**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Activity on the
Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (RNFIL)**

Manitoba

**Report
Province of Manitoba**

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

OECD Activity on Recognition of
Non-Formal and Informal Learning

Manitoba Report

Component 1, Contextual factors

1.1   Demographic change

Question 1.1.a)

Post-secondary enrolments and graduations have increased overall in Manitoba. University and college enrolments and graduations have increased over the past decade. In the past few years, the size of the traditional youth cohort for post-secondary education (18 to 24 years of age) has been increasing, at least partially accounting for these enrolment increases.

Higher participation of female students compared to males is noted, although this trend has been relatively stable over the past few years. As well, increased enrolment of Aboriginal Manitobans has been an important trend. There is no evidence in universities and colleges of a general increase in enrolment of older students.

Question 1.1.b)

Analysis of enrolment data by age indicates that students 25 years of age and under comprise approximately three quarters of university undergraduate enrolment and this has remained relatively constant. Learners in the college system and in Apprenticeship training continue to be somewhat older than university students. Approximately half of college enrolment is accounted for by students 25 years of age or older.

Learner profiles reflect some other demographic changes in particular sectors. The increased enrolment of Aboriginal learners has been particularly significant at the college level and in apprenticeship training. It is estimated that Aboriginal students now comprise 7% of university enrolments and 17% of college enrolments. In the Apprenticeship program, Aboriginal apprentices now constitute 17% of all active apprentices in the province.

Female students outnumber males in university enrolments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Females represent approximately 59% of university undergraduate enrolments and 55% of graduate enrolments. At the college level, females comprise 47% of enrolments. Females outnumber males at three of the four Manitoba colleges, the exception being Red River College which is the Province's largest college, located in Winnipeg.

Enrolments and graduations from Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) have gradually increased. See response to Question 1.6.a) for background on these centres which provide secondary level education for adults. Females again outnumber males in these institutions and more than half of the students are 25 years of age or older. In 2005/06, 37% of ALC learners self-identified as Aboriginal.

Question 1.1.d)

Over the past ten years, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) policies and procedures have been introduced at educational institutions (colleges, universities and adult learning centres) to improve access by adults to educational opportunities. Changing demographics have been one contextual factor for the introduction of these policies.

1.2   Internationalisation

Question 1.2.a)

Important developments have occurred in recent years in Manitoba's immigration policy. Specifically:

- *Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth* identifies immigration as a key factor to strengthening economic and population growth in the province. Immigration is a key component of a strategy to meet Manitoba's labour market needs. However, there continue to be barriers for many highly skilled immigrants in having their qualifications recognized and finding employment commensurate with their skills and experience. The government considers qualifications recognition a priority and has been actively developing new approaches to information, assessment, skills enhancement and labour market integration.
- In 2003, the immigration target was set at 10,000 arrivals annually by 2006. Immigration to Manitoba has contributed to the province's population growth of close to 30,000 persons over the past five years – the largest growth since the 1980s.
- In 2005, the province received 8,097 immigrant arrivals, the highest annual intake since 1968.
- The November 2006 Throne Speech set a new target for immigration. The goal is to double the current level in the next decade, by adding another 1,000 immigrants each year.
- Supported by the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement with Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Manitoba has increased capacity to meet immigration goals through the Provincial Nominee Program. Manitoba is able to recruit and nominate skilled workers through five priority and one general stream. Priority stream applicants are assessed on the basis of their ability to meet key benchmark criteria for settlement success in age, education, work experience, language ability and post-arrival supports. Provincial Nominees accounted for 57% of Manitoba newcomers in 2005.

The main activity in this area that relates to recognition of prior learning is the development of a Qualifications Recognition Strategy. This has evolved as follows:

- The development of a strategy to address the issue of qualifications recognition of highly skilled immigrants officially began in October 2002.
- Formation of Ministerial Committee on Qualifications Recognition (representing 8 provincial government departments)
- One-day Think Tank on November 26, 2002 marked the beginning of a consultative process.
- "Framework for a Manitoba Strategy on Qualifications Recognition" released in June 2003 as part of the Interim Report on the Manitoba Qualifications Recognition Initiative. The Framework recommended that the Manitoba government take the leadership role in the development of a strategy to address the issue of qualifications recognition and entry to practice of highly skilled immigrants. Seven Principles were outlined and stakeholder feedback on the Framework was invited.
- During 2003/04, two pilot projects began (through funding from the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program) to address barriers to qualifications recognition: Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association pilot project for 12 International Pharmacy graduates and University of Manitoba, Faculty of Engineering pilot for International Engineers.
- 2004 - Manitoba Strategy on Qualifications Recognition released
- Demonstration projects are developed involving regulators, post-secondary institutions and employers to test ideas and potential solutions to address barriers to qualifications recognition. Brief descriptions of these demonstration projects are provided below.
- December 2004 – Qualifications Recognition Summit held for relevant stakeholders to discuss progress, share best practices and consult on next steps.
- January to March 2005 – consultations on *Standards of Assessment.* An implementation strategy is being developed.
- November 15, 2006 Throne Speech stated that "new legislation will be introduced to spur the recognition of qualifications". Details are pending.

Informational materials, such as occupational profiles, have been developed to assist newcomers to understand life and services in Manitoba, including the qualifications recognition processes. For example, *Career Destination Manitoba for Newcomers* is a web-based project currently featuring 30 multimedia profiles of skilled newcomers who successfully re-qualified in regulated professions and found employment in Manitoba.

Demonstration Projects:

A number of demonstration/pilot projects involving regulators, post-secondary institutions and employers to increase the recognition of skills and entry into the labour market have been developed in the past few years.

Internationally Educated Engineers Qualification Program (IEEQ)
(See response to Question 5.2.a) for more detail)

Manitoba's successful IEEQ is in the process of becoming an established program. Funding from Human Resources and Social Development Canada, the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program (MIIP) and the Manitoba Opportunities Fund (MOF) has now been secured for a three-year period. The fourth cohort of this project began in September 2006. Conversations between the Faculty of Engineering and central government have taken place to discuss funding beyond the three-year period.

Internationally Educated Teachers Qualifications Pilot Program at the University of Manitoba began with its first cohort in January 2006. A portion of their funding is being provided through the Manitoba Opportunities Fund (MOF).

Accelerated Professional Career Development Program for Internationally Educated Accountants
MOF funding has been provided to Certified General Accountants (CGA) Manitoba to develop and deliver this program that began in the fall of 2006. The purpose of this project is to bridge the educational and experiential gaps of recently immigrated foreign trained accountants in an accelerated manner, ensuring those successfully completing the program are well equipped to achieve employment commensurate with their level of education and training.

Internationally Educated Agrologists Qualifications Pilot Program
Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program (MIIP) funding has been provided to the University of Manitoba for the development of this pilot. The first cohort is expected to begin in September 2007.

Credit Union Training Program
A training program for immigrants with a background in banking and customer service has been successfully offered a number of times through Manitoba credit unions. This program provides participants with training in communication, language and work culture as well as a three-month paid work experience within a credit union with the goal of employment with a financial institution.

Early Childhood Educators
An alternative assessment process/bridging program for immigrants wishing to certify as Early Childhood Educators was developed by the Manitoba Child Day Care Office and Labour and Immigration (LIM). Upon successful completion, participants are certified as Early Childhood Educators II. The third cohort of this program began in September 2006.

Hairstylists
In partnership with the Apprenticeship Branch, a program to assist trained immigrant hairstylists to successfully complete the Red Seal Hairstylists examination required to certify has been developed and piloted.

Pharmacists and Allied Health Professionals
LIM is working with Manitoba Health on funding proposals to Health Canada for Pharmacists and Allied Health Professionals.

Question 1.2.b)

The Agreement on Internal Trade, Labour Mobility requirements would be relevant to the issue of within-Canada mobility. In theory, according to the Agreement on Internal Trade, the occupational / professional standards are supposed to be competency based - which could include formal and non-formal training combined with prior work experience. While some occupations / professions use competency based standards, many are still mostly, if not solely based on formal academic credentials. A recent agreement made by the Committee on Internal Trade - made up of provincial / territorial ministers of trade has created a deadline for regulatory bodies to ensure that their standards are competency based by April 1st, 2009.

In the area of Apprenticeship, which is experiencing strong demand due to skills shortages and increased participation of new immigrants, Manitoba participates with other jurisdictions on a Joint Planning Committee. Relevant activities occurring under this umbrella include collaboration on developing inter-provincial program guides and actions in the areas of language benchmarks and Essential Skills.

1.3   New ICT

Question 1.3.a)

Manitoba's public post-secondary institutions are actively involved in distance and on-line learning. In addition to each institution's offerings, they have established Campus Manitoba as a consortium of public colleges and universities established to facilitate access to post-secondary education throughout the province.

Under a System Restructuring Envelope, the Council on Post-secondary Education supports projects that restructure some aspect of the post-secondary system in Manitoba. Both projects that incorporate learning technologies in the delivery of programs and initiatives that support the use of prior learning assessment and/or enhanced credit transferability and articulation have been supported in recent years.

The Apprenticeship Program has initiated efforts to develop alternative delivery arrangements apart from the traditional block release approach common in apprenticeship training. As an example, Pork Production Technician training has included modularized components via distance delivery. Modularization is also evident in some new curricula which, rather than leading to one level test, has been designed to have several unit tests throughout the course.

Distance delivery options are also available at the Kindergarten to Grade 12 level. In addition to regular academic credits, technical vocational courses on line include Drafting, Computer Science, Software Applications, Accounting and Agriculture.An interesting new example of the innovative use of ICT at this level is a new e-learning program called Health and Safety 101. In partnership with the Manitoba Workers Compensation Board, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Workplace Safety and Health, this program has been adapted specifically for Manitoba from the WSIB in Ontario (http://www.safemanitoba.com/hs_101_manitoba/presentation/index.aspx). It is intended to provide basic safety and health information (not job specific) to workers under the age of 25. This course can also prepare users for the Passport to Safety test and on-line transcript program (http://www.passporttosafety.com/) which can demonstrate basic knowledge and initiative in learning about safety and health to employers.

Question 1.3.b)

There are several examples of such credentials/qualifications in various industry sectors, not necessarily as a result of use of new ICT, but generally through increased industry involvement in training (using traditional and e-learning methodologies). The perceived value or currency of these credentials, in comparison to academic qualifications, is variable.

The following are a few examples:

The **Certificate in Management (CIM)** is a designation received by individuals for business focused management across a range of management functioning from shop floor supervisor up. There is an organization called the Certificate in Management which is responsible for this designation and it is run by business representatives.   The Certificate prepares students for positions in general management and sets the stage for further management education. It presents a broad survey of underlying disciplines, and an introduction to the functional areas in management. The completion of this Certificate with the appropriate electives satisfies most of the requirements for the Institute of Canadian Bankers (I.C.B.) and the Canadian Institute of Management (CIM).

The **Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP)** designation is a nationally recognized level of achievement within the field of Human Resources. The designation represents recognition of one's professionalism and commitment to ensuring a national standard of excellence. The CHRP standard emphasizes the critical role of people management; protects the interest of employers, employees and the general public; and sets a benchmark for the efficient practice of human resources management.

The **Canadian Welders Certification** is a credential which in Manitoba is more prevalent and sought after than red seal designation. The Canadian Welding Bureau (CWB) issues a ticket to those seeking employment in the metal fabrication field for a CWB certified company.

Question 1.3.c)

The potential use of e-portfolio has been considered but has not as yet been actively pursued. Manitoba continues to examine the feasibility of this approach.

The practice of e-portfolio was examined by a cross-department working group in 2004. Based on the magnitude of province-wide implementation, it was not considered to be a priority in light of other initiatives. Feasibility factors under discussion included required infrastructure supports, receptivity of training partners such as the public education system and business to receiving an e-portfolio, training for facilitators of e-portfolio and unclear benefits for learners/clients. Recently, the topic has been re-opened for discussion with the view that three years later the concept may be more attractive to the system.

Industry Training Partnerships Branch also conducted a specific e-Portfolio Project: "PLAR Needs Assessment for Electronic Portfolios for Manufacturing, Northern Development and Immigration" in partnership with industry. Electronic portfolios for PLAR needs were researched and analyzed with key stakeholders. A strategy document was developed identifying related implementations in other jurisdictions, emerging standards, and funding options.

See also projects related to Skills Passports in response to Question 5.1.a).

1.4   Economic developments and skills shortage/mismatch

Question 1.4.a)

Manitoba established the Premier's Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) which is a broad-based 35-member council that provides continuing advice to the Manitoba Premier on a wide range of provincial economic priorities. The initial set of recommendations from PEAC to the Premier formed the basis for Manitoba's economic strategy entitled ***Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth.*** This strategy recognizes "education first" as one of its key priorities. PEAC continues to provide recommendations in areas such as facilitating qualifications recognition of immigrants, improvements in Aboriginal education and working towards increased credit transfer and articulation in education.

Recognizing the unique challenges facing Northern Manitoba, the province also has a Northern Development Strategy. This strategy identifies five priority areas; housing, health, transportation, employment and training, and economic development.

Manitoba has also adopted a Community Economic Development (CED) policy framework. This is a key component of Manitoba's economic strategy, intended to develop a provincial economy that is more inclusive, equitable and sustainable. A strong CED approach in Manitoba will help to better meet the needs of communities by integrating social, economic and environmental objectives.

CED requires that community members have education and training opportunities that are accessible, relevant and affordable. Education and training contributes to enhanced employability, greater productive capability, and social and economic innovation. As such, it is critical to building strong economies and allowing people to live purposeful lives. Education and training is necessary to support lifelong learning that enables individuals and communities to adjust to changing circumstances and continuously meet their needs.

Finally, Manitoba has a Sustainable Development Act that applies to all provincial programs and policies. The province has recently established a Manitoba Education for Sustainable Development Working Group in response to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). Education for Sustainable Development recognizes the interdependencies among economic, social and environmental dimensions and is inclusive of formal, non-formal and informal education.

Question 1.4.b)

Shortages of labour and skills required by employers have been the most outstanding characteristic of Manitoba's labour market in the last five years. Demand has been spread throughout most sectors and regions of the province, and has spread from professional occupations and highly skilled trades to relatively unskilled occupations. As economic activity in the other western provinces increases, the labour market faces greater competition for workers at all skill levels.

Question 1.4.e)

There are several Canadian studies/reports that Manitoba has used (and in several cases has contributed to) that provide useful context information and relevant research. These include:
- Recognizing the Prior Learning (RPL) of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence (June 2006)
- Feedback from Learners. A second Cross Canada Study of PLAR (April 2003)
- A Slice of the Iceberg: Cross-Canada Study of PLAR (November 1999)
- Canadian Adults' Interest in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): a 2004 National Survey by David Livingstone (OISE)
- Canadian Adult Learner Friendly Institutions (ALFI) study to test the transferability of eight best practice principles to the Canadian context.
- State of the Field Review: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) prepared by Dr. Christine Wihak, Assistant Professor, University of Calgary for the Canadian Council on Learning
- Minding the Gap: A Study of Gap Training Models in Canada prepared by Reframed Learning Concepts, Ann Pedersen, Consultant for Advanced Education and Training and the Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee (May 2006)

Also, see the response to Question 1.4.f) below.

