



Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Pilot Competency Gap- Filling Guide

Draft August 4, 2026

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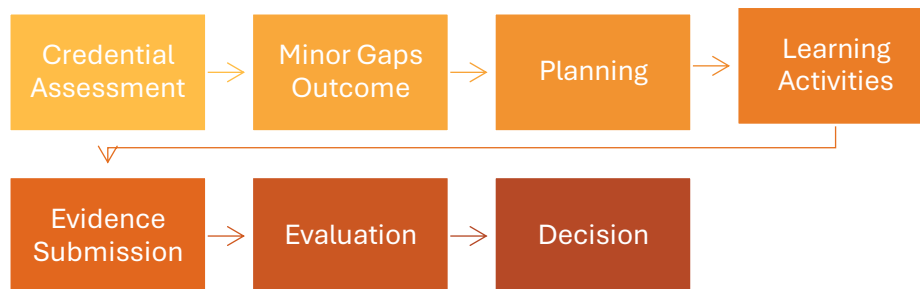
1. Introduction

1.1 What is competency gap-filling?

If your credential evaluation result is Non-equivalent – Minor Gaps or Non-equivalent – Major Gaps, you are eligible to participate in the Competency Gap-Filling process.

Competency Gap-Filling allows you to address specific competency gaps identified in your PLAR Credential Report by Component and Sub-component. You will choose learning activities, complete them, collect evidence of your learning, and submit that evidence for evaluation.

The diagram below provides an overview of the process.



This is an applicant-directed process. You are encouraged to build on your existing knowledge, skills, and experience and to approach the process with confidence and professional judgment.

1.2 Purpose of this guide

A result of Non-equivalent – Minor Gaps or Non-equivalent – Major Gaps means that you have demonstrated some or many of the competencies required for entry-to-practice in Canada, but additional learning, practice, or evidence is needed in specific areas.

This guide is designed to help you:

- understand the competency gaps identified in your Credential Report;
- plan learning activities to address those gaps;
- document and organize evidence of your learning; and
- prepare a complete submission for evaluation.

1.3 Who this guide is for

This guide is intended for applicants whose Credential Report indicates a result of Non-equivalent – Minor Gaps or Non-equivalent – Major Gaps through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) pilot.

The guide and accompanying tools and templates may also be helpful to applicants earlier in the credentialing process, such as those completing a self-assessment or preparing for the PLAR credential evaluation. Applicants at these earlier stages are welcome to use these resources as part of their preparation and planning.

1.4 Using this guide

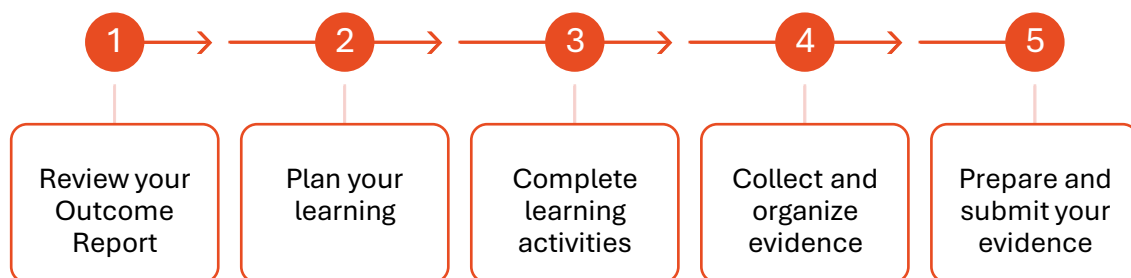
This guide provides practical advice, tools, and resources to help you plan, complete, and document your competency gap-filling activities.

The following resource may also be helpful:

- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Applicant Portfolio Guide

The goal of this guide is to help you address your competency gaps efficiently and demonstrate that you are ready to progress in the credentialing process.

Suggested Process



Important

This guide provides advice, tools, and resources to help you plan and document your competency gap-filling activities.

Your Credential Report remains the primary source of information about the competencies that require further development. As you plan your activities, be sure to focus on the specific competency gaps identified in your report and follow all applicable submission requirements.

Completing learning activities alone does not guarantee a successful competency gap-filling outcome. Evaluators assess the evidence you submit to determine whether the identified competency gaps have been addressed and whether competence has been demonstrated. For this reason, it is important to consider both your learning activities and the evidence you will provide throughout the competency gap-filling process.

2. Understanding your Credential Report

Before planning your learning activities, take time to review your Credential Report.

