

**Centre for Learning Accreditation
Learning Contract**

...assisting you in the successful completion of your PLAR portfolio

What is a learning contract?

Learning contracts serve as an important tool in many types of learning experiences. Jointly negotiated by learner and provider (mentor, teacher or facilitator), the learning contract provides a structure for the intended learning, including allusions to timeline, content, and process. Learning contracts should be signed off by both parties and amended, in the same way, as appropriate.

Learning contracts were popularized by Malcolm Knowles' work on adult learning and contribute to mature learners' ability to maintain self-direction in their learning. Learning contracts attend to a process plan, giving learners the opportunity to both think about their process and control it, as they undertake a learning project, in this case, the preparation of a PLAR portfolio.

Because the portfolio is a “developmental” or “generative” document that will grow over time, the learning contract approach provides a useful framework and roadmap for its construction.

Why will a learning contract be useful to me now?

The PLAR portfolio is a detailed piece of work that will take you some time to prepare. We can't predict how long it will take you as that depends on how much energy you devote to it and how much time you can actually spend with it. Most learners approach the portfolio on a part-time basis while continuing to take courses or at least while continuing with other job responsibilities and normal life commitments. Because there is not a firm time period during which a portfolio must be completed, we feel the learning contract can help serve as a guideline for time management, thus ensuring successful completion and eventual assessment of prior learning knowledge toward your degree program at AU.

How does it work?

Jointly, and in a collaborative fashion, you and your CLA mentor will agree on terms for the completion of your portfolio. We will begin by sending you this learning contract that has been prepared for you, outlining the parts of the agreement that we can put forward. You will complete the form with the parts of the learning agreement that are under your control. Together, you and your mentor will agree that the learning contract contains the correct information. The completed learning contract will form the basis for your engagement with CLA as you work on your portfolio.

What if the learning contract needs to be changed?

Things change, plans change, life gets in the way. When it is clear to learner or mentor that the contract needs revisiting, either can initiate a re-drafting of terms.

Learning Contract

Between _____
(learner)

and _____
(AU mentor)

for the purposes of completing a learning portfolio for PLAR assessment at Athabasca University.

Part I. Learner's commitment to product

I will complete the following tasks related to my portfolio:

	Estimated date of completion
1. Write a narrative autobiography*	_____
2. Discuss progress to date with mentor (phone)*	_____
3. Write other front-end pieces*	_____
4. Update my resume	By the end of portfolio preparation
5. Submit first draft learning statements	_____
6. Project portfolio completion date	_____
7. Ensure that portfolio requirements, as outlined on the checklist, are met.	_____ (learner initials)

* *initial timing suggested by mentor*

Part 2. Learner's and Mentor's commitment to process

For learners

1. As an engaged learner, I will strive to honour my timeline. _____
(learner initials)

2. As an engaged learner, I will let my mentor know when I cannot meet my targets.

For mentors

3. I will honour the time and energy that learners can invest in the PLAR process.

(mentor initials)

4. I will respect the learner's request to revise the learning contract.

5. Throughout the portfolio preparation process, I will advise the learner of my concerns if the portfolio does not meet requirements.

Please note: Typing your name in the signature line below will be considered equivalent to signing a hard copy of this document.

Signed:

Learner

Date

Signed:

Director, Centre for Learning Accreditation

Date

Phone Call Checklist

During the scheduled phone call (see above), we will discuss these topics. Other topics may also be raised by either mentor or learner.

1. Mode of contact (discuss preferred method of contact, email and/or phone)
2. How did you hear about PLAR?
3. Student status (at AU)
4. Nature of learning statements (review the importance of learning statements, their format and the process of development)
5. Supporting documentation
 - a. Letters of attestation (when to start, process)
 - b. Other forms of supporting documentation (statement of purpose)
6. Review portfolio checklist
7. Timeline
 - a. Negotiate dates/portfolio completion date
 - b. Establish renegotiation process
8. Questions? Concerns?