<u>Question 1.4.f)</u>

In the context of Manitoba's CED policy, and with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy undertook a range of research projects to examine how communities might overcome obstacles and share in the benefits created by the New Economy. Within the body of research produced are several studies relevant to lifelong learning, learner success and non-formal and informal learning. Examples include:
- <u>Education and Training in CED and the New Economy</u> prepared by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba for the Manitoba Research Alliance CED in the New Economy
- <u>Aboriginal Learners in Selected Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba</u> by Jim Silver with Darlene Klyne and Freeman Simard
- <u>Aboriginal Students and the Digital Divide: Non-Formal Learning in the Inner-City</u> by Lawrence Deane, MSW, Ph.D. and Sherry Sullivan, M. Ed.
- <u>Using Information Communication Technology Tools to Facilitate Community Economic Development Networks</u> prepared by Susannah Cameron, Research Affiliate, Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

<u>Question 1.4.g)</u>

An exhaustive list of occupations which include some recognition of non-formal and informal learning does not exist. The situation is complex and extremely variable. Such occupations include both regulated and non-regulated occupations. Potentially, any occupation may include such opportunities and these opportunities may exist in terms of entrance to practice or entrance to training.

1.5   Social developments

<u>Question 1.5.a)</u>

Manitoba has considered and is focusing attention on skills and competencies for a knowledge economy and society. These include:
- Essential skills – the set of nine essential skills identified by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Manitoba has developed an Essential Skills Framework (2004) and is working to implement this across several program areas.
- Employability skills – as articulated by the Conference Board of Canada. One key reason that this set of competencies is considered is that it includes emphasis on workplace safety and health. (See description of a project Health and Safety 101 in the response to Question 1.3.a.))
- Blueprint for Life/Work Designs – a set of competencies related to career development. The Blueprint is an international partnership project of the National

Life/Work Centre, the Canada Career Information Partnership, Human Resources and Social Development Canada and the national Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (US). Career development is the focus of an inter-ministerial initiative to develop and implement a career development framework (see response to Question 2.2.d)).

1.6   Others

Question 1.6.a)

In Manitoba, developments in the area of recognition of non-formal and informal learning should be understood within a context of related trends of education renewal that essentially comprise a "**Manitoba Model**". This model can be characterized as learner-centred and committed to learner success.

In addition to evolution of policy and practice with respect to prior learning assessment and recognition (see responses to Questions 1.6.b), 2.1.a), and 3.1.a)), several other elements are important to describe. An access or inclusion philosophy is evident in Manitoba. Efforts to enable access to learning for individuals, and to overcome barriers to success, have been pervasive. Examples include mature student entry policies, development of Adult Learning Centres, specific ACCESS programs, community-based delivery, credit transfer and articulation, and other activities to make education learner-centred. These are briefly described below to illustrate this "Manitoba model" that has evolved over many years.

Mature Student Entry Policies:
Post-secondary institutions entry policies allow mature student entry for individuals who may not be high school graduates or otherwise not meet prerequisites.

Adult Learning Centres:
The introduction of Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) in Manitoba has focused efforts to enable adults without a high school diploma or who lack specific prerequisites for post-secondary education to more easily obtain these. Adults may acquire a Mature Student Diploma through ALCs or may take individual course credits.

Adult education programs first appeared in Manitoba as extensions of high school programs during the 1970s. Beginning in 1988, adult learners had the option of completing a high school diploma designed to assist adults in completing their secondary schooling. Graduation with a regular provincial high school diploma requires the successful completion of 28 credits across Grades 9 to 12. In comparison, graduation with a Mature Student High School Diploma requires the completion of eight credits, four of which must be at the Grade 12 level (at least one must be English Language Arts and one Mathematics). Between 1996 and 2000, exponential growth had occurred both in the number of adult learners registering for courses and in the number of adult learning centres.

In 2000-2001, the province reviewed the way in which adult learners were able to access high school upgrading. In 2001-2002, responsibility for the administration of adult education in Manitoba was transferred from the area responsible for public schools to the Adult Learning and Literacy Branch.

In 2003, Manitoba passed an Adult Learning Centres Act. Although such centres existed prior to this, the Act formalized the governance framework of Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) for the first time. These centres were established to provide tuition-free secondary education credit courses using recognized principles of adult education.

ACCESS Programs:
Specific ACCESS programs have been designed and funded at Manitoba universities and colleges. These specialized programs are designed to assist individuals with accessing and succeeding in post-secondary education. Eligible individuals are those Manitobans who, due to geographic, financial, or academic barriers, would not be able to easily access post-secondary education. The programs are intended for, but not limited to, Aboriginal students, northerners, women, immigrants and people from visible minority groups. There were 2,655 new students enrolled in these programs between 1999/00 and 2005/06. The outcomes for ACCESS Program graduates are impressive. Of graduates in 2005, 97% were either employed or continuing their education. Of those employed, 98% were employed in areas related to their field of study.

Examples of ACCESS programs include:
- Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program (BUNTEP) which is an off-campus Bachelor of Education degree program serving the North.
- University of Manitoba Professional Health Program (PHP) which provides support to students in the Faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Medical Rehabilitation for those who have gained admission to these faculties.
- University of Manitoba Engineering Access Program (ENGAP) which provides a 4-year Bachelor of Engineering degree for Manitoba Aboriginal students. The impact of this program is clear. Of the 150 Aboriginal engineers in all of Canada, approximately one third are graduates of ENGAP.
- University of Winnipeg has the Winnipeg Education Centre – Education Program (WEC-ED) which is an off-campus Bachelor of Education program training teachers for Winnipeg's inner city.
- Red River College's Community College Access Program (CCAP) provides opportunities for college diploma and certificate programs for northern and rural residents.
- University College of the North Preparation for Health Careers Program (PHC) provides training for northern residents to enter the health field.

Community-based Delivery:
In addition to the funded ACCESS programs described above, increased community-based delivery of education has been a priority for development, both within the university and college systems and the apprenticeship program.

An area to be highlighted is work over the past five years to improve community-based training for apprentices in Aboriginal communities, particularly in the North. The Apprenticeship Branch has partnered with the colleges and First Nation and Métis communities to allow apprentices to receive the technical training component of their apprenticeship in their home communities or close to home. As an example, in 2005-06, four sections of technical training in the trade of Carpenter were delivered by Red River College at two participating First Nation communities (Pinaymootang First Nation and Lake Manitoba First Nation). A total of thirty-two seats were provided in Level 3 and 4 Carpenter through Aboriginal Community-Based Training.

Credit Transfer and Articulation:
Through its program approval and funding processes, the Council on Post-secondary Education supports increased credit transfer and articulation across the post-secondary system. In addition to including these considerations among the criteria for all program approvals and funding, specific projects are often funded in this area. The Council also has initiated the coordination of committees involving the post-secondary institutions to enhance credit transfer and articulation and to develop a more comprehensive credit transfer system in Manitoba. The first two committees are Articulation Committees on Nursing and Educational Assistants. The Nursing Committee has completed their work. A new Committee of Environmental Studies is now underway.

First introduced as a pilot project in 2000, a Dual Credit policy has been adopted by both the secondary school system and Adult Learning Centres. This policy permits students in high schools or ALCs to study post-secondary courses and apply them for credit at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Other Learner-centred Activity:
Recognizing that adults enter education and training programs with unique skills, knowledge and challenges has led to many adaptations and efforts to ensure that learning opportunities are learner centred.

An example of efforts to be learner-centred and to support learner retention and success is the province's Essential Skills Framework. Adopted in 2004, this framework represents concerted and coordinated efforts across program areas to integrate Essential Skills into learning opportunities, thus improving learner success. (See also the response to Q.1.5.a)

Funded community-based literacy programs use a Manitoba program called STAGES and this is designed to facilitate recognition of learning at these early stages of learner development. It also supports articulation with and access to further learning at an Adult Learning Centre. Stages are a portfolio approach to learning that incorporates a range of learning tasks and skills that provide learners with the opportunity to integrate authentic literacy tasks and activities into their learning programs. The Certificate in Literacy and Learning refers to three certificates or stage levels of learner development. There are four consistent sections (Reading text, document use, written communication, oral

communication) in each stage which correspond to the Essential Skills Complexity Levels.

- Stage One: Learners who enter the program with basic literacy skills.
- Stage Two: Learners with low reading and writing skills. Individuals at this level can use printed materials for limited purposes.
- Stage Three: Learners who are developing readers and writers. Articulated with Senior 1 and Senior 2 English Language Arts outcomes. Eligible for up to 2 credits toward the Mature Student High School Diploma.

Adult Learning Centres participated in the Canadian Adult Learning Friendly Institutions (ALFI) study which is designed to test the transferability of the eight best practice principles to the Canadian context. The project provided an opportunity to participate in the project Beyond PLAR: Creating a Hospitable Learner Friendly Environment for all Adult Learners. The ALFI principles assist the ALCs to meet the needs of the adult learners and identify areas which could be improved. The ALCs highlighted the prior learning assessment and recognition activity that is woven throughout the ALFI principles which is an important part of the intake and assessment at the ALCs.

Another common area for adaptation to be learner-centred is to provide culturally relevant supports. These may be for adult learners generally (e.g. the University of Winnipeg has established an Adult Learners Office to provide a focused range of services for adult learners at the institution). Often, efforts are focused on Aboriginal learners and, more recently, on Immigrant learners. Aboriginal student supports are in place in several institutions. With 69% of its students being of Aboriginal ancestry, these services are particularly evident at the University College of the North. An example of Immigrant-focused services is the Diversity and Immigrant Student Support Office at Red River College.

Question 1.6.b)

In Manitoba, Red River College was an early adopter of the recognition of prior learning, making it available in the 1980s to students in the fields of early childhood education and nursing. However, provincial funding for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) services was not provided until 1995, at which time, the province funded the college to create a position for a PLA Facilitator.

Concurrent to funding that position, the Department of Education and Training encouraged other post-secondary institutions to consider offering Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to their students. There was a deliberate strategy to develop grass roots institutional support as opposed to mandating the use of PLAR which had been unsuccessful in other jurisdictions.

In 1997, the Council on Post-Secondary Education was formed. This new organization had the mandate to fund the province's post-secondary institutions, approve new programs and establish a post-secondary policy framework. As part of its program approval process, institutions were asked to consider how PLA could be part of every

newly funded program. As well, the "System Restructuring Envelope" included PLA as one of the projects that could be funded, offering incentive funding to the establishment of the new service.

Workforce 2000, a program within Education and Training, funded practitioner Training workshops offered by the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network in the late 1990s.

In 1997, Manitoba Education and Training, in partnership with Red River College and the Winnipeg Development Agreement (WDA) of Human Resources Development Canada initiated the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Centre (the PLA Centre). The PLA Centre was established as a time-limited, not-for-profit agency, reporting to a board of directors. It was an arms length agency from both government and the college. The WDA provided salaries for the Executive Director, Project Manager, PLA Advisor and clerical support for 2.5 years. The province paid all operating costs, including rent. As well, the province funded all demonstration projects and the salaries for three PLA Advisors located outside of Winnipeg. Federal (WDA) funding for salaries ended in March 2000. Provincial funding continued until June 2001.

The PLA Centre was established to provide advisory services to individuals who were unemployed or underemployed, and to provide consulting services to post-secondary education, business and industry to support the development of PLAR programs and services. As part of its work, demonstration projects were undertaken to validate the use of PLA in a variety of fields.

While the PLA Centre had been very effective in its demonstration projects and had provided advisory services and practitioner training that was valuable, the post-secondary institutions were still not substantially increasing their capacity to offer PLAR services. As well, the opportunity to enhance PLAR services through the new network of Adult Learning Centres and through existing Employment Centres was recognized. The need for a new strategic approach to implementing PLAR was identified and work was undertaken to develop a new policy. Accordingly, a new strategy was developed that was designed to increase the capacity for the recognition of prior learning throughout the education and employment systems.

Component 2, Description of institutional arrangements

2.1   Political and legal framework

Question 2.1.a)

In November 2001, the Government of Manitoba released *A New Policy Framework for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)*. Its comprehensive objective was to increase the expertise in and use of PLAR across the province. The implementation

strategy was to link PLAR with other key provincial labour market strategies for effective training, college expansion, Aboriginal training and education, and immigration. The Framework proposed a strengthened, integrated approach to PLAR built on three cornerstones:

- increasing PLAR capacity in post-secondary institutions
- strengthening advisory services within the community, at Adult Learning Centres and Employment Centres, and
- providing a greater focus on industry PLAR projects and their sustainability

In designing the new PLAR framework, the goal was to have the framework be as decentralized as possible – making expertise and access available throughout the province. It was of great importance to expand the network of PLAR practitioners to make the recognition of prior learning accessible. Finally, there was a strong desire to move from demonstration projects that assisted a few people to widespread systemic change that would assist many.

The vision for the outcome of the PLAR initiative was that PLAR would be a key building block in a seamless provincial education system and would assist in reducing duplication of learning, increase access to training, support continuous learning and reduce training time.

The goals set out in the new strategy were:
1. To ensure a cost effective delivery and organizational structure for the continued work of PLAR.
2. To ensure PLAR is part of all major provincial activity to which it relates.
3. To build greater capacity within the post-secondary institutions in order to maximize the impact of PLAR within the educational system.
4. To build on the Essential Skills work occurring in business and industry by establishing PLAR within Workforce Manitoba (later renamed Industry Training Partnerships).
5. To develop a sustainable mechanism for the continued delivery of PLAR advisory services.

The November 2001 PLAR Policy Framework in its entirety as well as the 2001-2002, 2002-2003 and the 2003-2004 Annual Report Out can be accessed at www.plarinmanitoba.ca.

Question 2.1.b)

No specific PLAR legislation was introduced as part of the Manitoba initiative. Rather, implementation occurs within the existing and developing statutory responsibilities governing the post-secondary institutions, Council on Post-secondary Education, Apprenticeship and the Adult Learning Centres. Most recently, a Bill to create a new Adult Literacy Act has been introduced.

Although acknowledging that effective legislative and regulatory governance is essential for the overall functioning of the education systems in Manitoba, and work continues to ensure that this is in place, PLAR implementation has focused on policy, funding, capacity building and programming.

Question 2.1.f)

Once again, although the policy framework was not mandated through specific legislation, operational systems were put in place to put the policy framework into practice. The following describes the activities taken between introducing the framework in 2001 to 2004/05, when progress against the goals was reviewed by the Department.

Responsibility for managing the new strategy was located initially in both the Department and the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

Consistent with the introduction of the new strategy, the province's financial commitment to PLAR increased. The provincial funds that had been allocated to projects at the PLA Centre (including salaries for staff located outside of Winnipeg) were reallocated to contract positions within government and industry pilot projects.

Funding for a period of three years, for a new position in each of the publicly funded post-secondary institutions was made available. This was to assist each institution to increase its capacity in offering PLAR services.

The funds that had previously supported the operating costs at the PLA Centre were reallocated for the development of a comprehensive PLAR practitioner training program developed by Red River College to make training available not only in the classroom but online as well. Three years of funding included the development and implementation of two levels of PLAR training (PLAR Foundation Training and an Advanced PLAR Practitioner Training) for staff in post-secondary institutions and other organizations across Manitoba.

