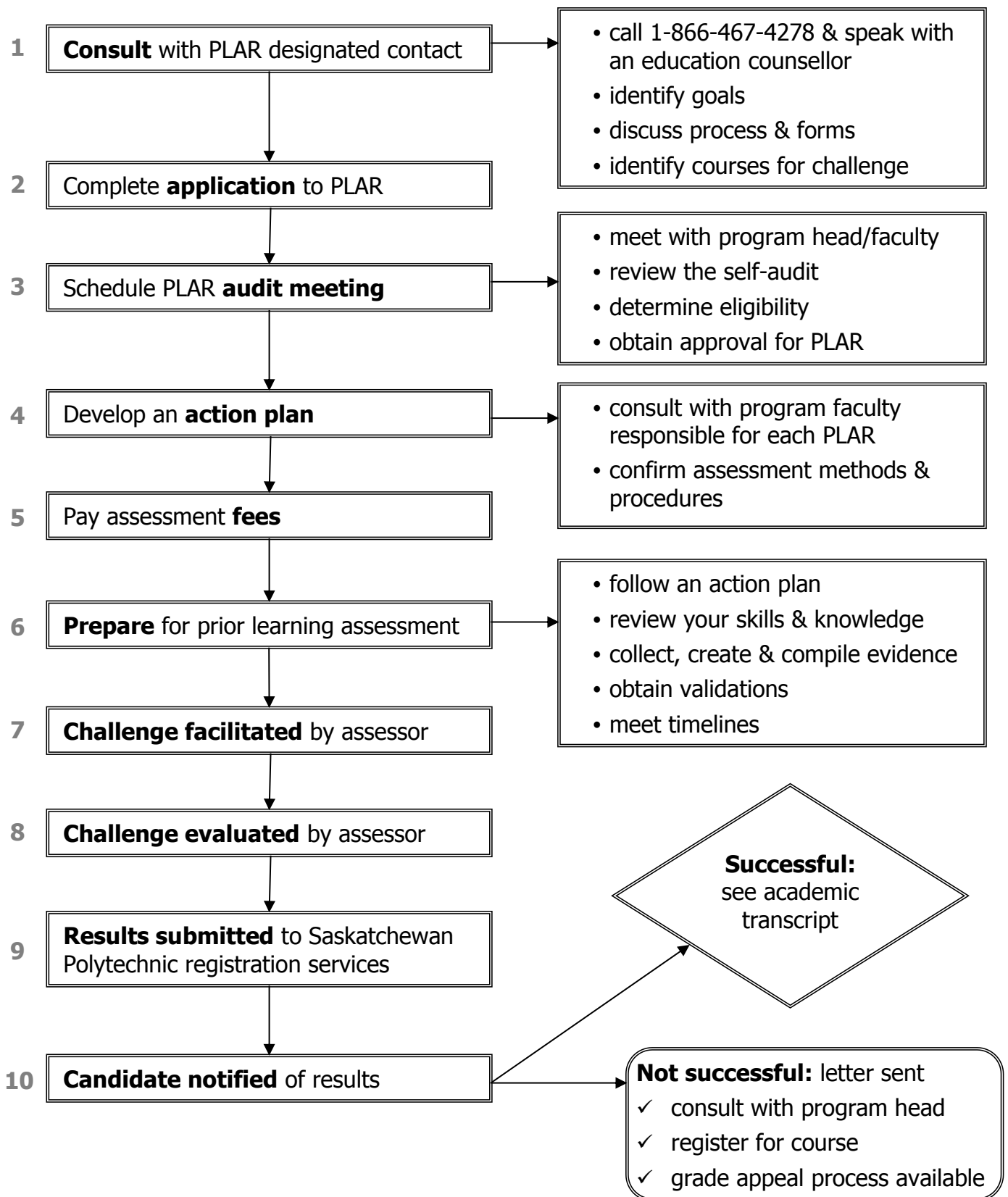
Contact your PLAR consultant(s) for this course

The PLAR consultant for the BCOM 120 & BCOM 121 courses is the Department Head, Arts & Sciences, at **Moose Jaw**. To arrange a consultation, please call the Contact Centre toll-free at 1-866-467-4278 and ask for this person.

The PLAR consultant for the STAT 120 course is the Department Head, Math & Sciences, at **Moose Jaw**. To arrange a consultation, please call the Contact Centre toll-free at 1-866-467-4278 and ask for this person.

