



# Resource Guide

for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition  
(PLAR)



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## What Canadian opticians do

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Opticianry is a rewarding and respected profession around the world. In Canada, just like in other countries, opticians are optical professionals who often work with ophthalmologists, optometrists, optometric assistants, and other healthcare professionals to provide vision care to their communities.

Canadian opticians perform the following activities:

- **Dispensing eyeglasses**
- **Fitting contact lenses**
- **Conducting refractions**

NOTE: This activity is only performed by opticians in some provinces.

In Canada, opticians are **regulated healthcare professionals**. This means they must be **licensed** in order to work. Each province has its own **regulatory body**, which provides licences for the opticians in that province.

## Becoming an optician in Canada

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Everyone who wishes to become an optician in Canada must pass the national licensing examination(s). There are two ways to become eligible to take the exam(s):

1

Complete the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process

This option is for people who have **already studied to be optical professionals or worked in the optical industry** in Canada or another country. The requirements and steps involved in the PLAR process are explained in this guide.

2

Complete a Canadian **accredited education program**

This option is for people who have **little or no previous education or experience in the optical industry**. For a list of accredited programs, visit [the NACOR website](#).

# Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

## Overview

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition or “PLAR” process allows optical professionals to **demonstrate the education and/or experience they already have**, instead of “starting over” and going back to school. PLAR applicants may include internationally educated opticians, optometrists, and ophthalmologists, as well as experienced optical professionals in Canada and other parts of the world who may not have had any formal education. PLAR eligibility criteria are set by each province, so there are some differences across Canada.

**The PLAR process is managed by the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators ([NACOR](#)).**

Completing PLAR is **faster** and **less expensive** than completing an accredited education program; however, it may not be the appropriate pathway for every applicant. If you are unsure whether the PLAR process is right for you, consider [contacting NACOR](#) for more information, or trying the free online knowledge self-assessment. You can learn more about the self-assessment in [Appendix B](#).

### *Do I have to be in Canada to take PLAR?*

No. The PLAR process is completed online, so you can do it from anywhere in the world. You do not need to be in Canada, and there is no need to submit any immigration documents with your PLAR application. However, to move to Canada and register as an optician, there are immigration requirements; it is your responsibility to ensure you meet these requirements.

PLAR includes:

- A **document review** process to confirm eligibility
- Online **multiple-choice** assessments, called "**CGAs**"
- Online **bridging modules** (if needed based on test results)

Generally, the process of becoming an optician through PLAR is as follows:



# 1

## Application

To begin your PLAR application, you will need to choose a **province**. The application requirements may vary slightly by province, so be sure to choose the correct application on [the NACOR website](#).

### *What province should I choose if I'm not living in Canada yet?*

Choose the province that you plan to live and work in. If you aren't sure which province that is yet, that's okay—just choose one you are considering. You can change your mind later in the process.

# 2

## Document review

The NACOR website also lists the documents you will need to submit with your application. Some documents are required with every application, while others are optional. Your application must **prove that you have education and/or experience in the optical industry**. If it does not, more information may be requested, or your application may be rejected.

On your application, you'll specify the area(s) in which you would like to be assessed:

<b>Eyeglasses*</b>	Required for all PLAR applicants
<b>Contact Lenses*</b>	Required if you wish to register as a contact lens fitter
<b>Refracting**</b>	Required if you wish to certify as a refracting optician

*\*Ontario applicants must complete both Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses.*

*\*\*Refracting is only offered in British Columbia.*

Assessment in different areas can lead to different career options once the PLAR process is complete:

<b>Assessments successfully completed</b>	<b>Potential outcomes</b> after completing PLAR and passing the applicable licensing exam(s)
Eyeglasses	Register as an optician who can dispense eyeglasses
Eyeglasses & Contact Lenses	Register as an optician/contact lens fitter who can dispense eyeglasses and fit contact lenses
Eyeglasses & Refracting (BC only)	Register as an optician who can dispense eyeglasses and perform refractions
Eyeglasses, Contact Lenses & Refracting (BC only)	Register as an optician/contact lens fitter who can dispense eyeglasses, fit contact lenses, and perform refractions

You may only apply to be assessed for skills that you already have. For example, if you have never been trained to fit contact lenses, you cannot be assessed on your contact lens knowledge.

### ***Are there different requirements in different provinces?***

Yes. If you select Ontario as your province, you will be required to complete assessments for both Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses. Only BC applicants may apply for Refracting.

### ***What if I require an accommodation in the PLAR process?***

The application stage is the appropriate time to notify NACOR about any accommodations you may need due to disability or extenuating circumstances. You may be asked to provide documentation to support your need for an accommodation.

Once you submit your application form and required documents, NACOR will review your application. This is referred to as the document review process. You may be asked to provide more information to verify your education or experience.

## Payment of fees

You will be required to pay a **document review fee of \$262.50 (including tax)** when you submit your application.

If your application is approved in the document review process, you will then pay the applicable **CGA fee of \$367.50 (including tax) for each area that you apply to be assessed in.**

The total cost of the PLAR process will be based on the area(s) selected on your application: <b>Area(s)</b>	<b>Fees</b> (including tax)		
	Document review	CGA(s)	<b>TOTAL</b> (if application approved)
Eyeglasses	\$262.50	\$367.50	\$630.00
Eyeglasses & Contact Lenses	\$262.50	\$735.00	\$997.50
Eyeglasses & Refracting (BC only)	\$262.50	\$735.00	\$997.50
Eyeglasses, Contact Lenses & Refracting (BC only)	\$262.50	\$1,102.50	\$1,365.00

Payment is made via credit card. Cheques and debit cards are *not* accepted.

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## Scheduling

If your application is approved, you will be contacted by email to schedule the date(s) and time(s) when you will complete the required CGAs.

The CGAs are **administered online**; you do not need to travel anywhere to take them. You may complete them from your home or from any private, quiet location where you feel comfortable and able to concentrate. A member of the NACOR team will supervise the process virtually.

NACOR offers CGAs Monday through Friday during their regular business hours. They will schedule your testing based on your availability; if you'd like, you may even be able to schedule your tests the same week you apply. You may also choose to schedule your tests several weeks or even months in advance.



When choosing the date(s) and time(s) for your testing, consider:

- Privacy  
If you plan to complete the tests at home, choose a **time when you will not be distracted** by family members or other responsibilities. You cannot communicate with others (in person or by phone or message) while taking the tests.
- Internet access  
You will need a **secure, stable Internet connection** for the entire testing period. If you do not have continuous Internet access, consider the times when your Internet is most reliable.
- Availability technology  
You will need access to a **computer with a working microphone and speakers** for the entire testing period. (See [Appendix D](#) for more information about the requirements.) If you share a computer with family members, choose a time when no one else needs to use the computer.
- Length of time  
The CGA time limits are:

Eyeglasses	4 hours 30 minutes
Professional Practice	2 hours
Eyeglasses & Low Vision	2 hours 30 minutes
Contact Lenses	2 hours
Refracting	2 hours

It is best to allow an extra 30 minutes for each CGA, in case of technical issues or other delays. Contact Lenses and Refracting may be completed in a single session or on two different days. They may not be completed on the same day as the Eyeglasses CGA.

- Time zones  
Your test supervisor will be in Canada, where there are several time zones. NACOR operates in Canada's Central time zone (UTC-5 or UTC-6, depending on the time of year). Even if you haven't moved to Canada yet, you will still need to pick a time **within NACOR's business hours**.
- Preparation time  
See [Appendix B](#) for more information about how to prepare for the CGAs.

After you have considered all of these factors, you can tell NACOR when the best date(s) and time(s) are for you. They will send you a **confirmation email** once your CGAs are scheduled.

### ***What if I need to change the date or time of a test?***

If your availability changes, and you need to cancel or reschedule your CGA, please contact NACOR at least 24 hours before your scheduled start time at 1-866-949-1950 or [general@nacor.ca](mailto:general@nacor.ca).

# 3

## The CGAs

The online multiple-choice assessments used in the PLAR process are called CGAs. “CGA” stands for:

**C**ompetency  
**G**ap  
**A**nalysis

This is because the assessments analyze your knowledge to determine if there are any gaps. If you do have gaps, they will be identified within specific competencies—that is, areas relating to specific opticianry skills.

As discussed, there are three different CGAs: Eyeglasses, Contact Lenses, and Refracting.

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### Questions

The number of questions and the amount of time you’ll have to complete the questions is different for each CGA:

<b>Eyeglasses</b> Professional Practice Eyeglasses & Low Vision	285 questions 120 questions 165 questions	4 hours 30 minutes 2 hours 2 hours 30 minutes
<b>Contact Lenses</b>	140 questions	2 hours
<b>Refracting</b>	120 questions	2 hours

All of the test questions are **multiple-choice**. This means that you will not be required to type or verbalize any answers; you will simply select the best answer from three options provided on-screen.

**3. Macular degeneration is characterized by a loss of which area of vision?**

- Central
- Nasal
- Peripheral

For more information about multiple-choice questions, see [Appendix C](#).

To learn more about the layout and navigation of the CGA, see *Completing the CGAs* [Appendix E](#).

## Competencies

Each CGA is based on the [National Competencies for Canadian Opticians](#). This document provides a detailed list of all of the skills that an optician in Canada is expected to have. The Eyeglasses CGA pulls from both Domain 1 (Professional Practice) and Domain 3 (Eyeglasses & Low Vision). The Contact Lenses CGA relates to Domain 4 (Contact Lenses). The Refracting CGA is based on Domain 2 (Refraction).

To better understand the competencies and how they are tested through the CGAs, you can review how many questions on each CGA relate to each competency:

### *Eyeglass CGA*

285 questions

Section	Competency	Questions
<b>Professional Practice</b> (120 questions)	1.1 Professionalism and Ethics	30
	1.2 Informed Consent	15
	1.3 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Record Keeping	15
	1.4 Patient and Workplace Safety	15
	1.5 Jurisprudence and Regulatory Policies	15
	1.6 Scope of Practice	15
	1.7 Maintaining Competence	15
<b>Eyeglasses &amp; Low Vision</b> (165 questions)	3.1 Anatomy and Pathology	15
	3.2 Optics	15
	3.3 Equipment and Tools	15
	3.4 Infection Control	15
	3.5 Needs Assessment	15
	3.6, 3.8 Prescription Interpretation and Lens Duplication, Ordering	15
	3.7 Lens and Frame Selection	15
	3.9, 3.10 Inspection and Industry Standards, Verifying Fit and Patient Success	15
	3.11 Patient Communication	15
	3.12 Continuing Care	15
	3.13 Low Vision	15

### *Contact Lenses CGA*

140 questions

Competency	Questions
4.1 Anatomy and Pathology	15
4.2 Optics	15
4.3 Equipment and Tools	15
4.4 Infection Control	15
4.5 Needs Assessment	15
4.6, 4.7 Prescription Interpretation and Lens Selection, Ordering	20
4.8, 4.9 Inspection and Industry Standards, Verifying Fit and Patient Success	15
4.10 Patient Communication	15
4.11 Continuing Care	15

### *Refracting CGA*

120 questions

2.1 Anatomy and Pathology	20
2.2 Optics	15
2.3 Equipment and Tools	15
2.4 Infection Control	15
2.5 Needs Assessment	25
2.6 Patient Communication	15
2.7 Continuing Care	15

Because the CGAs are so closely linked to the competencies, it's a good idea to look over the National Competencies document when preparing for PLAR. While it may not be necessary to read the document in full, you may find it helpful to look over the competency list and the "practice illustrations" provided. Reviewing this document may also be useful in interpreting your PLAR results.