Links among the institutions, the industry-related project staff, advisory services, Apprenticeship, Aboriginal education and foreign qualification recognition were established through an inter-branch working group called the Provincial PLAR Project Team (P3T). This provided a mechanism to discuss issues, gaps in implementation, share information, and create partnerships. Representatives from Labour and Immigration for Foreign Credential Recognition and the Aboriginal Education Directorate have been invited to the table to lend these perspectives. A sub-committee called the P3T working group extends the goals within the policy framework into a working plan which reflects coordinated commonly held areas of interest such as communication and research. Coordinating these linkages was assigned to the Industry PLAR area. At all levels of activity, linkages were made to the content or subject matter experts who are essential partners in developing appropriate processes for the recognition of prior learning.

The Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee (WPLAR) was established as a business, labour and government partnership to provide a focus for industry-based PLAR.

A PLAR Coordinator was formally appointed in 2003 to ensure that implementation proceeded as envisioned, to maintain accountability and to be a central responsibility for communication.

Recently, a PLAR coordinating committee was created for post-secondary institutions.

<u>Question 2.1.g)</u>

While specific activities have been monitored, and in some cases, evaluated, a formal evaluation of the overall framework implementation has not been conducted.

<u>Question 2.1.h)</u>

Building awareness about PLAR and its availability is a key activity in decentralizing PLAR activities and supports. Communication strategies occurred through internal efforts (such as the government coordination group), professional networking activities, and the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network (MPLAN) which is an association of PLAR practitioners. The Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee (WPLAR) has hosted several awareness-raising events, including an education session on the application of PLAR to Aboriginal Learning, and another on the Australian experience of integrating PLAR into its entire training system. An open discussion has also been facilitated with organized labour groups. Work continues on increasing awareness and sharing Manitoba 'lessons learned'.

In addition to each area's brochures and web presence, Manitoba has a series of brochures, publications and two websites which provide a consistent and comprehensive source of information to individuals and organizations.

Finally, Adult Learning Centres and Employment and Training Service Centres are key public points of contact for information about PLAR.

2.2 Governance and the role of government

<u>Question 2.2.a)</u>

List of 'who does what' for non-formal and informal learning and recognition of such learning

Who?	What?
Council on Post-Secondary Education	The Council's mandate within the formal learning system is described below. Part of COPSE's policy mandate involves promotion of PLAR activity at the public post-secondary institutions through limited funding provision.

(COPSE)	
Universities and Colleges	Institutions are responsible for setting academic standards and for accessing formal, non-formal and informal prior learning for admissions or credit purposes.
Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network (MPLAN)	MPLAN has over 100 members throughout the province, and provides a full program of professional development, sharing of resources and expertise, and networking throughout the year. MPLAN networks members representing a variety of stakeholders including education, business, industry, government and community organizations. MPLAN is committed to working closely with the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CPLA)
Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee (WPLAR)	The WPLAR was established as a business, labour and government partnership to provide a focus for industry-based PLAR.
Adult Learning Centres (ALCs)	Each ALC, in consultation with Adult Learning and Literacy, will determine the system for implementing PLAR in accordance with the *PLAR Policies and Procedures for ALCs.* ALCs provide PLAR information and upfront intake advising to assist learners to develop individual learning plans.
Employment and Training Services (ETS) Centres (also referred to as Employment Centres)	Employment counselors in ETS Centres provide individuals with PLAR advisory services and often utilize PLAR practices in supporting clients to develop their individual employment and training plans.

Question 2.2.b)

List of 'who does what' for formal recognition of such learning

Who?	What?
Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE)	COPSE is the provincial agency that works to promote excellence and cooperation within the post-secondary education sector to meet the diverse educational needs of Manitobans. COPSE facilitates the coordination and integration of post-secondary services and facilities, reviews and approves university and college programming, develops policy, and promotes fiscal responsibility and accountability in the post-secondary system. A major responsibility of COPSE is the allocation of funds to the province's seven public post-secondary institutions. COPSE Secretariat undertakes activities and projects designed to fulfill the mandate of the Council and to meet the goals established by the Council and Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy. The Secretariat also works in consultation with the universities and colleges to support the Council members in the development of policy and financial accountability
Universities and Colleges	Institutions are responsible for setting academic standards and for accessing formal, non-formal and informal prior learning for admissions or credit purposes.
Government and regulatory bodies	Occupations/professions that are regulated have occupational standards set by a combination of government (e.g. Apprenticeship program) or regulatory bodies established by legislation (e.g. Engineers).
Apprenticeship and Trades	The Board is the regulation-making and policy-setting body with respect to

Qualification Board and Provincial Trade Advisory Committees (PTACs)	designated trades in Manitoba. With advice from specific trade advisory committees, the Board sets the standards for qualification.
Adult Learning Centres	ALCs are responsible for assessing formal, non formal, and informal learning and awarding high school level credits. This learning may have been acquired through educational settings, work, and life experiences.

Question 2.2.c)

The approach in Manitoba would be classified as a shared responsibility model. Individuals, government, universities and colleges, Adult Learning Centres, Employment Centres, the Apprenticeship program, industry and other stakeholders all play a role.

As described in the responses to Question 1.6.a) and Question 3.1.a), the "Manitoba model" embeds the assessment and recognition of prior learning within a broad framework that also includes other key elements. A holistic approach that fundamentally links to the needs of individuals, the labour market and communities requires the contribution of many players.

Question 2.2.d)

Inter-ministerial approaches occur as needed to meet objectives. Often these are informal collaborations or arise around specific projects/activities. Three examples are provided below. Collaboration has been common in initiatives related to Aboriginal education and, increasingly, activities supporting new immigrants. The third example illustrates the linkage between learning and the labour market and highlights joint efforts to enable individuals to become knowledgeable participants in learning and employment systems.

Igniting the Power Within

Representatives from Aboriginal groups like the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Métis Federation wanted to ensure that Aboriginal communities throughout Manitoba were given the same access to information about Essential Skills (ES) and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) that the mainstream was receiving and in 04-05 planning began to address this need.

A dynamic partnership of First Nations and Métis organizations and Manitoba Advanced Education and Training was formed in 2004 to answer a growing need for Essential Skills and PLAR information and training for local first-point-of-contact advisors and counsellors in Aboriginal communities throughout Manitoba. *Igniting the Power Within* (Levels I to IV) certification training has been implemented to build capacity within attendees to use Essential Skills and PLAR within their existing services, thus 'Igniting the Power Within' Aboriginal people throughout Manitoba.

The committee's goal for Igniting the Power Within is to make plain the Essential Skills and PLAR concepts through a meaningful interchange with frontline contact staff: those involved in Manitoba's Aboriginal communities as community advisors and counselors in the fields of education and employment. Delivery includes the use of traditional teaching methods and highly interactive and experiential learning, storytelling, oral presentation and theatre.

The issue for Manitoba is conveying the government's vision of best practice – the use of Essential Skills and PLAR concepts in education and training - to the communities themselves, and giving them the opportunity to guide and develop the concepts within their own communities for workforce development. Especially in the North, where formal education is a challenge, the concepts have the potential to significantly increase the number of people exposed to educational and employment opportunities.

At each *Igniting the Power Within* event, the Steering Committee approached the communities respectfully and in a consultative manner to get direct feedback on their choices and priorities. In this way, information becomes available to further refine the resources and training required to establish and sustain PLAR and Essential Skills at the community level. The first event, Level I, familiarized 250 aboriginal community advisors/ counsellors with the concepts and applications inherent in Essential Skills and PLAR. Building on this, Level II focussed 75 participants on the PLAR-related practice of building portfolios. Additional training is being developed.

Portfolio materials and methods were developed specifically for this event and break ground in terms of developing a metaphor for building portfolios using language which speaks loudly to the Aboriginal community. These materials and methods have been subsequently piloted in two Aboriginal communities and by Diane Hill. The response has been impressive.

Two teleconference portfolio completion groups are being run for the purpose of assisting Igniting graduates to complete their personal portfolios and increasing the internal network of Igniting to be able to represent Igniting's efforts at the community level.

A portfolio sample book containing profiles of eight Aboriginal people and the manner in which they could complete a portfolio is currently being completed. This will be distributed throughout Manitoba.

Further delivery of Igniting the Power Within will occur with delivery of Level 1 – March 5 and 6, 2007 - Winnipeg

Labour Market Strategy for Immigrants (LMSI)

Recent work focused on the labour market integration of immigrants has been approached formally in an inter-ministerial manner, which also includes Federal involvement, through establishment of a Labour Market Strategy for Immigrants (LMSI).

The LMSI is a joint action plan of Advanced Education and Literacy (AEL), Competitiveness, Training and Trade, and Labour and Immigration (LIM) to make it quicker and easier for immigrants to find and keep relevant employment in response to provincial labour market requirements.

A major focus of the LMSI is internal coordination between the three departments to enhance the participation of immigrants in existing programs and services geared to the development of Manitoba's labour market.

With funding from the Government of Canada, the LMSI will also develop new tools and capacities to improve qualification recognition processes and enhance linkages between immigrants and Manitoba employers offering job opportunities.

The LMSI will work with relevant stakeholders to advance best practice approaches and develop new tools in the following key areas:

- Developing assessment tools/methods to find out what skills and competencies newcomers have to meet specific labour market requirements;
- Developing enhanced labour market and qualification recognition information for immigrants before they arrive to Manitoba and once they are here;
- Conducting research and demonstration projects to establish best practice approaches to qualifications recognition and effective labour market integration; and
- Engaging relevant stakeholders, including employers, in information sharing and development of "bridge to work" models.

The following are brief descriptions of projects undertaken within the LMSI that have a PLAR component:

EAL Benchmarking and Essential Skills Profiling of
Gr. 12 EAL Curriculum
Development of a resource tool which recognizes language and essential skills proficiency required for success in Gr. 12; a tool for EAL learners in making a transition to employment and/or progressing to further education. Project is undertaken in conjunction with Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Adult Learning and Literacy Branch, and the Adult Language Training Branch.

Demonstration Project: Integration of immigrants in the heavy construction industry
Undertake language benchmarking of occupational profiles/curriculum within the Skilled Labourer and Heavy Equipment Operator occupations currently in high demand in Manitoba; design and implement recruitment/selection and assessment processes; develop and pilot skills development sessions to address language/cultural and technical skill gaps; pilot the use of PLAR tools and a "Skills Passport" to validate skills/competencies; and facilitate work experience placements to assist up to 15

immigrants access employment in the heavy construction industry. Undertaken in partnership with the Winnipeg Floodway Authority, Employment and Training Services.

Bridge to Work Pilot Project
Design and implement a work internship program for skilled newcomers in high demand occupational areas. Pilot initiative with 25 immigrants in 2006/07. The pilot will provide an opportunity primarily for professional immigrants in non-designated occupations to obtain Canadian work experience, employer-based gap training, and validation of formal/non-formal learning through a Skills Portfolio.

Demonstration Project: Dufresne Group
Design and implement workplace based PLAR tools/processes, language/cultural orientation to prepare new and existing immigrant workers for company-delivered training as furniture repair technicians, assemblers, and merchandise handlers to meet current and future expansion requirements of Dufresne Group. Workplace based model for immigrant integration and assessment and recognition materials developed will have transferability to other employers/occupations interested in considering immigrants to address their skill/labour requirements.

Also related to the area of immigration is work on Qualifications Recognition. See response to Question 1.2.a) for more information.

Career Development Framework

The Departments of Education, Citizenship and Youth; Advanced Education and Literacy; and Competitiveness, Training and Trade have been working together through an Education Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) Committee on Career Development to improve coordination of career development policy and services. A Manitoba Career Development Advisory Committee composed of career development stakeholders was also established to provide feedback to the ADMs Committee. The ADMs Committee has identified Career Development Goals for Manitoba, prepared a Career Development Framework, and identified a three-year Action Plan (2006-2009) to build a career development culture in educational environments and the labour market. The Framework and Action Plan have been approved by the Deputy Ministers and, in April 2006, were enthusiastically supported by the Manitoba Career Development Advisory Committee.

The Career Development goals are:

- Career Development is recognized as essential to the social and economic well-being of Manitobans.
- Manitobans have the knowledge and abilities to set and achieve career goals.
- Manitobans have access to quality resources required to make informed education, training and employment choices on an ongoing basis.
- Manitobans have the employability skills and attitudes to work and adapt effectively to the needs of the workplace.

- Stakeholders in career development have a forum to exchange information and work cooperatively.

Some of the outcomes of the Framework and the Action Plan include:
- Increased awareness of the importance of career development (personal; career; economic development levels)
- Greater coherence between school/post-secondary education/labour market)
- Better access to information (better/useful products; walk-in; web links)
- Increased capacity for career/learning plan assistance
- Increased capacity/use of assessment tools
- Greater/expanded opportunities for career exploration; mentorships/internships
- Increased career development cultures in schools
- Integration between BluePrint for Life/Work Designs and Essential Skills
- Increased capacity in Aboriginal organizations to deliver relevant career related resources.

While the role of PLAR is not always explicit in this work, it is expected that the more knowledgeable and proactive individuals are in setting career and learning goals throughout their lives, the greater will be the demand for flexible, responsive educational opportunities, including opportunities to recognize prior learning.

2.3   Resources

Question 2.3.a)

Resources for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning are not generally accounted for separately from the overall program and institutional budgets.

Funding for a staff year per post-secondary institution, which was targeted to facilitate initial incorporation of PLAR into each institution, has now become part of ongoing funding to the universities and colleges (subject to base increases).

In addition, each major area of practice within the Department was given funds for a PLAR advisor/practitioner and the WPLAR committee was given funding for industry development. (For examples, see response to Question 5.1.a). Initial investment was about $960,000 annually and this has increased slightly since this time.

Although not explicitly stated, this approach to funding PLAR activity likely reflects the assumption of the PLAR framework that PLAR is an integral part of a seamless, community-based, learner-centred education and training system. While strategic investment has been used to support the development and implementation of the framework, effective implementation must be fully embedded in programming and not approached as an add-on.

Question 2.3.b)

See the response to Question 2.3.a) above and Question 2.1.f) for how the PLAR Framework implementation was resourced over its initial development.

Question 2.3.c)

Costs associated with PLAR services are variable. For example, there is no charge for PLAR advisory services through Employment Centres. Adult Learning Centres are tuition free and provide PLAR as part of how they offer learning opportunities.

