

*School of Health Sciences*  
**Practical Nursing Program**  
CENTRE FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS



**PLAR**  
*Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition*  
  
Candidate Guide

# **Lethbridge College Practical Nursing Program Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Candidate Guide**

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## Why consider a PLAR assessment?

Lethbridge College students normally gain their academic credits by successfully completing credit courses offered by Lethbridge College. However, Lethbridge College recognizes that students entering credit programs often have acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of previous learning and experience. Outcomes from these activities can be assessed at Lethbridge College and students may be awarded academic credits in equivalent Lethbridge College courses or be given unspecified credits that may count towards overall program outcomes.

To be considered for a PLAR assessment, students must meet the academic admission requirements of the program.

**Important Note:** Due to regulatory requirements, students who have previously graduated with a diploma in Practical Nursing but who were unsuccessful in the Canadian Practical Nurse Registration Exam (CPNRE) will not qualify for PLAR for any nursing courses (PNG).

## What are the PLAR options?

General PLAR eligibility is based on the applicant having recent health care experience. Specifically, the applicant must have 2 years of continuous successful experience within the past 5 years.

The practical nursing program consists of two types of courses:

1. Support courses – To be eligible to PLAR support course, an applicant must first register or already be registered as a student at Lethbridge College.
2. Practical nursing courses – To be eligible to PLAR a practical nursing course, an applicant must first be registered as a student in the Lethbridge College practical nursing program.

## Fees

- There will be a charge for each individual course assessment.
- PLAR fees will be discussed with the program representative in initial meetings.

## How many courses can be challenged through PLAR?

Currently, we have nine courses with PLAR challenges available. You may challenge as many of these courses as you are able to prove prior skills and knowledge through assessment.

A 25% residency requirement at Lethbridge College must be completed.

For further details on Lethbridge College's PLAR policy, please visit:

[Grading Policy, Appendix A, Part D](#)

## Which courses are PLAR-ready?

Practical Nursing Diploma Program Profile			
Course Code	Course Name	**PLAR available	PLAR unavailable
<b>Semester 1</b>			
*BIO 1156	Wellness & Health Issues	X	
*BIO 1160	Anatomy and Physiology I	X	
*ENG 1150	English Composition <b>OR</b>	X	
*COM 1162	Interpersonal Relationships & Communication	X	
PNG 1145	Health & the Practical Nurse (Theory I)	X	
**PNG 1146	Basic Nursing Skills (Practice I)	X	
**PNG 1147	PN Clinical I	X	
<b>Semester 2</b>			
*BIO 1161	Anatomy and Physiology II	X	
PNG 1148	Health and Individuals (Theory II)	X	
PNG 1149	Intermediate Nursing Skills (Practice II)	X	
PNG 1154	PN Clinical II		X
PNG 1159	Pharmacology	X	
PNG 1167	Health Assessment	X	
<b>Semester 3</b>			
PNG 2251	Health and Illness (Theory III)	X	
PNG 2252	Senior Nursing Skills (Practice III)	X	
PNG 2253	PN Clinical III		X
PNG 2256	Pathophysiology	X	
*PSY 1170	Human Development across the Lifespan	X	
PNG 2254	Mental Health Nursing	X	
<b>Semester 4</b>			
PNG 2255	Professional Growth		X
PNG 2257	Health and Families (Theory IV)	X	X
PNG 2260	Full Scope of Practice Skills (Practice IV)		X
PNG 2259	PN Clinical IV		X
PNG 2267	Community Nursing	X	
*SOC 1167	Sociology of Aging (DL)	X	
<b>Semester 5</b>			
PNG 2277	Comprehensive Practicum		X

\*These courses commonly are administered/delivered by other academic areas at Lethbridge College and student will be directed to the appropriate department.

\*\* PNG 1146 and PNG 1147 have a defined PLAR process noted in the Appendices. For courses open to PLAR not listed in appendices, please consult with the Program Chair per process on page 7.

## Is PLAR available at any time of the year?

PLAR challenges are currently being offered from September to June of each academic year for nursing courses.

