Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Application Package

Overview

Canadian and international applicants who have not graduated from a Canadian accredited program may be eligible complete a Prior Learning Assessment and Learning Assessment (PLAR) to determine if they are eligible to challenge the National Examination(s).

The purpose of PLAR is to determine if a candidate has a combination of knowledge and skills equivalent to a recent graduate from a Canadian accredited program. NACOR administers PLAR on behalf of the College of Opticians of Alberta (COA). Upon successful completion of PLAR, candidates become eligible to register as a Provisional Optician with the COA and challenge the National Examination(s) for Canadian Opticians.

The PLAR Process

1. Document Review
   Review of the required documents submitted with the application form (see requirements below). If the document review is successful, the candidate will continue with the PLAR process. If the document review is unsuccessful, the candidate will be informed of alternative pathways to registration. Your document review is valid for one year. If you do not start the PLAR assessment within this timeframe you will be required to submit a new application and required documents.

2. Professional Practice Bridging Module
   All PLAR candidates are required to complete a Professional Practice bridging module. The module includes material on legislation, communication, professionalism, and infection control. The bridging module is self-study. Candidates will work through the bridging module at their own pace. Upon completion of the module, candidates will be required to successfully complete a post-test.

3. Competency Gap Analysis (CGA)
   The CGAs are multiple-choice assessments based on the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians. There are two CGAs, one for dispensing eyeglasses and one for dispensing contact lenses.

   a. Eyeglasses and Low Vision: 150 questions (2.5-hour time limit)
   b. Contact Lens: 130 questions (2-hour time limit)

All PLAR candidates are required to complete the Eyeglasses and Low Vision CGA. Candidates who have applied for contact lenses will be required to complete the Contact Lens CGA as well.

4. CGA Results
   The results from each CGA produce a computer-generated score card used to determine if there are any gaps in knowledge and skills. If gaps are identified, candidates will be required to complete additional bridging modules before proceeding. Upon completion of each assigned module, candidates will be required to successfully complete a post-test.

   If no gaps are identified, candidates will be eligible to proceed immediately.

5. Register with the COA
   After successful completion of PLAR, candidates become eligible to apply for registration as a Provisional Optician in Alberta. Alberta applicants are required to be registered as a Provisional Optician to challenge the National Examination(s).

6. National Examinations
   Apply for and complete the National Examinations for Canadian Opticians. There are two National Examinations: one for dispensing eyeglasses and one for dispensing contact lenses.

7. Update Registration Status
   After successful completion of the National Examination(s), candidates become eligible to update their registration status with the COA to independently practice as an optician in Alberta.

Questions

Send questions about PLAR to plar@nacor.ca or call 1-866-949-1950 ext. 2

PLAR Application Form

Registration Information

What province are you applying for PLAR in?

☑ Alberta

What Registration Category are you applying for?

Please select one of the following:

☐ EYEGLASSES

☐ EYEGLASSES AND CONTACT LENSES

☐ CONTACT LENSES (must be registered as an eyeglass dispensing optician in Canada)

Why are you applying for PLAR?

Please select one of the following:

☐ I am an internationally trained eyecare professional

☐ I have significant work experience*

*__A minimum of 4 years__ of full-time work experience related to dispensing eyeglasses is required to apply for PLAR – Eyeglasses. __An additional 2 years__ of full-time work experience related to dispensing contact lenses is required to apply for PLAR – Contact Lenses.

Personal Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Suite #: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

PLAR Fees

Fee Category	**Fee (excluding applicable HST/GST)**
Document Review	$250.00
Professional Practice Bridging Module	$500.00
Eyeglasses CGA	$500.00
Contact Lens CGA	$500.00

The total PLAR fees applicable to each licensing category are outlined below.

Licensing Category	**Total (excluding applicable HST/GST)**
Eyeglasses	$1,250.00
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	$1,750.00
Contact Lenses (must already be licensed for eyeglasses in a province)	$750.00

Once NACOR has received your application and all required supporting documents, a payment link for the document review fee will be sent to you by email. Payment must be received before the document review is started.

Personal Affidavit

I authorize the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators to share the personal information on this application form, as well as any documents submitted as part of this application, with any regulator of opticians in Canada.

