**St. Kitts and Nevis**

**Technical**

**and**

**Vocational Education and Training Council**



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| Close-up image showing the leaf-sides of two oversized books side-by-side on a bookshelf, with additional books in soft focus background |
| Portfolio Development   A Candidate’s Guide  for   Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition |
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St. Kitts-Nevis Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council

PLAR Portfolio Development Guide, Version 1.0, October 2021.

Table of Contents

[Introduction 4](#_Toc84596684)

[The Portfolio 4](#_Toc84596685)

[Definition of Evidence 4](#_Toc84596686)

[Who Can Provide Evidence? 5](#_Toc84596687)

[Evidentiary Sources 5](#_Toc84596688)

[Rules of Evidence 5](#_Toc84596689)

[Steps for Portfolio Development 6](#_Toc84596690)

[Portfolio Format 6](#_Toc84596691)

PLAR Portfolio Development Guide

# Introduction

Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR) is the process that involves the identification, documentation, and assessment of learning that was acquired through formal, nonformal, and informal learning. PLAR involves the recognition of a candidate’s previously certified or uncertified learning to ascertain his level of competence and ultimately qualification based on the national and or regional qualifications framework. PLR is the means by which person can reflect, identify, and demonstrate their range of knowledge and skills through a valid and reliable process leading to recognizable certifications.

# The Portfolio

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of pieces of evidence or artifacts demonstrating work produced by a learner over a period of time. This evidence may be from various sources. A properly constructed portfolio incorporates a selection of evidence which is clearly benchmarked against the relevant competency units and indicates performance relating to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in accordance with established industry standards. The portfolio is an organized and convenient method of presenting materials which records and verifies a candidate’s learning accomplishments and relates them to the requirements of a specific training programme leading to recognizable certifications. The presentation of a plethora of evidentiary materials mapped to the various units of the occupational standards are compiled in a portfolio.

# Definition of Evidence

Evidence is sometimes referred to as artifacts and it is the actual proof produced by the learner or other parties in reference to the candidate’s ability to perform as required in the assessment criteria. There can be a wide array of evidentiary sources that can be divided into the following broad categories:

1. Direct Evidence: - This refers to the actual evidence produced by the learner. The evidence produced must be verified/validated by direct observations by the verifier to determine the learner’s competence. The evidence can be in the form of materials that were produced by the individual. The evidence can take the form of photographs, reports describing what the candidate has been observed doing, as well as videos of the candidate performing the actual work. All photographs produced as evidence must be signed, dated and/or stamped on the day of direct observation by the verifier. **NOTE: The verifier in this instance is the person who can confirm the candidate’s claim of competence).**
2. **Indirect Evidence: -** This is evidence that cannot be directly validated by the verifier and include such evidence as spoken words or written evidence. This type of evidence is produced about the learner by another source other than the assessor and the learner. Claims of expertise, experienced or skills need to be confirmed by the employer and or trainer concerned. For this type of verification, the St. Kitts-Nevis Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council (SKNTVETC) specifies that the following should be done:
   1. The verifier’s report/statement/testimonial **MUST** be written on the company’s official letterhead if the verifier is with a company. In those instances where the verifier is not with a company or one that does not use an official letterhead, all demographic data such as name, address, and telephone number **MUST** be clearly indicated.
   2. The report MUST contain the date when competence/achievement was observed by the verifier
   3. The company’s stamp should be clearly displayed on the report and /or the verifier’s signature MUST be written in a manner that makes it legible.

The competency standard will indicate the **scope** (assessment criteria), **context** (range statement) and **level** for the demonstration of the outcome to be achieved. The candidate will have to produce evidence of their ability to perform across the scope, context, and level indicated.

The standard determines the type of evidence to be collected directly or indirectly, written, or oral depending on the quality of the evidence that is available.

# Who Can Provide Evidence?

Evidence can be provided by the candidate him/herself or from various sources on behalf of the candidate. Evidence can also be provided on the candidate’s behalf by the Assessor, colleagues, clients, customers, and/or the candidate’s supervisory/employer.

# Evidentiary Sources

Evidence can be provided from a variety of sources. The list below provides examples of evidentiary sources.