Of the public post-secondary institutions in Manitoba, all expect students to bear the primary direct costs related to PLAR assessments. Some specific examples of how this is addressed at different institutions are:

- Brandon University – A PLAR application fee of $300.00 is levied irrespective of the number of courses to which an applicant is seeking to apply PLAR.
- University of Winnipeg – Students will be charged a fee equal to one half of the tuition fee normally associated with the course(s) they are seeking to challenge. This fee is prorated against the total number of credit hours involved (1, 3, or 6).
- Red River College has established a wide variety of contingencies relating to the fee structure for PLAR. Specifically,

    - The maximum fee charged to any student for Prior Learning Assessment at RRC in any one year will not exceed the full-time program fee as determined by the Registrar. The PLAR fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.
    - Assessment of Educational Documents for Transfer Credit
      Transfer of Credit from publicly funded Manitoba Post-secondary institutions - No Fee
      Transfer of Credit from other Canadian Post-secondary institutions - $15.00 per course (maximum $75.00 per application)
      Transfer of Credit from International Post-secondary institutions - Fee to be considered on an individual basis (minimum of $50.00 up to a maximum $250.00 per application)
    - Portfolio Assessment Fees
      Portfolio assessment fee for each course in which a portfolio assessment is requested.
      Portfolio assessment fee for courses up to 20 hours - $75.00
      Portfolio assessment fee for courses 21-60 hours - $150.00
      Portfolio assessment fee for courses 61+ hours - $250.00
    - Challenge Process Fees
      * Challenge Examinations (i.e. written/oral examinations, projects, assignments or a combination of) - $35.00 per hour of assessment up to a maximum of $250.00 per course (includes cost of consumables)
      Practical Examinations, Skill Demonstrations, Simulations - $35.00 per hour of assessment up to a maximum of $350.00 per course (plus cost of consumables)
    - Note: Effective April 1, 2004: Full time students enrolled in full time programs will be assessed a PLAR fee of $100 per course for a Challenge Examination process (i.e. written/oral exams, projects, assignment or combinations of) or a course portfolio assessment. If the designated course PLAR fee is less than $100, students will pay the lower PLAR course fee. For PLAR assessment involving Skill Demonstration/ Practical Skill examinations/Simulations, full time students will pay the designated

PLAR fee as determined by the program area, based on the PLAR Fee Range Guidelines.

- <u>Fees for Assessing PLAR for Program Outcomes:</u> In programs where PLAR is conducted on a program outcomes basis, the PLAR fees will be based on $35.00 per hour of assessment (plus cost of consumables if any) for each program outcome. The maximum amount charged to conduct PLAR for all program outcomes in a program will not exceed the full time program fee as determined by the Registrar.

The Apprenticeship program charges individuals $250 to challenge an exam within the Trades Qualification process. The cost of level placement tests are $100 per test.

<u>Question 2.3.d)</u>

The Province's 17 Employment Centres and 44 registered Adult Learning Centres provide PLAR advisory services as part of their mainstream business. Adult Learning Centres also provide assessment services in relation to their program offerings (i.e. secondary education program offerings for adults). Post-secondary institutions provide access to PLAR services potentially through any of their delivery sites. Finally, workplace-based projects are delivered directly in industry locations.

2.4   Others

<u>Question 2.4.a)</u>

Capacity Building and Practitioner Training - An important feature of Manitoba's approach to PLAR-related activities is the emphasis being placed on capacity-building across education and employment systems. In particular, a strong focus on practitioner training is evident, to ensure that those delivering various PLAR services, from PLAR advisors in Employment Centres and ALCs to post-secondary instructors to those delivering industry-based or community-based training, are continuing to develop their skills and knowledge in the area of PLAR. The use of PLAR processes in the development of practitioner training is also a focus.

 The following are some examples that illustrate this emphasis:

- To enhance quality practice and expand the network of qualified PLAR Practitioners, Red River College (RRC) has developed and implemented 2 levels of PLAR training; PLAR Foundation (40 hours) and PLAR Practitioner (40 hours – advanced level). Facilitated by Red River College and the provincial department of Education, it is available to all postsecondary institutions, Adult Learning Centres, Employment Centres, community groups and other organizations. The PLAR Foundation Training is also offered on-line and a distance delivery model for the PLAR Practitioner course was developed in 2003. As of 2005, 383 participants from across Manitoba and Canada have completed the PLAR Foundation Course. Of these, 50 are RRC faculty/staff. There were 93 graduates in 2004/05 (45 through RRC onsite, online and summer institute delivery and 48 through Adult Learning Centres).

- From 2004 to 2006, 81 adult educators completed the 40 hour PLAR Foundations training, bringing the total number of adult educators who have completed this training through Adult Learning and Literacy to over 260. Consequently, the number of learners benefiting from PLAR at Adult Learning Centres continues to increase.
- Also see the information on the *Igniting the Power Within* initiative described in the response to Question 2.2.d).

Component 3, Description of technical arrangements

3.1   Qualifications, qualification systems, qualification framework

Question 3.1.a)

A variety of terms have been used in Manitoba related to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The most common has been Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR). More recently, the Department is adopting the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to refer to its PLAR-related activities as it is more inclusive and gives visibility to practices like:
- Post-secondary – credit transfer, advanced standing
- Apprenticeship – Qualification Recognition, cross-trade credit, block recognition of related industry training
- Qualifications Recognition
- PLAR practice
- Industry practice

Other terms which are in use in Manitoba, sometimes in specific circumstances or with specific meanings are:
- Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) – sometimes used to emphasize the assessment and counselling function to assist individuals to understand their knowledge and skills with less emphasis on the recognition of these in any formal system. Most commonly used within advisory services such as those in Employment Centres.
- Qualifications Recognition (QR) - this term is particularly used in the case of recognition of foreign qualifications of immigrants. A key element of the Manitoba Qualification Recognition Framework (see response to Question 1.2.a) is that Manitoba should ensure that assessing institutions are accountable for their practices and that they observe the principle of "substantive equality" in their assessment and recognition of qualifications of highly skilled immigrants. "Substantive equality" requires that "differences among social groups be acknowledged and accommodated in laws, policies and practices to avoid adverse impacts on individual members of the group. A substantive approach to equality evaluates the fairness of apparently neutral laws, policies and programs in light of the larger social context of inequality and emphasizes the importance of equal outcomes which sometimes requires equal treatment and sometimes different treatment." Source: http://canadajustice.gc.ca

- Bridging Programs – Although this term is not used extensively in Manitoba, a bridging program is usually defined as one that assists skilled immigrants to enter the job market more quickly.
- Trades Qualification (TQ) – used specifically to refer to the process, within the Apprenticeship Program, for an experienced worker in a designated trade to gain journeyperson status.
- Gap Training – used to refer to the training required to fill gaps in knowledge or skill once these have been identified through assessment.
- Advanced Placement/Standing – used by the Apprenticeship program and some post-secondary institutions to refer to providing partial credit towards a complete program based on assessment of prior learning.
- Competencies and Standards – used to define the specific competencies required and the standard at which these are to be acquired for recognition.
- Efforts are generally made to use language appropriate to the audience, whether this is academic, government, industry, labour, Aboriginal or immigrant contexts. Adjustments are therefore sometimes made in use of typical PLAR language. An example is the use of "gap training" which is meaningful to an industry or institutional audience but tends to be avoided in communities as it is sometimes viewed as being driven by a "deficit model" rather than being asset-based. As another example, the terms "standards" and "competencies" are sometimes used interchangeably with an industry rather than academic audience. Manitoba has also implemented a change from the term "English as a Second Language" (ESL) to "English as an Additional Language" (EAL). The following glossary has been used to attempt to define common language/understanding of PLAR within a workplace context:

   Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) – the identification, assessment and documentation of learning from life and work experiences. It reflects learning that is assessed in a rigorous yet flexible manner and best accommodates a learner's ability to show what they know and can do.

   Assessment – a process by which a judgment is made about the quality and level of learning attained.

   Flexible Assessment – the application of a variety of means to prove prior learning that can include documentation, practical demonstrations, performance observation, testimonials, and formal and informal testing.

   Benchmark – a well-established measurement of performance specifically chosen to serve as a guide to compare the value of actual performance against compensation factors.

   Learning Outcomes – a statement describing what a learner should know and be able to do as a result of a learning intervention. They capture the type of learning that reflects the complex integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes and capabilities.

   Performance Elements – the components of a learning outcome that a learner must know and be able to do successfully to demonstrate the required learning.

Assessment Criteria – the standards/indicators used to judge the worth of learning/performance outcomes.
Competencies – identification of what should be known or done.

Question 3.1.b)

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is evolving within the context of overall approaches to qualifications recognition. See response to Question 4.2.b).

Question 3.1.c)

Recognition of non-formal and informal prior learning is more common with respect to the mature high school diploma and college level programming and less common at the university level. See response to Question 4.2.b).

Question 3.1.c)

Generally speaking, recognition of prior learning is exerting pressure on qualifications systems as individuals increasingly seek out and demand recognition of their prior formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Question 3.1.f)

With increased implementation of PLAR-related processes, the formal education sector is concerned with standards, quality assurance and dealing with the demands placed on the institutional capacity to deliver gap training. Direct involvement of institutions in the evolving policy and practice of recognition of prior learning is critical to moving forward. See also the response to Question 4.4.f) regarding incentives/disincentives.

3.2   Credit accumulation and transfer

Question 3.2.a)

Credit accumulation and transfer arrangements vary across institutions and programs. Each post-secondary institution has a policy on transfer of credit. Typically, credits awarded through a PLAR-related process are recorded on the learners' transcript (unsuccessful PLAR challenges are not). Limits on the number of credits towards a program of study that can be granted through PLAR are common.

See response to Question 4.2.b) for more detailed information on PLAR practices at various levels of education.

3.3 Assessment methods and procedures

Assessment methods and procedures vary across institutions and programs. Some examples are:

- ALCs may use a several flexible assessment methods such as projects, assignments, case studies; product assessments; essays, reports; tests/examinations; interviews; oral exams; panel assessments; oral presentation; portfolio review; and logs, journals. Eleven PLAR Resource Guides have been developed for high school level courses at ALCs. The guides provide learners with a self assessment and provide teachers with a framework to recognize formal, informal and non-formal learning. The guides are available on the Adult Learning and Literacy website at http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ael/all/publications/plar/plar.html . The guides provide adult learners with a self assessment in order to identify learning gaps and to prepare for assessment. The guides have been helpful to the adult educators to plan PLAR for learners and there have been an increase in PLAR credits in the subjects with the guides. The PLAR Resource Guides provide consistency and assist the ALCs with intake advising and assessment of learners.
- Post-secondary institutions also use a variety of methods to assess prior learning. These include; assessment of educational documents; portfolio/evidence review (i.e. a document that identifies and verifies prior learning); challenge process (written/oral examinations, interviews, projects, assignments, performance/skill demonstration, product assessments); and external course/program assessment (i.e. course/program review). It should be noted that institution polices often emphasize that credit must be for demonstrated learning (knowledge and skills) and not for experience alone.

See response to Question 4.2.b) for more detailed information on PLAR practices at various levels of education.

In Manitoba, academic standards are set by the training institutions (universities and colleges). In some cases, the academic standards are highly related to professional and occupational standards - in that in college level courses and some professional programs, industry and occupational representatives are involved in the academic program development and delivery. In general, however, academic institutions are able to set their own program requirements and thus control academic standards.

In terms of professional / occupational standards, it depends upon whether the occupation / profession is regulated or not. If the occupation is not regulated, standards are essentially set by employers who decide whether a candidate's formal and/or informal training and prior experience qualify him/her for a particular job.

If the profession / occupation is regulated, standards are set by some combination of government and professional regulatory bodies. Where professional regulatory bodies set

occupational / professional standards, they are given the power to do so by government legislation. For example, teachers in Manitoba are directly regulated by a government department. Similarly, standards for skilled trades people working in Manitoba are regulated by the Apprenticeship branch.

For other occupations / professions such as Engineers, Doctors, Land Surveyors, etc. government has legislation granting the power to set occupational / professional standards to independent regulatory authorities. These regulatory authorities then have the ability to set entry to practice standards, provide licensure and in some cases set criteria for continued licensure based on the need for continuous learning.

(See also the discussion of the Agreement on Internal Trade in the response to Question 1.2.b.))

3.4   Others

Question 3.4.a)

The Settlement and Labour Market Services and Adult Training Branches of Manitoba Labour and Immigration are the areas to work with newcomers to the province. See responses to Questions 1.2.a) and 1.2.b). Services include an Academic Credentials Assessment Service (ACAS), a Credentials Recognition Program and Adult Language Training.

Academic Credentials Assessment Service (ACAS)
The Academic Credentials Assessment Service (ACAS) evaluates the education of people who have been educated outside of Canada and compares it to educational standards in Manitoba. The service assists immigrants with professional and/or technical backgrounds to gain recognition for education and work experience obtained abroad.

ACAS verifies documents for authenticity, translation, recognition status of institution and educational program and individual educational standing. Comparisons are made against current educational standards.

Programs outside Canada are compared to Manitoba programs, with respect to the issuing institution, level, length and general content of study. Once the evaluation is complete, ACAS issues an Academic Credentials Report. This report is advisory in nature and is designed to support and facilitate hiring or admission decisions made by employers, occupational regulatory bodies and educational institutions. ACAS also offers assistance with the placement of students with foreign credentials in Manitoba secondary schools. The ACAS report highlights similarities between the programs.

ACAS is a member of the Alliance of Credentials Evaluation Services of Canada (the Alliance). The Alliance ensures that individuals have access to fair and credible credentials assessment services. Members of the Alliance follow principles of good practice that are consistent with international standards.

The Academic Credentials Report is only available to people residing in Manitoba. There is no charge for this service. Canadian citizens educated abroad and landed immigrants with foreign credentials qualify for this service. Assessments are given for formal instruction only. They do not evaluate competence, work experience or prior learning.

In 2005/06, academic credential reports and accreditation referrals were provided to 662 immigrants.

Credentials Recognition Program
The Credentials Recognition Program assists immigrants with professional and/or technical backgrounds in gaining recognition for education and work experience obtained outside of Canada. The program offers assessment and wage assistance as well as counselling and referral services to eligible clients.

Landed immigrants and recently naturalized Canadians are eligible for assistance under this program. To qualify, applicants must have successfully completed a minimum two-year post secondary program outside of Canada and must have credentials and work experience that are not formally recognized in Manitoba.

Interested applicants are expected to have a working knowledge of English or French. Any business registered and operating in the Province of Manitoba, providing full-time professional or technical employment opportunities, is eligible for assistance. Crown Corporations are also eligible.

Jobs created through the Credentials Recognition Program must remain permanent positions upon termination of the wage assistance provided through the program. The creation of new positions cannot result in the layoff.
Assessment assistance provides clients with financial assistance to offset the costs of assessment fees, books and exams. Once eligibility is established, the program will pay 50% of approved costs, up to a maximum of $2,250.

Wage Assistance is available to eligible clients who are working in professions requiring Canadian work experience. Wage assistance is offered to employers who provide work experience related to the client's educational background.

Employers must create new, permanent, full-time positions to qualify for wage assistance. Professional associations or regulatory bodies may be consulted to determine the necessary experience required.

The wage assistance paid to employers is 40% of the gross wage per employee, calculated over a six month period. The maximum wage assistance available is $4,500. In 2005/06, 390 highly skilled immigrants were assisted with the costs of assessments and examination fees, courses and materials needed to achieve accreditation and wage assistance was provided to 27 newcomers for placement in permanent employment in their fields of expertise.

Adult Language Training
Manitoba has a variety of programs, services and resources for adults who want to learn English as an Additional Language (EAL) or develop Canadian English language communication skills. Learners are referred to the program in their region that can best meet their needs and goals. All the programs use the Canadian Language Benchmarks to assess learners, develop lessons and report to learners.