The PLAR consultant for ACCT 122, ACCT 225 and HR 236 is the Program Head, Financial Services, Human Resources, Insurance and Marketing, at **Moose Jaw**. To arrange a consultation, please call the Contact Centre toll-free at 1-866-467-4278 and ask for this person.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process



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.
 - It is your responsibility to create, collect and compile relevant evidence – if required.
3. Learning must be current within the last 5 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-evidence – what you say about your knowledge and experience.

Ensure that you provide full evidence to your Business Information Systems 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):

- resource lists
- written descriptions and analysis
- observations
- workplace validations
- work samples
- case studies
- employer or direct supervisor validations
- certificates of attendance or completion from any non-formal learning such as industry training
- documentation of any previous formal education

All documents that are submitted to Saskatchewan Polytechnic 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.

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

For each learning outcome listed, please self-evaluate your competency levels and record in the appropriate column

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)

ACCT 122 – Introductory Financial Accounting 1

Your studies will focus on an introduction to financial accounting designed to provide you with accounting skills to handle business transactions. The course will include bookkeeping techniques, accounting for a merchandising concern and control over cash and receivables. Accounting for payroll is also introduced in this course. ACCT 122 is a companion to ACCT 125 (Introductory Financial Accounting 2) which continues the study of basic financial accounting.

Credit unit(s): 4.0

ACCT 122 – Introductory Financial Accounting 1 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 accounting and its uses.					
2. Apply the "Accounting Equation" to business transactions.					
3. Prepare business transactions for a service company.					
4. Prepare period-end adjustments.					
5. Implement period-end accounting procedures.					
6. Demonstrate accounting for a merchandising company.					
7. Apply alternative methods of valuing inventories.					
8. Apply procedures for internal control over cash.					
9. Prepare transactions relating to receivables.					
10. Demonstrate accounting for payroll.					
11. Describe ethical accounting practices.					

PLAR assessment methods

If your self-audit results above are positive, please contact the consultant. Please do not prepare for assessment until instructions are clarified at a consultation meeting, your [PLAR application form](#) is complete, and you have registered to PLAR this course.

- Evidence file:** (work samples that demonstrate knowledge of the course learning outcomes)

OR

2. **Exam:** 60% pass mark required – problems with approximately 10% multiple choice questions

Example of a problem: From the given information, please prepare a month end bank reconciliation.

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

ACCT 225 – Managerial Accounting

Your studies will provide an introduction to the fundamentals of managerial accounting. You will examine cost concepts, pricing strategies, manufacturing accounting, cost allocation, and budgeting processes, and you will be able to select appropriate managerial accounting techniques for decision making.

Credit unit(s): 5.0

Prerequisites: ACCT 122, minimum grade of 60

ACCT 225 – Managerial Accounting 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. Apply basic cost accounting terms and concepts.					
2. Organize cost flow information to prepare financial schedules.					
3. Set up a basic job-order costing system.					
4. Manage costs incurred by a business organization.					
5. Use cost-volume-profit Analysis as a decision-making tool.					
6. Set up financial performance measurement tools to evaluate business divisions and investments.					
7. Use cost flow information to prepare budget documents.					
8. Interpret variances using flexible budgeting tools.					
9. Apply appropriate managerial accounting techniques for decision making in a business environment.					

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

Please include any work samples, validations, letters of reference, and documentation that demonstrates your knowledge and skills of this course's learning outcomes. The following must be submitted:

- Employer validation
- Resume
- Relevant work based training or workshops – please include any certificates, statements of attendance, agendas or workshop outlines you may have.
- Work samples including:
 - financial schedules – statements for cost of manufacturing, cost of goods sold, and income
 - budget documents – master budget, cash budget, flexible budget

- income statements – contribution margin format, segmented income statements
- Master budget for an organization/business

2. Clarification interview

Assessor may contact candidate for explanation or verification of submitted evidence.

3. Challenge exam

If the evidence submitted is complete or missing some skills and knowledge, candidates may be asked to write a short answer exam.

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

ADMN 220 – Organizational Behaviour

You will study human behaviour in organizations and develop the skills needed to deal with people at work. Your studies include content on individual behaviour, values, interpersonal relationships and communications, groups and team dynamics, organizational culture, leadership, and change. You will study these aspects of human behavior within the context of diverse formal organizations.

Credit unit(s): 4.0

ADMN 220 - Organizational Behaviour 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 organizational behaviour.					
2. Explain how our perceptions, personalities, and emotions shape our behaviour.					
3. Explain how values influence behaviour.					
4. Apply various motivational models to improve performance.					
5. Develop effective teambuilding skills.					
6. Explain how power and organizational politics relate to performance.					
7. Explain conflict management.					
8. Describe organizational culture.					
9. Determine the appropriate leadership style in a situation using leadership theory.					
10. Explain the benefits of, and the challenges faced with group decision making.					
11. Explain organizational change and strategies to overcome resistance to change.					