* The candidate’s daily work or activities
* The candidate’s prior work experiences
* Certificates from previous learning activities (courses/programmes/workshops etc.)
* Leisure activities
* Job Descriptions
* Testimonials/recommendations
* Video and audio recordings
* Observations by Assessors/Mentors
* Authenticating Reports
* Certificates and/or transcripts
* Case Studies
* Historical Evidence
* Personal Statements
* Workplace assignments
* Projects completed
* Product/work samples/models/drawings etc.
* Photographs with explanatory statement
* Signed statements from clients describing work done for them (private jobs)
* Invoices and quotations for jobs
* Resume/CV with outline of work history

# Rules of Evidence

The Assessor must ensure that regardless of the source or type of evidence, that such meets the following guidelines:

1. **Validity: -** The evidence is valid providing it actually helps the Assessor to make judgement that was intended to be made. The evidence must cover the broad range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which are essential for competent performance as required by the occupational standards.
2. **Currency:** - The presented evidence must actually reflect the candidate’s current performance capacity to perform the work outlined in the occupational standard. Evidence presented for the demonstration of competence in the specific skill area must be less than five (5) years old.
3. **Sufficiency:** - The presented evidence must be of sufficient quality to meet all the required criteria for a candidate to be deemed competent and receive certification in the skill area. This requires the collection of an adequate amount of appropriate evidence to ensure competency has been met and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. The performance criteria, range, and underpinning knowledge in the regional or national occupational standards must be covered in the evidence presented to determine competency. On those occasions where the evidence presented is insufficient to determine competency additional evidence will be required and in addition to additional assessment.
4. **Authenticity:** - The extent to which the assessment can be shown to relate to the learner’s own individual work is referred to as authenticity.

# Steps for Portfolio Development

1. The candidate and the PLAR Advisor meet to review the candidate’s learning and experience in relation to the units of the competency standards and outcomes.
2. The candidate and a PLAR Advisor match the candidate’s learning and experience to the units and outcomes of the award.
3. The candidate and the Advisor agree on a plan for the collation of existing evidence, the generation of new evidence and the provision for additional training where needed.
4. The responsibility for the collating of evidence now rests with the candidate. At this stage the candidate must take into consideration the performance criteria, range, knowledge and understanding that are given in the standards.
5. The Advisor guides the candidate in putting together the portfolio base on the format outline below.
6. The completed portfolio is then submitted to the Assessor for assessment, decision, and appropriate actioning base on the assessment outcome.

# Portfolio Format

Each portfolio should include the following items/headings:

1. Title Page: - This page should include the following:
   1. Candidate’s Name
   2. Skill Area and Level
   3. Name of Award
   4. Date Submitted Sample Title Page

Portfolio

of

Fluid Power Equipment Maintenance

CVQ- Level 1

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the SKNTVETC Certification

John Doe

October 2021

1. Table of Contents: - This is used to provide an organizational guideline of the contents of the portfolio. It provides the following:
   1. Headings/Titles for each section of the portfolio
   2. Shows the arrangements of portfolio items
   3. Provides the page numbers for quick reference and linkage in electronic portfolios
   4. List of tables and figures

**Note: The SKNTVETC recommends that all portfolios be submitted electronically, and the table of contents feature in Microsoft Word is utilized.**

1. Acknowledgment: - This section while optional is used as a way of showing appreciation to:
   1. Those individuals who provided authenticating information
   2. Individuals who assisted in the development of the portfolio
   3. Organization/employers that allowed for the use of premises and assisted in the capture of evidence
2. Resume or CV: - A resume/CV is an important part of the portfolio since if provides a synopsis of the candidate’s work experience. A resume/CV should be:
   1. Properly organized, neat, and visually appealing.
   2. Grammatically correct
   3. Identify the skills and abilities relevant to the occupational area being assessed.
   4. Highlight relevant work experiences, and responsibilities in a chronological order with most recent appearing first.
   5. Educational achievements by institution, award type and date should be presented chronologically with most recent appearing first.

**Note: there is a wide array of websites that can assist with the development of a resume/CV. The Council does not endorse any specific format or website. Chose the one best suited for your individual needs.**

1. Certificates/Transcripts: - All certificates and transcripts from institution attended must be presented for awards listed on resume/CV
2. Core Evidence Presentation: - All evidence should be arranged by job function or a combination of related function as stipulated by the standards for the skill area being assessed. Clusters or grouping of related units can used as outlined in the action plan developed with the Advisor.

It is important to have an explanation for all functions/tasks stipulated on your action plan as this is the main piece of evidence that will be used to determine competency. Here details such as what was done, why it was done, how it was accomplished should be provided. The explanation can then be supported with additional evidence such as photographs, videos etc. In instances where there is audio/visual presentation it is important to narrate the explanation to accompany the activities similar to a documentary as this will help in provide clarity and sufficiency to the evidence provided.

Calculations, scientific and communication skills relevant to the specific tasks should be presented as part of the evidence.