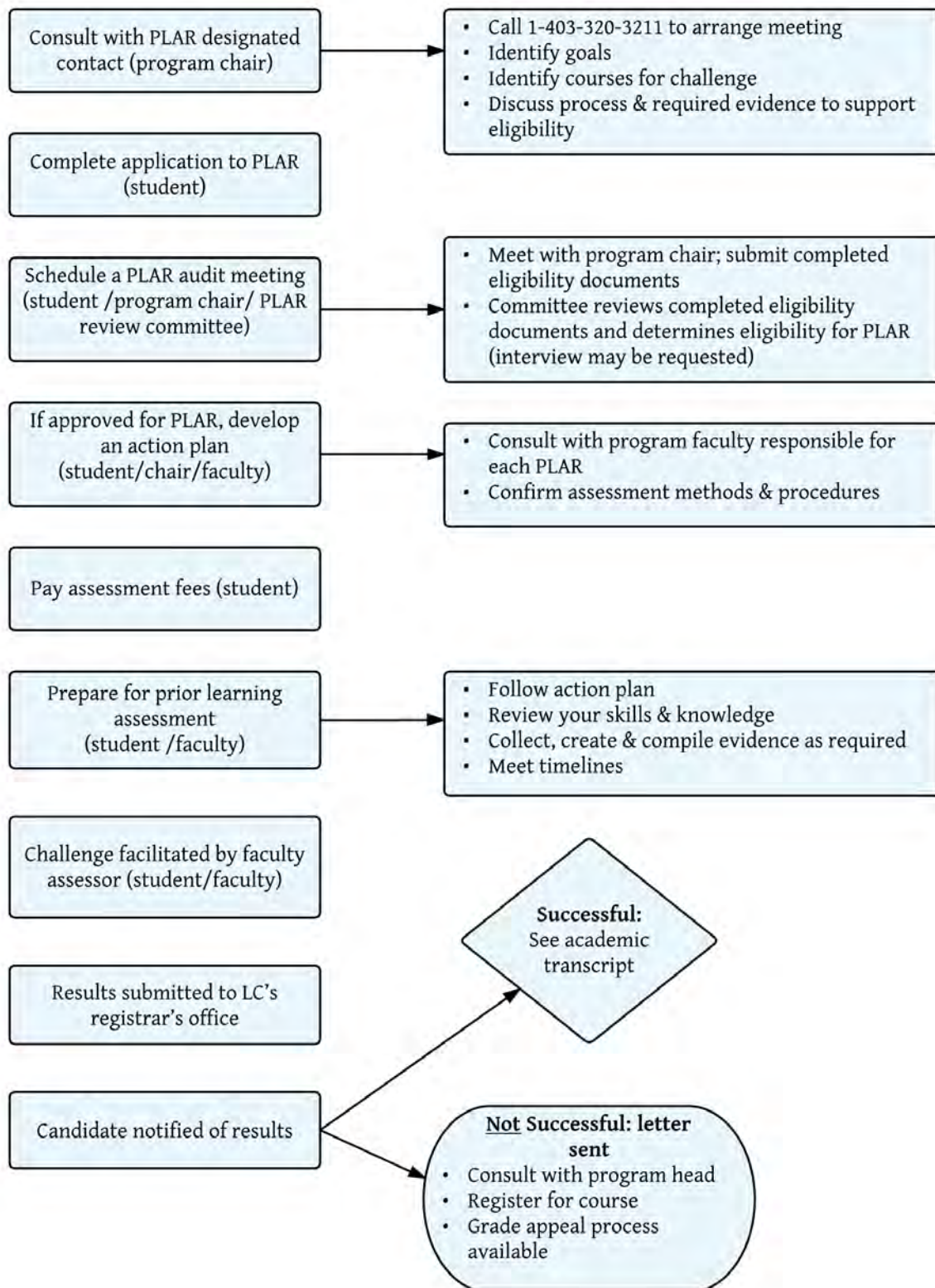
## Is it easier to challenge a course through PLAR or to take the course?

Neither is easier. By using PLAR you may reduce the repetition of studying information that you already know. The PLAR process allows you to demonstrate knowledge you already have. PLAR is not an easy way to certification, but rather a “different” way to obtain credit for a course. Your personal level of skill and experience will dictate which course you choose to challenge. The self-audit section found later in this guide will help you decide if you have a good match of skill and knowledge for a specific course.

## Guiding principles for developing a PLAR evidence file

1. As you begin the PLAR process, you will be advised if any evidence is required. This will be identified in your action plan. Check with the PLAR designated contact **before** you begin to gather evidence.
2. Evidence must be valid and relevant. Your evidence must match the learning outcomes identified for each course.
  - It is your responsibility to create, collect, and compile relevant evidence, if required.
3. The evidence should demonstrate the skills and knowledge from your experiences.
4. The learning must have both a theoretical and a practical component.