PLAR assessment methods

If your self-audit results above are positive, please contact the consultant. Please do not prepare for assessment until instructions are clarified at a consultation meeting, your [PLAR application form](#) is complete, and you have registered to PLAR this course.

1. Evidence file

Please include any work samples, validations, letters of reference, and documentation that demonstrates your knowledge and skills of this course's learning outcomes. The following must be submitted:

- Employer validation
- Resume

- Relevant work based training or workshops – please include any certificates, statements of attendance, agendas or workshop outlines you may have
- Statement of work value – include a 350 word paragraph that describes the importance of your work and what gives you satisfaction in your work

2. Assignment

This assignment will be completed at the nearest Saskatchewan Polytechnic test center. Distance candidates can make arrangements with the program to complete this assignment at their home location (please refer to [Appendix A](#) for [assignment instructions](#)). The assignment will consist of 10 multiple choice questions and the remainder of the assignment will be discussion or scenario based questions (case studies) related to organizational behaviour. You may bring your resource text into the assignment.

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

BCOM 120 – Business Communications 1

You will develop fundamental employability skills by studying the principles of communication. The course content includes developing effective writing skills. You will apply the principles and skills by writing letters and memorandums for routine and negative purposes. You will develop teamwork employability skills and examine ways to apply communication skills to team and cross-cultural situations.

Credit unit(s): 4.0

Equivalent course(s): BCOM 104, COMM 141

BCOM 120 – Business Communications 1	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
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.					
1. Explain the process of communication.					
2. Illustrate the importance of cultural awareness in communications.					
3. Discuss communication techniques in interpersonal and workplace situations.					
4. Compose effective sentences and paragraphs.					
5. Write routine business messages.					
6. Write negative business messages.					
7. Create formal documents using word processing applications.					
8. Explain how to establish and maintain client relationships.					
9. Use email features and electronic calendaring to manage business communication.					

PLAR assessment methods

If your self-audit results above are positive, please contact the consultant. Please do not prepare for assessment until instructions are clarified at a consultation meeting, your [PLAR application form](#) is complete, and you have registered to PLAR this course.

The evidence file and documented evidence of presentation and evaluation skills are PLAR requirements for BCOM 121. If a candidate is unable to meet these requirements, an appropriate combination of assessment methods will be used in addition to the evidence file.

1. Evidence file ** AND/OR

- 2 routine business memos
- 2 routine business e-mails
- 1 letter of application to PLAR
- 2 routine business letters
- 2 negative business letters

- Validation letter(s) from employer(s)
- Performance checklist to validate communication skills

** Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for more information about the evidence file.**

2. Assignments AND/OR

Memos, emails, and/or letters may be assigned if the evidence file is incomplete.

3. Challenge exam

- Passing mark of 60%
- Learning outcomes 1 – 4 are weighted at 20% of the exam
- Critical learning outcome 6 is weighted at 40% of the exam
- Critical learning outcome 7 is weighted at 40% of the exam

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

BCOM 121 – Business Communications 2

You will continue to develop effective business writing skills and employability skills. The course focuses on writing business reports in informal and formal styles. Your classroom study and experience will help prepare you for a business career by developing your presentation skills.

Credit unit(s): 4.0

Prerequisite(s): BCOM 120, minimum grade of 60

BCOM 121 – Business Communications 2 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. Conduct research for a report.					
2. Create documentation notes and bibliographies.					
3. Organize business reports.					
4. Use graphics to illustrate reports and presentations.					
5. Write proposals.					
6. Write user manuals.					
7. Write user manuals.					
8. Deliver effective oral presentations using presentation tools.					
9. Evaluate oral presentations.					

PLAR assessment methods

If your self-audit results above are positive, please contact the consultant. Please do not prepare for assessment until instructions are clarified at a consultation meeting, your [PLAR application form](#) is complete, and you have registered to PLAR this course.

1. Evidence file **

- Formal report/formal research paper
- 1 analytical report (memo or letter format)
- 2 informational reports (memo or letter format)
- Graphics used in at least one of the above reports
- Letter(s) of validation from employer(s)
- Employer validation of presentation skills
- Testimony from Toastmasters International (or similar organization) to validate presentation and evaluation skills

Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for more information about the evidence file.