**Main Evidence Presentation**The main evidence presentation should include:

* 1. Explanation of evidence
  2. Additional supporting evidence. Supporting evidence can be in the form of:
     1. Sketches/Drawings/Plans
     2. Samples – replica of finished produce. Model etc.
     3. Audio recordings
     4. Video recording – this can be a main source supported by certificates
     5. Menus
     6. Forms such as administrative forms etc.
     7. Case study
     8. Floor plans
     9. Budget
     10. Reports
     11. Photographs

**Sample Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition** | | | | | |
| **Candidate’s Action Plan Template** | | | | | |
|  | | | | | |
| **Candidate’s Name:** | ***Enter Candidate’s Full Name (First, Middle, and Last****)* | | Qualification Code: | |  |
| **Skill Area** |  | | | **Level** | *Select Level* |
|  | | | | | |
| **Unit Code** | **Unit Title and Competency Elements** | | | **Evidence** | |
| **MEMCOR0131A** | **Undertake Interactive Workplace Communication** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Communicate information about tasks, processes, events, or skills* | | |  | |
| *Take part in group discussion to achieve appropriate work*  *outcomes* | | |  | |
| **MEMCOR0161A** | **Plan to Undertake a Routine Task** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Identify task requirements* | | |  | |
| *Plan steps required to complete task* | | |  | |
| *Review plan* | | |  | |
| **MEMCOR0051A** | **Perform related computations –(basic)** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Apply four basic rules of calculation* | | |  | |
| *Perform basic calculations involving fractions and decimals* | | |  | |
| **MEMCOR0141A** | **Follow principles of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) in work environment** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Follow safe work practices* | | |  | |
| *Report workplace hazards* | | |  | |
| **ITICOR0011A** | **Carry out data entry and retrieval procedures** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Initiate computer system* | | |  | |
| *Enter data* | | |  | |
| *Retrieve data* | | |  | |
| *Amend data* | | |  | |
| *Use document layout and data format facilities* | | |  | |
| *Monitor the operation of equipment* | | |  | |
| *Access and transmit information via the Internet* | | |  | |
| *Close down computer system* | | |  | |
| *Maintain computer equipment* | | |  | |
| **ITICOR0231A** | **Operate a personal computer** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Initiate computer system* | | |  | |
| *Use keyboard and equipment* | | |  | |
| *Navigate and manipulate desktop environment* | | |  | |
| *Organise directory and folder structures* | | |  | |
| *Organise files for user and/or organisational requirements* | | |  | |
| *Correctly shut down computer* | | |  | |
| **ME00135** | **Collect Fluid Power Equipment Management Data** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Adhere to safety practices and procedures* | | |  | |
| *Complete hydraulic daily checklists* | | |  | |
| *Complete pneumatic daily checklists* | | |  | |
| **ME00136** | **Conduct Fluid Power Equipment’s Fluid Contamination Control (FCC)** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Maintain the system’s fluid and components* | | |  | |
| *Perform minor maintenance activities* | | |  | |
| *Maintain the fluid power workshop and its’ equipment* | | |  | |
| **ME00137** | **Collect fluid samples** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Schedule sampling frequency intervals* | | |  | |
| *Collect fluid sample* | | |  | |
| *Label container* | | |  | |
| **MEMCOR0171A** | **Use graduated measuring devices** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Use a range of graduated devices to measure/determine dimensions or variables* | | |  | |
| *Maintain graduated devices* | | |  | |
| **MEMCOR0111A** | **Use power tools** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Use power tools* | | |  | |
| **MEMCOR0191A** | **Use hand tools** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Use hand tools* | | |  | |
| **ITICOR0471A** | **Access the internet** | | |  | |
| *Element of Competency* | *Identify and use local resources* | | |  | |
| *Identify and use remote resources* | | |  | |
| Advisor Name | |  | | | |
| Advisor Signature | |  | | | |
| Candidate’s Name | |  | | | |
| Candidate’s Signature | |  | | | |
| Date | |  | | | |

In the sample action plan presented above, the unit title is bolded with each associated competence element below in italics. **The Unit Title and Competency Elements are to be replaced to match the individual candidate.**

**NOTE: Evidence must be presented for each element of competency to achieve the unit competency standard. The candidate must be deemed competent in all Mandatory units and the required number of elective units to be awarded the full CVQ or NVQ-SKN certification.**