## The PLAR process



## PLAR Eligibility Evidence

These are three types of evidence used to support your PLAR request:

1. Direct evidence – what you can demonstrate for yourself
2. Indirect evidence – what others say or observe about you
3. Self-evidence – what you say about your knowledge and experience

Ensure that you provide full evidence to your Practical Nursing Diploma program faculty assessor so that your prior learning application is assessed appropriately. Well organized, easy to track evidence will also ensure that none of the evidence is missed or assessed incorrectly.

Here are some examples of evidence that you may be requested to submit as part of your evidence file (if required):

- resource lists
- written descriptions and analysis
- experience (activity) outlines
- philosophy statements
- observations
- workplace validations
- work samples
- photos of environments/equipment
- videos
- attestation letters
- resumes
- references

All documents that are submitted to Lethbridge College may be returned to the student after the final results have been given and the grade appeal deadline of seven days has passed. A copy of transcripts and certificates may be included in your evidence file, but be prepared to show original documents at the PLAR audit meeting for validation.

## How long will it take to prepare evidence for PLAR?

Since the requirements are different for each course, and each candidate has different experiences, the amount of time it takes to prepare your evidence will vary.

## Practical Nursing Program Resource List

Go to the Lethbridge College Bookstore website to determine textbooks and learning manuals with current prices used in each course. <http://www.lethbridgecollegebookstore.ca/>



## Steps to Complete a Self-Assessment

1. Read through the levels of competence as listed below.

<b>Mastery:</b>	I am able to demonstrate the learning outcome well enough to teach it to someone else.
<b>Competent:</b>	I can work independently to apply the learning outcome.
<b>Functional:</b>	I need some assistance in using the outcome.
<b>Learning:</b>	I am developing skills and knowledge for this area.
<b>None:</b>	I have no experience with the outcome.
<b>Learning Outcomes</b> For each learning outcome listed, please self-evaluate your competency levels and record in the appropriate column for each self-audit.	

2. Take a few minutes and read through the following self-assessment for each course in which you are interested as a PLAR candidate.
3. Check your level of competence as you read through each of the learning outcomes for each course. The information will help you in your decision to continue with your PLAR application.
4. In order to be successful in a PLAR assessment, your abilities must be determined at mastery or competent levels for the **majority of the learning outcomes**. Some things to consider when determining your level of competence are:
  - Licensed Practical Nurse Entry to Practice Standards
  - How do I currently use this outcome?
  - What previous training have I had in this outcome: workshops, courses, on-the-job training?
  - What personal development or volunteer experience do I have in this area?
  - Be prepared to explain the reason you chose this level if asked by an assessor.
5. Bring the completed self-audit to a consultation meeting with the program chair or faculty member.



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### **Appendix A**

## **PNG 1146 – Basic Nursing Skills (PN Practice I)**

## PNG 1146 – Basic Nursing Skills (Practice I) Self-Assessment Checklist

Students will develop theoretical principles and basic nursing skills needed to support clients with activities of daily living and in meeting basic health needs. Maintaining client and worker safety in the health care environment is highlighted.

<b>PNG 1146 - Basic Nursing Skills (Practice I)</b> <b>Mastery:</b> I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. <b>Competent:</b> I can work independently to apply the outcome. <b>Functional:</b> I need some assistance in using the outcome. <b>Learning:</b> I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. <b>None:</b> I have no experience with the outcome.					
	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
1. Perform skills that ensure a medical aseptic environment					
• Define terms related to medical and surgical asepsis					
• Describe elements of the chain of infection					
• Describe the nurse's role in preventing the transmission of infection					
• <b>Perform skills related to medical asepsis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hand hygiene</li> <li>▪ Donning &amp; doffing personal protective equipment</li> </ul>					
2. Identify the role and components of the nurse-client relationship					
• Identify the components essential to the communication process					
• Recognize and demonstrate verbal communication techniques that enhance nurse-client relationships					
• Recognize and demonstrate non-verbal communication techniques that enhance nurse-client therapeutic relationships					
• Identify barriers to communication					
3. Assist the adult client with mobility and positioning					
• Define terms related to mobility and positioning					
• Describe positioning techniques					
• Describe range of motion exercises					
• Describe procedure for a mechanical lift and sliding board transfer					
• Discuss use and assessment of restraints					
• <b>Perform skills related to assisting the client with mobility and positioning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Range of motion, positioning in bed, restraints</li> <li>▪ Sliding board transfer &amp; mechanical lifts</li> </ul>					