2. Assignments

- 1 formal report
- 1 analytical assignment
- 2 short informational reports
- 2 presentations which may be pre-recorded
- 1 evaluation of a pre-recorded presentation

3. Challenge exam

- Passing mark of 60%
- Critical learning outcome 5 is weighted 60% of the exam
- Critical learning outcome 7 is weighted 40% of the exam

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

HR 236 – Organizational Effectiveness

You will develop strategies and processes related to creating and fostering an evolving workplace culture that supports innovation, change, quality, and learning and results in harmony between the organization's needs and employee's expectations while remaining consistent with the organization's business plan. The course content includes an overview of business planning corporate culture, quality management, and the emerging role of the employer and human resource support systems.

Credit unit(s): 4.0

Equivalent course(s): ADMN 236

HR 236 – Organizational Effectiveness 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 concept of organizational development and change theory.					
2. Describe the theories of effective change management.					
3. Discuss principles of engagement and diagnosis in change management.					
4. Discuss leadership theories and their impacts on change management.					
5. Describe how employees engage in a process of organizational redesign to help share required new behaviours.					
6. Apply the change management process in a given situation.					
7. Illustrate the impact of human resource management interventions on an organization.					
8. Explore choices available in <i>reinforcing</i> new behaviours through the “hardwiring” of the organization.					
9. Examine organizational culture and its role in hindering and implementing change.					
10. Discuss current trends driving the roles of leaders in implementing and leading the process of strategic renewal in an organization.					
11. Describe current trends and issues in change management.					

PLAR assessment methods

If your self-audit results above are positive, please contact the consultant. Please do not prepare for assessment until instructions are clarified at a consultation meeting, your [PLAR application form](#) is complete, and you have registered to PLAR this course.

1. Evidence file

The evidence file must include documents that demonstrate the skills and knowledge related to the learning outcomes above. These will require verification/validation by present and/or past employers.

And/or

2. Interview

You will be required to participate in an interview with an instructor where you will be asked to demonstrate your knowledge in the above areas.

And/or

3. Challenge exam

You may also be asked to complete a comprehensive exam based on the learning outcomes for this course

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

STAT 120 – Business Statistics

You will be introduced to the elements of statistics used in business. The course content includes frequency distribution, measure of central tendency and dispersion, probability distributions (discrete and continuous), sampling, sampling distributions, estimations, regressions, correlation and elementary hypothesis-testing.

Credit unit(s): 4.0

Equivalent course(s): ACP 374

STAT 120 Business Statistics	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
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.					
1. Use statistical terminology and procedures.					
2. Diagram appropriate tables and graphical charts for organizing and presenting data.					
3. Calculate averages for summarizing data.					
4. Calculate the standard deviation and variance measures for finding data variability.					
5. Calculate data location, ranges, and shape.					
6. Analyze fundamental concepts and symbolism of probability.					
7. Calculate revised probabilities.					
8. Examine probability distributions.					
9. Apply the Central Limit Theorem (bell curve) to simple experimental design.					
10. Construct confidence intervals for a population mean and proportion involving large and small samples.					
11. Construct hypothesis testing.					
12. Analyze paired data using the Linear Regression method with correlation analysis.					

PLAR assessment methods

If your self-audit results above are positive, please contact the consultant. Please do not prepare for assessment until instructions are clarified at a consultation meeting, your [PLAR application form](#) is complete, and you have registered to PLAR this course.

1. Targeted resume

A targeted resume is a resume that is customized so that it specifically highlights the experience and skills you have that are relevant to the field of Business Statistics.

It focuses on your skills and experience, rather than on your chronological work history. Edit your existing resume so that your skills and knowledge under each job experience match the critical learning outcomes of the course.

- State your capabilities, what you can do, as well as your achievements, what you have done. Make sure that your statements regarding your capabilities and achievements are short and put in bullet style.

Please refer to the website <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/resumes/a/target.htm> for a sample and more information on a targeted resume.

It focuses on the candidates' skills and experience, rather than on chronological work history. Please have the candidate edit their existing resume so that skills and knowledge under each job experience match the critical learning outcomes of the course.

2. Challenge exam

Time Allowed: 3 hours

The pass mark on the challenge exam is 60%

There are approximately 40 questions formatted as Word problems. The questions are based on the learning outcomes found in the Business Statistics self-audit of the PLAR Business Certificate candidate guide.

Students writing the challenge test are given a set of Statistical tables and Formula Sheets to assist them with their solutions to the exam questions. Instructor will share with PLAR candidates at the self-audit meeting as described in [Step 3](#) of the PLAR Process.

