



## *Respiratory Therapy Program*

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition  
(PLAR)



**(Respiratory Therapy Program)**  
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

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## Section 1: Prior Learning Assessment Quick Reference Guide

<b>What is PLAR?</b>	Prior Learning Assessment (PLAR) is an evaluation through a valid and reliable process, by qualified specialist(s), of the knowledge and skills that have been learned through non-formal or informal learning (i.e. non-credit courses, on the job training or life and work experience) to determine the equivalency for credit to a NAIT course(s).
<b>What can PLAR do for me?</b>	<p>PLAR can help you by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing skills and knowledge acquired through prior learning</li> <li>• Reducing the number of courses required to complete your program</li> <li>• Helping you to access skilled work faster</li> </ul>
<b>How do I know if I'm a candidate?</b>	If you have successful work experience in the field of construction and can provide evidence of your skills and knowledge to meet learning outcomes for courses within the Construction Engineering Technology Program, you may be a PLAR candidate.
<b>What are the PLAR options?</b>	<p>You must be accepted into the NAIT Respiratory Therapy to receive PLAR services (the non-refundable tuition deposit has been paid). See <a href="#">Admissions</a> on the NAIT website for further information on applying to NAIT. Open Studies students are <b>not</b> eligible to apply for PLAR.</p> <p>If you have previously learned the skills and knowledge for one or more of the Respiratory Program courses, you may apply to be assessed for each applicable course. Please note that NAIT has a 50% residency requirement.</p>
<b>How many courses are available by PLAR?</b>	<p>For a list of courses available see the Respiratory Therapy Technology Program PLAR Candidate Guide.</p> <p>Applicants can only receive credit for up to 50% of any NAIT credit program. (See <a href="#">NAIT Academic Regulations and Procedures</a> under <b>Residence Requirements</b>). Students should enroll in their courses until official confirmation has been received that credit was granted.</p>
<b>When are PLAR challenges offered?</b>	Please contact the program at <a href="mailto:RET@nait.ca">RET@nait.ca</a> for more details. Your request will be reviewed within 6 weeks of receipt of the application form, all supporting documents (in English) and verification of fee payment. Submit your PLAR request early!
<b>How much does PLAR cost?</b>	The PLAR Evaluation fee is \$150.00 <b>per</b> course challenge.
<b>Are there methods other than PLAR to gain NAIT course credits for prior learning?</b>	<p>NAIT may grant transfer of credit for course(s) from a recognized post-secondary educational institution. Students must be accepted into a NAIT credit program before submitting a <i>Request for Transfer Credit or Credential Recognition</i> form.</p> <p>For specific information and guidelines regarding transfer credit or credential recognition, refer to <a href="#">Recognition of Prior Learning</a> on the NAIT website. Also refer to the Advanced Credit section on the program home page.</p>



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<b>What do I need to prepare for a PLAR assessment?</b>	Credit is earned for proven knowledge and skills. You will be assessed on your competence in the learning outcomes for each course. For more information on the learning outcomes, criteria, and the form of assessment please refer to the (Respiratory Therapy) PLAR candidate guide & self-audit package.
<b>How do I get started?</b>	Call NAIT and ask to speak to Student Service Centre Representative at 780-471-6248 or Toll Free at 1-877-333-6248 or <a href="mailto:AskNAIT@nait.ca">AskNAIT@nait.ca</a> .



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## Section 2: NAIT PLAR Candidate Guide

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### Acknowledgements

This section of the document has been adapted with permission from SIAST (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology).

The Construction Engineering Technology Program is dedicated to removing barriers and broadening the access to programs at NAIT. NAIT recognizes that knowledge and skills are gained through a variety of processes including life and work experiences that may align with courses within our programs. We are committed to supporting a community in which learners will receive appropriate credit or recognition for prior learning.

### Why consider a PLAR assessment?

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to the combination of flexible ways of evaluating peoples' lifelong learning, both formal and informal against a set of established standards. You can receive academic credit for your relevant lifelong learning. The Construction Engineering Technology Program recognizes prior learning in a number of ways. We recognize:

- Previous formal learning from a recognized post-secondary institution through transfer of credit and credential recognition.
- Previous non-formal and in-formal learning through a comprehensive prior learning assessment and recognition process (PLAR).

### What are the PLAR options?

To be eligible for PLAR, a candidate must have first applied and have been accepted to a NAIT credit program (the non-refundable tuition deposit has been paid). Open Studies students are not eligible to apply for PLAR. Please note that your PLAR request will be reviewed within 6 weeks of receipt of the PLAR application form, all supporting documents (in English) and verification of fee payment. Submit your PLAR request early!