PLAR results are generally emailed within 1–2 weeks of your final CGA being completed. The email may be sent to you by NACOR or by the provincial regulatory body. **Check your junk mail folder regularly** while you are waiting for your results, just in case the email goes there.

You will only receive one email with the results of all of the CGAs you completed.

### ***What is the passing grade for PLAR?***

The CGAs are not marked as “pass” or “fail.” You will not receive a percentage score, a letter grade, or a number indicating how many questions you answered correctly.

Instead, you will receive a **competency-based score card**. The score card lists all of the different competencies or areas of opticianry that were covered on the test. Within each area, you’ll be given a score of AT or BELOW.

- A score of AT means you did well in that area (your knowledge and skills are “at” the required level).
- A score of BELOW means your knowledge and skills are “below” the required level, so you’ll need to complete one or more bridging modules and the associated post-test(s) in that area before you can proceed.

PLAR results include:

- **A competency-based score card**

This tells you the areas where you did well, and the areas where you will need to improve before you can proceed. Examples are provided on the next page.

To see the score card template for all PLAR tests, visit [Appendix F](#).

- **An explanation of what additional education you will need to complete (if any)**

This tells you which modules and post-tests you need to complete in order to finish the PLAR process ([mandatory bridging modules](#)) and suggests other modules that you might find helpful based on your CGA results ([optional bridging modules](#)).

See [Bridging](#) for more information.

If your score card indicates that the gaps in your knowledge cannot be addressed by bridging modules, it may be recommended that you complete a Canadian accredited education program.

- **A deadline**

This tells you how long you have to complete the next steps. For example, if you have been assigned bridging modules, you will have one year to complete them. If you have not been assigned any bridging, you will have three years to pass the national licensing examinations and apply for registration with a regulatory college.

For more information, see [After PLAR: Next Steps](#).

The following examples are score cards for two different applicants who completed the Eyeglasses CGA:

*Example 1: Bridging assigned*

Section	Competency	Result
Professional Practice	1.1 Professionalism and Ethics	AT
	1.2 Informed Consent	AT
	1.3 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Record Keeping	BELOW
	1.4 Patient and Workplace Safety	AT
	1.5 Jurisprudence and Regulatory Policies	AT
	1.6 Scope of Practice	AT
	1.7 Maintaining Competence	AT
Eyeglasses & Low Vision	3.1 Anatomy and Pathology	AT
	3.2 Optics	AT
	3.3 Equipment and Tools	AT
	3.4 Infection Control	BELOW
	3.5 Needs Assessment	AT
	3.6, 3.8 Prescription Interpretation and Lens Duplication, Ordering	AT
	3.7 Lens and Frame Selection	AT
	3.9, 3.10 Inspection and Industry Standards, Verifying Fit and Patient Success	AT
	3.11 Patient Communication	AT
	3.12 Continuing Care	AT
	3.13 Low Vision	AT

These results indicate that the applicant **does not meet** the entry-to-practice standards for competencies 1.3 and 3.4, as defined by the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians.

The bridging associated with any “BELOW”-level competencies is required for this applicant.

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This applicant is required to successfully complete the following mandatory bridging modules before becoming eligible to challenge the National Optical Sciences 1 – Eyeglasses Examination:

- Module 1: Legislation
- Module 3: Professionalism
- Module 4: Infection Control

Review of the following bridging course is also recommended (not mandatory):

- Module 2: Communication

*Example 2: No bridging assigned*

Section	Competency	Result
Professional Practice	1.1 Professionalism and Ethics	AT
	1.2 Informed Consent	AT
	1.3 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Record Keeping	AT
	1.4 Patient and Workplace Safety	AT
	1.5 Jurisprudence and Regulatory Policies	AT
	1.6 Scope of Practice	AT
	1.7 Maintaining Competence	AT
Eyeglasses & Low Vision	3.1 Anatomy and Pathology	AT
	3.2 Optics	AT
	3.3 Equipment and Tools	AT
	3.4 Infection Control	AT
	3.5 Needs Assessment	AT
	3.6, 3.8 Prescription Interpretation and Lens Duplication, Ordering	AT
	3.7 Lens and Frame Selection	AT
	3.9, 3.10 Inspection and Industry Standards, Verifying Fit and Patient Success	AT
	3.11 Patient Communication	AT
	3.12 Continuing Care	AT
	3.13 Low Vision	AT

These results indicate that the applicant **meets** all the entry-to-practice standards as defined by the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians.

No bridging is required for this applicant.

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This applicant is eligible to challenge the National Optical Sciences 1 – Eyeglasses Examination.

***If I have three BELOW scores, does that mean I will be assigned three modules?***

Not always.

All of the questions on the CGAs are linked to different competencies, and some questions link to multiple competencies. Similarly, some of the competencies are linked to multiple bridging modules. This means that you could be assigned two or three bridging modules for a single BELOW score.

In Example 1 here, the BELOW score in **1.3 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Record Keeping** results in two modules being assigned: Module 1 (Legislation) and Module 3 (Professionalism). Both modules are needed to ensure an understanding of competency 1.3. Meanwhile, the BELOW score in **3.4 Infection Control** results in just one module being assigned: Module 4 (Infection Control).

**If your results indicate that you do not need any bridging, the PLAR process is complete!**



# 5

## Bridging

Bridging will be assigned to you if you receive a score of BELOW in one or more of the competencies on your score card. A BELOW score indicates a *gap* in knowledge; the purpose of bridging modules is to *bridge the gap*.

Being assigned bridging does not mean you've failed PLAR. It is very common for applicants to complete bridging as part of the PLAR process. Bridging can be very valuable, because it:

- **Offers targeted learning and resources in the areas where you need them.**
- **Provides insight into different aspects of opticianry in Canada.**
- **Helps you prepare for the national licensing exams.**

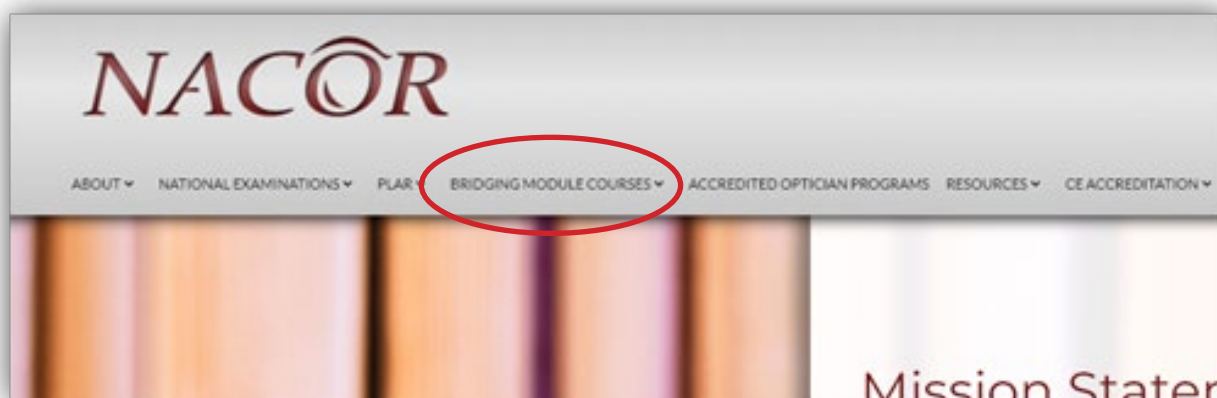
(See [After PLAR: Next Steps](#) for more information about the licensing exams.)

Your PLAR results will clearly indicate which bridging modules, if any, you need to complete. Some modules will be marked as “mandatory,” while others may be marked as “optional.” **For each mandatory module assigned**, you must complete *both the module* itself (free to access) and **the post-test** associated with that module (for a fee of \$100 per attempt). All mandatory bridging must be completed within one year.

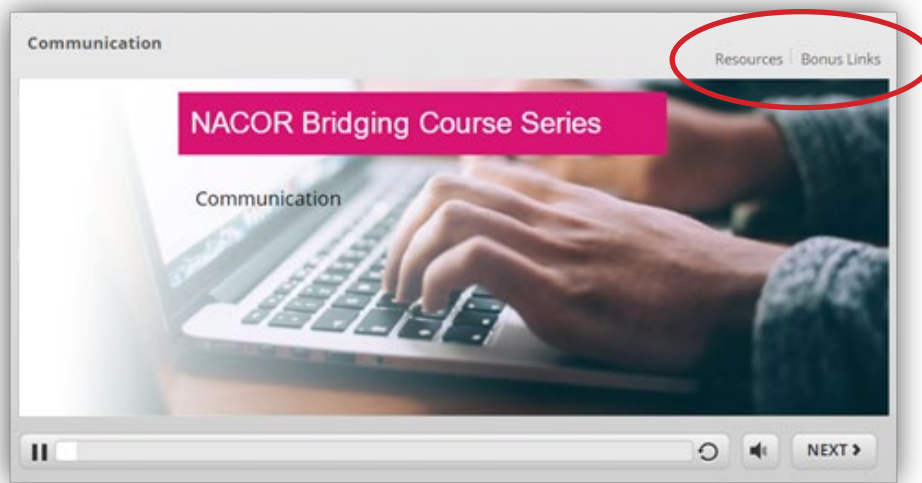
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### Accessing bridging modules

Bridging modules are hosted on [the NACOR website](#). They are **free to access** and can be **completed entirely online**.



Each module includes interactive elements, practice questions, online resources, and links to relevant articles. On average, the content of a single module takes 4–5 hours to review.



For more information—including a full list of modules and a detailed description of what is included in each—see [Appendix G](#).

Each module has a post-test associated with it. The post-test is an online multiple-choice test related to the content of the module. Post-tests are also completed online; however, they are available by application only, at a fee of \$100 per attempt.

### ***What is the passing grade for the post-tests?***

You must achieve at least 80% to pass a post-test.

### ***Are the post-tests supervised?***

No. You will be provided with a link to complete the post-test at a time that works for you. The tests are “open-book,” which means you may access the corresponding bridging module while completing its post-test.

**Once you have passed the post-tests for all of the mandatory modules assigned to you, the PLAR process is complete!**

### ***I'm done PLAR! Does this mean I am now a Canadian optician?***

No, not quite! There are still a couple more steps in the process. Read on to learn more.



## After PLAR: Next steps

PLAR offers an opportunity for optical professionals with prior education or experience to enter the optical industry in Canada. However, after completing PLAR, these applicants must take the same steps as Canadian graduates in order to become licensed as opticians.

### 6

#### National licensing examinations

**Every optician in Canada is required to pass the national licensing examination(s).** The exams must be taken **in person**; there is no virtual option, because the examination process involves hands-on practical assessment.

It's a good idea to take the licensing exam(s) soon after you complete the PLAR process. Regardless of which province you plan to live and work in, you'll be **required to pass the exam(s) within three years of completing PLAR.**

***Are the eligibility requirements for the national licensing exams the same in every province?***

Eligibility requirements for the national licensing exams vary from province to province. For more information on these requirements, visit [the NACOR website](#).

The exams are hosted all across Canada at various times throughout the year. Every exam administration is the same, so you can apply to take the exams in any province (regardless of which host province you selected for PLAR). For a list of upcoming exam dates and venues, visit [the NACOR website](#).