Test criteria: Please show all work – you will be given partial marks for correct steps.

All steps to most questions require:

- Use proper **symbols**
- State clearly which **formula** you are using
- **Substitute** appropriately into the formulas
- **Simplify** your work and **round** your **answers** appropriately
- **Include** the **Units** with the statistical measure
- Use **properly labelled** sampling distribution curves and **probability notation** where appropriate in your answers

Calculator: Use of a statistical featured calculator is recommended for the exam.

Resources

Please ask the PLAR consultant to recommend any useful resources to prepare for assessment, which may include the following items. Also, check for related resources from online and other sources. Purchasing resources for this course from the [Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bookstore](#) is optional.

Business Information Systems

Appendices

Appendix A: ADMN 220 – Organizational Behaviour documents

ADMN 220 - Employer validation letter

(On employer's business letterhead)

I have actually seen _____ complete the tasks that I have
(Candidate's name)
signed for on the competency sheet for the _____ area, and
(Course/learning outcome)

I have confidence that he/she is competent to perform those tasks.

Name of validator: _____

Employer: _____

Job title: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

General comments regarding the candidate's performance (optional):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ADMN 220 Employer validation checklist:

Employer instructions: Review each of the skills and knowledge factors that are listed in the table below. Indicate with a checkmark whether the PLAR candidate can perform the factor at a "Satisfactory", "Unsatisfactory", or "Not Applicable" level. Add any comments that you might have to clarify your responses in the comment area. Provide your signature at the bottom of this form and complete the validator information sheet

Skills and knowledge	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable	Optional comments
Determines goals and sets priorities				
Plans and schedules activities				
Completes tasks within an established deadline				
Solves problems and makes thoughtful and reasonable decisions, even if unpopular				
Effectively uses verbal skills				
Effectively uses non-verbal skills				
Leads discussion groups				
Prepares presentations				
Delivers presentations				
Understands and works well in a diverse workplace (gender, age, race, other)				
Negotiates work tasks and assignments				
Functions as an effective team member				
Effectively manages conflict				
Maintains good relations with others				
Encourages and motivates others to accomplish tasks				
Monitors the performance of others when required				

Instruction sheet for candidate

Note to candidates:

Please take careful note of the marks assigned to each of the following questions and plan your time and answers according to the value of each question. As well, when given a choice of questions, please only answer one as you will only be marked on one (refer below to number 3).

This information is included in the candidate guide so you will have more information about the assignment. You will receive the actual assignment from the program area once you have made your PLAR application.

- 1.** Candidates are to complete the following questions:
 - a) Either Question 1 OR Question 2
 - b) Questions 3, 4, 5, and 6. Note that question 4 has two choices. Your assignment will be graded depending on the choice you have made.
 - c) Either Question 7 OR Question 8

- 2.** Questions 1 and 2 can be done directly into the assignment booklet. The other questions must be done on the paper that has been supplied to you. Please ensure that your writing is neat and legible.

- 3.** Assessors will only mark the first response in questions where candidates are given a choice.

- 4.** This assignment has been developed so that candidates who have had organizational experience would be able to complete it without reference to a textbook. However you are allowed to use your textbooks.

Appendix B: BCOM 120 & BCOM 121

BCOM 120

Detailed information and validation checklists for evidence file

The following terms are used in **BCOM 120**.

Routine business emails, memos, and letters

"Routine" business messages are typical business messages and take the form of memos, emails, or letters:

- Memos are internal messages; that is, they are sent to employees in the business for which the writer is working.
- Emails may be either internal or external messages.
- Letters are external messages, which are sent to organizations other than the business for which the writer is working.

Routine business messages describe procedures and distribute information. The reader is expected to be pleased, mildly interested, or possibly neutral.

Routine messages use the direct organizational pattern. The three parts are:

- the purpose of the message
- explanations, details, or evidence in the next paragraph
- action information including dates or deadlines, a summary of the message, or a closing thought

Negative business letters

Negative business letters deliver bad news. The reader is expected to receive the news with displeasure or even hostility.

"Bad news" letters are written using an indirect organizational pattern. The four parts are:

- a neutral statement
- an explanation of the causes of the bad news
- an understated announcement of the bad news
- a pleasant statement that focuses on the future

Direct memo/letter feedback sheet for BCOM 120

*Please use this feedback sheet as a guide when completing a
direct memo/letter for BCOM 120*

Key: E: Excellent G: Good A: Average U: Unacceptable

The PLAR candidate must achieve at least an "A" rating in each category.