1. Testimonials: - These are essential for the development of a portfolio especially when submitting still photographs. These are:
   1. More than a mere letter of recommendation or character reference
   2. Provide detail information on the candidate’s competence in the skill area
   3. Illustrate specific outcomes which satisfy the occupational standard
   4. Speak to candidate’s competence in satisfactorily mastering the functions/tasks as postulated by the occupational standard for the specific skill area.
2. Glossary of Terms: - This contains a listing of all technical terms and abbreviations that were used within the portfolio along with their meanings. Examples of such includes the following:
   1. TVET: - Technical and Vocational Education and Training
   2. CVQ: - Caribbean Vocational Qualification
3. Bibliography: - This contains a listing of all the resources used for information during the portfolio development process, such as occupational standards, relevant textbooks, technical journals, manuals, websites etc. This concludes the portfolio and contains the following:
   1. Author/Writer
   2. Publisher
   3. Place of Publication
   4. Title
   5. Date of Publication
   6. Place from where publication was extracted
   7. Page number where appropriate

# Glossary of Terms

**Assessor:** - a specialist who conducts evaluation to determine a candidate’s competency and learning outcomes based on an establish set of performance criteria. The assessor is a person with the required knowledge and experience in the area being assessed.

**Assessment: -** this is the process of measuring a candidate’s performance against a pre-determined employment standard

**Assessment of Prior Learning**: - this is an assessment process that is used to assist learners in the reflection of and demonstration of learning to be measures against some standard in an occupational area. This process allows the learner to provide evidence to validate their achievement which ultimately leads to recognizable certification.

**Award**: - an award is a certificate, diploma, or degreepresented to an individual or institution in recognition of the attainment of work competencies or criteria governing the occupation.

**Certificate**: - an award designated to be the achievement of a set of standards as determined by an area of study or skill.

**Certification**: - this is the issuance of a formal document recognizing that an individual has attained a standard of proficiency in a set of skills, knowledge, and attitude that has been identified as requirements for the employment

**Certification of Prior Learning**: - the designation of an award based on the assessment of learning outcomes gained through formal or nonformal training over time.

**Competency**: - a set of measurable skills, knowledge, and attitudes obtained through formal and non-formal education, work experiences or life experiences. These knowledge, skills and attitudes are required to perform work activities to the standards required in the industry.

**Competency Assessment**: - the measurement of skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained by various means, with the purpose of determining the candidate’s ability to perform work activities to the industry established standards.

**Current**: - current is defined as being able to provide evidence that demonstrate competency in the skill area that are less than five (5) years old.

**Duty**: - this is a cluster of related tasks into a broad functional area or general area of responsibility

**Evidence:** - the variety of samples produced in the form of written documents, work samples, or demonstrations to substantiate a claim of competence attained.

**Function: -** this is a major activity within an occupational standard. It is a combination of elements that make up an employable skill and which, when assessed, can lead to a vocational qualification.

**Job**: - a set of functions that may be classified as an employable skill and which can be represented in a certification award.

**National Vocation Qualification (NVQ-SKN)**: - this is a certificate of competence awarded to an individual based on the attainment of competencies at the level of the skill for which the individual was assessed and deemed competent. NVQ-SKN is the National Vocational Qualification for St. Kitts and Nevis and currently has five levels.

**Occupation**: - refers to a group of jobs consisting of a set of competencies or related functions.

**Performance Criteria**: - these are statements of performance that are used as the basis of assessing an individual’s competence in a skill area.

**Portfolio**: - a document that is used to formally present learning achieved from prior learning experience. It is a package that is assembled with the documented evidence that supports a candidate’s claim of competence.

**Portfolio Assessment**: - the process of evaluating the evidence provided as proof of competence in a skill attained through prior learning experiences. This is the validation of the evidence against the established occupational standards.

**Prior Learning and Recognition of Assessment (PLAR)**: - this is the process of assessing and recognizing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired through formal and non-formal education, training, or work experience as they relate to specific criteria as set out in the occupational standards.

**Registration**: - the formal entry following admissions to a programme of training, assessment, or professional body in compliance with the regulations governing the organization or profession.

**Skill**: - a set of functions, tasks, and or duties that is identified within an occupational standard and measured through a variety of assessment instruments

**Standards**: - these are the benchmark achievements used as a measure of skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to perform the functions and tasks within an occupation.

**Transcript** - an official document recording the candidate’s achievements within a training institution or programme. The transcript identifies modules taken, grades achieved, and award granted.

**Valid**: - this ensures that assessment covers the broad range of skills, knowledge, attitudes which are essential to competent performance. It also ensures that the judgement of competence is based on sufficient evidence. Valid relates to the outcomes, performance criteria, range, and evidence statements of the units being attempted by the candidate.

**Verifier**: - this is a specialist who confirms the authenticity of the evidence of performance presented for competence by a candidate.

**Verification**: - this is the confirmation of authenticity of evidence presented for the certification of candidates.