In Winnipeg, newcomers first join the ENTRY Program, a four-week program that provides some essential settlement and employment information as well as some key language skills. While learners are in the ENTRY Program, an appointment is made for a Canadian Language Benchmarks placement test with the English Language Assessment Centre. In 2005/06, approximately 1,400 newcomers participated in the ENTRY Program.
An Advanced EAL course for internationally trained engineers has been developed to assist with their goals of employment, university entrance or improvement in on-the-job performance.

An Advanced EAL Distance Learning and on-line EAL tutorial support is available for selected occupations through phone, email and internet.

Curriculum for an EAL program for Internationally Educated Teachers has been developed and delivered through the University of Manitoba.

Funded through the Enhanced Language Training Initiative, seven occupation-specific language training programs have been developed and delivered. For example, the Canadian Communication for Physicians Trained Abroad (CCPTA) program for internationally trained doctors and other health professionals is delivered annually. The course is a recommended precursor to the Clinicians Assessment and Professional Enhancement (CAPE) which is necessary for International Medical Graduates (IMG) to get into the enhanced training provided through the Manitoba Medical Licensure Program for IMGs.

Assessments of English language proficiency were conducted for more than 2800 individuals through the Assessment and Referral Centre. A self-study guide for Adult EAL learners to practice English on their own using the internet and other community resources was developed and approximately 3000 such guides were distributed.

Collaborative Language Portfolio Assessment
Portfolios are used in adult EAL classes. Learners' progress is assessed using collaborative language portfolio assessment based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB). In collaborative language portfolio assessment, the learner collects samples of their language tasks and classroom test results throughout the program. At times during the course, the teacher and learner examine and discuss the portfolio collection in terms of the learner's language strengths and problems. The portfolio lets the learner and teacher see the improvement the learner has made during the course. The

CLB levels that the learner receives on their final report are based on the material in the learner's portfolio.

When a student leaves a Manitoba adult EAL program, he/she will receive a progress report from the teacher indicating CLB levels attained.

Component 4, Stakeholder behaviour

4.1 Characteristics of stakeholders

Question 4.1.a)

See response to Question 2.2.a) and 2.2.b) for general information on various stakeholders. Available information on participants/users is included in Question 4.3.a).

4.2 Access

Question 4.2.a)

See response to Question 4.2.b) below.

Question 4.2.b)

Secondary Level

At the secondary school level, several changes have occurred in the senior years (Grades 9 to 12) graduation requirements designed to increase choice and flexibility for students. As was noted in the response to Question 1.6.a), a first step was the introduction in 1988 of a Mature Student High School Diploma. Other policies in the regular Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system which are also relevant for their recognition of learning outside the classroom are:

- School-Initiated Courses (SICs) and Student-Initiated Projects (SIPs) – these were introduced to allow for more local programming at a school level. Within the 28 credit regular high school diploma, some credits are compulsory (15 to 19 depending on program) and others are optional credits. SICs and SIPS can be used to meet these optional requirements, up to a maximum of 11 SICs and 3 SIPs.
- A Challenge for Credit Option has been introduced at the senior years level. Guidelines have been provided by the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth. All school divisions are expected to develop local policies and procedures for implementation of this option.

- Dual Credit Option – As described in the response to Q. 1.6.a), this policy permits students in high schools to study post-secondary courses and apply them for credit at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.
- Credit for Community Service – Manitoba has had in place for some time, a policy to recognize for credit students' learning through out of school music programs. This is referred to as the Private Music Option. Recently, a decision was taken to promote the recognition of volunteer activity on the part of students through a similar approach. Student activity outside of school of this nature can be recognized for credit as a SIP. Guidelines are provided by the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth for awarding a community service student-initiated project (SIP) credit.
- A Senior Years Technology Education program is offered in Manitoba. This consists of 14 compulsory credits and an approved cluster of 8 to 14 compulsory technology education credits. Students wishing to graduate from a Senior Years Technology Education Program must fulfill the minimum 28 credit graduation requirement. A cluster of technology education courses must be an approved group of 8-14 department-developed and/or approved courses which facilitate the transition from school to work. Work experience through work placement is a common feature of Technology Education courses. Work placement is one of several delivery mechanisms that may be used to achieve the teaching/learning goals, objectives, and/or outcomes stated in department-developed, -registered, or -approved curricula and/or courses. The Technology Education program also provides a Senior Years Apprenticeship Option which enables students to start an apprenticeship while still in high school.

Adult Secondary

As described in the response to Question 1.6.a), delivery of the Mature Student High School Diploma in Manitoba is achieved primarily through the network of Adult Learning Centres. PLAR policy and procedures also exist for this network, working within the Provincial requirements for a Mature Student Diploma. In July 2004, the Adult Learning and Literacy Branch, which oversees ALCs, issued a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policies and Procedures Guide for Adult Learning Centres (ALCs). The Provincial policy essentially states that Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) will award credit to learners, whenever possible, for high school level prior learning. This learning may have been acquired through educational settings, work, and life experiences. It also states that ALCs will have PLAR Policies and Procedures to align with the Adult Learning and Literacy (ALL) PLAR Policies and Procedures Guide for ALCs. A PLAR Manual (revised January 2006) has also been provided for ALCs. These documents are available on the Adult Learning and Literacy website at http://www.gov.mb.ca/all.

All ALCs are expected to make PLAR advising and assessment services available for all adult learners. It is also a condition of ALC registration that each ALC have at least one staff member who has received the Foundation level training in PLAR.

Winnipeg Technical College

Winnipeg Technical College is a unique Manitoba institution, first established in 1983 with joint federal and provincial funding. The college was designed to meet the technical training needs of secondary students and adults in need of marketable job skills. It is governed by a board comprised of elected Trustees who are appointed from the Pembina Trails and Louis Riel shareholding school divisions and representatives from the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth. The College operates 12 months a year and several programs are offered on a full-time basis in the evenings. It also receives funding through the Council on Post-Secondary Education.

The college began developmental work in the area of PLAR in 2002/03. A PLAR guide was prepared. In 2003/04, a Recognition of Prior Learning Committee and Coordinator were put in place and continue to build PLAR capacity in the institution.

Post-Secondary Level

At the post-secondary level, all of Manitoba's public post-secondary institutions have some form of PLAR framework (admissions policies or approaches). Five institutions have frameworks that apply on an institution-wide basis.

Apprenticeship Program

The Apprenticeship Program has provision for certification through work experience. An individual who is an experienced worker in a designated trade, but who does not hold a Certificate of Qualification in Manitoba (acquired through participation in the program as an apprentice), can become a fully qualified and certified journeyperson through a process called Trades Qualification (TQ). Eligibility requirements refer to persons with out-of-province or foreign credentials/experience. There are also several ways in which trades people with experience and/or training can earn advanced placement in technical training. These include grand-parenting, cross-credits between trades and more traditional methods of assessing knowledge and work experience for advanced standing.

Level placement tests are common. These enable an individual with experience to challenge the Level 1 placement exam and, if achieving a score of 70% or more, receive credit for their Level 1 technical training. If their score on this exam is 85% or more, they may challenge Level 2. On the same basis, if they score well enough on the Level 2 exam they may challenge Level 3. Opportunity to challenge at Level 4 is not provided.

It should be noted that special accommodations for exams, often for individuals whose main language is not English can be provided. Increased time, interpreter services, and access to a dictionary are examples.

These PLAR-related provisions (TQ process and level placement exams) are generally standard within any Canadian Apprenticeship program. A unique element in Manitoba is

the provision of free Certificate Examination Preparation workshops. Manitoba also does not use an exam as a screening tool for entry as do some other jurisdictions; rather the only requirement is an employer/employee apprenticeship agreement. Efforts continue to be made to incorporate Essential Skills training and PLAR into the Apprenticeship program to support retention and success.

A PLAR Coordinator is now in place in the Apprenticeship program to provide a focal point for PLAR-related activities.

Brandon University–

In 1999, BU launched its PLAR initiative, which provides students with a formal, institution-wide policy framework concerning PLAR, as well as a PLAR office and Coordinator through BU Student Services. The Coordinator can provide guidance / advice to students who are interested in pursuing formal recognition of past learning. All students are eligible for consideration under PLAR, irrespective of faculty or department. BU provides students with information regarding PLAR in its academic calendar, and also provides students with ready access to all PLAR information and application forms through its website.

http://www.brandonu.ca/plar/

http://calendar.brandonu.ca:8080/servlet/calendar?book=ugrad2006&key=62320&full=

http://www.brandonu.ca/studentsvc/plar.htm

http://www.brandonu.ca/administration/senate/Policies/PLAR_Guidelines.pdf

University of Manitoba (including College Universitaire de Saint Boniface)–

The University of Manitoba does not have a formal, institution-wide policy regarding use of PLAR. A "challenge for credit" model has been used for years at the university-level, which in the case of UM has been expanded to reflect limited experiential and vocational learning. To be eligible to challenge for credit a student must first be admitted to a faculty or school of the UM. Eligible students are required to demonstrate their competence in the courses which they are challenging for credit. Where formal, written examinations are required, these will be generally scheduled during the regular examination sessions in April/May, June, August, or December. Specific requirements, procedures, applications and fees vary by faculty. This policy is currently under review.

Early PLAR activities were focused in the Division of Continuing Education and the development of Recognition of Prior Learning tools, processes and policies which led to the creation of a common outcome-based core curriculum in the Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education consortium of four Western Canadian Universities. In total some 85 participants were directly involved in this project, which has won the PEARL Award

for Excellence in Recognition of Prior Learning by the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network.

Important strides are being made to include some form of PLAR in the individual faculties' admissions guidelines. The result is a decentralized approach to the use of PLAR at the UM, and as such, the policies / methods / approach to PLAR at UM vary from faculty to faculty and department to department.

Recently (05-06) UM has implemented a full-time PLAR director whose responsibility is to develop and enhance PLAR initiatives throughout UM. A Recognition of Prior Learning Office opened in June 2005. The primary focus of the RPL Office is developmental initiatives and capacity building with faculties and departments.

No student-oriented, general information on PLAR can be found on UM's website, however there are examples of references to PLAR in specific Faculty/Department documents.

Sample of UM Department of Social Work Plans for increasing equity through PLAR: http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/social_work/documents/Equity_Plan.pdf (page 10)

Sample of UM Faculty of Medicine, Community Health Services use of PLAR: http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/chs/pdf/Graduate/faq_07.pdf (page 2)

Sample of actual admissions material (for Con. Ed.) bearing information on PLAR: http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/con_ed/mpcp/calendar/request/ce_guide06-07.pdf (page 6)

With respect to the Collège Universitaire de Saint Boniface, specifically, a PLAR advisory committee has been formed with representatives from both the community college and university programs at the Collège. Efforts have focused on increasing awareness among faculty and building capacity to offer this option. PLAR credits have been awarded in seven program areas to date.

University of Winnipeg–

In 1999, UW extended its challenge for credit regulations to include a formal, institution-wide PLAR framework. Regulations and policies are listed in the General Calendar under Section VII Academic Regulations and Policies #5 Challenge for Credit – Assessing Prior Learning. The purpose of Challenge for Credit is to provide an alternate mechanism by which students can gain credit for courses approved by Senate. To apply, a student must be admitted to the appropriate faculty/division of the University of Winnipeg and must present (to the department/program) evidence of prior learning. The student will be required to complete appropriate orientation and advising as determined by the university and department/program. The student may be required to complete appropriate preparation training (e.g., for portfolio development).   Permission to challenge a course for credit must be obtained from the department/program. An

assessment will be performed only for students who have satisfactorily demonstrated to the department/program through pre-assessment evaluation and advising that they have learning sufficient to justify the challenge.

At the departmental level, there are relatively few areas of study where PLAR is excluded from consideration (one of the most notable of these exceptions being academic writing courses required for graduate / post-graduate study). UW provides students with access to a PLAR Coordinator through the office of Adult Learner Services, which is in turn situated within UW's Admission / Academic Advising Services Department. This Coordinator can provide guidance / advice to students who are interested in pursuing formal recognition of past learning.

Information on the PLAR policy is available on the university's website.

http://adultlearner.uwinnipeg.ca/plar.html

Assiniboine Community College–

At ACC, there is an institution-wide policy on PLAR that applies to all programs. Prior learning assessment and recognition provides an opportunity for individuals to obtain credit for college level learning that has been gained outside a formal institutional setting. During the process, an individual's prior learning gained from education, work, life experiences and personal study is assessed against the expected learning outcomes in college courses. If the learning demonstrated is equivalent to that normally acquired through a formal course in the chosen area of college study, then credit is granted. Going through the prior learning assessment process at Assiniboine Community College can eliminate duplication of learning and can shorten the time and cost of gaining a college education.

Assiniboine is in the process of making many of its courses and programs available for PLAR. All departments are responsible for conducting PLAR on an individual, case by case basis (in terms of admission) and for each program, the academic advisor can provide guidance / advice to students who are interested in pursuing formal recognition of past learning. The ACC's academic calendar provides students with a comprehensive list of those courses to which PLAR can be applied. On the ACC website however, only PLAR for programs within the Business and Hospitality Division are searchable by students, and no other general information regarding PLAR is made available on the site.

http://public.assiniboine.net/xDefault.aspx?tabid=61&mid=375&prgField=PriorLearning&prgID=%2020

Red River College–

RRC is quite advanced in terms of its PLAR framework. The College defines PLAR as a process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of formal study and non-formal learning acquired through work and life experience. The

recognition of prior learning can be used towards the requirements of an academic or training program and/or occupational/professional certification. PLAR promotes access to college programs and is an integral part of developing an articulated education system.

RRC has established an institution-wide PLAR office and PLAR Coordinator, who can provide guidance / advice to students who are interested in pursuing formal recognition of past learning. Comprehensive information about PLAR is readily accessible for students in the RRC academic calendar and on its website. RRC also conducts workshops and orientation sessions for students and members of the community who are interested in learning more about PLAR (both in general and at RRC). Please see the following link for more information about RRC's PLAR programs, guidelines and regulations:

http://www.rrc.mb.ca/index.php?pid=404

University College of the North–

UCN provides students with a formal, institution-wide PLAR policy which indicates that the College will award credit to learners, wherever possible, for college-level prior learning acquired through educational settings, work and life experience. UCN specifies general rules and guidelines for PLAR within its academic calendar, and provides students with a PLAR Facilitator who can provide guidance / advice to students who are interested in pursuing formal recognition of past learning. Information on PLAR can also be obtained from Enrolment Services, the Assessment Centre located at the campus in The Pas, and from all UCN Deans.

http://www.ucn.ca/UCN%20Calendar%20Pages%20134895.pdf (page 9)

 Question 4.2.c)

See response to Question 4.2.b) above.

4.3   Participation

Question 4.3.a)

A consistent approach to capturing participation in PLAR-related processes has not been fully developed. Each year a PLAR Report Out against the objectives in the PLAR framework is written. It is regarded as a progress report. An early evaluation was conducted of the implementation for the purpose of identifying areas of priority focus. Continuing to improve the consistency and relevance of measures of progress is a priority.

Adult Learning Centres report continued increase in participation in PLAR.