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
CONTENT/ORGANIZATION	E	G	A	U
Subject Line and Opening Paragraph				
<input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes main idea in the subject line (as applicable)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Restates and amplifies main idea in the opening paragraph				
<input type="checkbox"/> States purpose clearly				
<input type="checkbox"/> Opens with a question or polite command if applicable				
General Explanation	E	G	A	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Provides reader with adequate background to understand the writer's needs and interests				
Specific Details	E	G	A	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Includes all relevant information				
<input type="checkbox"/> Asks open-ended questions and clarifies as needed				
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizes information effectively (like items grouped; most important to least important etc.)				
Closing Paragraph	E	G	A	U
<input type="checkbox"/> Includes clear, dated action with an explanation if applicable				
<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses appreciation if applicable				
<input type="checkbox"/> Provides closure				
WRITING STYLE	E	G	A	U
Includes effective writing techniques such as:				
<input type="checkbox"/> "You" focus/Reader benefit				
<input type="checkbox"/> Positive attitude				
<input type="checkbox"/> Active verbs				
<input type="checkbox"/> Concise language				
<input type="checkbox"/> No trite expressions				
<input type="checkbox"/> Ideas expressed fluently				
<input type="checkbox"/> Parallel construction				
<input type="checkbox"/> Original thought				

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
GRAMMAR/SPELLING/PUNCTUATION/MECHANICS	E	G	A	U
Correct:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Grammar				
<input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation				
<input type="checkbox"/> Numbers				
<input type="checkbox"/> Spelling				
<input type="checkbox"/> Abbreviations				
<input type="checkbox"/> Word Usage				
FORMAT	E	G	A	U
All parts:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Correct order				
<input type="checkbox"/> Correct spacing				
<input type="checkbox"/> Consistent letter & punctuation style OR				
<input type="checkbox"/> Correct memo set-up including initials at the FROM line				
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete information				

Direct memo/letter - BCOM 120

Please have form filled out by your employer or direct supervisor

(On employer's business letterhead)

_____ (candidate's name) has satisfactory knowledge of how to compose e-mails, memos, and letters to send the following business messages:

Routine business messages: The candidate composes effective sentences and paragraphs and uses standard format when writing routine messages. Examples are e-mails and memos that relate to the daily operation of an organization and letters that request information or reply to customer's queries.

Negative business messages: The candidate composes effective sentences and paragraphs and uses standard format for writing messages which may contain bad news. Examples are refusing requests, declining invitations, and delivering negative news to employees and customers.

Name of validator: _____

Employer: _____

Job title: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

General comments regarding the candidate's performance (optional):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Detailed information and validation checklists for evidence file

The following terms are used in **BCOM 121**.

This appendix includes an explanation of the terms "informal report," "informational report," "analytical report," and "formal report" as they are used in the PLAR Validation Checklist for BCOM 121.

Informal report

An informal report is a short report of ten pages or less. It presents the information in either memo or letter format, according to whether the report is needed inside or outside the writer's organization.

Informational report

The main purpose of an informal informational report is to present information (data) without analyzing it or making recommendations. The writer collects and organizes the data.

Examples are periodic reports such as sales reports; trip, convention, and conference reports; progress reports; and investigative reports.

Analytical report

The main purposes of an analytical report are not only to present information, but also to analyze the information and provide conclusions. If requested, the writer will also make recommendations.

Examples of analytical reports are justification/recommendation reports, feasibility reports, and yardstick reports (which examine problems with two or more solutions so they compare/contrast criteria).

Formal report

A formal report may be either informational or analytical. It is similar to an informal report except that it is longer and it is formatted differently. Written in response to a request from the decision makers in an organization, a formal report contains the following parts:

- Cover
- Title page
- Letter or memo of transmittal
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusions
- Recommendations (if applicable)
- Appendix (if applicable)
- Works cited

Examples of formal reports are an organization's annual report, a report to an outside agency, which provides funding to the writer's organization, or a long report, which presents information to a decision maker

Informal informational report feedback sheet for BCOM 121

*Please use this feedback sheet as a guide when completing an
informal informational report for BCOM 121*

Key: E: Excellent G: Good A: Average U: Unacceptable

The PLAR candidate must achieve at least an "A" rating in each category.