Your Credential Report identifies the competencies you have demonstrated and the areas that require further development. Understanding your report will help you focus your learning on the gaps that need to be addressed.

2.1. How competency gaps are identified

Competency gaps are identified through an evaluation conducted by trained Registered Dental Technologists (RDTs) that compares your education, training, and experience to the competencies required for entry-to-practice in Canada.

A competency gap is identified when the evidence provided does not fully demonstrate the knowledge, skills, experience, or professional judgment expected of an entry-level Dental Technologist or Dental Technician in Canada.

2.2 Understanding your credentialling outcome

Following the evaluation, applicants receive one of three outcomes.

OUTCOME I: Substantially Equivalent

You have met the education, training, and experience standards expected of an approved Canadian dental technology program. You are eligible to proceed to the Dental Technology Entry-to-Practice Assessment (DTETPA).

OUTCOME II: Non-equivalent – Minor Gaps

Minor gaps have been identified in your education, training, or experience. You have an opportunity to address these gaps by a specified deadline to become eligible to proceed in the credentialling pathway.

OUTCOME III: Non-equivalent – Major Gaps: credentialling

Major gaps have been identified in your education, training, or experience. During the PLAR pilot, you have an opportunity to address these gaps by a specified deadline to become eligible to proceed in the credentialling pathway.

3. Understanding Your Learning Needs

Understanding the nature of your competency gaps will help you choose learning activities that are focused, efficient, and relevant.

Before beginning your learning, take time to review the competencies identified as components in your Credential Report where Upgrade or Significant Upgrade is required and the sub-components that are Partially Met or Not Met. This will help you focus your efforts on the areas that require

development and avoid spending time on activities that do not directly address your identified gaps.

3.1 Types of learning needs

Competency gaps can take different forms. Understanding the nature of your learning needs can help you choose learning activities that are focused and relevant. The table below describes common types of learning needs and examples of learning approaches that may help address them.

Learning need	Description	Examples	Learning approaches
Knowledge	What you need to know and understand	Anatomy and oral structures, dental materials, infection prevention and control, professional practice requirements	Courses, workshops, reading, online learning
Skills	What you need to be able to do	Fabrication procedures, design activities, quality control procedures, equipment use	Hands-on practice, laboratory activities, supervised learning
Experience	Areas where additional exposure or practice is needed	Limited experience with a procedure, appliance type, or workplace activity	Workplace learning, observation, mentorship, supervised practice
Application and Integration	Applying knowledge, skills, and experience together in practice	Case analysis, troubleshooting, material selection, applying quality and safety requirements	A combination of learning approaches, often supported by workplace-based evidence

Many competency gaps do not fit neatly into a single category. For example, a gap involving removable prosthetics may require additional knowledge, hands-on practice, workplace experience, and evidence demonstrating application in practice.

When planning your learning, consider all aspects of the competency gap and the evidence you will ultimately submit.

The next section introduces tools and resources that can help you organize your learning activities, document your progress, and prepare evidence for evaluation.

4. Planning your learning

CADTR has developed several optional tools and resources to support you throughout the competency gap-filling process. These tools can help you plan your learning, organize your evidence, and prepare your submission.

4.1 Using the *Planning your Learning* tool

CADTR has developed a Planning Your Learning Tool to help you think through each competency gap and identify learning activities that may be appropriate.

The tool guides you through a simple planning process:

1. Understand the gap.
2. Identify the type of learning required.
3. Select learning approaches.
4. Choose learning activities.
5. Plan your evidence.
6. Link evidence to the competency.
7. Review your plan.

Completing the tool before beginning your learning activities can help ensure that your efforts remain focused on the gaps identified in your Credential Report.

You can access the Planning Your Learning Tool [here](#).

4.2 The Competency Gap-Filling Toolkit

You are not required to use these tools. However, you may find them helpful for organizing your learning and evidence.

Tool/Form	Purpose
Planning your Learning	Helps you understand the gap and choose learning approaches
Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)	Helps you organize learning activities, timelines, and planned evidence
Evidence Log	Helps you organize and present evidence
Workplace Learning Record (optional)	Helps document workplace-based learning activities

4.3 Choosing learning activities

There is no single "right" way to address a competency gap. The most appropriate approach will depend on the nature of the gap, your previous experience, and the opportunities available to you.

In the PLAR process, learning approaches are referred to as **origins of learning** because learning can occur in different ways and in different settings.

Structured Learning

Structured learning includes organized educational activities such as courses, workshops, continuing education programs, and instructor-led training. This approach is often useful for building knowledge and foundational understanding.

Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning involves independent study using resources such as textbooks, professional publications, instructional videos, and online learning modules. This approach can be particularly useful when addressing focused knowledge gaps.

Workplace-Based Learning

Workplace-based learning occurs through practice in real or simulated work environments. Examples include mentorship, observation, supervised practice, job shadowing, and workplace projects. This approach is often valuable when developing skills, gaining experience, and demonstrating application in practice.

Combining learning approaches could provide the strongest results.

When selecting learning activities, consider whether they:

- directly address the competency gap;
- provide opportunities to apply learning;
- are realistic for your situation;
- can generate meaningful evidence; and
- can be attained and submitted for evaluation within the time allotted by CADTR.

4.4 Developing your learning plan

Once you have considered your options, you may choose to document your plans using the Individualized Learning Plan (ILP).

The Planning Your Learning tool helps you decide what learning activities may be appropriate. The ILP helps you organize and document those decisions.

The ILP can help you:

- identify learning goals
- organize activities
- establish timelines
- identify planned evidence

Documenting your plan can help keep your learning organized and make it easier to monitor your progress.

You can access the ILP Form [here](#).

4.5 Finding Learning resources

CADTR has compiled an inventory of sample learning resources that may help applicants address competency gaps.

These resources are provided as guidance only; CADTR does not endorse any specific learning resource. You are encouraged to select learning opportunities that best meet your needs and address your identified competency gaps.

When selecting resources, consider whether they:

- address the competency gap directly
- are from a credible source and are current
- are appropriate for entry-level practice expectations
- will help you generate evidence of competence

You can access the Resources [here](#).

4.6 Think about evidence before you begin

As you plan your learning activities, it is important to think about the evidence you will need to collect and submit.

Different learning activities may produce different types of evidence. Considering your evidence requirements before you begin can help you select learning activities that not only address the competency gap but also generate evidence that can be used in your submission.

Before beginning a learning activity, ask yourself:

- What evidence will I be able to provide?
- How will this evidence demonstrate competence?
- How will I link this evidence to the competency gap?
- How will I document and organize this evidence for submission?

For information about evidence requirements and submission expectations, refer to the PLAR Applicant Portfolio Guide.

Planning for evidence early can help you stay organized and ensure that your learning activities produce meaningful evidence for evaluation.

Remember: the goal is not simply to complete learning activities. The goal is to demonstrate competence through evidence.

5. Demonstrating competence through evidence

By this stage, you should have identified your competency gaps, selected learning activities, and begun planning how you will address them. The next step is to collect and organize evidence that demonstrates your competence.

Completing learning activities is only part of the competency gap-filling process. You must also provide evidence that shows what you learned and how you apply it in practice.

Evidence plays an important role throughout the credentialling process and remains central to competency gap-filling. Evaluators use evidence to determine whether identified competency gaps have been addressed.

5.1 What makes strong evidence?

The strongest evidence focuses on the specific competency gap identified in your Credential Report rather than providing broad or unrelated information.

Strong evidence should be:

- **Authentic** – clearly reflects your own work, learning, or experience.
- **Accessible** – organized and easily viewable, readable, or audible by evaluators.
- **Current** – knowledge and skills that align with today's professional standards.
- **Relevant** – directly related to the competency being assessed.
- **Sufficient** – provides enough information for evaluators to determine whether competence has been demonstrated.

As a general guideline, applicants should submit at least two pieces of evidence for each competency being addressed. Combining different types of evidence often provides a stronger demonstration of competence than relying on a single source.

Refer to the PLAR Applicant Portfolio Guide Credentialling to review what evidence is acceptable and required.

5.2 Types of evidence

There are many ways to demonstrate competence. The most appropriate evidence will depend on the competency gap being addressed and the learning activities you completed.

Examples of evidence may include:

Learning-Based Evidence	Workplace Evidence	Practice Evidence	Reflective Evidence
official transcripts certificates of completion course or workshop records assignments or projects	supervisor attestations performance reviews observation records mentorship feedback	work samples case examples technical designs photos or videos (where permitted)	learning summaries reflective journals description of how learning has been applied record of professional development activities

Using a combination of evidence types often provides the strongest demonstration of competence.

5.3 Explaining your evidence

Evidence should show more than completion of a learning activity. Evaluators need to understand what you learned, how you developed it, and how it relates to the competency being addressed.

For each competency, consider:

- What did I learn?
- How did I develop this learning?