Two licensing exams are offered:

- National Optical Sciences 1 – Eyeglasses Examination
  - » Basic dispensing and lens finishing (13% of exam)
  - » Lens duplication (39% of exam)
  - » Measurement (15% of exam)
  - » Verification (19% of exam)
  - » Service (14% of exam)
- National Optical Sciences 2 – Advanced Practice Contact Lens Examination
  - » Keratometry and Rx interpretation (23% of exam)
  - » Pathology and contact lenses (17% of exam)
  - » Verification and lens design (13% of exam)
  - » Insertion and removal (9% of exam)
  - » Follow-up (38% of exam)

Passing the Eyeglasses Exam is mandatory for registration as an optician. Passing both the Eyeglasses Exam and the Contact Lens Exam is mandatory for registration as an optician/contact lens fitter.

Visit [the NACOR website](#) and download the [Candidates Handbook](#) to learn more about the exams.



## Provincial registration as an optician

As we discussed at the very beginning of this guide, opticians are **regulated healthcare professionals** in Canada—which means they must be **licensed** in order to work.

Each province has its own regulatory body, which provides licences for the opticians in that province. You will need to **register** with the regulatory body in your province before you can begin working as an optician. Registration application processes vary from province to province; contact your provincial regulatory body directly for more information.

For a full list of provincial regulatory bodies, see [Appendix H](#).



## Quick reference - Becoming an optician through PLAR

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### 1. **Complete the free online self-assessment to find out if PLAR is right for you**

The assessment can be found on [the Become an Optician website](#).

### 2. **Apply for PLAR**

Download the application package from [the NACOR website](#). Complete and submit the package to NACOR, along with all required documentation and fees.

The documentation must demonstrate sufficient education and/or experience in opticianry or a related field (e.g., optometry).

NACOR will work with you to schedule your testing at a time that works for you.

### 3. **Complete the CGAs**

You may complete the PLAR tests online, from anywhere in the world. They consist of multiple-choice questions in three different areas:

- Eyeglasses (285 questions, 4.5-hour time limit)\*
- Contact Lenses (140 questions, 2-hour time limit)
- Refracting (120 questions, 2-hour time limit)

\* Eyeglasses is mandatory for all PLAR applicants.

### 4. **Receive PLAR results**

You will receive your PLAR results by email within 1–2 weeks of completing your final CGA.

### 5. **Complete bridging modules (if applicable)**

If you require additional learning (as indicated by the PLAR results), you will be assigned online bridging modules.

Each module is accompanied by a short online “post-test” to confirm comprehension. You must pass the post-test to complete the module.

If you are not assigned any bridging, you may proceed directly to Step 6.

### 6. **Pass the national licensing exams**

More information about the national licensing exams can be found on [the NACOR website](#). Eligibility requirements vary by province.

### 7. **Register as an optician with provincial regulatory body**

Again, requirements vary by province. Contact the regulatory body directly for more information. (See [Appendix H](#).)

## Appendix B:

### PLAR study tools

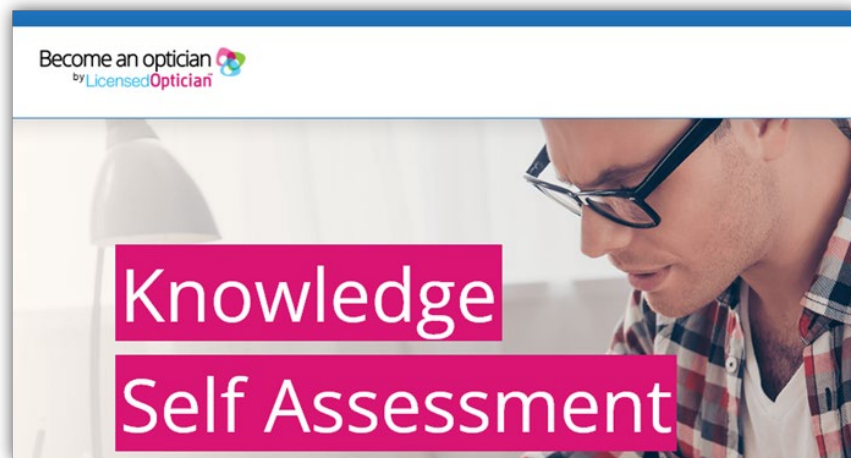
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Studying for PLAR is not mandatory. As an experienced optical professional, you already have a wealth of skills related to the optical field. The purpose of PLAR is simply to demonstrate your current level of knowledge.

Nonetheless, many PLAR applicants like to refresh their knowledge before taking the CGAs. Doing a bit of preparation may help you to feel more confident and less stressed on test day.

The following resources are available to help you prepare:

#### Knowledge self-assessment



The knowledge self-assessment is a **free online test** that uses a similar format and similar types of questions to what you'll find on the CGAs. It's a great tool to use if you're:

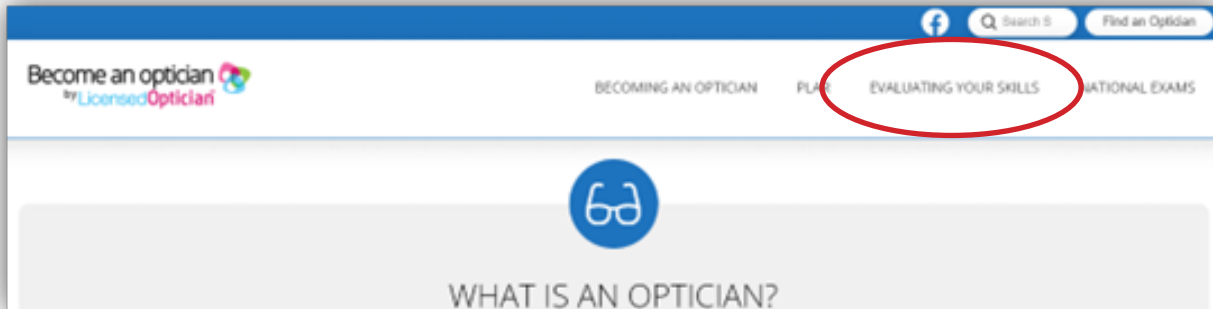
- Unsure whether the PLAR process is right for you  
The self-assessment compares your knowledge to the knowledge of an entry-level optician in Canada, just like PLAR does.  
If you score well on the self-assessment, then you're likely to be a good candidate for the PLAR process. If you score poorly on the self-assessment, you might not be ready for PLAR.
- Preparing to take your CGA(s)  
Even though studying for PLAR isn't mandatory, it can be helpful to refresh your knowledge and to familiarize yourself with the format and types of questions involved.

The knowledge self-assessment includes separate sections relating to Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses so you can prepare, as applicable, for the CGA(s) you plan to take. When you complete each section, you'll get feedback on your answers to the questions.

You can take the self-assessment as many times as you would like. Your results will not be submitted to NACOR; they are just for your own learning.

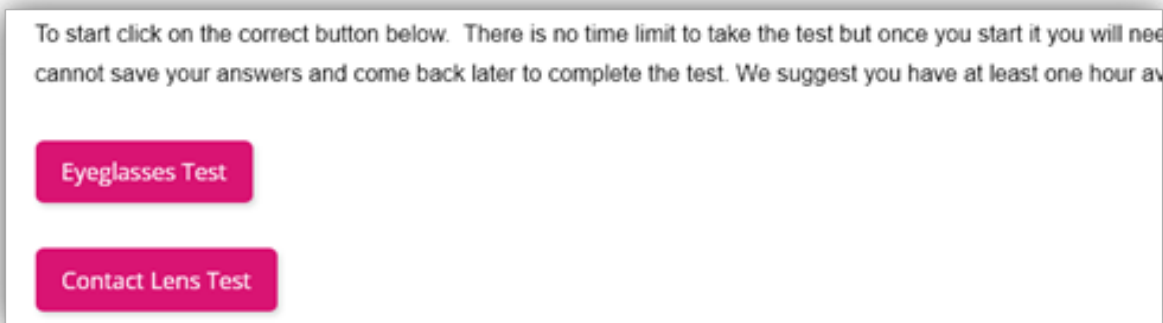
Here's how you can access and use the knowledge self-assessment:

1. [Navigate to the Become an Optician website](#)
2. From the menu, select **Evaluating Your Skills**



Doing so will take you to the self-assessment landing page. Here, you can read more about the self-assessment, as well as the competencies and questions included in each section. You'll also find tips for answering the questions.

3. [When you're ready, select either section to begin.](#)



The sections can be completed in either order.

4. [Answer each question by selecting option you think is correct.](#)

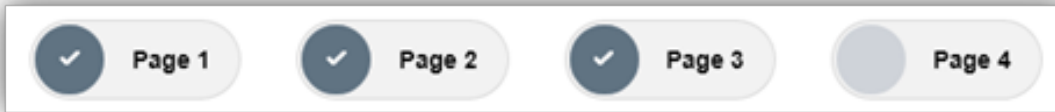


Remember to read all parts of the question carefully and consider all of the options before making your choice.

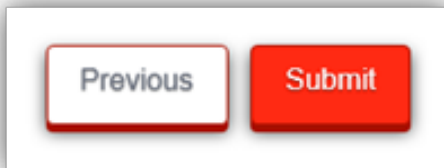
For more guidance on how to answer multiple-choice questions, see [Appendix C](#).

5. Ensure that all pages of questions are completed.

Along the top of the page, checkmarks indicate which pages are complete and which still have unanswered questions.



6. When you're ready, use the button at the bottom of the final page to submit your answers.



7. View your feedback.

After submitting your answers, you will immediately see your score (as a percentage). Below the score, you'll find more information about what that score means—whether you might be ready for PLAR or might need to do some more studying or even consider additional education.

## You scored 55%

The self-knowledge test is not something that you pass or fail. The purpose of the self-knowledge test is to give you an idea of where your level of knowledge is compared to an "entry level" optician in Canada. Entry level means an optician that has been working in the industry for a few years, they would not have as much knowledge as an experienced optician that has been working for many years. The self-knowledge test compares your knowledge to an entry level optician because the PLAR assessments you will take if you decide to proceed with PLAR will also compare your current level of knowledge to an entry level optician.

If you scored between **73-82%** on the test you scored in the average range of an entry level optician in Canada. This means your level of knowledge is equal to the average level of knowledge of a Canadian optician in contact lenses. You may be ready to pursue PLAR. **results on this assessment are to be used as a guide only and are not a guarantee that you would achieve success in licensure.**

If you scored between **41% - 72%** you scored below the average range of an entry level optician, you may want to review the bridging modules on the NACOR website before you decide to proceed with PLAR. Below is a list of suggested bridging modules to help you study and prepare for your PLAR assessment.

If you scored **40% or less** you may want to consider additional training or upgrading. Accredited programs are available at the following

You will also receive personalized recommendations for bridging modules that might help to address the specific gaps in your knowledge.

## Study material

Bridging modules to help upgrade your knowledge are available free of charge on the N

The self-assessment test is meant as one tool to help you prepare for your PLAR assessment. They are available for anyone to use to regard

Available bridging modules to help upgrade your knowledge in **Contact Lenses**.

<b>Module 4</b>	Infection control
<b>Module 6</b>	Equipment use - contact lenses
<b>Module 7</b>	Anatomy - eyeglasses & contact lenses
<b>Module 12</b>	Dispensing contact lenses - Course #1
<b>Module 13</b>	Dispensing contact lenses - Course #2

Finally, you'll have the opportunity to review the correct answers to all of the assessment questions, along with the answers that you selected.