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
CONTENT/ORGANIZATION	E	G	A	U
Introduction				
· Explains authorization/purpose of the report				
· Describes sources & methodology (if appropriate)				
· Provides necessary background information for readers				
· Previews the organization of the report				
Findings	E	G	A	U
· Groups facts or findings into 3 to 5 subtopics				
· Supports findings with facts/evidence				
· Uses clear headings				
· Chooses appropriate degree of formality				
· Enhances readability with graphic highlighting				
· Uses logical order to present information				
· Provides appropriate in-text citations				
Visuals	E	G	A	U
· Introduces & explains graphics				
· Uses appropriate format (number & caption)				
· Provides appropriate in-text citations				
Summary/Conclusion	E	G	A	U
· Reviews main points				
· Discusses what action will follow (if appropriate)				
· Offers a concluding thought				
· Facilitates quick response				
WRITING STYLE	E	G	A	U
Includes effective writing techniques such as:				
· Precise/concise language				
· Reader oriented				

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
· Active verbs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Consistent verb tense	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Transitional devices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Fluent expression of ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Parallel construction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAMMAR/SPELLING/PUNCTUATION/MECHANICS	E	G	A	U
Correct:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Punctuation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Numbers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Abbreviations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Word Usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FORMAT	E	G	A	U
· Places all parts of document in the correct order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Provides appropriate spacing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Includes Works Cited page in appropriate documentation style	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Applies consistent letter & punctuation style OR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Uses correct memo set-up including initials at the FROM line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Informal analytical report feedback sheet - BCOM 121

*Please use this feedback sheet as a guide when completing an
informal analytical report for BCOM 121*

Key: E: Excellent G: Good A: Average U: Unacceptable

The PLAR candidate must achieve at least an "A" rating in each category.

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
CONTENT/ORGANIZATION	E	G	A	U
Introduction				
· Explains the authorization/purpose of the report				
· Previews the organization of the report				
· Summarizes conclusions & recommendations (receptive audiences)				
Findings	E	G	A	U
· Describes the problem or need if not in Introduction				
· Establishes criteria (if applicable)				
· Uses clear headings				
· Discusses & evaluates alternatives, pros & cons etc.				
· Supports findings with facts/evidence				
· Enhances readability with graphic highlighting				
· Provides appropriate in-text citations				
· Organizes findings for logic and readability				
Visuals	E	G	A	U
· Introduces & explains graphics				
· Uses appropriate format (number & caption)				
· Provides appropriate in-text citations				
Conclusions & Recommendations	E	G	A	U
· Draws reasonable conclusions from the findings				
· Justifies conclusions with highlights from findings				
· Makes recommendations if asked; based on the conclusions				
· Enumerates & explains needed actions				
· Writes recommendations as commands				
WRITING STYLE	E	G	A	U
Includes effective writing techniques such as:				
· Precise/concise language				

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
· Reader oriented				
· Active verbs				
· Consistent verb tense				
· Transitional devices				
· Fluent expression of ideas				
· Parallel construction				
GRAMMAR/SPELLING/PUNCTUATION/MECHANICS	E	G	A	U
Correct:				
· Grammar				
· Punctuation				
· Numbers				
· Spelling				
· Abbreviations				
· Word Usage				
FORMAT	E	G	A	U
· Places all parts of document in the correct order				
· Provides appropriate spacing				
· Includes Works Cited page in appropriate documentation style				
· Uses consistent letter & punctuation style OR				
· Uses correct memo set-up including initials at the FROM line				

Formal report feedback sheet – BCOM 121

*Please use this feedback sheet as a guide when completing a
formal report for BCOM 121*

Key: E: Excellent G: Good A: Average U: Unacceptable

The PLAR candidate must achieve at least an "A" rating in each category.

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
CONTENT/ORGANIZATION	E	G	A	U
Introduction				
· Identifies the purpose of the report				
· Explains the significance/background of the study				
· Includes scope, limitations, sources & methodology				
· Previews the organization of the report				
Findings	E	G	A	U
· Discusses topic thoroughly and objectively				
· Supports findings with facts/evidence				
· Enhances readability with graphic highlighting				
· Uses clear headings				
· Uses logical order to present information				
· Provides appropriate in-text citations				
Visuals	E	G	A	U
· Chooses appropriate charts/graphs/illustrations				
· Introduces & explains graphics				
· Uses appropriate format (number & caption)				
· Provides appropriate in-text citations				
Summary/Conclusion	E	G	A	U
· Reviews main points				
· Explains what the findings mean in relation to the problem				
· Makes recommendations that suggest action (if requested)				
· Enumerates & explains actions; writes actions as commands				
WRITING STYLE	E	G	A	U
Includes effective writing techniques such as:				
· Precise/concise language				
· Reader oriented				
· Active verbs				