I authorize any regulator of opticians in Canada to release my personal information to the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators.

I do solemnly swear that I have completed the application form above to the best of my knowledge and believe the completed form is correct and true.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATION PACKAGE BY EMAIL: plar@nacor.ca

Required Documentation – Internationally trained/educated

Mandatory documents

The following mandatory documents must be submitted for internationally trained/educated eyecare professional applicants.

- Completed application form
- Passport-sized photo (must have been taken within the past three years)
- Transcripts of formal education in the optical field (including name and location of school, dates of enrolment and graduation, and grades achieved)
  The education must be a degree or diploma that includes training in eyeglasses. If you are applying for contact lenses the education must also include training in contact lenses

Optional documents

The following optional documentation may be provided with your application if you have them.

- Examination results (if you have successfully challenged a licensure/certification examination in another country, provide the date of examination and mark achieved)
- Registration documents, license, or certification (if you are registered or licensed outside of Canada, provide a copy of your license or certificate and a letter from your regulatory organization confirming your registration)
- ICES, IQAU, or WES (if you have had your international credentials evaluated in Canada, provide the report)
- Language proficiency (if you have completed an English as a Second Language (ESL) course provide the name of the course you completed, the level completed and a copy of any certificates you received)

Required Documentation – Work experience

A minimum of 4 years of full-time work experience related to dispensing eyeglasses is required to apply for PLAR – Eyeglasses. Minimum 8,000 hours required

An additional 2 years of full-time work experience related to dispensing contact lenses is required to apply for PLAR – Contact Lenses. Minimum 4,000 hours required

Mandatory documents

The following mandatory documents must be submitted for work experience applicants.

- Completed application form
- Passport-sized photo (must have been taken within the past three years)
- Details of optical work experience- Completed Eyeglasses/Contact Lens Dispensing Experience Form(s)
  Candidates must submit a completed Dispensing Experience Form for each place of employment. The forms must be completed and signed by their supervisor during their time of employment. If they are submitting dispensing hours from more than one place of employment a separate form must be submitted for each place of employment. If the candidate is applying for PLAR for both eyeglasses and contact lenses they must submit separate forms for each.
- Confirmation letter(s) of employment from supervisor(s)
  Candidates must submit a letter of confirmation from each supervisor that completed a Dispensing Experience Form. The letter(s) must include the dates of your employment as well as a general description of your duties and responsibilities during your employment.

Eyeglasses Dispensing Experience Form

*Please complete one form for each place of employment**

FULL NAME OF APPLICANT	LAST NAME:
	FIRST NAME:
BUSINESS NAME:	
BUSINESS ADDRESS:	
CITY:	PROVINCE:
POSTAL CODE:	COUNTRY:
TELEPHONE # ( )	E-MAIL:
FIRST DAY OF EMPLOYMENT (DD/MM/YY):	LAST DAY OF EMPLOYMENT (DD/MM/YY) (enter "N/A" if still employed):

TOTAL HOURS OF DISPENSING EYEGLASSES COMPLETED AT THIS LOCATION:

_____

(Number of weeks worked at this location times the number of hours per week)

Name of Supervisor: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____

I declare that the above-mentioned person worked under my supervision during the dates recorded above.

**Make copies of this form as needed*

Contact Lens Dispensing Experience Form

*Please complete one form for each place of employment**

FULL NAME OF APPLICANT	LAST NAME:
	FIRST NAME:

BUSINESS NAME:	
BUSINESS ADDRESS:	
CITY:	PROVINCE:
POSTAL CODE:	COUNTRY:
TELEPHONE # ( )	E-MAIL:
FIRST DAY OF EMPLOYMENT (DD/MM/YY):	LAST DAY OF EMPLOYMENT (DD/MM/YY) (enter "N/A" if still employed):

TOTAL HOURS OF DISPENSING CONTACT LENSES COMPLETED AT THIS LOCATION:

_____

(Number of weeks worked at this location times the number of hours per week)

Name of Supervisor: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____

I declare that the above-mentioned person worked under my supervision during the dates recorded above.

**Make copies of this form as needed*