<b>PNG 1146 - Basic Nursing Skills (Practice I)</b>					
<b>Mastery:</b> I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. <b>Competent:</b> I can work independently to apply the outcome. <b>Functional:</b> I need some assistance in using the outcome. <b>Learning:</b> I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. <b>None:</b> I have no experience with the outcome.					
	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
4. Provide care to a client in isolation					
• Define terms related to isolation					
• Describe isolation practices					
• Describe collection of specimens for microbial examination					
• <b>Perform skills related to providing care to a client in isolation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Entering, leaving, and working within an isolation room</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Collecting specimens (nares, groin, rectal, throat, sputum)</b></li> </ul>					
5. Assess your ability to care for an older adult					
• Examine attitudes about older adults					
• Identify concerns of the older adult					
• Determine supports required by the older adult to remain independent					
• Assess your ability to care for an older adult					

## PLAR assessment methods

If you qualify for PLAR, you may be asked to demonstrate your learning in the following ways. Be prepared to discuss the expectation during the consultation meeting.

**1. Written Comprehensive Challenge Exam\***

- The PLAR candidate will successfully complete a written challenge exam.

**And**

**2. Lab Skills Demonstration\***

- The following skills are critical components of PNG 1146. Therefore, the candidate will be required to show competence in each skill. The PLAR candidate will demonstrate the following skills in a simulated nursing lab environment.
  - hand hygiene, donning and doffing PPE
  - enteral feeds
  - bed bath

The candidate will need to demonstrate competence and safety on the checklists in order to be successful, as well as achieve a minimum mark of 66%.

A cumulative final mark of 66% or greater, including the lab skills demonstrations and written exam, will contribute to the candidate completing necessary criteria for the course.

\* NOTE: Only one attempt will be allowed.

## **PNG 1146 Basic Nursing Skills - Personal Narrative Related to Older Adults**

1. What experience do you have with the older adult population? Please describe. Include duration of experience and in what capacity.

2. Describe a current concern that affects the older adult population who are still living in the community.

3. List and discuss community supports that are available to an older adult living in your community.

4. Identify and discuss one myth or stereotype about older adults.



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### **Appendix B**

**PNG 1147 – PN Clinical I**

## PNG 1147 – PN Clinical I Self-Assessment Checklist

Students will develop theoretical principles and basic nursing skills needed to support clients with activities of daily living and in meeting basic health needs. Maintaining client and worker safety in the health care environment is highlighted.

<b>PNG 1147 – Practical Nursing Clinical 1</b> <b>Mastery:</b> I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. <b>Competent:</b> I can work independently to apply the outcome. <b>Functional:</b> I need some assistance in using the outcome. <b>Learning:</b> I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. <b>None:</b> I have no experience with the outcome.					
	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
1. Communicate effectively with the client					
2. Communicate effectively with the multidisciplinary team					
3. Perform a holistic health assessment					
4. Safely transfer clients with and without mechanical lifts					
5. Create a nursing care plan					
6. Care for the resident's environment including bedmaking (occupied/unoccupied)					
7. Complete documentation and charting					
8. Perform skills related to personal hygiene including bed baths and tub baths, oral care, integumentary care					
9. Perform skills related to assisting the client with nutritional needs oral and enteral					
10. Assist the adult client with nutrition and hydration needs.					
• Define terms related to nutrition					
• Identify common diets and explain the purpose of each					
• Identify adult fluid requirements					
• Demonstrate appropriate feeding and drinking techniques					
• Identify different health issues that may result in enteral feeding.					
• Identify and provide rationale to the critical assessments necessary when providing nourishment via a tube feed					
• Perform skills related to tubing feeding a client					
11. Assist with care of the Resident's environment					
• Identify bed safety features					
• Define common bed positions					
• Perform skills related to making an occupied bed and an unoccupied bed.					
12. Assist the adult client with personal care/comfort					
• Define terms related to personal care and comfort					
• Describe the purposes of bathing and the types of baths					