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
· Appropriate degree of formality				
· Transitional devices				
· Fluent expression of ideas				
· Parallel construction				
GRAMMAR/SPELLING/PUNCTUATION/MECHANICS	E	G	A	U
Correct:				
· Grammar				
· Punctuation				
· Numbers				
· Spelling				
· Abbreviations				
· Word Usage				
FORMAT	E	G	A	U
· Places all parts of document in the correct order				
· Includes appropriate preliminary parts in correct format: Cover, Title page, Transmittal Document, Table of Contents/List of Illustrations, Executive Summary				
· Includes supplemental parts: Appendix & Works Cited				
· Uses appropriate documentation style for Works Cited page				
· Uses appropriate spacing & pagination				

Presentation skills feedback sheet – BCOM 121

*Please use this feedback sheet as a guide when completing
presentation skills for BCOM 121*

Key: E: Excellent G: Good A: Average U: Unacceptable

The PLAR candidate must achieve at least an "A" rating in each category.

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
CONTENT & ORGANIZATION	E	G	A	U
Topic				
· Appropriate for the audience				
· Stayed on topic—no digressions				
Introduction	E	G	A	U
· Introduced himself/herself				
· Established credibility				
· Gained listeners attention & interest				
· Previewed main topic areas				
Body	E	G	A	U
· Stated main ideas clearly				
· Provided supporting details				
· Used examples, humour etc. to create audience rapport				
· Provided adequate information				
· Organized speech logically				
· Defined unfamiliar terms				
· Interested audience				
Conclusion	E	G	A	U
· Restated central theme/purpose				
· Provided closure (summary, quotation)				
PRESENTATION & DELIVERY	E	G	A	U
Preparation				
· Used jot notes				
· Rehearsed speech				
· Showed good command of the material				
Visuals	E	G	A	U
· Made effective eye contact				

TRAITS & EXPECTATIONS	RATING			
· Displayed animated facial expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Used natural mannerisms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Showed natural posture & movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aids	E	G	A	U
· Well prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Easy to read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Attractive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Enhanced presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Effective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocal	E	G	A	U
· Pronounced words correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Demonstrated well-regulated pacing/fluency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Maintained adequate volume	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Used effective expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
· Included few vocalized pauses (ahs, ums)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Direct memo/letter – BCOM 121

Please have form filled out by your employer or direct supervisor

(On employer's business letterhead)

_____ (candidate's name) has satisfactory knowledge of how to compose both informal short reports and formal reports, how to deliver effective oral presentations, and how to evaluate oral presentations.

Informal reports include knowledge of:

Informational reports. Informational reports present information without analyzing it or making recommendations. Examples are sales reports; trip, convention, and conference reports; progress reports; and investigative reports.

Analytical reports. Analytical reports present information, analyse it, and provide conclusions. They may include recommendations. Examples are recommendation reports, feasibility reports and yardstick reports (which compare/contrast criteria).

A formal report may be informational or analytical. It contains the following parts: cover, title page, letter or memo of transmittal, table of contents, list of figures, executive summary, introduction, body, conclusions, appendix, and bibliography.

An oral presentation might take the form of a short presentation to a staff meeting, a sales pitch to a customer, or a speech before a professional gathering. An evaluation of a presentation involves encouraging the speaker and making helpful suggestions.

Name of validator: _____

Employer: _____

Job title: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

General comments regarding the candidate's performance (optional):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Oral Report Evaluation

Speaker: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Topic: _____ Class: _____

A. CONTENT			
	Y		N
Topic:			
▪ Appropriate?			
Opening:			
▪ Greeting?			
▪ Stated topic?			
▪ Gained listener's attention/interest?			
▪ Previewed main topic areas?			
Body:			
▪ Ideas clearly explained?			
▪ Ideas logically organized and on topic?			
▪ Vocabulary appropriate to audience?			
Closing:			
▪ Verbally cued audience?			
▪ Summarized central theme/purpose?			
▪ Closing thought/quote?			
▪ Offered to answer questions?			

Y=Yes N=No

B. PRESENTATION AND DELIVERY			
	Y		N
Preparation:			
▪ Used index card notes for reference?			
Appearance:			
▪ Regular eye contact?			
▪ Warm facial expression?			
▪ Avoided distracting mannerisms?			
▪ Appropriate posture?			
Voice:			
▪ Clear/fluent? (avoided non fluencies)			
▪ Well paced?			
▪ Loud enough?			
▪ Expressive?			
Visuals:			
▪ Overheads, Flipcharts			
▪ Posters, PowerPoint			
▪ Other			
▪ Introduced/explained?			
▪ Clear and readable?			