For each question, you'll see an explanation of why the correct answer is correct (and why the incorrect answers aren't).

## View your results

This section will display the results from each individual question from the assessment. For each question, you will be able to see if your answer was correct. If your answer was correct, there will be a green checkmark next to your answer. If your answer was incorrect, there will be a red **x** next to your answer. The correct answer will always be highlighted in green. Next, you will be able to see each possible answer with an explanation why each answer was correct or incorrect.

### 1) What is the most effective way for an optician to stop the spread of infection in the dispensary?

- A: Clean all frames with undiluted bleach. **x**
- B: Clean all equipment weekly with a 70% alcohol solution.

**C: Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.**

A: Incorrect. Undiluted bleach could be harmful to frames, the optician cleaning them, and the patients trying them on.

B: Incorrect. Equipment should be disinfected between patients.

C: **Correct. The most effective way to prevent the spread of infection is through proper handwashing.**

Take the time to read through all of the questions—the ones you answered incorrectly and the ones you answered correctly. Understanding the logic behind the questions will help prepare you for the CGAs—and it will build your opticianry knowledge too!

## Bridging modules

Bridging modules are **online interactive lessons** related to specific opticianry topics. They are ideal for professionals who have already trained and/or worked in the optical industry but may have small “gaps” in their skills or knowledge. This is why they are referred to as **bridging** modules—because they help to **bridge the gaps**.

You may use the bridging modules in two different ways:

- **Before** your CGA(s), to study  
The modules are free and publicly accessible, so you can open them and work through them whenever you would like.
- **After** your CGA(s), to address gaps in your knowledge  
Depending on your CGA scores, you may be required to complete one or more bridging modules before you can become an optician. See [Bridging](#) for more information.

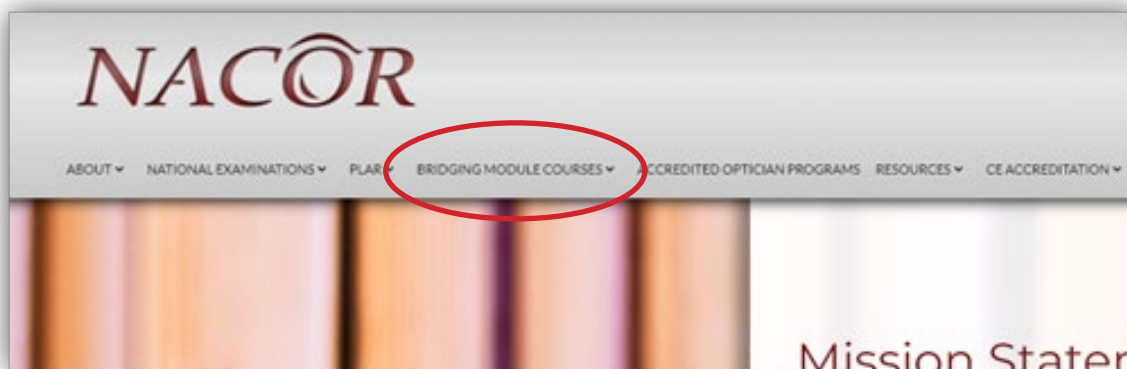
A total of 18 modules are currently available, with topics relating to all three CGAs. Within each module are interactive elements, practice questions, online resources, and links to relevant articles. For more information, including a full list of modules, see [Appendix G](#).

Here’s how you can access the bridging modules:

1. [Navigate to the NACOR website.](#)

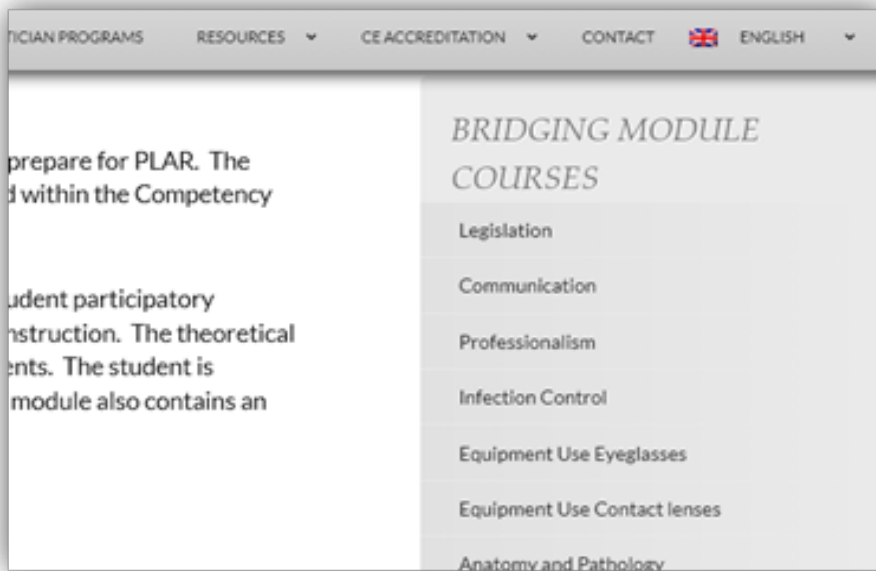
After submitting your answers, you will immediately see your score (as a percentage). Below the score, you’ll find more information about what that score means—whether you might be ready for PLAR or might need to do some more studying or even consider additional education.

2. From the menu, select **Bridging Module Courses**.

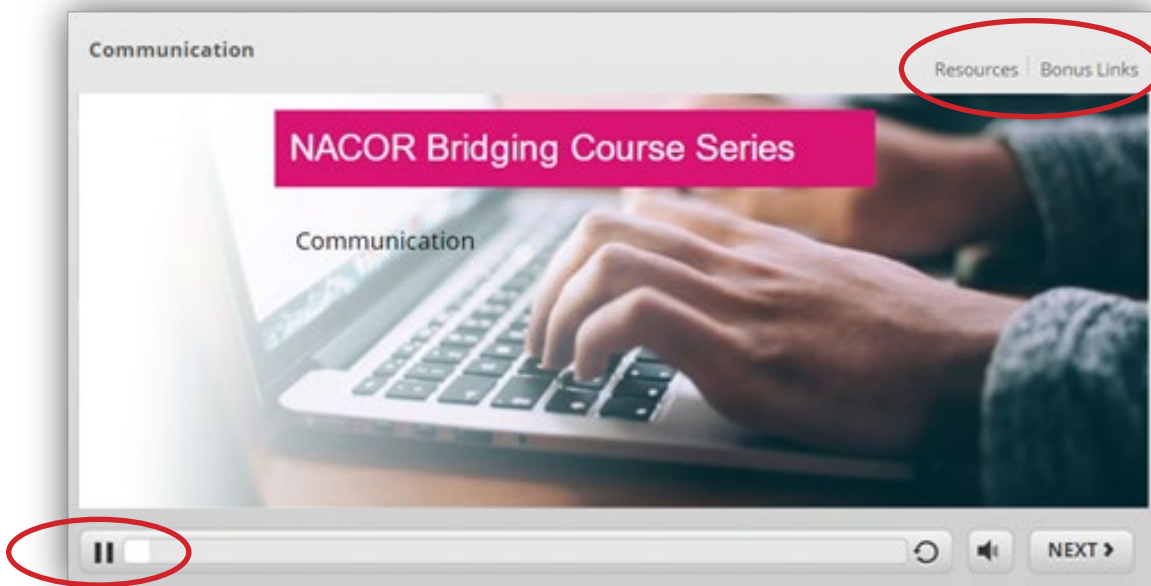




Doing so will take you to the bridging module landing page. Here, you can select whichever module you'd like from the menu.



3. Work through the module, being sure to access all elements and visit all links.



On average, the content of a single module takes 4–5 hours to review.

## National competencies for Canadian Opticians

3.9.1	Verify the accuracy of the received order against the patient record.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analyzes and verifies the powers to ensure that they are within ANSI tolerance.</li><li>• Confirms that measurements received are as ordered.</li><li>• Confirms that correct edge and centre thicknesses were received.</li><li>• Ensures lens materials and treatments are as ordered.</li><li>• Verifies lens type is as ordered (e.g., brand, flat top, office lens).</li></ul>
3.9.2	Ensure eyeglasses meet standard tolerances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applies standard tolerance chart to every order received from the laboratory.</li><li>• Verifies monograms and CSA requirements.</li><li>• Confirms that correct edge and centre thicknesses were received.</li><li>• Measures and verifies that the lenses are fabricated and mounted in the eyeglass frame within standard tolerance.</li><li>• Visually inspects the lens surface for imperfections.</li></ul>
3.9.3	Ensure eyeglasses are in standard bench alignment to ready them for placement on the patient.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adjusts frames to standard bench alignment.</li><li>• Confirms 4-point touch.</li><li>• Confirms temples open perpendicular to the frame front.</li></ul>

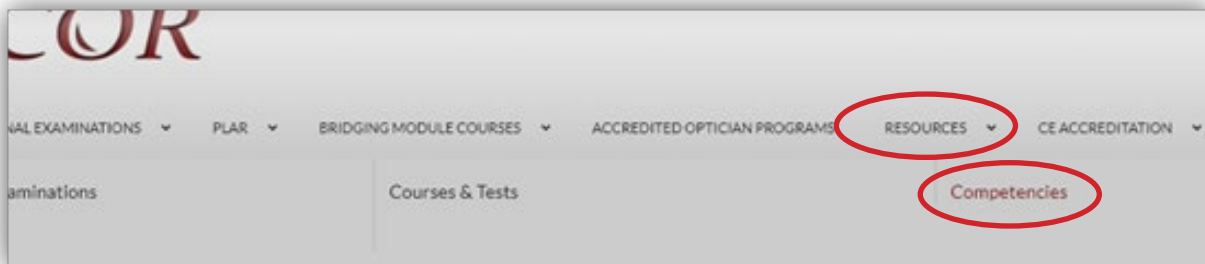
The National Competencies for Canadian Opticians is a document developed by opticians from all across the country. It provides a detailed list of **all of the skills that an optician in Canada is expected to have**.

The questions on the CGAs are based on the National Competencies. The Eyeglasses CGA pulls from both Domain 1 (Professional Practice) and Domain 3 (Eyeglasses & Low Vision). The Contact Lenses CGA relates to Domain 4 (Contact Lenses). The Refracting CGA is based on Domain 2 (Refraction).

While it may not be necessary to read the document in full, you may find it helpful to look over the competency list and the “practice illustrations” provided. Reviewing this document may also be useful in interpreting your PLAR results.

Here’s how you can access and use the knowledge self-assessment:

1. [Navigate to the NACOR website.](#)
2. From the menu, select **Resources**, then **Competencies**.



## Appendix C:

### Answering multiple-choice questions

A multiple-choice question is composed of two parts:

1. The first part is the “stem,” which identifies the question or problem.
2. The second part is a set of possible answers. The answers include one “key,” which is the best answer to the question, and a number of “distractors,” which are plausible but incorrect answers to the question.

On the CGA, each question will include three possible answers. All three answers may be reasonable, but one will be the best possible answer. This is the “key”—the correct answer to the question.

It is important to thoroughly read and understand the question, and carefully consider each answer option before making a choice. Remember that minor differences in wording can change the meaning, and that the incorrect answers aren't there to trick you. Only one answer is truly correct.

#### Example

##### Stem:

A patient has the following Rx:

OD -4.50

OS -4.50 -0.50 × 180

PD 64

He has chosen a frame with the following measurements:

A=50, B=38, DBL=20, ED=53

Where will the thickest part of the lens be?

