

Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR)

Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) Requirements – Nova Scotia

Background

In Nova Scotia, employees who work in Long-term care providing personal care are required to complete the Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) Program through an accredited College in Nova Scotia. If someone has not completed the CCA program in NS they must complete the requirements to become a CCA. There are several ways that this can happen:

1. For those who have no formal training or are Personal Care Workers (PCWs), they must undergo a process called Prior Learning Assessment and Review (PLAR) that helps you gain formal recognition toward CCA Course completion based on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA's) you have acquired through prior education and life experiences. This process will help you prove you already have some of the knowledge and skills needed to be a CCA, so that you do not have to repeat that learning.
2. For Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN) wanting to work as CCAs, they need to either provide their National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) report indicating that they are “comparable” or “somewhat comparable” to a Canadian RN or they too must undergo the PLAR process.

This resource is meant to assist you with the steps you are required to take as a condition of your employment:

What if I completed the PSW program in another province?

You are required to complete either the CCA **PLAR** process or a CCA program through an **accredited college in Nova Scotia** and pass the **Nova Scotia Provincial CCA Exam**. Both the PLAR program and the exam must be successfully completed within two (2) years of your Shannex date of hire.

What if I have no formal personal care training?

Before you can work you are required to complete First aid w/ CPR training as well as an introduction to personal care and safe resident handle. After that, you are required to complete either the CCA **PLAR** process or a CCA program through an **accredited college in Nova Scotia** and pass the **Nova Scotia Provincial CCA Exam**. Both the PLAR/program and the exam must be successfully completed within two (2) years of your date of hire.

What if I am an Internationally Education Nurse (IEN)?

As an Internationally Educated Nurse, you can provide a NNAS report indicating your credentials are “comparable” or “somewhat comparable” to those of a Canadian-educated nurse. Based on this, you are considered certified and eligible to work as a CCA in Nova Scotia. If you are unable to provide such a report, or if your report is “not comparable”, you will be considered a non-certified CCA and must complete either the PLAR process or a CCA program. Both the PLAR/program and the exam must be successfully completed within two (2) years of your date of hire.

What is the first step in the process?

The first step is to register with PLAR. To do so, complete the registration form at Recognizing Prior Learning - Continuing Care Assistant Program. There is cost per module, but funding may be available through the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care (DSLTC)



CONTINUING CARE
ASSISTANT

Requirements: To be eligible for PLAR, you must have:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- Minimum of one year's experience in the health care industry
- Clear criminal record
- Computer literacy

Once I am registered with PLAR what happens next - The PLAR process is broken down into two Phases.

Phase 1:

- You will complete three (3) workshops to assess your knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's)
- As part of this phase, you can complete course recognition. If you have completed a prior course, certificate, diploma, or degree that is recognized by the CCA Program Advisory Committee (CCAPAC) you can submit this as proof of learning
- Once completed, a learning path will be assigned to you based on missing KSA's

Phase 2:

- There are thirteen (13) possible modules that may be assigned to you. You are to complete these modules online at your own pace within the Shannex deadline indicated on your offer letter
- There are multiple Nova Scotia Certifications that you will need to sign up for and take on your own time. These include Food Hygiene, Dementia: Understanding the Journey, LEAP: Palliative Care, CPR, etc.

When I have completed the PLAR process, what is next?

- Once you have completed all Program Requirements you will be eligible to take the CCA Certification Exam
- Your PLAR Navigator will send you an official invitation to register for the Exam
- You are given three (3) attempts to pass the CCA Certification Exam to become a certified CCA in Nova Scotia

You are required to provide proof of enrollment in the PLAR process (or an accredited CCA program) within thirty (30) days of your hire date. **In addition, you must provide your manager with regular updates on your progress, including timelines, scheduled assessments, and any changes or delays in your enrollment or completion plan.** Failure to provide timely proof of enrollment or ongoing updates may result in termination of employment. If you have questions, please reach out to the

Academic Program & Partnership Team

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