	2002/2003	**2003/2004**	**2004/2005**	**2005/2006**
Full credits	168	473	520	539
Partial credits	56	96	210	221
Number of learners graduating with PLAR credits	(not collected)	140 learners	229 learners	246 learners
PLAR advising	416	551	653	729

Post-secondary institutions are working to report relevant measures on a regular basis. The following are some examples:

University of Winnipeg

	2003 - 2004	**2004 – 2005**
Number of Students	67	81
Success Rate	94%	96%
Number of Assessments	23	14
Number of Courses	21	12
Number of Courses PLAR Ready:	51 (16 new)	57 (6 new)

Red River College of Applied Arts, Science and Technology

	2003 - 2004	**2004 – 2005**
Number of Students	395	409
Success Rate	92%	95%
Number of Assessments	678	787
Number of Programs	50	63

College universitaire de Saint Boniface

	2003 - 2004	**2004 – 2005**
Number of Students	13	26
Success Rate	96%	88%
Number of Assessments	27	42
Number of Students graduating with PLAR credits	0	4

University College of the North

In 2003-04, a total of 96 PLAR credits were awarded to applicants in both regular programs and continuing education.

Winnipeg Technical College

	2003 - 2004	**2004 – 2005**
Number of Students	66	96
Number of Assessments	37	33
Number of Courses	44	72
Number of Students graduating with RPL credits:	50	65

4.4   Incentives and disincentives

Question 4.4.d)

See response to Question 4.4.f) below.

Question 4.4.f)

Direct involvement and engagement of stakeholders, whether they are post-secondary institutions or employers, is most critical to encouraging change in the area of recognition of prior learning.

With respect to post-secondary institutions, a small amount of base funding was provided to establish a core capacity (e.g. PLAR coordinator) in each institution. Additional support has been provided for specific activities or projects that have then arisen from the initiative of the institutions.

Employer engagement in PLAR-activities has largely been supported through specific projects. Based on experience with these activities and the benefits achieved, employers will be willing to consider other actions in the area of prior learning assessment and recognition. See response to Question 5.1.b) for examples of workplace/industry-based PLAR activities.

Finally, the recognition of promising practices serves as an incentive for all stakeholders. The Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) provides recognition awards. In addition, the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment and Network (MPLAN) issues annual PEARL awards for outstanding practice in PLAR.

4.5   Others

Component 5, Case studies on benefits and barriers

5.1   Economic benefits

 Question 5.1.a)

Manitoba's Industry Training Partnerships (ITP) Branch (of the Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade) provides business and industry with an integrated and coordinated single window of access to support human resource planning and skills training. Industry-based prior learning assessment and recognition is an integral component of the services provided by this program. In this area, ITP provides consultation and expertise to business, labour and government regarding PLAR for industry-related projects and coordinates the development of industry-based PLAR projects.

The program works with a tri-partite (business, labour, government) Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (WPLAR) Committee which assists, guides, and makes recommendations with regard to the development of and support for innovative PLAR practices in industry. It should also be noted that a certificate of completion is issued by the Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee (WPLAR) to participants in workplace-based training activities.

The following are some examples of projects that have occurred over the past three or four years:

Bristol Aerospace: Competency-Based Training Framework
In Phase 1, aerospace manufacturing competencies were identified by process and a model was developed to create the assessment tools and criteria to document competency in compliance with ISO (International Standards Organization) requirements.

Now well into Phase 2, this project is documenting the competencies of each of 112 manufacturing processes in 8 main manufacturing areas. Future phases will assess the workforce's skills and knowledge against the stated competencies and develop a Competency Based Training Framework for focused and documented on-the-job training.

Boeing Competency Identification
A quality audit at Boeing requires that the company create competencies, including Essential Skills, for all job categories and a system to better determine training and development based on the competencies. Boeing has chosen to adopt the principles of PLAR and requires support to develop the competencies, ES competencies, and assessment and documentation processes.

PLAR for Boeing Technical Writing
Development of a process for and assessment of recognition of prior learning against the WEMSC-funded 40S Technical Writing and Communication course, which utilized

authentic Boeing workplace tasks and materials incorporated into the English Language Arts 40S (Technical Communications) course - Mature Student Diploma Program.

College of Midwives of Manitoba (CMM) - Prior Learning and Experience Assessment (PLEA) Project
CMM requested assistance to determine the feasibility of implementing and sustaining a rigorous PLAR system for midwives wishing to register. It was determined that PLAR development and sustainability looked feasible. The Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (WPLAR) Committee funded the further definition of CMM's core competencies and the initial identification of assessment criteria.

WPLAR then funded the development of long-term competency review processes and tools, pre- and post-advisory processes for applicants (including referral process for language benchmarking and upgrading), and training programs for advisors, assessors, and examiners.

A further project phase revised the PLEA tools, processes and materials based on the earlier pilot, offered the revised pilot program over a longer timeframe, and developed an outreach strategy and communication process with employers.

Two nationally funded projects have caused CMM to want to expand their competency definitions: The Aboriginal Midwives Program and the National Midwives Pilot Project. In the expansion of competencies it is necessary to further define multiple routes of entry including the nursing route. At the same time, the Faculty of Nursing has identified some willingness to train midwives. As such it is necessary to explore related competencies and examine feasibility.

United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Security Officer Training Initiative
Responding to new mandatory security officer training demands, this project researched national, provincial and local trends in the security sector, identified competencies for training standards purposes, reviewed current training available in Manitoba, and made recommendations for an overall Security Officer PLAR process.

Phase 2 developed a PLAR process for security officers including an accreditation process with testing and gap training, including 12 curriculum modules on topics such as *Professionalism and Public Relations*, *Patrol Procedures*, and *Legal Authority, Duties and Responsibilities* and support materials such as examinations, comprehension questions, vocabulary, and study and test-taking tips.

Phase 3: Much of the development work on the competencies and related training curriculum have been developed and vetted through a coordinating committee representative of business and unions. It is now necessary to develop assessment processes and flexible assessment methods, typically associated with PLAR, and to pilot all development

Work-Ready Skills Passport
This project researched the necessary essential, employability and core technical skills required in the construction sector in Manitoba. A skills passport was created specific to construction ensuring workers can be hired into entry-level positions.

This project resulted in
1. a profile of the essential, employability and core technical skills needed to work in entry-level construction occupations that can be used as the basis for pre-employment, employment, training or Apprenticeship programs
2. generic, flexible assessment methods for determining the work-readiness of individuals applying for entry-level construction jobs
3. a piloted prototype of a tool that job-seekers can use to provide evidence of their skills and knowledge and employers can use to make informed selection decisions
4. a model suggesting a process for providing "Work-Ready" workers for large projects and supporting hiring of Northern residents for Northern project
5. a practical software tool for tracking the skills development of seasonal workers and facilitating their labour force attachment

New Flyer Industries: Skills Passport Model Completion
This work brought the ongoing Skills Passport project at New Flyer to the point of installation by (1) **developing database reports** capable of sorting information in a manner which is useful to the client, i.e. skills shortages, training matrix (2) **designing and testing the printed passport** with client data in order to produce a passport prototype based on the assessment data tracked in the software, and (3) **building the final deployment package for installation of software at the client site**. A half day training session was also included in this activity to train the end user of the software at the client site.

5.2   Educational benefits

Question 5.2.a)

PLAR-related activity at post-secondary institutions varies from program to program and institution to institution. Many specific activities have arisen around specific needs and opportunities.

Most of the following case studies have been provided by the PLAR Coordinators in the post-secondary institutions. The last example was provided by Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

Brandon University Case Study
First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling Degree (B. FNAC)

The B. FNAC program was built around the belief that Aboriginal ways of counselling and helping others heal are unique, and that those who have already been actively practicing these ways should be recognized in this degree program.

Many elders and healers have had their traditional ways of helping, for example, ceremonies or sweat lodges, recognized for formal degree credit. Contemporary and mainstream Aboriginal counselors have also had their agency experience recognized for formal degree credit.

The B. FNAC degree program was the winner of the Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Network PEARL award for outstanding practice in PLAR in 2003, and has also been recognized by the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment.

Since inception of the degree in 2000, thirty-two B.FNAC students have graduated with PLAR as part of their degree credit.

Assiniboine Community College – Case Study Example
Comprehensive Health Care Aide

One of the great successes of Assiniboine Community College's Comprehensive Health Care Aide (CHCA) Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR) program is the ability for students to enter and exit at various points in the program. The advantage to challenge/PLAR students is that they determine what component of the program they are comfortable with challenging, but they also register (by distance or in the classroom) for any of the components they feel they cannot successfully challenge. For many students time and money play a major role in deciding which component(s) they wish to challenge/PLAR. Many prefer to take the theory courses by distance and choose to PLAR the two practicums. This saves students time and money and allows them to continue working at their jobs while maintaining their school and family life.

The PLAR program is an integral component of Assiniboine Community College's CHCA distance cluster offerings. Regional Health Authorities hire students for part-time employment after they complete CHCA term one theory. These employees then obtain experience and develop the criteria necessary to enter the CHCA challenge/PLAR program. This serves two purposes. It allows students eligibility into the challenge/PLAR process and it fills the need of the employers who are understaffed. The end result is a temporary work force that is on their way to becoming fully trained and certified and ultimately hired by the health authority on a full-time basis.

Red River College of Applied Arts, Science and Technology Case Study: PLAR in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Diploma

The goal of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Diploma program is to develop students' knowledge and skills required to provide quality childcare in the community. Graduates competently plan and implement appropriate learning experiences that stimulate the intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of young children. In Manitoba, the provincial government legislated that 2/3 of the staff in a licensed children's centre must be qualified at the ECE II Level (i.e. diploma).

The ECE Diploma program offers PLAR and is accessible through a variety of flexible delivery options including:

- ECE Day Program: The full time two year diploma program at the RRC Winnipeg campus.
- ECE Workplace Program: This program enables experienced early childhood workers and assistants to work three days/week and attend classes two days/week and achieve the ECE diploma within a two year time span.
- School of Continuing Education and Distance Education - All theory courses of the first year of the ECE diploma program are offered onsite at the Winnipeg campuses during evenings and weekends. All theory courses in the two-year diploma program are available through Distance Education.
- Rural campuses offer programs according to demand. Currently the program is offered at three RRC regional campuses.
- Community partners - the ECE program is delivered in First Nations and other rural communities in partnership with organizations or bands, where a need and interest exist. The diploma program has been delivered in 11 First Nations communities, including some fly-in communities.

To meet the needs of experienced Early Childhood Educators interested in accessing an ECE Diploma, a quality PLAR system and practices are available for the above delivery options. Adults with at least 2 years of fulltime experience in a licensed children's centre can apply for the PLAR ECE program. Following a PLAR orientation and an individual interview, learners may register for PLAR in the ECE courses. Learners may prove prior learning for up to 75% of the courses in the program including the practicum components. The remaining 25% of the program courses may be completed through the above delivery options.

Learners work with an ECE PLAR faculty advisor to determine which courses they may wish to challenge, and then proceed with PLAR through a range of assessment options including: assignments; projects; tests; interviews; practical skill demonstrations and portfolios/evidence collections. The ECE PLAR approach has well developed learning guides and tools available for learners to access during the PLAR process. Learners are also able to use resources from the RRC ECE Learning Resource Center. The PLAR

advising component and assessments conducted by the ECE faculty (i.e. subject matter experts) ensure a rigorous, valid, reliable and credible PLAR system.

Often PLAR learners will tap into the ECE Workplace Program. This unique model, similar to the PLAR approach, allows adults to continue to be employed while working towards their ECE Diploma. They attend classes 2 days a week, while continuing to work for the other 3 days and are able to achieve their diploma in two years. The workplace model operates using hands on learning, gap training, and PLAR principles. Workplace and PLAR have the same entrance requirements (i.e. 2 years experience in a licensed centre) so these learners can access courses between the two programs.

In 1983, ECE was one of the first College programs in Canada and, at RRC to implement PLAR practices. Since then, PLAR has been implemented in ECE with great success and it is a model for other programs. Many ECE learners have achieved their College diplomas with a combination of classroom or distance delivery learning and PLAR. Between 2002-2005, over 315 PLAR course assessments were conducted in the ECE Diploma Program.

These ECE learners have saved time and resources, eliminated duplication of learning, completed their ECE diploma more efficiently and have had their learning from work and life validated and recognized for College credit.

Red River College of Applied Arts, Science and Technology Case Study: PLAR in the Certificate in Adult Education (CAE)

Instructors hired to teach at Red River College, are required to complete the Certificate in Adult Education (CAE) Program. Many of these individuals have been involved in teaching in a variety of situations, and believe that their experiential learning may be equivalent to the courses and expectations in the CAE Program.

PLAR processes are available for each of the 10 CAE courses, as well as for the Practicum required for attainment of the CAE certificate. The PLAR process for the CAE Program guides potential PLAR candidates to begin by reviewing the CAE Program Handbook. Course content that is familiar is identified and learners, self assess using the CAE course learning outcomes to identify courses that may be applicable for PLAR. The College PLAR Advisor provides assistance and advising through out this process.

Using a course by course approach, the learner determines whether the information has been acquired through formal study or through learning from work and life experience. If formal courses have been completed, the learner completes and submits the required documentation to Request a Course Credit Grade Transfer. If learning from work and life experiences has contributed the expertise, one of either, a challenge process or portfolio assessment is available.

Key to the success of PLAR in the CAE program are the PLAR Resource Guides that have been developed for each of 7 core courses and the Portfolio Development Resource Information (Portfolio Assessment) available for the remaining 3 courses. To ensure quality in the PLAR process, each of the PLAR Resource Guides includes the course learning outcomes, a learner self-assessment checklist, the PLAR process requirements (often with options for proving prior learning) and the assessment criteria. Specific samples of evidence that meet course learning outcome standards are identified and required for assessment. The College PLAR Advisor is available for guidance and support for all faculty who are investigating and accessing PLAR processes.

The RRC CAE Program, in addition to faculty, attracts learners who have been involved as educational facilitators, trainers and/or curriculum specialists. These individuals from business, industry and post secondary environments have education, expertise and practical experience which can be articulated, measured and awarded credit through the PLAR process.

A unique aspect of the CAE Program places faculty in the role of a "learner seeking recognition for prior learning". Awareness of PLAR systems and benefits increase as faculty, as learners, identify course content and expectations that are familiar, and move through the process of documenting prior learning. The credibility of the system is upheld as equivalent learning is assessed and awarded credit. Not only are faculty recognized for their prior learning but they gain new knowledge and skill related to quality PLAR practices and systems. Expanding the number of PLAR adopters is essential in gaining support for the development and implementation of quality PLAR practices across College programs.

From 2003-2005, over 250 PLAR course assessments were conducted and credits awarded in the Certificate in Adult Education.