- How have I applied it?
- What evidence demonstrates this application?

In the PLAR process these explanations are referred to as **learning statements**. Learning statements do not replace evidence. They help evaluators understand the significance of the evidence you submit.

5.4 Using the *Evidence Log*

The Evidence Log is designed to help you organize your evidence and clearly link it to the competency gaps identified in your Credential Report.

The Evidence Log can help you:

- organize evidence as it is created;
- identify which competency each piece of evidence addresses;
- record learning statements; and
- guide evaluators to supporting documents.

Using the Evidence Log throughout the process can help you keep track of evidence as you collect it.

You can access the Evidence Log [here](#).

5.5 Using the *Workplace Learning Record*

If workplace-based learning forms part of your gap-filling activities, the Workplace Learning Record can help document:

- workplace activities;
- supervision and mentorship;
- feedback received;
- progression over time; and
- increasing levels of independence.

The Workplace Learning Record is intended to support workplace-based learning and may not be necessary for all applicants.

You can access the Workplace Learning Record [here](#).

6. Preparing your submission

Once you have completed your learning activities and gathered your evidence, the final step is to prepare and submit your evidence package.

6.1 Submission checklist

Before submitting your evidence package, confirm that:

- ☐ You have addressed all identified competency gaps.

- ☐ Your evidence is clearly linked to each competency being addressed.
- ☐ Your evidence is sufficient and addresses the requirements for your pathway.
- ☐ Your learning statements are complete and accurate.
- ☐ All supporting documents are included.
- ☐ Your files are clearly named and organized.
- ☐ Your materials are accessible and easy to review.

The Evidence Log can help you organize your evidence and guide evaluators through your submission.

6.2 Submitting your evidence

CADTR will provide instructions regarding:

- submission format
- file naming conventions
- submission timelines
- submission procedures
- fees (if applicable)
- other administrative requirements

6.3 What happens next?

Once your submission is received, CADTR will review your materials to determine whether the identified competency gaps have been addressed.

The evaluation process generally includes:

- An administrative review to confirm that the submission is complete.
- Assignment of the submission to one or more evaluators.
- Evaluation of the evidence against the competencies identified in your Credential Report.
- Issuance of an outcome and notification of the result.

Following the evaluation, you will receive an updated Credential Report outlining the outcome of the competency gap-filling process.

Glossary

Attestation: A written statement from a supervisor, employer, mentor, or other qualified individual confirming that information, activities, experience, or evidence submitted by an applicant is accurate.

Competency Gap: An area where additional learning, practice, or evidence is needed to demonstrate the competencies required for entry-to-practice.

Competency Gap-Filling: A process through which an applicant undertakes learning activities and submits evidence to demonstrate that identified competency gaps have been addressed.

Competency: The knowledge, skills, judgment, and professional behaviours required to perform safely and effectively.

Credential Report: A report that summarizes the outcome of a credential assessment and identifies any competency gaps requiring further development.

Entry-to-Practice: The point at which an individual has demonstrated the knowledge, skills, judgment, and professional behaviours required to practise safely and effectively as a Dental Technologist or Dental Technician in Canada.

Evaluator: A Registered Dental Technologist/Technician (RDT/DT), or other qualified subject matter expert appointed by CADTR, who evaluates evidence submitted through a PLAR, or competency gap-filling process.

Planning your Learning Tool: A planning tool that helps applicants understand competency gaps, identify learning needs, and select learning approaches.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP): A planning tool used to document learning goals, learning activities, timelines, and intended evidence.

Learning Statement: A brief written explanation describing what was learned, how the learning was achieved, and how it relates to a specific competency or competency gap. Learning statements help evaluators understand the significance of the evidence submitted.

Mentorship: A learning relationship in which an experienced professional provides guidance, feedback, and support to help an applicant develop specific knowledge, skills, or competencies.

Origin of Learning: The source or context in which learning occurs. In the competency gap-filling process, learning may originate through structured learning, self-directed learning, workplace-based learning, or a combination of approaches.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): An assessment process that evaluates learning and competence gained through work experience, professional practice, and other learning activities.

Submission: The collection of evidence and supporting documentation provided to CADTR for evaluation as part of the competency gap-filling process.

Workplace Learning Record: A tool used to document workplace-based learning activities, supervision, mentorship, and feedback.

Workplace-Based Learning: Learning that takes place through participation in workplace activities. Examples may include supervised practice, observation, job shadowing, mentorship, workplace projects, and on-the-job learning.