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### Individual Course Challenge

If you have successful work experience in the field of construction and can provide evidence of your skills and knowledge to meet learning outcomes for courses within the Construction Engineering Technology Program, you may apply to be assessed for each applicable course. Please note that NAIT has a 50% residency criterion. Applicants can only receive credit for up to 50% of any NAIT credit program (See NAIT Academic Regulations and Procedures under Residence Requirements). Students should enroll in their courses until official confirmation has been received that credit was granted.

### Fees

The PLAR evaluation fee is \$150.00 per course challenge. Please note:

- The course assessment fees must be paid prior to submitting a PLAR request.
- All fees are non-refundable.

### How many courses can be challenged through PLAR in the Program?

Credit is granted per course – partial credit will not be granted. Please note that NAIT has a 50% residency criterion. Applicants can only receive credit for up to 50% of any NAIT credit program (see NAIT Academic Regulations and Procedures under Residence Requirements).

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

Contact the program at [RET@nait.ca](mailto:RET@nait.ca) for more details. Your request will be reviewed within 6 weeks of receipt of the request form, all supporting documents (in English) and verification of fee payment. Submit your PLAR request early!

**Please Note:** You should enroll in your courses until official confirmation has been received that credit was granted. The program sends an email notification that the application has been processed.

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Contact the program area with any questions or concerns related to the assessment results. Appeal process available.
- Notify the program if they have decided to decline a course credit that has been granted. Any changes must be requested before the add/drop deadline.

### Which courses are PLAR ready?

Within the document, you will see what courses are PLAR ready; however, the Respiratory Therapy program is continually working on formalizing a PLAR for other courses. Please contact the program at [RET@nait.ca](mailto:RET@nait.ca) to find out if the course you are interested in is available for PLAR.

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

Neither is easier. By using PLAR you may reduce the repetition of studying information that you already know. The PLAR process allows you to demonstrate knowledge you already have.



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PLAR is not an easy way to certification, rather a “different” way to obtain certification. Your personal level of skill and experience will dictate which courses you choose to challenge. The self-audit section found later in this guide will help you to decide if you have a good match of skill and knowledge for a specific course.

### Methods of Assessing Prior Learning

Assessment methods measure an individual’s learning against course learning outcomes. The assessment methods listed below are the ones most commonly used, but other forms of flexible assessment may be considered. These assessments may include one or a combination of the following assessment tools:

- Product validation and assessment
- Challenge exam
- Standardized tests
- Performance evaluations (including skill demonstrations, role plays, clinical applications, case studies)
- Interviews and oral exams
- Equivalency (evaluations of learning from non-credit training providers)
- Evidence or personal documentation files (providing evidence of learning from life and work experiences and accomplishments)

### If I live out of town, do I have to travel to the NAIT main campus to do PLAR?

Depending on the mode of assessment, there may be times that you will need to meet with the program on campus. However, we will try to keep travel to a minimum.

### What services or resources can I access if I have a disability?

Identify any possible needs related to your disability during your PLAR Audit meeting with the program. If you have a disability and want to know more about what services or resources you may be able to access for your PLAR assessment, please contact [Services for Students with Disabilities](#).

### Are there other methods to gain NAIT course credits for prior learning?

Yes, using Transfer Credit and Credential Recognition NAIT may grant credit for previous post-secondary training from a recognized institution that is similar in content, objectives, and evaluation standards to NAIT training. Transfer of credit is different from the PLAR process. Transfer credit and credential recognition guidelines may be found at: <http://www.nait.ca/86612.htm>

**Please Note:** This process should be completed prior to your PLAR challenge. If these credits cannot be used for transfer credit or credential recognition, you may be able to use these accredited courses as part of your evidence for your PLAR challenge.



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If more information is required, please contact:

- A NAIT Student Service Centre Representative at 780-471-6248 (Toll Free: 1-877-333-6248) or email [AskNAIT@nait.ca](mailto:AskNAIT@nait.ca)
- Program Advanced Credit contact ([www.nait.ca](http://www.nait.ca) under programs & courses and contacts)