<b>PNG 1147 – Practical Nursing Clinical 1</b> <b>Mastery:</b> I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. <b>Competent:</b> I can work independently to apply the outcome. <b>Functional:</b> I need some assistance in using the outcome. <b>Learning:</b> I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. <b>None:</b> I have no experience with the outcome.					
	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
13. Provide care to a client in isolation					
• Define terms related to isolation					
• Describe isolation practices					
• Describe collection of specimens for microbial examination					
• <b>Perform skills related to providing care to a client in isolation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Entering, leaving and working within an isolation room</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Collecting specimens (nares, groin, rectal, throat, sputum)</b></li> </ul>					
14. Assess your ability to care for an older adult					
• Examine attitudes about older adults					
• Identify concerns of the older adult					
• Determine supports required by the older adult to remain independent					
• Assess your ability to care for an older adult					

## PLAR assessment methods

If you qualify for PLAR, you may be asked to demonstrate your learning in the following ways. Be prepared to discuss the expectation during consultation meeting.

- Resume including three references
- Detailed job description with scope of practice, typical responsibilities
- Completion of:
  - Employer Documentation of Work Experience
  - Personal Narrative Related to Older Adults

## Employer Documentation of Work Experience – Part A

**It is required that all information be completed by the nursing supervisor or designate**

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hours of work experience providing direct personal care in the last 5 years: \_\_\_\_

Date of commencement of employment in position of providing care: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist - Employer Documentation of Work Experience – Part B

Please add comments as necessary.

S is a rating of Satisfactory applicable		U is a rating of Unsatisfactory			N/A for non-applicable		
Content	Theory			Performance			Comments
	S	U	N/A	S	U	N/A	
<b>1. Infection prevention and control techniques</b>							
Hand washing, medical asepsis							
Chain of infection							
Collection of specimens (e.g., nares, groin, rectal, sputum)							
Standard precautions							
Transmission-based precautions							
Isolation technique							
<b>2. Safety</b>							
Assessment of environment							
Client teaching (e.g., personal safety)							
Assessment for hazards & risks (e.g., falls)							
Restraints							
<b>3. Mobility</b>							
Appropriate body mechanics							
Range of motion							
TLR assessment of self, client, and environment							
Positioning/responding in beds and W/C							
TLR transfers and mechanical lifts							
Guided fall							
Ambulation – crutches, canes, walkers, splints, wheelchairs							

Content	Theory			Performance			Comments
	S	U	N/A	S	U	N/A	
Assessment of complications of immobility (e.g., pressure ulcers)							
Prosthetic devices, A/E stockings, tensors							
<b>4. Nutrition</b>							
Health education (e.g., Canada Food Guide)							
Selection of balanced diet, assisting with menu selection							
Assessing dietary need (e.g., regular, soft, liquid, clear)							
Measuring intake and output							
Assisting the client with eating and adapting based on client needs							
<b>5. Personal Care</b>							
Health education r/t hygiene							
Skin assessment and maintenance of skin integrity							
Care of sensory aides/prosthetic devices (e.g., hearing aid, dentures, contact lenses)							
Oral hygiene							
Hair care							
Bathing							
Peri care							
Back care							
Topical applications							

Content	Theory			Performance			Comments
	S	U	N/A	S	U	N/A	
Nail and foot care (e.g., diabetics)							
Application of therapeutic heat and cold							
<b>6. Elimination</b>							
Assessing elimination patterns							
Collecting stool and urine specimens							
Correcting mild constipation (e.g., diet, exercise, enemas, suppositories)							
Assisting with bedpans, urinals							
Urinary catheter care							
Applying a condom catheter							
Measuring urinary output and comparing to fluid intake							
<b>7. Vital Signs</b>							
Assessing vital signs – temperature, respirations, pulse, blood pressure, pulse oximetry							

Content	Theory			Performance			Comments
	S	U	N/A	S	U	N/A	
8. Provider Performance							
Demonstrates caring behaviour toward clients							
Demonstrates professional behaviour toward clients, families and co-workers							
Effective communication skills (e.g., appropriate reporting to team)							
Work attendance (please comment)							

Optional additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## PNG 1147 Clinical I - Personal Narrative Related to Older Adults

1. What experience do you have with the older adult population? Please describe. Include the duration of experience and in what capacity.
2. Describe a current concern that affects the older adult population who are still living in the community.
3. List and discuss community supports that are available to an older adult living in your community.
4. Identify and discuss one myth or stereotype about older adults.