##### Answers:

- A. Top edge of the lens.
- B. Nasal edge of the lens.
- C. Temporal edge of the lens.

In this example, the correct answer is:

C. Temporal edge of the lens.

The thinnest point of a minus lens is found at the optical centre, directly in front of the patient's pupil, and the lens gets progressively thicker as it travels away from centre. In this example, the width of the lens (A measurement) is greater than the depth of the lens (B measurement), and the pupil will be towards to nasal portion of the lens. Therefore, the greatest lens thickness will be temporal.

With this prescription and PD, the top edge of the lens could only be the thickest portion if the depth of the lens (B measurement) were greater than the width of the lens (A measurement)—which is not the case here. Therefore, A. Top edge of the lens is incorrect.

For the nasal edge to be the thickest portion, the PD would need to be greater than it is in this situation, such that the pupil would be towards the temporal edge of the lens. Alternatively, the prescription would need to be for plus lenses (which are thicker at the optical centre, directly in front of the patient's pupil, and get progressively thinner as they travel away from the centre). This is not the case, so B. Nasal edge of the lens is incorrect.

All of the answer options provided here are “plausible.” However, only one of them is correct. This is why it's important to read carefully, review all of the information provided in the stem, and consider each answer option before making a choice.

## Appendix D:

### Testing your technology

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Because PLAR is completed online, there are several technical requirements. You can follow these steps to prepare your computer for PLAR.

Please note that you will need a secure, stable Internet connection to complete these steps, and to complete the PLAR process.

1. Download Zoom onto your computer

Zoom is a secure desktop application used for making video calls over the Internet. Although it is also available for mobile, you must use it on your computer during the PLAR process.

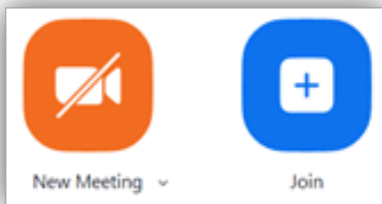
The application can be downloaded from [the Zoom website](#).

2. Practice opening and logging in to Zoom

Once you have downloaded the application, make sure that you know how to find it and open it on your computer. To locate the application, search for “Zoom” in your Start menu (on PC) or Apple menu (on Mac). You may need to create an account and choose how your name will appear on screen. You should use your own name as it appears on your PLAR application.

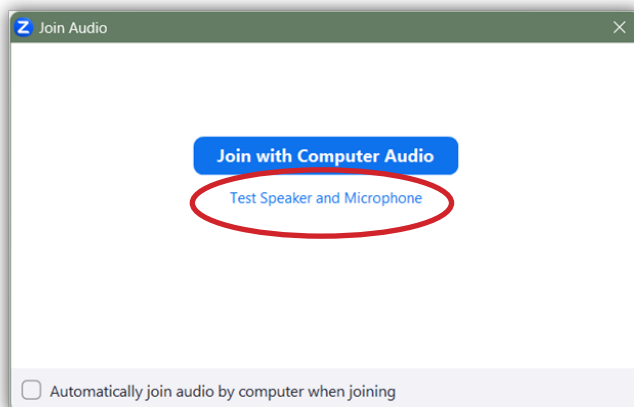
3. Try launching a meeting from the desktop app

Select **New Meeting** to start a video call. No one else will be able to see or hear you; this will simply give you the opportunity to explore the call functions and ensure your camera and microphone work.



- Connect your audio

Zoom will open a pop-up window from which you can choose your audio settings:

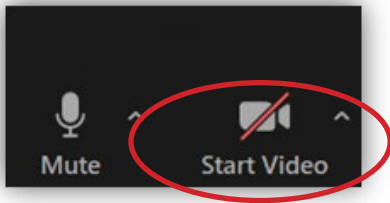


Select **Test Speaker and Microphone**, then follow the prompts on-screen to ensure that your speakers/headphones and microphone are working correctly. Use the **Select Speaker** and **Select Microphone** menus to try different input sources. If you plan to use headphones for PLAR, make sure you can hear the audio through the headphones.

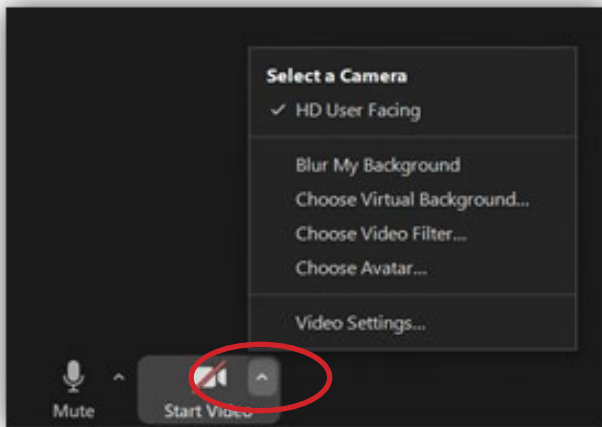
Once you have confirmed that your speaker and microphone are working, select **Join with Computer Audio**.

- Connect your video

If your camera does not turn on immediately, you may need to start it manually. Move your mouse around the Zoom window to see your microphone and camera options. You may need to select **Start Video**.



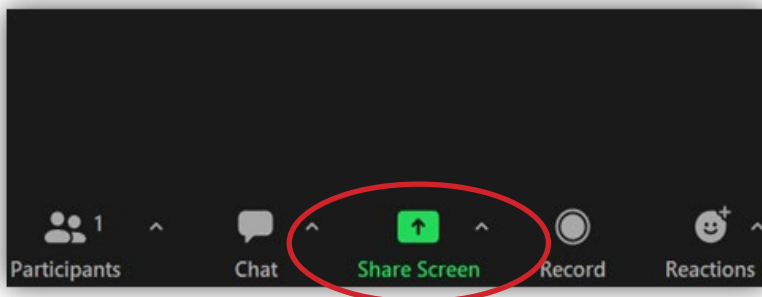
If you are still not able to see yourself on screen, select **the arrow on the Start Video button** to open another menu. From here, you can confirm that the correct camera is selected and troubleshoot other video settings.



Note that the use of blurred or virtual backgrounds is *not permitted* during PLAR. To better understand why, see *Completing the pre-test checks* in [Appendix E](#).

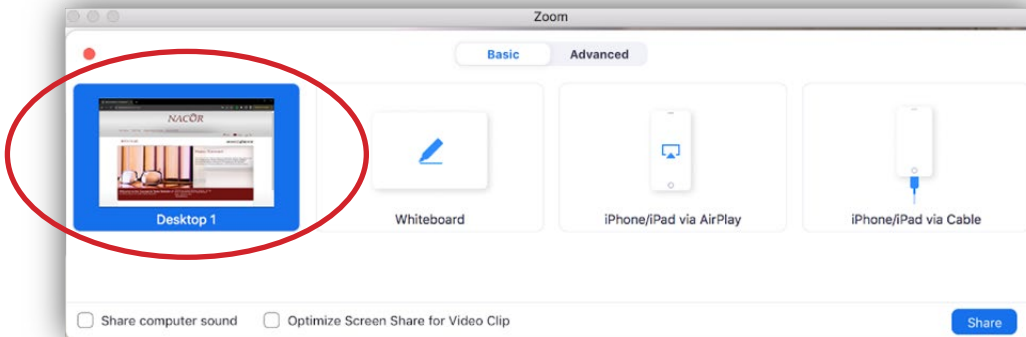
- Practice screen-sharing

Hover your mouse in the Zoom window again to find the **Share Screen** button.

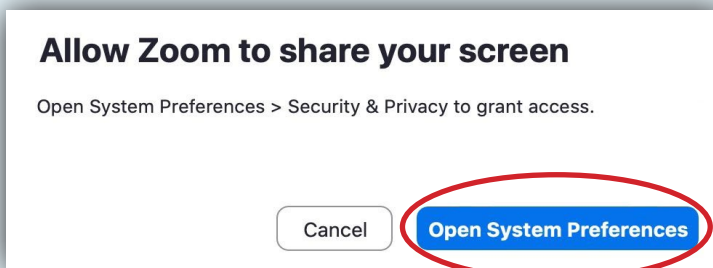


You will be required to share your screen for the entire testing period.

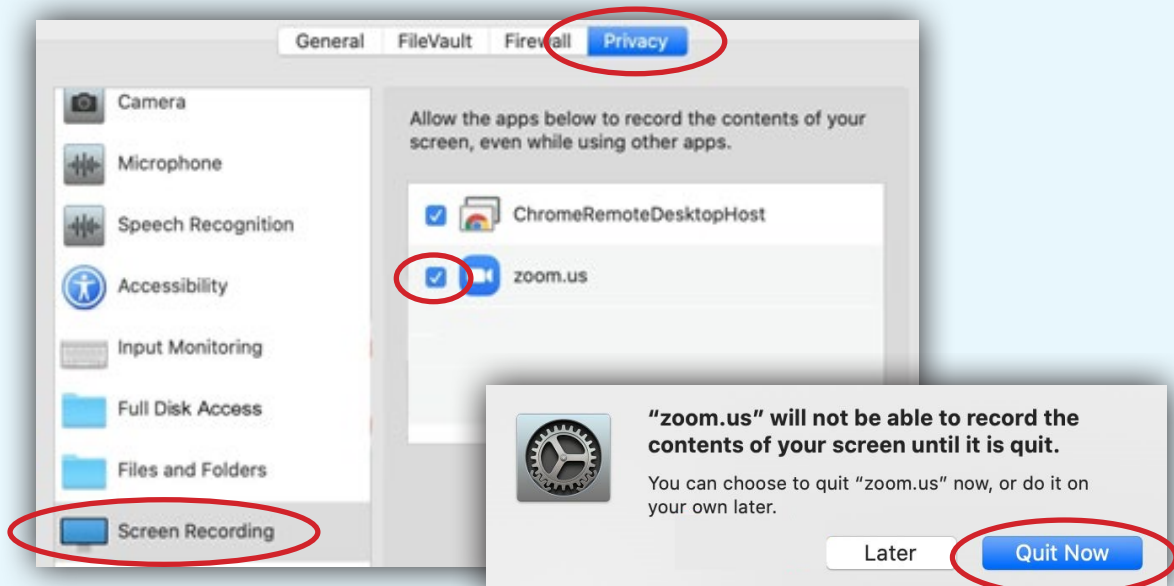
After selecting **Share Screen**, you will be prompted to choose which part(s) of your screen you want to share. You should share the entire desktop, not just a specific window or program. The best option is usually the first one.



In some cases, you may be asked to allow Zoom to share your screen. To do so, select **Open System Preferences**.

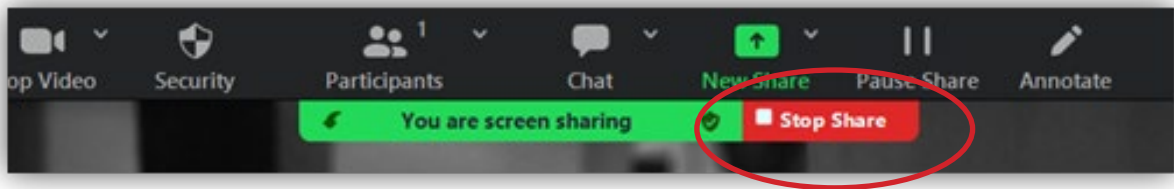


From there, navigate to the **Privacy** tab, select **Screen Recording** from the menu, and check the box next to "zoom.us."