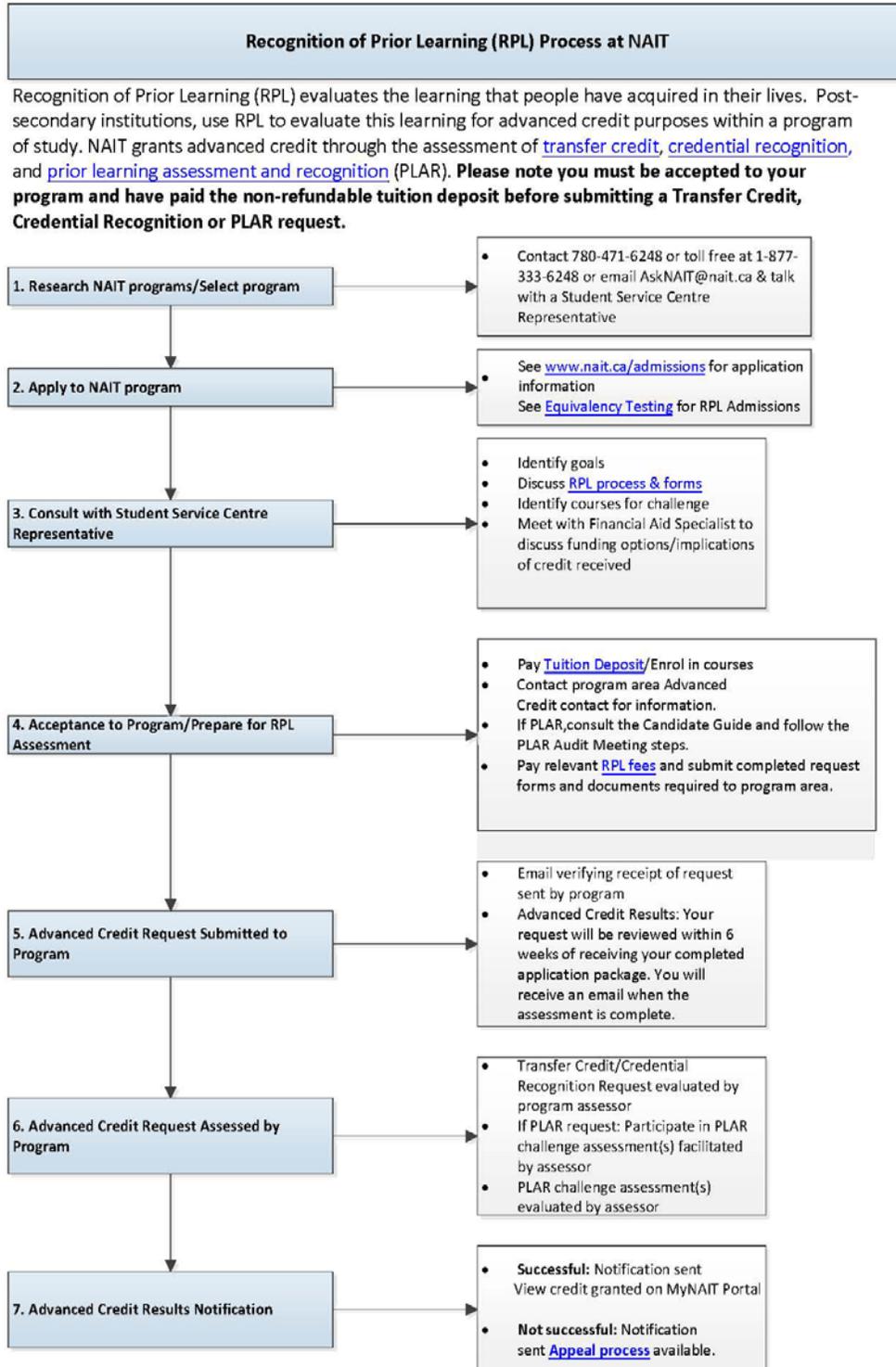
[What are the implications of receiving PLAR or Transfer Credit for my full-time student status?](#)

While RPL can mean fewer classes to take and pay for, students should be aware that the definition of full-time status for Financial Aid may be different than NAIT's definition of full-time status. Questions regarding financial assistance should be directed to the [NAIT Student Service Centre](#). A student who qualifies for advanced credit should review the [NAIT Academic Regulations and Procedures](#), Academic Honors and if necessary, seek further consultation with Advising or Program staff since eligibility for semester honors, Dean's Honor Roll, an honors diploma/certificate or awards may be affected.



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The PLAR Process





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### Guiding principles for developing a PLAR evidence file

1. As you begin the PLAR process you will be advised if any evidence is required. This will be identified in your action plan. Check with the PLAR designated contact (see program home page Advanced Credit Contact) for your program before you begin to gather evidence.
2. Evidence must be valid and relevant. Your evidence must match the learning outcomes identified for each course. It is your responsibility to create, collect and compile relevant evidence – if required.
3. Learning must be current (i.e. within the last 7 years).
4. The evidence should demonstrate the skills and knowledge from your experiences.
5. The learning must have both a theoretical and practical component.