University of Winnipeg - PLAR/Adult Learner Supportive Department
Developmental Studies program

The University of Winnipeg Developmental Studies program is committed to supporting adult learners in their pursuit of a degree. This program is the leader at the university in encouraging PLAR and an excellent model for other departments. Developmental Studies has provided PLAR professional development opportunities such as, the *Practitioner Leadership Training in PLA* completed by one instructor, information sessions and reading materials for instructors on *What is PLAR and Learning Outcomes*, a series of workshops/seminars for the child care community - *Lunch 'n Learn* where instructors introduced their area of expertise, a quick overview of the Developmental Studies program and an introduction to PLAR at the university, *Breakfast Summer Solstice Seminar* where PLAR was introduced to 70 Child Care Centre Directors, and free *Portfolio Building Workshops* offered for prospective students interested in the Developmental Studies program.

Several noted strengths of this program include supportive instructors with PLAR experience, flexible course schedules, gap training, accreditation with the Manitoba Child Care Program, and articulation with Red River and St. Boniface Community Colleges. Many of the adult learners in the Developmental Studies program have extensive knowledge in the field of childcare and education. Therefore, PLAR has provided learners with opportunities to obtain credit for university-level knowledge and skills gained through their work. Eighteen learner applications for PLAR in Developmental Studies courses have had a success rate of 100% and four more PLAR applications are in process.

Collaboratively, three University of Winnipeg departments, Developmental Studies, Division of Continuing Education (DCE) and PLAR, developed the *Advanced Diploma in Leadership in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Program*. This program consists of courses from Developmental Studies and DCE and all students have the option of PLAR. This program offers childcare educators a shorter route to achieving their credential, ECE III, after graduating with a College diploma in Early Childhood Education and can later ladder to achieving a Bachelor of Arts in Developmental Studies. The structure of this program, and its emphasis on PLAR, has allowed adult learners to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree in Developmental Studies in a timely and efficient manner.

Developmental Studies is an adult learner and PLAR friendly program. The UW Developmental Studies program received the 2005 Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network (MPLAN) PEARL Award and was nominated for the Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) 2006 Canadian Recognizing Learning Award.

University of Manitoba/Manitoba Labour and Immigration/ Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) Internationally-Educated Engineers Qualification Pilot Program

As was described in the response to Question 1.2.a) above, Manitoba Labour and Immigration has supported a number of Qualifications Recognition Projects in Manitoba that have been developed to address the issue of qualifications recognition of highly skilled immigrants. While the focus of this pilot project is not strictly on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, it uses a holistic approach to the needs of learners and the use of non-formal and informal learning (use of paid co-op work experience and mentorship) is incorporated. The project is included because it is considered illustrative on many levels.

Since September 2003, the Internationally-Educated Engineers Qualification Pilot Program (IEEQ) has been an option for a select group of Internationally Educated Engineers needing to fulfill the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba (APEGM) requirements for academic qualification necessary for licensure as a professional engineer in Manitoba.

The IEEQ Program is an alternative to Confirmatory Examinations for those who are assigned five or fewer Confirmatory Examinations by APEGM. As a pilot program, IEEQ has accommodated approximately 10-12 participants per year. Participants are typically experienced, mid-career engineers who hold a completed university degree in engineering from their home country and generally have a number of years of professional experience prior to their arrival in Canada.

IEEQ is the only program of its kind (for International Engineering Graduates) in Canada that operates directly in partnership with the regulator and leads to a formal credential with the licensing body (regulator). This is what sets it apart from other "bridging" programs for internationally-educated engineers. The IEEQ Program has proven to be a time-effective and supportive alternative to Confirmatory Examinations.

Program Structure

The IEEQ Program is a 12-month program, beginning in September of each year. The program has three components: academic coursework, a paid co-op work experience placement, and a report on the co-op work experience.

Academic coursework includes between three and eight courses at the senior levels in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Manitoba. By completing the coursework, participants confirm their academic background and technical capabilities. Courses include:

- Engineering Economics
- Practicing Professional Engineering in Manitoba (a course developed specifically for internationally-educated engineers)
- Technical & design courses, matched as closely as possible to the Confirmatory Examinations assigned by APEGM. The exact technical and design courses are different for each IEEQ program participant, and the exact courses are determined upon consultation with the IEEQ program staff.

The second component of the program is a *paid co-op work experience placement* with an engineering employer. Through the co-op work term, participants gain Canadian employment experience, a job reference, and begin to build their professional network. This generally takes place after the coursework, from May – August. The IEEQ staff work with participants to assess their background, experience, and interests, and help to find a work placement.

Besides a program of academics and co-op work term, IEEQ takes a *holistic approach* to the individuals' development as professional engineers. There is a significant cultural training component (Canadian culture, engineering business culture, engineering ethics, etc). Data shows that internationally-educated engineers' technical skills are usually on par with Canadian-educated; their ability to get a job and keep a job depends on their ability to understand and fit into the culture. This is an aspect that the program addresses.

Mentoring is provided to students by Engineers-in-Residence (retired or semi-retired engineers from industry), and support is provided by program staff. In addition, academic, financial, and social supports are built into the program, modeled after successful aboriginal access programs.

Upon successful program completion, a formal credential of Engineer in Training is granted by the regulator. This is what is of critical value to the participants; the EIT credential has a direct and significant impact on employability and earning potential. After completing one year of Canadian work experience (IEEQ co-op term counts toward this requirement), the individual is eligible for the full P.Eng. license.

Program/Participant Status

Manitoba has demonstrated leadership in creating, developing, and supporting IEEQ, and the program is widely known and well-respected across the country. IEEQ has established relationships with local organizations and industry groups such as the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), the Consulting Engineers of Manitoba (CEM), and Manitoba Aerospace (MAHRCC), and immigrant-serving agencies. IEEQ is firmly planted on the radar screens of credible national organizations like the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE), the Association of Colleges & Universities of Canada (AUCC), and the Canadian Electricity Association (CEA). There is now serious interest and activity in at least two other provinces to establish IEEQ-style programs in their own jurisdictions.

IEEQ ties into many important agendas including:
- Manitoba's immigration strategy / Canada's immigration strategy to increase numbers of newcomers and support their integration;
- Labour market demands for experienced professionals generally;
- Strong demands for engineers specifically (pending retirements; sustained strong economy has created lots of work for engineers); and
- Supports province's economic growth.

Program enrollment and completion rates:

IEEQ1: 7 enrolled: 5 completed, 2 exited
IEEQ2: 14 enrolled: 13 completed, 1 exited
IEEQ3: 9 enrolled (in progress): 6 scheduled to complete by intended timeline September 2006; 3 continuing (two in courses and one in a co-op term that began late); none exited.
IEEQ4: 9 enrolled, to begin the program in September 2007.

Number employed in engineering or engineering-related jobs:
(Based largely on anecdotal data as participants cannot be required to report to program staff.)

IEEQ1: 5 completed: 4 employed in engineering; one unknown.

IEEQ2: 13 completed: 11 employed in engineering; 2 employed engineering-related.
IEEQ3: All nine on co-op terms currently (all in engineering); two known instances where co-op terms have already resulted in permanent offers; one known instance where co-op term has been extended to late fall.
IEEQ4: n/a

Number of participants with Professional Engineering Status/Engineer in Training status:

IEEQ1:	5 completed: all EITs; 2 P.Engs to date; one more expected to be through the process by end of August 2006.
IEEQ2:	13 completed: all EITs; 2 P.Engs to date; two more expected to be through the process by end of August 2006.
IEEQ3:	n/a
IEEQ4:	n/a

Average salary of participants who have successfully completed:
(This information is anecdotal only at this point. Staff collects follow-up information at 9 months and 24 months after program completion, but participation in the survey is voluntary and sample sizes are too small at this point to produce valid statistics.)

Example: IEEQ1 participant: Pre-IEEQ - engineering technician at $35K. IEEQ co-op - engineering designer $43K. End of co-op – hired permanently at $50K. Since then, regular promotions.
Example: IEEQ1 participant: Pre-IEEQ – security guard. IEEQ co-op – engineer at $40K. End of co-op – hired permanently.
Example: IEEQ2 participant: Pre-IEEQ - newspaper carrier. IEEQ co-op - engineer at $40K. End of co-op – hired permanently with salary increase.
Example: IEEQ2 participant: Pre-IEEQ - computer tech. IEEQ co-op - engineer at $40K. End of co-op – hired permanently @ $50K.

Participants pay back the investment. With increased salaries comes increased earning potential, an increase in taxes paid and an investment in Manitoba.

Engineering disciplines represented since program start:

Civil, agricultural, mechanical, manufacturing, electrical, electronics, computer.

Partners/Funding and Support Levels:

Manitoba Labour and Immigration through the Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program:
FY 2006/07 - $96,000.00 (Core funding for staff salaries; participants' tuition and books.)
FY 2005/06 – $71,969.81
FY 2004/05 – $68,425.00
FY 2003/04 – $41,078.00

COPSE through the Manitoba Opportunities Fund (MOF):
Three-year commitment of $120,000.00 each year for a total of $360,000, starting FY 2006/07.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Foreign Credentials Recognition (FCR) Program through the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE):
IEEQ project funding, as well as funding for national level work.
Three-year commitment of $310,000.00 starting December of FY 2005/06.

Manitoba Competitiveness, Training and Trade:
Living allowances through Employment Insurance to qualifying program participants.
Student Aid for qualifying participants needing to access living supports.

University of Manitoba, Faculty of Engineering:
In-kind contributions of time and advocacy by Associate Dean of Design Engineering as well as support from other faculty staff.
Support from University Administration.

Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba (APEGM):
Formal agreement with University to recognize program graduates.

Manitoba Employers:
Provision of four-month paid work experience for program participants.
Most employers offer long-term employment to participants.
Manitoba Hydro has committed dollars for two bursaries per year for program participants. Other bursary commitments from employers are in progress.

The goal of IEEQ is to become a sustainable, permanent program in Manitoba and to increase its enrollment to meet the province's demand. Data from APEGM indicate that 40 applicants for licensure per year (internationally-educated engineers) are eligible for IEEQ. At an average course load of six courses per individual, this creates a demand for 240 new course spaces at the senior levels in the Faculty of Engineering.

5.3   Social benefits

Question 5.3.a)

Three case studies are described below. The first, supported by Industry Training Partnerships (ITP), is a project example that reflects a community-based approach. The second is a training initiative in support of Community Economic Development (see response to Question 1.4.f.). The third is a regional initiative related to supporting benefits for Aboriginal and local residents in planned northern Hydro development.

Fisher River
This project developed and piloted a PLAR model that provides individuals, trainers and the community with an approach to successfully matching individuals with training opportunities that lead to successful employment.

Participants in training programs should be able to conduct a successful job search, replicate that job search when needed, and maintain ongoing workforce attachment. In order to do this, they need skills and knowledge related to the four elements in an Employability Model - Labour Market Relationships, Workplace Skills, Employer Expectations, and Job Search Strategies. Based on the employability model, participants need to be able to:
- reflect on and evaluate their skills, knowledge, and experiences
- identify strengths as well as learning needs and possible learning paths
- learn and apply new skills

This project
1. Developed an assessment process that addresses the four elements of the Employability Model
2. Conducted individual needs assessments with students in the current training programs
3. Worked with participants to develop individual learning plans
4. Provided recommendations for how the needed content can be incorporated into the current and/or future training.

The resulting model will benefit other communities and organizations, and is also available to be incorporated into a longer-term strategy to support labour force attachment.

The CD/CED Training Intermediary Internship Program

On behalf of a network of over twenty five agencies, CEDA hosts the collaborative CED Training Intermediary, a training and education program to upgrade the skills of people involved or would like to be involved in revitalizing low income communities. The program includes internships for current practitioners as well as community-members, a series of workshops to strengthen capacities of community-members to be more active and effective in revitalizing their communities, and certificate and diploma programs in cooperation with Red River College.

CED TI consults with a 14 member management committee, made up of representatives from the community, educational institutions, government and funders on all issues relating to design and implementation of the program.

CED TI has implemented a CED internship program. The program recruits individuals who have had limited formal education (or in the case of new Canadians, have qualifications that may not be recognized) for placement in Red River College's CED certificate program. The CD/CED Certificate program at Red River College is one year

in length with a practicum piece attached to it. In addition, CED TI coordinates job placements for these individuals once RRC training is complete as part of the overall program. Learning assessment and some training are provided by CED TI prior to instruction at RRC to assess grade level and other possible upgrades that may be needed before entering RRC. One of the goals of the program is to link community-based expertise and experience with the programs in an educational institution (in this case RRC). By developing these kinds of human resources, connections are made between the people living and working in low-income communities and the non-formal economy via CED is enhanced.

The program provides financial assistance and social support to people who are interested in community development and community economic development but who might be experiencing barriers in obtaining a formal education in this field.

Manitoba Hydro Northern Training and Employment Initiative (HNTI)

The Hydro Northern Training and Employment Initiative is a multi-year, $60.3M training initiative to prepare northern Aboriginal people for 800 jobs related to hydroelectric construction on the Wuskwatim Generating Station and proposed Keeyask Generating Station. The funding partners for initiative are Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro and Canada (Human Resource and Social Development, Western Economic Diversification Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).

The goals of the Initiative are to:
- ensure that participants have knowledge and skills to take advantage of opportunities to participate fully in the hydroelectric generation projects planned in Northern Manitoba and on other major construction projects;
- maximize opportunities for the employment of Northern Aboriginal people in the construction industry or related sectors;
- lever opportunities related to hydroelectric projects for long community capacity building;
- support the development of northern Aboriginal businesses and community ventures through the provision of products and services to the hydro projects.

The Initiative is Aboriginal-led in the design and delivery of training. Over 85% of training is community-based training or through training centres throughout the North, including the University College of the North.   The training delivery model provides for a continuum of training opportunities (e.g. employment readiness, upgrading, technical and professional training, on-the-job training) to prepare individuals to access training opportunities. The use of PLAR tools and processes is incorporated in the initiative where appropriate. The HNTI was one of the considerations that led to delivery of the Igniting the Power Within in Northern Manitoba (see response to Question 2.2.d)).

5.4   Personal benefits

Question 5.4.a)

Adult Learning Centres and post-secondary institutions in Manitoba have made particular efforts to capture information about the experience of individuals who have participated in Recognition of Prior Learning processes. While anecdotal, they provide a glimpse into personal barriers and benefits experienced by learners.

A survey of learners at ALCs was conducted in 2004. The findings are relevant, given that PLAR approaches are an integral component of programming at ALCs. The following is a brief summary of findings:

> Learners reported that the recognition of their learning provided direction on where and what they could do. By recognizing their learning, the adult achieved employment and educational goals. The adults identified positive effects in relation to life, work, and education.
>
> Comments provided by learners included references to:
> **Life**
> - Increased self esteem
> - Personal growth
> - Confidence
> - More aware of self
> - Positive role model for their children
> - Validates overall learning
> - Recognition of what they have done
> - Change of career (opens doors of opportunity)
> - Proud of self
> - Busy person and this saved time
> - Life skills validated
>
> **Education**
> - More aware of overall learning
> - Saves time
> - Graduate sooner (statistics prove this)
> - Increased opportunities to further education
>
> **In the workplace**
> - Volunteered to write the company newsletter
> - Applying for jobs that they never thought they could apply for
> - More confidence
> - Increased qualifications
> - Recognition of learning (informal and non formal) used for hiring practices

Specific quotes captured from adult learners were:

"PLAR has allowed me to be more valuable as an employee, as a spouse and as a person in general, and to gain a high school credit without taking a high school course."

