

plar@athabascau.ca

Dear Sir/Madam,

An Athabasca University student whom you know, work with, or have worked with in the past is asking you to write a letter on his or her behalf as a part of his or her application to AU's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process. We hope you will take this opportunity to assist your colleague on his or her learning journey.

AU's Centre for Learning Accreditation (CLA) provides students with the opportunity to receive credit for learning they have acquired in settings other than the university or in other formal education venues. Your letter is very important to this process because it provides evidence that the candidate does have the learning he or she claims to have. Our assessors read these letters very closely, looking for linkages to the candidate's learning statements within their PLAR portfolio.

Please note the following guidelines to help you write this letter of attestation:

1. Send your written evaluation of the candidate's learning on your letterhead stationery, if possible. If you do not have letterhead, be sure to include your address, daytime telephone number, and e-mail address. We may contact you with questions or ask for further information.
2. Include a description of your present position, pertinent past experience, and formal education and training.
3. Mention the candidate by name and identify your relationship to the candidate (e.g., co-worker, supervisor, etc.). Explain the situation in which you have observed his or her learning and supply an appropriate timeframe for your experience with the candidate.
4. State specifically which competencies, skills, or knowledge you are evaluating. In most cases, the candidate will inform you of these in advance and provide you with a list of "learning statements" he or she has written. The learning statements should accurately describe the candidate's learning that has arisen from a particular work experience.
5. Describe the candidate's specific skills, knowledge, and competencies as you have observed them, in your own words. This is far more helpful than just checking the list of learning statements that may have been provided to you. While you may discuss your letter with the candidate or discuss the learning directly, please do not request that he or she compose the letter for you.
6. Evaluate how well the candidate grasps the learning by using statements such as "average", "above average", "exceptional", and so on. Use examples, whenever possible, for the



standards you have used to evaluate the candidate, such as “performed at the same level as my other employees who possess a bachelor’s degree, or performance exceeded other volunteers under my supervision who have performed similar duties”, or whatever statement most accurately represents the situation.

7. Please remember that this letter is one of attestation rather than recommendation or reference. We are more interested in verifying the candidate’s learning than in predicting future performance. What suffices as a reference letter does not work well as an attestations letter.
8. Sign your letter and send it directly to the email address below. After receiving your letter, we will then send a copy to the candidate.

Your letter will be most helpful to the candidate and to us if it is an accurate reflection on his or her learning. Thank you for your participation in the program. Please call us if you have any questions. Our process is clearly described at this web site: <http://priorlearning.athabascau.ca/index.php>

Sincerely,

Director
Centre for Learning Accreditation

We currently can only accept emailed letters as attachments, sent to plar@athabascau.ca