### Types of evidence

There are three types of evidence that may be used to support your PLAR request:

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

Ensure that you provide full evidence to your Construction Engineering Technology Program PLAR assessor so that your prior learning application is assessed appropriately. Well organized, easy to track evidence will also ensure that none of the evidence is missed or assessed incorrectly.

All documents that are submitted to NAIT may be returned to the student after the final results have been given and the advanced credit appeal deadline of 10 days has passed. A copy of transcripts and certificates may be included in your evidence file, but original transcripts that were submitted at the time of application to NAIT will be available online. Be prepared to show original parchments at the PLAR audit meeting for validation.

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

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



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## Section 3: Self-Audit Guide

### Steps to complete a self-audit

1. Read through the levels of competence as listed below.  
**Mastery:** I am able to demonstrate the learning outcome well enough to teach it to someone else.  
**Competent:** I can work independently to apply the learning outcome.  
**Functional:** I need some assistance in using the outcome.  
**Learning:** I am developing skills and knowledge for this area.  
**None:** I have no experience with the outcome.
2. List each learning outcome (found in the course outline) and self-evaluate your competency levels and record in the appropriate column for each self-audit. Use the Self-Audit Template below.
3. Check your level of competence as you read through each of the learning outcomes for each course. The information will help you in your decision to continue with your PLAR application.
4. In order to be successful in a PLAR assessment, your abilities must be at the competent or mastery level for the majority of the learning outcomes (at least 80%). Some things to consider when determining your level of competence are:
  - a. How do I currently use this outcome?
  - b. What previous training have I had in this outcome: workshops, courses, on-the-job?
  - c. What personal development or volunteer experience do I have in this area?Be prepared to explain the reason you chose this level if asked by an assessor.
5. Bring the completed self-audit to a consultation meeting with the program head or faculty member in Step 4 – of The PLAR Process for prior learning assessment.



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Self-Audit Template

Research in Healthcare (RSCH1100)

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RSCH1100

Credit unit(s): 3

Complete the below table by filling in the course outcomes placing a ✓ in the appropriate column. A candidate must be competent in of the following:

<b>Mastery:</b> I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. <b>Competent:</b> I can work independently to apply the outcome. <b>Functional:</b> I need some assistance in using the outcome. <b>Learning:</b> I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. <b>None:</b> I have no experience with the outcome.	<b>Mastery</b>	<b>Competent</b>	<b>Functional</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 1:</b> Explain the research process and scientific method. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value of research</li> <li>• research types</li> <li>• scientific method</li> <li>• quantitative and qualitative research</li> </ul>		✓			
<b>Learning Outcome 2:</b> Apply critical thinking skills for literature search and evaluation. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research question/hypothesis</li> <li>• literature/evidence search</li> <li>• critical analysis of research literature</li> </ul>		✓			
<b>Learning Outcome 3:</b> Utilize the research process. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data collection</li> <li>• data analysis and statistics</li> <li>• dissemination of findings</li> <li>• ethics</li> </ul>		✓			



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## Section 4: PLAR Assessment Methods

If you qualify for PLAR, you may be asked to demonstrate your learning in one or more of the following ways. Be prepared to discuss the expectations during a consultation meeting.

**Evidence File:** The student must produce a record of experience. This may include the following:

1. Description of previous experience
2. Information on prior courses, certifications, etc. obtained
3. Employment validation letter
4. *Challenge Exam:* The student **may** be required to challenge the exam for the course. A minimum of 80% on the exam will be required.



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Appendix A: Title Page

# (Respiratory Therapy Program)

## Research in Healthcare – RSCH1100

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

NAIT Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

I attest that the enclosed evidence is correct and have been compiled by myself. I attest that I am the person named in this application and the evidence unless otherwise signified.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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



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Appendix B: Evidence Files

Respiratory Therapy	Name:	_____
Research in Healthcare (RSCH1100)	Student ID:	_____
	Date:	_____

**Please go over the following checklist with your program to further discuss the requirements for your evidence file:**

- Binder or folder** separated into sections and each section is clearly identified as to what is within the section.
- A **cover page** as the first page of the binder that identifies the student name and course the candidate is applying to PLAR. Refer to Appendix A: Title Page.
- ✓ Signed **letter of validation** on company letterhead if requested. Refer to Appendix C: Employment Validation Letter.
- ✓ **Employment validation checklist** if requested. Refer to Appendix D: Employment Validation Checklist.
- A **personal resume** detailing the relevant work history of the candidate.
- Work sample documents** if requested.
- ✓ Any relevant **documentation** of completion of apprenticeship courses, private training courses, non-credit courses, and/or workshops (photocopies only).
- ✓ If applicable, any **additional items** to support the evidence file.
- Challenge Exam**

**Notes (indicate rational for requesting or not requesting certain documents as listed above)**



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Appendix C: Employment Validation Letter

Instructions: You may be required to submit an employment validation letter. The employment validation letter provides a statement of verification of employment in a setting relevant to the course(s) being challenged through PLAR. The employment validation letter must be printed on letterhead of your current employer and signed by the human resources department indicating the length of employment and working environment(s). A letter template has been provided for your use. Please copy the content below and fill-in the fields as directed. If requested completed letter should be included with your PLAR evidence and submitted to the PLAR assessor for the enter program.

