

8. If the portfolio does not contain sufficient evidence to validate the applicant's competence, the following strategies may also be employed by the NCTVET:
- **A Challenge Examination:** This will comprise written questions and practical tasks based on the competencies that need to be verified based on the Competency Standards;
 - **Practical Demonstration:** Applicants will be asked to demonstrate their competence in the areas that could not be adequately verified;
 - **An Oral Test:** Oral questioning may be used. The applicant will be asked questions to determine his/her knowledge of the areas which were not sufficiently covered in the portfolio.

Certification

Once the panel has agreed that sufficient evidence was presented by the candidate, a recommendation for an award of the National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica (NVQ-J) or Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) at the level determined by the requirements of the Competency Standards will be made. A Job Certificate can also be awarded if only job specific competencies were assessed during the PLAR process.

These awards (NVQ-J, CVQ, Job Certificates) are:

- proof of one's competence in a particular skill area
- recognized by employers island wide
- recognized by regional and international awarding bodies

Awards of NVQ-J and CVQ are done at the following levels:

Level 1	Directly Supervised Worker Narrow Band
Level 2	Supervised Skilled Worker
Level 3	Skilled Under Broad Direction Autonomous Worker
Level 4	Para-Professional, Technician
Level 5	Chartered Professional
Level 6:	Specialist
Level 7:	Specialist /Multi-disciplined Professional
Level 8:	Specialist

Fees

Fees for PLAR will be applied as follows:

- Registration
- Assessment
- External Verification

Please contact the examination body that is providing the assessment service for the associated fees.

[For more information on the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition \(PLAR\) process, please contact:](#)

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**PRIOR LEARNING
 ASSESSMENT
 AND RECOGNITION**

The NCTVET

The National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET) is the national body authorized to award certificates to individuals who have demonstrated competence in technical and vocational skills required for the workplace. In an effort to meet the growing needs of persons to be assessed and certified, the NCTVET offers several types of assessment modalities. One such modality is called Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) or Certification of Prior Learning (CPL).

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is an internationally recognized system which allows for the identification, documentation, assessment and recognition of persons' prior learning experiences. It also allows tertiary institutions to determine whether an applicant, who does not meet the normal matriculation requirements or possesses the required competencies can enter a university course of study. Through the NCTVET's PLAR process, persons may attain the National Vocational Qualification of Jamaica (NVQ-J) or the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ).

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

The underpinning assumptions of Prior Learning Assessment are that:

- significant learning takes place outside of the walls of a classroom;
- adults acquire important knowledge, skills and abilities through various kinds of formal and informal study.

PLAR therefore refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that have been acquired over time through direct involvement in a skill or an occupational area. These competencies may result not just from involvement in a formal learning environment (training institutions, workshops, seminars, conferences, and the workplace) but also from informal environments. These informal environments may include self-directed study, research, personal projects and self-employment.

What are Some Benefits of PLAR?

The benefits of recognizing prior learning achievements are many. PLAR has advantages for the individual, training providers and employers.

To the individuals it:

- provides the opportunity for the recognition of lifelong learning through the granting of professional certification at appropriate levels;
- eliminates the need to "return to the classroom" for competencies already gained and lessens time spent away from work;
- provides the opportunity to have knowledge and skill gaps identified. Once identified, gaps can be addressed by the individual through additional training or exposure to the relevant skill functions.

To the training providers it:

- provides better use of training resources through reduced teaching/training time and resources;
- provides the opportunity to offer affordable and more relevant courses to meet the needs of individuals;
- provides a means to meet the certification requirements of individuals and employees within the workforce.

To the employers it:

- provides opportunity for an increase in the number of certified workers available to employers;
- reduces training costs to employers;
- provides a means for improved productivity and morale.

How Does the PLAR Process Work?

1. The individual is required to complete an application form;
2. The Registrar will assess the likelihood of the applicant benefiting from the PLAR process and determine if sufficient evidence can be produced for an assessment;
3. An orientation exercise will be conducted which will provide the applicant with detailed information on the requirements of the process;
4. An advisor will be assigned to the applicant, and will provide guidance on gathering required evidence, preparing the portfolio and assist with the applicant's preparation for the panel assessment;
5. The applicant is required to access the relevant Competency Standards and familiarize him/herself with requirements of the Standards;
6. The applicant is required to prepare a portfolio of documents to provide sufficient evidence of his/her competence in the specified area as determined by the Competency Standards. The portfolio may include testimonials from clients and employers, video, pictures and audio recordings, projects certificates, transcripts.
7. Once the portfolio has been completed and submitted, an Assessment Panel will be selected to review and verify the evidence that has been presented. The Panel will also interview the applicant to determine his/her knowledge, literacy and communication skills.