If you are prompted to quit the program in order to proceed with screen-sharing, select **Quit Now** and then *restart* the steps to open the app and launch a meeting.

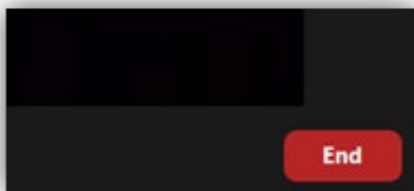
Once you have confirmed that your screen-sharing works, find and select the red **Stop Share** button to stop sharing your screen.



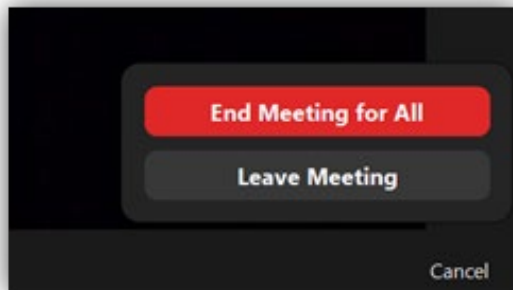
Screen-sharing will also automatically end when the Zoom call ends.

#### 4. End the practice call

Once you have successfully connected your audio and video and practiced screen-sharing through Zoom, you can end the practice call by finding and selecting **End**.



If prompted, select **End Meeting for All**.



Your computer now meets the technical requirements for PLAR. To ensure a smooth testing experience, be sure to follow the additional setup steps detailed in [Appendix E](#) on your testing day(s).

## Appendix E:

### What to expect on the day of your CGA

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On the day of each CGA, give yourself plenty of time to set up your workspace and your computer.

#### Choosing a location

You may complete your PLAR testing from any location where you feel comfortable and able to concentrate. This may be a space in your home, a back room in your workplace, or even a private area in a public library.

When choosing a location for your tests, consider:

- Test confidentiality  
You will not be permitted to speak to anyone other than your test supervisor for the entire testing period. Likewise, no one else will be permitted to look at the test content on your computer screen.  
  
While it may not be possible to find a space with no other people (e.g., if you live with others in a small space), you must **ensure that others know they cannot disturb you**, communicate with you, or look at what you are doing.
- Noise level  
You should choose a space that is **quiet and without distractions**. Please note, however, that **you will be required to speak aloud** to your test supervisor at the beginning and end of the test. If you are taking the test somewhere public (e.g., a library), you must ensure that talking is permitted in that location. You should also use headphones.
- Your personal privacy  
You will be **visible through your webcam** for the entire testing period. You will also be asked to use your webcam to show your workspace to your test supervisor; this includes the desk, table, or work surface in front of you, as well as the walls of the room you are in.  
  
If you are taking the test from your home, be sure to choose a location that you are comfortable showing to your test supervisor. If you are taking the test elsewhere, confirm that you are allowed to show that space on camera.

#### Preparing your workspace

In your workspace, you are permitted to have the following:

- A piece of government-issued photo ID (e.g., a passport, driver's licence) **\*REQUIRED\***
- Blank paper
- Pens or pencils
- A non-programmable calculator
- A drink and/or light snack

**All other items should be removed** from the desk, table, or work surface where you are taking the test. **Cell phones and smart watches should be silenced and put away** (e.g., in another room, in your bag).



## Preparing your computer

It's a good idea to **restart your computer** at least half an hour before your CGA is scheduled to start. This allows you to close any programs that are open, run any necessary system updates, and ensure that the computer will be ready when you need it.

When your computer comes back on, open an Internet browser (e.g., Chrome, Firefox; *not* Microsoft Edge) and navigate to <https://nacor.ca/>.

Do not start any programs or make any Internet searches. Simply prepare to start the video call.

## Joining the video call

About 5–10 minutes before your scheduled start time, join the video call. To do so:

1. Open the email from NACOR containing the meeting details.
2. Find the meeting access information.

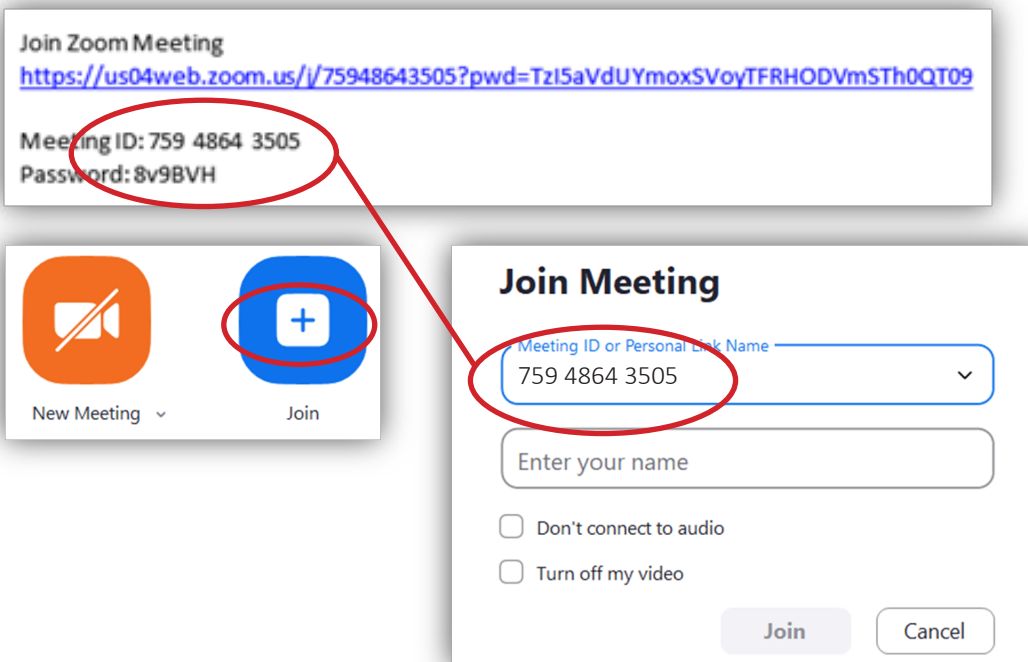
From here, there are two options for joining the call:

- a. Select the Zoom link



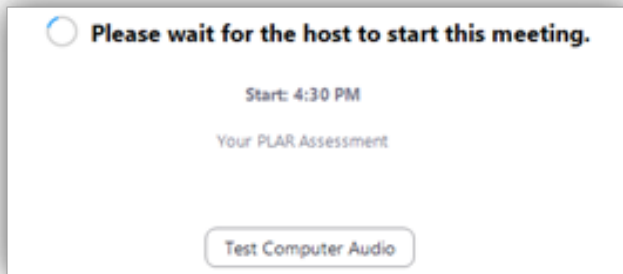
OR

- b. Enter the Meeting ID and Password into your Zoom desktop app



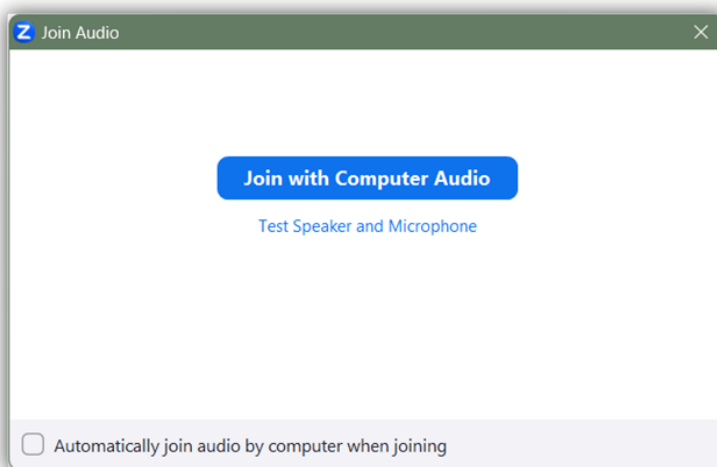
Your computer should launch the call immediately. If prompted, you may need to select **Open Zoom** or **Open Zoom Meetings**.

If your test supervisor has not started the session yet, you may be placed in a virtual waiting room until they are ready to begin.



3. Connect your audio.

Zoom will open a pop-up window from which you can choose your audio settings:



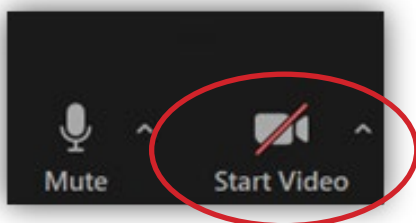
Select **Test Speaker and Microphone**, then follow the prompts on-screen to ensure that your speakers/headphones and microphone are working correctly. Use the **Select Speaker** and **Select Microphone** menus to try different input sources.

Once you have confirmed that your speaker and microphone are working, select **Join with Computer Audio**.

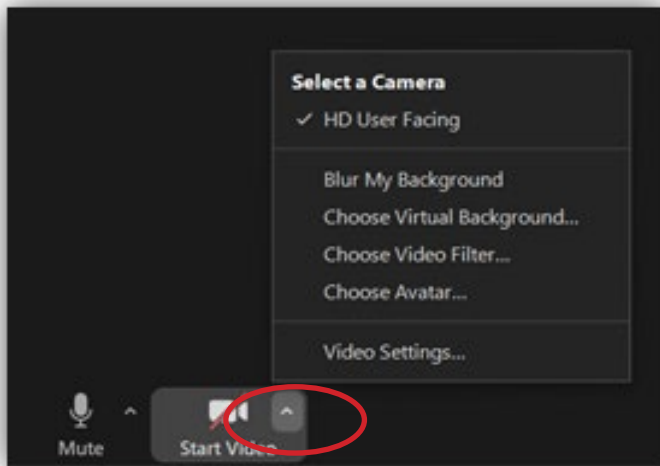
4. Connect your video.

If prompted, select **Join with Video**.

If your camera does not start immediately, you may need to start it manually. Move your mouse around the Zoom window to see your microphone and camera options. You may need to select **Start Video**.



If you are still not able to see yourself on screen, select **the arrow on the Start Video button** to open another menu. From here, you can confirm that the correct camera is selected and troubleshoot other video settings.



Note that the use of blurred or virtual backgrounds is *not permitted* during PLAR.

5. Meet your test supervisor

You should now be able to see and hear your test supervisor, and they should be able to see and hear you!

### Completing the pre-test checks

Next, your test supervisor will ask you to complete a few preliminary checks:

1. Verify your identity

Your supervisor will ask you to hold up your government-issued photo ID so that they can see it through the camera. They will be confirming that:

- You are the person in the picture.
- The name on the ID is the name on your application.
- The ID is not expired.

The purpose of the ID verification is to ensure that the correct person is taking the CGA. If you do not show appropriate ID, you will not be permitted to take the CGA.

2. Show your workspace

Your supervisor will ask you to pick up your laptop or webcam and show them your space. This includes the desk, table, or work surface in front of you and the walls of the room you are in.