Letter template (On employer’s business letterhead)

Date

To Whom It May Concern:

I have reviewed the employment records of \_\_\_\_\_ and I can verify that the above  
*Name of employee/candidate*

candidate has been employed by \_\_\_\_\_ for . \_\_\_\_\_. Please  
*Name of employer* *Length of employment*

contact me at \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ with any questions or for  
*Phone* *Email*

additional information.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Job Title*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*



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Appendix D: Employment Validation Checklist

Respiratory Therapy Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Research in Healthcare (RSCH1100)** Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Directions:** On the following page(s) there is a list of skill and knowledge factors that the employee is required to achieve in completing the course. Please validate the employee/candidate’s performance by placing a ✓ in the appropriate column. Add any clarifications/observations in the “Optional Comments” section. Sign and date below.

<b>Mastery:</b> I am able to demonstrate it well enough to teach it to someone else. <b>Competent:</b> I can work independently to apply the outcome. <b>Functional:</b> I need some assistance in using the outcome. <b>Learning:</b> I am developing skills and knowledge for this area. <b>None:</b> I have no experience with the outcome.	Mastery	Competent	Functional	Learning	None
<b>Learning Outcome 1:</b> Explain the research process and scientific method. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• value of research</li> <li>• research types</li> <li>• scientific method</li> <li>• quantitative and qualitative research</li> </ul>					
<b>Learning Outcome 2:</b> Apply critical thinking skills for literature search and evaluation. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research question/hypothesis</li> <li>• literature/evidence search</li> <li>• critical analysis of research literature</li> </ul>					
<b>Learning Outcome 3:</b> Utilize the research process. The following concepts, skills, and issues are used to support this Outcome: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data collection</li> <li>• data analysis and statistics</li> <li>• dissemination of findings</li> <li>• ethics</li> </ul>					

**Note:** The employer/ supervisor may be contacted by the NAIT assessor to confirm/clarify information provided.



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**Additional Comments**

**Employee Information**

Dates of employment: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Employment description: Full-time hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Part- time hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_

Position(s) held \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student number: \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that I am the person who has performed those items checked on this checklist. I acknowledge that the performance checklists used are solely for the purpose of skills assessment for the NAIT Respiratory Therapy program requirements and are not intended to replace or modify company operating or safety procedures, and may not be appropriate for use in all circumstances.

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

**Employer Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student number: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that I am the person who has administered this checklist, and that I have conducted this candidate's skills assessment with integrity. I also affirm that the above-named candidate is the person whose performance I evaluated, and that the above named person performed the checked tasks at the indicated level without assistance from me or any other person.

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



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## Section 5: PLAR Assessor Guide

### PLAR Assessment Framework

Respiratory Therapy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Research in Healthcare (RSCH1100)**

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Assessor directions:** Create a copy of this master assessment framework document for each candidate's challenge. Clearly identify which assessment method, or combination of assessment methods, will be used for the candidate. The completed assessment framework document will form part of the candidate's PLAR challenge file to be kept by the program (general student file location) for future reference. This record is important for program documentation and to assist the program faculty with post-assessment consultation.



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**PLAR Assessment Methods**

This section provides space for the assessor to make notes on the following different assessment methods. If the assessment method does not apply, please provide a note stating that the method is not applicable and the reason why.

**Previous Experience and Employment**

**Industry Related Courses and Training**

**Challenge Exam**



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**Learning Outcomes**

**Assessor Directions:** Based on the methods above, determine if the candidate has successfully met the criteria for each **critical** course outcome below. Developmental outcomes are greyed out and do not require proof of evidence.

**Criteria:** The PLAR candidate must achieve a “Yes” rating for each learning outcome in order to be granted credit.

Learning Outcomes	YES	NO	
	Meets Criteria	Developing the Skill	Not Observed
Learning Outcome 1:			
Learning Outcome 2:			
Learning Outcome 3:			

**Additional Comments**

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

NAIT PLAR assessor signature: \_\_\_\_\_