"This has been unfinished business. I'm finally going to get the hat with the tassel on my head, something I should have done many years ago. PLAR paid off and I'm looking forward to graduation day."

"Although I have a degree and many certificates, I always wanted to obtain my Grade 12 diploma. I accomplished my goal of receiving my Grade 12 diploma. I have gained additional skills to use in my role of an Employment Consultant."

"For the PLAR in English, I sent in an article that was published in Canadian Cattleman magazine, as well as a presentation given at Midland Division Career Technology Studies award night…For accounting, I decided to challenge the course using PLAR. I have developed a strong accounting ability. This has come from using budgeting in all aspects of our farm operation…without PLAR I would never have attempted to get my Grade 12 diploma."

"I especially appreciate PLAR…for my second English credit. The concept of his type of learning provides the opportunity for completion in a shorter time frame without repetition of prior proven knowledge."

The following are personal case stories gathered by the Department PLAR Coordinator from various education providers:

Tom *Urban Circle Training Centre*

Tom was in early 20's when he arrived at a Winnipeg Aboriginal training centre with no confidence in his own abilities and no idea of what he wanted or could do for employment. PLAR assisted him to progress to where he is now attending the Self-Governance program at Red River College and plans to return to work in his Reserve community.

Through PLAR, Tom realized and documented skills gained while working on Reserve and in the Band office, including very marketable abilities in proposal writing and administration. Everybody had told him he wouldn't succeed but PLAR helped him see he already had experienced success, and could continue to do so.

"He knows has a place in society, he knows has a lot of gifts to offer his community and he knows he can make a difference."

Holly *Winnipeg Technical College*

Holly was enrolled in the Mature Student Diploma and needed one credit to complete the diploma this year before her baby was born. She had formal training at a private hairstyling school and several years experience in the field. Through several comprehensive exams and a practical test, Holly was able to demonstrate her ability to

meet the required competencies. She was able to use the WTC credit to fulfill the credit requirement for her diploma.

Wendy *Red River College*

Owning and operating a licensed Family Day Care home, provided Wendy with a variety of knowledge and skills related to the early childhood profession. To enhance these skills and to work towards attaining the Early Childhood Education Diploma, Wendy completed many courses through Red River College's Continuing and Distance Education.

A full time two-year program involves numerous courses, and the content of many courses was already familiar learning to Wendy. Rather than re-learning content in the classroom, Wendy accessed PLAR to challenge for credit in courses where she felt that she had already acquired the learning. Instead of taking courses, she proved through a variety of PLAR processes that her knowledge and skills were equivalent to the expectations for traditional students. Wendy believes in "the learning process, and promoting better ways to teach children". She successfully completed the ECE Diploma and attained a position on the Dean's Honour Roll in June 2003.

PLAR allowed Wendy to complete her program of study in a shorter period of time. By challenging for credit in courses, Wendy moved through the program rapidly. As a part time student, she graduated 6 years earlier than she would have following the traditional part time diploma studies path. This has provided the motivation for continuing to learn. Next on Wendy's learning agenda is the Post Diploma Program for Studies in Special Needs Child Care, which she plans to begin in the fall of 2003.

Susan *University of Winnipeg*

An active Early Childhood Educator since 1980, Susan has translated her work experience into credits towards a Bachelor's degree at the University of Winnipeg. Susan has vast experience in child care – working as a supervisor and director of a variety of Day Care Centres, a part-time instructor at a college program in Early Childhood Education, and as a day care coordinator for the provincial Child Daycare Office. As well, Susan has presented several workshops at the Annual Manitoba Child Care Association Conference.

Through PLAR, she has received three course credits - Observation and Evaluation Techniques, Parents, Family and Professionals, and Interpersonal Communication and is continuing towards her goal of a B.A., major in Developmental Studies.

Erin *Employment Projects of Winnipeg*

A Winnipeg woman is using PLAR to assist with her transition from electrical shops teacher to accounts receivable clerk.   Trained as an electrician, Erin earned her papers as a journeyman electrician before pursuing further education to become a teacher.

More recently, Erin underwent a complete career change. As a mother of two, including a child with disabilities, she wanted a job that enabled her to be home more, with predictable hours and located closer to her home.

Erin attended Employment Projects of Winnipeg for help with the transition. Through a PLAR process, she was able to document what she knows and can do, including her knowledge and skills in math. When Erin heard about a job opening in an accounts receivable office, she had the confidence to apply, and the ability to articulate and define the skills she could bring to the job.

Erin is not sure where her career path will take her next. She knows that the self-awareness gained through PLAR will assist her in continuing to document her lifelong learning as skills transferable to the workplace.

John *Brandon University*

An accomplished individual with experience in the Canadian Forces as a Psychiatric Nurse, and as a boxer and boxing coach, John is translating his life long learning towards a year of university credit that enables him to enter a Masters of Education program.

John had already earned his three-year Bachelor degree in Native Studies from Brandon University. He believed that knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience could be equivalent to the required fourth year of university credit.

John's portfolio features his workplace learning including operating his own counseling and consulting company, his community service and his accomplishments and recognition as an athlete and coach.

John began PLAR at an early and experimental time at the university. He persisted and over a period of three years was gained conditional admittance to the M.Ed. program and successfully completed some of the courses required for his Master's degree.

Nasir *Employment Connections*

Motivated through an employment-focused prior learning assessment and recognition advisory process at Employment Connections, a recent immigrant woman has opened many doors that are helping her adjust and prepare for a successful life in Canada.

Nasir arrived at a Winnipeg employment centre frustrated because she did now know how to get a job. Nasir didn't think she knew much of anything and didn't believe she had many skills. She also knew her limited English was holding her back.

During the PLAR process, Nasir has worked on having her secondary and post-secondary education accredited, developed a resume that highlights her skills and work experience and sought out and attends English as a Second Language training at a local church. She

is auditing a science course at the University of Manitoba in preparation for her eventual return to master-level studies. As well, she volunteers regularly at a local hospital to assist her in gaining and documenting employment-related skills and experience.

Darlene *University of Winnipeg*

The availability of PLAR is helping a Calgary woman obtain her B. Ed. from the University of Winnipeg in less time and with fewer costs.

Darlene, who has a college diploma in Vocational Industrial Teacher Education, currently lives in Calgary and teaches costume sewing and design, and theatrical makeup at a high school. She is already a mobile learner – attending classes at the University of Calgary as a visiting student and traveling back to Winnipeg in the summers to pick up courses towards her degree. The availability of PLAR is enabling her to gain credit toward her degree by submitting a portfolio that documents her work experience.

Eric *Red River College*

Eric is closer to achieving his goal of becoming a General Manager of a hotel or resort, after he translated his 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry into credits toward a college diploma in Hotel and Restaurant Administration.

Over the past twenty-five years, Eric has progressed from a dishwasher to restaurant manager to Operations Manager of a rural resort and conference centre. He has also attended two years of university, taken a range of industry-related training and has done independent study.

Through a PLAR process, Eric's extensive learning and experience has been documented and credits granted towards the recognized college diploma. "Although I feel I have amassed a wealth of knowledge in my 25 years in the restaurant and hotel industry and earned the respect of my peers, my work will be validated through the formal diploma. I also see this credential as a stepping stone to further education."

Bob *Horizons Adult Learning Centre*

Bob, in his mid 20s, wanted to further his training and career in accounting.

Although he is a university graduate with a degree in business administration, Bob was unable to enroll in accounting – he had enrolled in University as a mature student without ever attaining his Grade 12 math.

Through PLAR, Bob was able to prove his prior learning attained in business and through his university studies. He demonstrated and/or successfully tested for all but part of a module for Grade 12 math. In short, PLAR saved Bob time and money in achieving his plan to enroll in accounting courses at Red River College.

Chris *University of Winnipeg*

Identifying and organizing prior learning experiences through a PLAR process has helped a Winnipeg woman enrolled in a university Joint Communications Degree/Diploma to save time, money and energy.

Chris had been in business for 15 years preparing written communications for business, individuals, and students when a car accident ended her ability to carry on with the physical demands of her business.

Through a PLAR process she successfully challenged the mandatory academic writing course and received 12 unallocated hours of credit.   During the PLAR process, she discovered that the value of her life experiences provided her with the confidence to enter university as a 'late bloomer'.   The insights gained continue to help her as she juggles education with family and employment responsibilities, and rehabilitation. Although it will take her four years to complete the degree, without the credits achieved through PLAR, her physical limitations would extend that period considerably.

Allen *Winnipeg Technical College*

Allen had some related formal training from another college and has worked privately as a freelance artist on stage and television for many years. Through a series of interviews and examining Allen's work in his portfolio he was able to obtain 2 ¾ out of 10 program credits in *Production Art.* The PLAR process and flexible program at WTC has allowed Allen to gain credit for what he knows and to attend in a way that supports his family situation.

Elaine *Red River College*

Elaine joined the staff of Red River College in 2001, having partially completed the Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) Program at the University of Manitoba.

Since college faculty are encouraged to complete the Certificate in Adult Education (CAE) offered through Red River College, Elaine changed direction slightly and focused on attaining the RRC credential. To begin the process, Elaine registered for and completed Course Implementation and Evaluation. She then applied for a transfer of credit to the CAE for the courses completed through the University of Manitoba.

Elaine was an experienced adult educator who had taken advantage of numerous professional development opportunities. She had developed expertise in a wide range of adult education principles and practices. Through her involvement with Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), Elaine had assisted numerous candidates in preparing and presenting evidence of prior learning. By developing and presenting portfolios of evidence to prove knowledge and skills, Elaine was able to attain credit for three more (CAE) courses.   The PLAR Foundation course was an elective in the CAE

Program. Elaine was confident of her knowledge of both PLAR theory and application and successfully challenged for credit. During the summer of 2003, Elaine completed the final course for her Certificate in Adult Education.

Although gathering and generating evidence for portfolios was time consuming, Elaine felt that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. In approximately 13 months, using PLAR methods involving transfer credit; portfolio assessment; and challenge processes, Elaine was awarded credit for 5 of the 7 CAE courses. She completed the 2 remaining courses at Red River College and attained her CAE certificate.

Tyler *University of Winnipeg*

PLAR has assisted a computer service technologist translate his extensive work experience into two courses towards a B.A., major in Business Computing.

Tyler, in his work with a large corporation in the Advanced Internet Operations department, was responsible for the continued stable operation of many systems, both hardware and software. Based on his knowledge and experience in computer networking and in distributed client/server applications, he was given credit for two courses – Computer Architecture and Systems Software, and Intro to Unix. As a part-time student, he is now pursuing PLAR in two more Business Computing courses.

Karen *Red River College*

Karen began taking courses in the Business and Administrative Studies Certificate Program at RRC in 1997. Over the next 6 years, while working full time, Karen completed 10 out of the 12 courses through part time evening and weekend studies.

During the process, Karen learned of an experiential learning option, available to individuals in management positions who managed at least 6 employees over a period of 5 years. By providing supporting documentation in the form of verification letters, resume and current job description, Karen was granted a credit for the experiential learning option in the Business and Administrative Studies Certificate.

With one credit course remaining, Karen contacted the RRC PLAR Advisor for advice on the PLAR processes, to receive a course outline for the Report Writing course and the specific guidelines for developing a portfolio. In her job, Karen wrote reports on a regular basis and felt that she could prove her knowledge and skills by documenting and presenting samples of her work. In June 2003, Karen submitted her portfolio to a College faculty assessor and was awarded credit for the Report Writing course.

When Karen saw the light at the end of the tunnel, PLAR allowed her to complete the Business and Administrative Studies Certificate on her own terms. Karen was able to demonstrate her prior learning by systematically working through the portfolio process at home instead of driving to the College following a busy work day for an additional four

hours of class time. She gained personal satisfaction through the acquisition of credits granted for learning acquired through work experience.

Naomi *University of Winnipeg*

PLAR is making post-secondary education more accessible to a mature student recovering from a car accident.

After completing a three-year arts degree at the University of Winnipeg, Naomi has accessed PLAR to keep her on track towards a goal of graduate studies. PLAR allowed her to apply her experiences as a care worker for young unwed mothers to social science courses, resulting in the completion of two full courses in one term, bringing her 12 credit hours closer to completing a four-year undergraduate degree.

PLAR has allowed Naomi to reduce the costs of her education and to work from home so she can maintain her studies and keep her appointments with various doctors.   For Naomi, PLAR has enabled her to bridge the gap between formal education and life experience and ease the path to a university education.

5.5   Others

Question 5.5.a)

An observation that can be made from the case studies examined in Manitoba is that PLAR-related activities tend to simultaneously present benefits and barriers for individuals, employers, educational institutions and communities. Economic, social, educational and personal benefits are also closely inter-twined in these cases.

Given this observation, Manitoba has provided case studies in response to the above questions which would have relevance; however, they should be considered in light of the full range of benefits and barriers.

Component 6, Conclusions and challenges

In Manitoba, attention to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning has clearly been viewed as an important activity to support individuals, in the context of lifelong learning, to meet their economic and educational goals. It has also been recognized that for many Manitobans, particularly Aboriginal Manitobans and recent immigrants, that recognition of prior learning (formal, non-formal and informal) can contribute to improvements in social and economic equity.

Increasingly, as the labour market tightens and industry is experiencing human resource shortages, recognition of prior learning is also being viewed as an important response to a changing labour market. The potential for recognition of prior learning (RPL) to improve

labour market efficiency, labour mobility, etc. are increasing in importance as goals. Industry interest in being involved and supporting RPL has never been higher, as employers understand the role RPL can play in addressing skill shortages. As well, educational institutions have gained more experience with RPL and are beginning to see benefits to the institutions in terms of system efficiency and promoting increased enrolments.

Challenges remain. As interest in and demand for PLAR services increases from individuals and employers, Manitoba needs to continue to build its response capacity in post-secondary institutions, adult learning centres and employment centres. Individuals find that the recognition they can acquire often does not meet their expectations. When gaps in their learning are identified, too often the gap training is not available to fill these. Institutions are faced with many challenges in trying to build capacity. Opportunities for RPL are less developed at the university level in comparison to adult secondary and college levels. The adoption of more competency-based approaches is needed. The lack of legislation can be viewed as limiting the extent to which RPL supports labour mobility. Quality assurance continues to be critical and addressing RPL quality considerations occurs in the context of the evolving state of quality assurance in the education system as a whole.

Having said this, Manitoba has made significant progress in implementing recognition of non-formal and informal learning. It has evolved from a number of discreet activities and demonstration projects to a decentralized and systemic strategic approach involving multiple stakeholders. Capacity building efforts have resulted in successes, particularly in terms of growing awareness and practitioner training. The approach has matured from one which was primarily focused on recognition of non-formal and informal learning to one that is much more integrated with the dynamic area of recognition of formal learning.

Manitoba continues to view RPL as a valuable part of our '**Manitoba model**". This area of activity complements other efforts to build a learner-centred approach that is inclusive and geared to success. Along with other examples such as ACCESS programs, Adult Learning Centres, essential skills framework, and community-based and workplace-based delivery, RPL is part of an evolving model that seeks to meet the economic and social needs of individuals, industry, educational institutions and the Province as a whole.