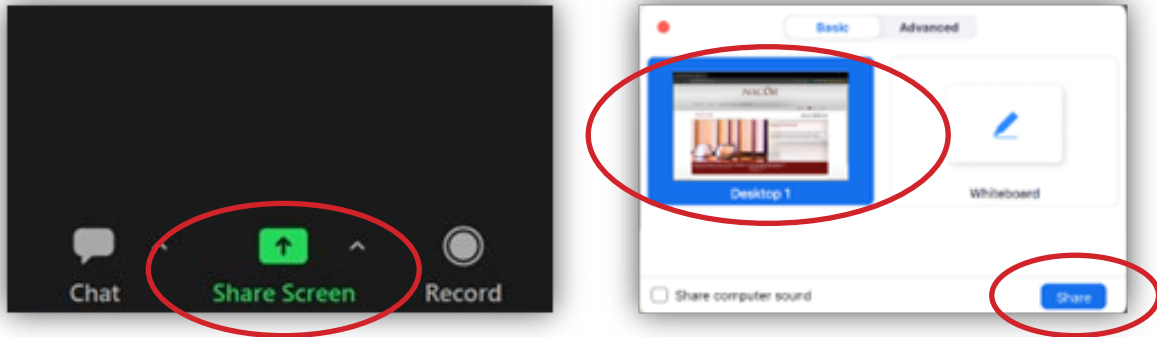
The purpose of showing your workspace is to ensure that your space is secure and that you do not have any prohibited materials with you. This way, the testing is fair for everyone.

If you have prohibited materials in your workspace, you will be asked to remove them.

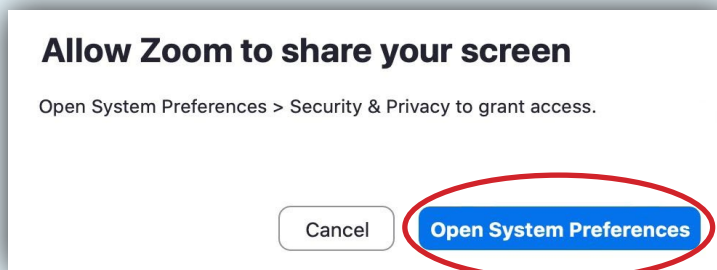
The supervisor may ask you to show your space again at any time during the testing period.

### 3. Share your screen

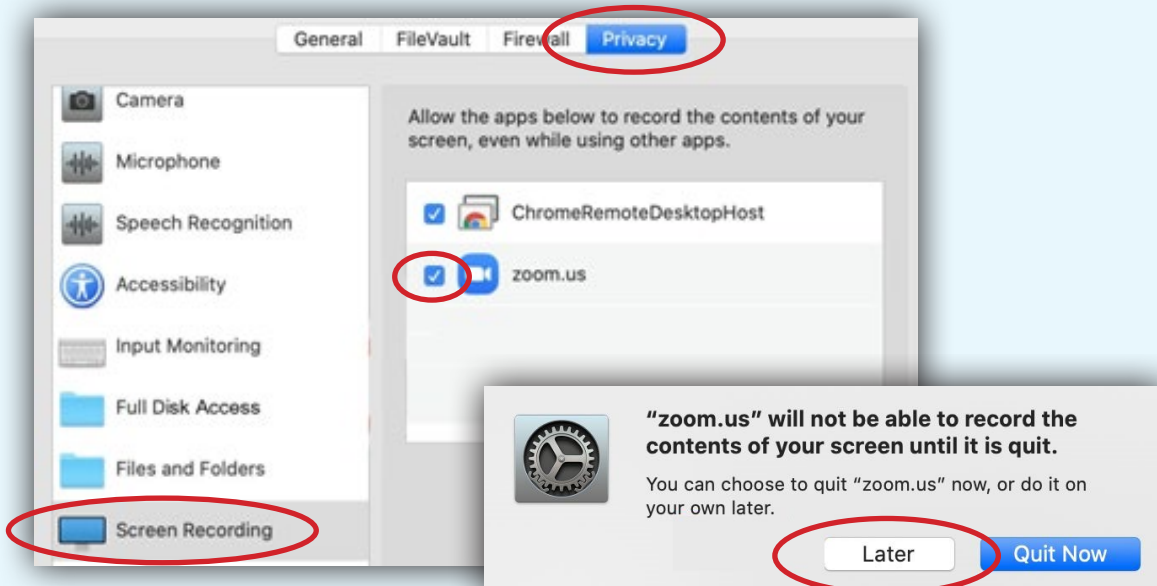
Finally, your supervisor will ask you to share your screen using the “Share Screen” button at the bottom of the Zoom window. This will allow them to see everything that is happening on your computer screen. You must keep screen-sharing on for the entire testing period.



In some cases, you may be asked to allow Zoom to share your screen. To do so, select **Open System Preferences**.



From there, navigate to the **Privacy** tab, select **Screen Recording** from the menu, and check the box next to “zoom.us.”



If you are prompted to quit the program when you are already on the call with your supervisor, select **Later**.

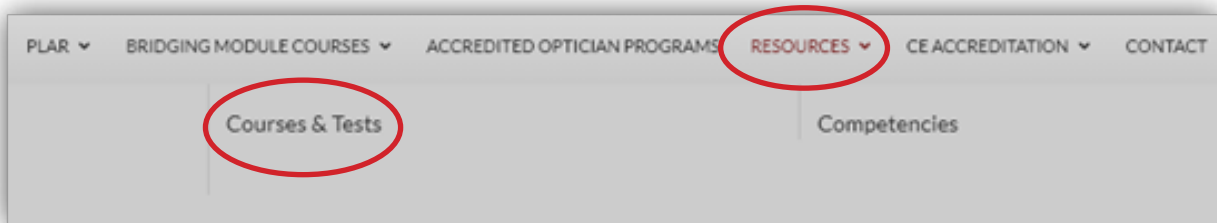
The purpose of sharing your screen is to ensure that you are focused on the test for the entire testing period. You are not permitted to visit any other websites or use any other computer programs while taking the CGA.

Screen-sharing will automatically end when the Zoom call ends.

## Logging in to the CGA platform

Your test supervisor will walk you through the steps to log in to the test platform, as follows:

1. Open the Internet browser where you have already navigated to <https://nacor.ca/>.
2. Hover your cursor over the **Resources** tab in the grey menu along the top of the page. This will open a drop-down menu. Select **Courses & Tests**.

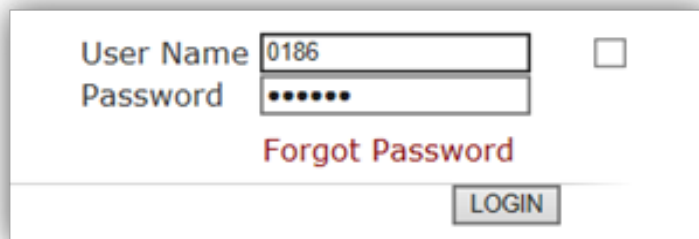


If hover functionality is not supported, simply select **Resources** from the menu, then scroll down and select **Courses & Tests**.

3. Scroll to the bottom of the page and select **Login** in the lower right-hand corner.



4. Log in using the **User Name** and **Password** provided by your test supervisor.

A screenshot of the login form. It features two input fields: 'User Name' containing '0186' and 'Password' containing six dots. To the right of the 'User Name' field is a small square checkbox. Below the fields is a red link that says 'Forgot Password'. At the bottom center is a grey button labeled 'LOGIN'.

5. Hover your cursor over the **CGA3 PLAR** tab on the grey menu. This will open a drop-down menu. Select the CGA you have been instructed to write first.



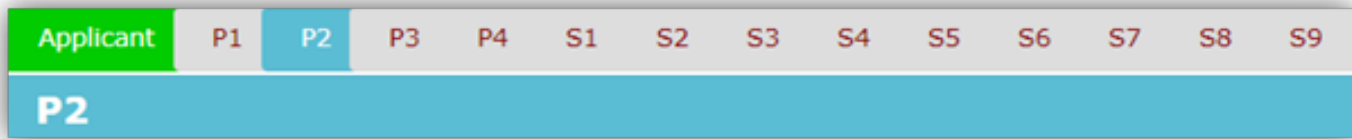
6. You will be asked to enter your **Applicant ID**. This is the same 4-digit number you used as your User Name to log in in Step 5. You will also need to enter the two-letter abbreviation (e.g., BC) of your host **Province**.

A screenshot of the 'PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE' test interface. The title 'PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE' is at the top. Below it is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > CGA3 PLAR > English >'. A navigation bar contains tabs for 'Applicant' and 'P1' through 'P4', and 'S1' through 'S15'. The 'Applicant' tab is selected. Below the navigation bar, there are two input fields: 'Applicant ID' and 'Province'. A 'Next Step' button is circled in red at the bottom left.

Selecting **Next Step** will start the test. Ensure that you are ready to begin!

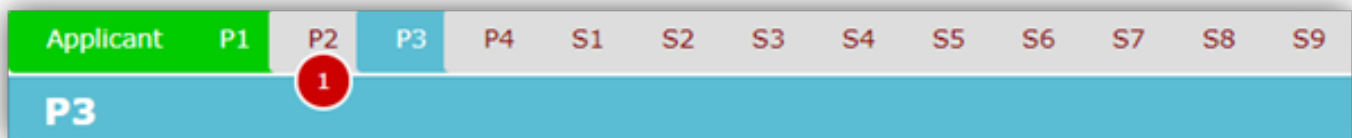
## Completing the CGAs

The test questions are divided into several tabs across the top of the test window.



Your answers will be saved each time you move to a different tab. You can move back and forth between the tabs and **complete the questions in any order**. Be sure to use the numbered tab buttons or the “Prev Step” and “Next Step” buttons to move between tabs, not your browser’s “Back” or “Forward” buttons.

**A tab will turn green** once all questions within that tab are complete. If you leave a question blank and then move to the next tab, **a red circle will appear to show** how many questions still need to be completed in the previous tab.



(You must use the numbered tab buttons to change tabs if you wish to leave one or more questions blank. The “Next Step” button will not allow you to proceed if any question within that tab is incomplete.)

All of the test questions are **multiple-choice**. This means that you will not be required to type or verbalize any answers; you will simply select the best answer from three options provided on-screen.

**3. Macular degeneration is characterized by a loss of which area of vision?**

- Central
- Nasal
- Peripheral

For more information about multiple-choice questions, see [Appendix C](#).

Although all of the questions use the same format (that is, multiple-choice with three options), there are two different types of questions: [independent questions](#) and [scenario-based questions](#). The questions appear in separate tabs within the CGA window.

Independent questions	Scenario-based questions												
Questions in the “P” tabs ask about individual topics and situations; none of the questions are related to other questions.	Each “S” tab includes a short scenario or “case study,” followed by a few multiple-choice questions about that case study. All of the questions within that tab relate to the same case study.												
Applicant	P1	P2	P3	P4	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9
S6													

As you answer the questions, remember:

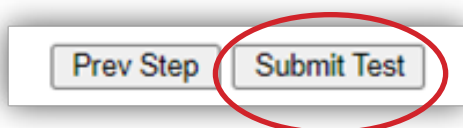
- The questions are not trying to trick you  
Each question has only one correct answer. Read each option closely, as minor differences in wording can change the meaning.
- Your time is limited  
Some questions will be easier for you to answer than others. Try not to spend too much time thinking about the more difficult questions. If you don’t know the answer, it might be a good idea to skip over that question, then come back to it later if you have time.
- The test is designed for an optician at the “entry-to-practice” level  
As a trained optical professional, you may have dealt with more complex situations or developed advanced problem-solving skills. If you have worked as an optometrist or ophthalmologist, you may have had different responsibilities in your work. However, PLAR is focused on situations that might occur for an optician who has recently completed their education and started working in the industry in Canada.

Each CGA has a different number of questions:

Eyeglasses Professional Practice Eyeglasses & Low Vision	285 questions 120 questions 165 questions	4 hours 30 minutes 2 hours 2 hours 30 minutes
Contact Lenses	140 questions	2 hours
Refracting	120 questions	2 hours

Your test supervisor will track your time and will remind you how much time you have left. Once the time is up, you must submit the test.

To submit the test, select “Submit Test” at the bottom of the final page. This will send your answers to NACOR. You will not be able to go back and review your answers after you have submitted them.





# Appendix F:

## PLAR Score Card

The competency scores are divided into two categories:

**AT:** The applicant's scores meet the entry-to-practice expectations for the competency; no bridging is assigned.

**BELOW:** The applicant's scores do not meet the entry-to-practice expectations for the competency; bridging is assigned.

Section	Competency	Result
<b>Professional Practice</b>	1.1 Professionalism and Ethics	AT or BELOW
	1.2 Informed Consent	AT or BELOW
	1.3 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Record Keeping	AT or BELOW
	1.4 Patient and Workplace Safety	AT or BELOW
	1.5 Jurisprudence and Regulatory Policies	AT or BELOW
	1.6 Scope of Practice	AT or BELOW
	1.7 Maintaining Competence	AT or BELOW
<b>Eyeglasses &amp; Low Vision</b>	3.1 Anatomy and Pathology	AT or BELOW
	3.2 Optics	AT or BELOW
	3.3 Equipment and Tools	AT or BELOW
	3.4 Infection Control	AT or BELOW
	3.5 Needs Assessment	AT or BELOW
	3.6, 3.8 Prescription Interpretation and Lens Duplication, Ordering	AT or BELOW
	3.7 Lens and Frame Selection	AT or BELOW
	3.9, 3.10 Inspection and Industry Standards, Verifying Fit and Patient Success	AT or BELOW
	3.11 Patient Communication	AT or BELOW
	3.12 Continuing Care	AT or BELOW
	3.13 Low Vision	AT or BELOW
<b>Contact Lenses</b>	4.1 Anatomy and Pathology	AT or BELOW
	4.2 Optics	AT or BELOW
	4.3 Equipment and Tools	AT or BELOW
	4.4 Infection Control	AT or BELOW
	4.5 Needs Assessment	AT or BELOW
	4.6, 4.7 Prescription Interpretation and Lens Selection, Ordering	AT or BELOW
	4.8, 4.9 Inspection and Industry Standards, Verifying Fit and Patient Success	AT or BELOW
	4.10 Patient Communication	AT or BELOW
	4.11 Continuing Care	AT or BELOW
	<b>Refracting</b>	2.1 Anatomy and Pathology
2.2 Optics		AT or BELOW
2.3 Equipment and Tools		AT or BELOW
2.4 Infection Control		AT or BELOW
2.5 Needs Assessment		AT or BELOW
2.6 Patient Communication		AT or BELOW
2.7 Continuing Care		AT or BELOW

## Appendix G:

### List of bridging modules & what they cover

Below is a list of all bridging modules currently used in the PLAR process. Select the **Online module** link to access the theoretical and interactive portions of a module. (Remember that each module's post-test is available by application only.) Select the **Competency summary** link to learn more about what is covered in the module—including a list of competencies and a description of the content and topics.

Module 1: Legislation	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 2: Communication	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 3: Professionalism	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 4: Infection Control	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 5: Equipment Use – Eyeglasses	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 6: Equipment Use – Contact Lenses	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 7: Anatomy – Eyeglasses & Contact Lenses	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 8: Optics	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 9: Critical Thinking	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 10: Dispensing Eyeglasses – Course 1	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 11: Dispensing Eyeglasses – Course 2	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 12: Dispensing Contact Lenses – Course 1	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 13: Dispensing Contact Lenses – Course 2	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 14: The Intake Interview	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 15: Screening Tests	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 16: Refracting	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 17: Developing Refractive Specifications	<a href="#">Online module</a>	<a href="#">Competency summary</a>
Module 18: Low Vision	<a href="#">Online module</a>	Competency summary (not currently available)

## Appendix H:

### Provincial regulatory bodies

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<b>Alberta</b>	College of Opticians of Alberta	<a href="http://albertaopticians.ca">albertaopticians.ca</a>
<b>British Columbia</b>	College of Opticians of British Columbia	<a href="http://cobc.ca">cobc.ca</a>
<b>Manitoba</b>	Opticians of Manitoba	<a href="http://opticiansofmanitoba.ca">opticiansofmanitoba.ca</a>
<b>New Brunswick</b>	Opticians Association of New Brunswick	<a href="http://opticiansnb.com">opticiansnb.com</a>
<b>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</b>	Dispensing Opticians Board of Newfoundland and Labrador	P.O. Box 2552 St. Johns, NL A1C 6K1
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians	<a href="http://nscdo.ca">nscdo.ca</a>
<b>Ontario</b>	College of Opticians of Ontario	<a href="http://collegeofopticians.ca">collegeofopticians.ca</a>
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	P.E.I. Board of Dispensing Opticians	P.O. Box 20140, RPO Sherwood Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 9E3
<b>Quebec</b>	Ordre des opticiens d'ordonnances du Québec	<a href="http://opticien.qc.ca">opticien.qc.ca</a>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Saskatchewan College of Opticians	<a href="http://scoptic.ca">scoptic.ca</a>

## Frequently asked questions

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### **Do I have to be in Canada to take PLAR?**

No. The PLAR process is completed online, so you can do it from anywhere in the world. You do not need to be in Canada, and there is no need to submit any immigration documents with your PLAR application. However, to move to Canada and register as an optician, there are immigration requirements; it is your responsibility to ensure you meet these requirements.

### **What province should I choose for PLAR if I'm not living in Canada yet?**

Choose the province that you plan to live and work in. If you aren't sure which province that is yet, that's okay—just choose one you are considering. You can change your mind later in the process.

### **Are there different requirements in different provinces?**

Yes. If you select Ontario as your province, you will be required to complete assessments for both Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses. Only BC applicants may apply for Refracting.

### **What if I require an accommodation in the PLAR process?**

The application stage is the appropriate time to notify NACOR about any accommodations you may need due to disability or extenuating circumstances. You may be asked to provide documentation to support your need for an accommodation.

### **What happens if my application is rejected during the document review?**

If your application is rejected, you can still become an optician in Canada, but you will be required to complete a Canadian accredited education program.

### **How much does PLAR cost?**

The cost of PLAR varies based on which CGAs you apply to take. See [Payment of fees](#) for details.

### **How long do I have to schedule my CGA(s) after my document review is complete?**

There is no deadline for scheduling your CGA(s). You can complete the PLAR process based on your own availability, whenever you feel confident that you are ready. Some applicants schedule their CGAs the same week they apply. Others choose to schedule the tests several weeks or even months in advance.

### **How can I study for PLAR?**

Although studying for PLAR is not mandatory, you may choose to prepare by taking the online knowledge self-assessment, working through bridging modules, or reviewing the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians. See [Appendix B](#) for more information.

### **What if I need to change the date or time of a PLAR test?**

If your availability changes, and you need to cancel or reschedule a CGA, please contact NACOR at least 24 hours before your scheduled start time at 1-866-949-1950 or [general@nacor.ca](mailto:general@nacor.ca).

### **How long will it take to receive my PLAR results?**

PLAR results are generally emailed within 1–2 weeks of your final CGA being completed.

### **What is the passing grade for PLAR?**

The CGAs are not marked as “pass” or “fail.” You will not receive a percentage score, a letter grade, or a number indicating how many questions you answered correctly.

Instead, you will receive a competency-based score card. The score card lists all of the different competencies or areas of opticianry that were covered on the test. Within each area, you’ll be given a score of AT or BELOW.

- A score of AT means you did well in that area (your skills and knowledge are “at” the required level).
- A score of BELOW means your knowledge and skills are “below” the required level, so you’ll need to complete one or more bridging modules and the associated post-test(s) in that area before you can proceed.

### **If I have three BELOW scores on my PLAR score card, does that mean I will be assigned three modules?**

Not always. All of the questions on the CGAs are linked to different competencies, and some questions link to multiple competencies. Similarly, some of the competencies are linked to multiple bridging modules. This means that you could be assigned two or three bridging modules for a single BELOW score.

### **How long do I have to complete my bridging module(s)?**

Bridging modules must be completed within one year of being assigned.

### **What is the passing grade for the bridging post-tests?**

You must achieve at least 80% to pass a bridging post-test.

### **Are the post-tests supervised?**

No. You will be provided with a link to complete the post-test at a time that works for you. The tests are “open-book,” which means you may access the corresponding bridging module while completing its post-test.

### **I’m done PLAR! Does this mean I am now a Canadian optician?**

No, not quite! You will still need to pass the national licensing exam(s) and complete your provincial registration.

### **Are the eligibility requirements for the national licensing exams the same in every province?**

Eligibility requirements for the national licensing exams vary from province to province. For more information on these requirements, visit [the NACOR website](#).

### **Is there a deadline for taking the national licensing exam(s)?**

Yes. After you have completed PLAR, you must pass the licensing exam(s) within three years.

# Glossary

## **accredited education program**

an opticianry education program that has been reviewed and approved by [Accreditation Canada](#).

## **bridging module**

an interactive lesson related to a specific opticianry topic; designed to “bridge gaps” in knowledge for professionals who have already trained and/or worked in the optical industry; may be used for studying (when preparing for PLAR) or to fulfill bridging requirements based on CGA results

## **bridging post-test**

the short online multiple-choice test that accompanies a bridging module; must be completed for any bridging module that has been assigned as “mandatory”

## **CGA**

stands for “Competency Gap Analysis”; the online multiple-choice assessment used in the PLAR process; may refer to the Eyeglasses CGA, the Contact Lenses CGA, or the Refracting CGA

## **competency-based score card**

a chart that lists all of the competencies that are included in a CGA, along with the applicant’s score (either AT or BELOW) in each area; provided to the applicant after they have completed all of the CGAs for which they applied

## **document review**

the process through which NACOR determines eligibility for the PLAR process; includes a review of all application documents to ensure an applicant has the necessary education and/or experience in the optical industry

## **independent question**

a multiple-choice question that does not directly relate to any other question or scenario within a CGA

## **mandatory bridging module**

a bridging module that must be completed by an applicant based on their PLAR results

## **multiple-choice**

a type of test question that involves selecting the correct answer from a set of possible answers

## **NACOR**

stands for “National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators”; the organization that administers both PLAR and the national licensing examinations

## **national licensing examinations**

the practical exams that must be passed prior to becoming an optician and/or contact lens fitter in Canada

## **optician**

a regulated healthcare professional who dispenses eyeglasses and may also fit contact lenses and/or conduct refractions

### **optional bridging module**

a bridging module that may be useful for an applicant to review based on their PLAR results (but that they are not required to complete)

### **PLAR**

stands for “Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition”; a process through which an applicant who has studied to be an optical professional or worked in the optical industry in Canada or another country may be able to become an optician in Canada

### **post-test**

(see "bridging post-test")

### **regulated healthcare professional**

an individual who works in a healthcare field (e.g., opticianry, nursing, psychology) and is required to maintain a licence in order to work

### **regulatory body**

a provincial organization that provides licences to healthcare professionals and also serves other government-mandated functions (e.g., responding to complaints about healthcare professionals, determining rules and standards for a healthcare profession, educating members of the public on what to expect in a healthcare setting)

### **scenario-based question**

a multiple-choice question that directly relates to a scenario or “case study” within a CGA

### **Zoom**

a secure desktop application used for making video calls over the Internet





Questions?

Contact NACOR:

[general@nacor.ca](mailto:general@nacor.ca)

1-866-949-1950 ext. 1