First Nations Health Managers Association

Association des gestionnaires de santé des Premières Nations
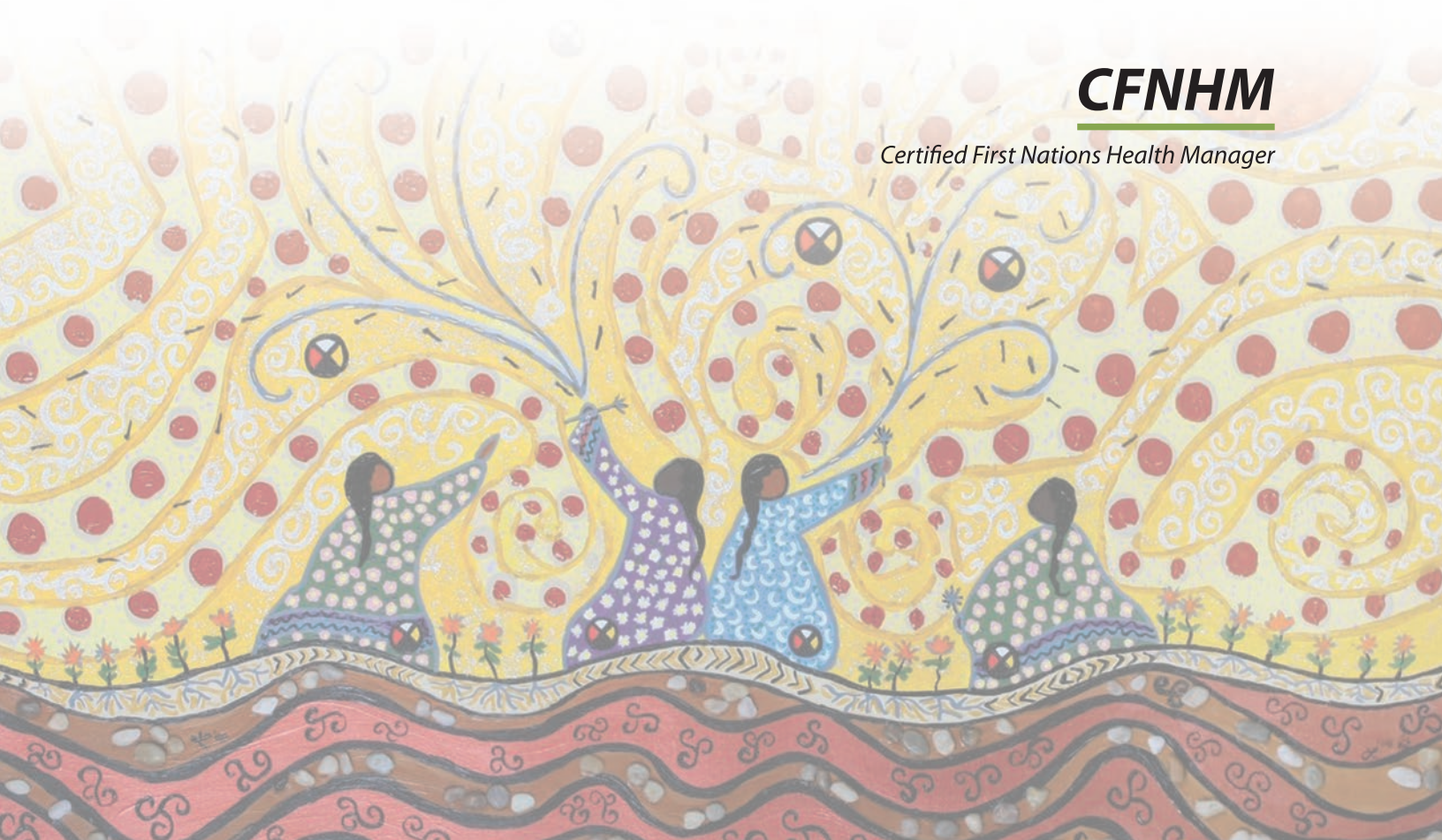
INFORMATION GUIDE

for

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION

CFNHM

Certified First Nations Health Manager

INTRODUCTION

The First Nations Health Managers Association (FNHMA) provides Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process as an alternative path towards certification as a health manager.

Candidates with seven or more years of practical health services management experience may take the PLAR path to professional certification.

The PLAR path requires the completion of a portfolio which will be reviewed by assessors who will look for evidence that the candidate is competent in at least 80 percent of the FNHMA competencies.

Prior to December 31, 2016, candidates who meet the portfolio evidence requirement will be exempt from the Professional Examination. After this date successful PLAR Candidates will be required to write the Professional Examination.

This guide has been developed to assist those interested in pursuing the PLAR path.

PLAR affords individuals an opportunity to achieve credit toward certification based on past experience, professional development and education. The PLAR path requires candidates to:

1. Have a minimum of seven years of health services management experience and provide evidence.

2. Complete the Competency Self-Assessment and identify strengths and limitations of educational and work experience.

3. Engage in further educational or experiential development, if necessary.

4. When the targeted development is completed (if necessary), develop a PLAR Portfolio based on the information provided in the PLAR Portfolio Development Guide.

5. Ensure the PLAR Portfolio demonstrates the equivalencies to the competency standards. This will include a listing of post-secondary and other qualifications, e.g. university degrees, professional qualifications, matching academic courses and work experiences to the required competencies.

6. Provide letters from two sponsors; who can attest to your level of experience in health management.

7. Request a PLAR Portfolio Assessment by submitting the required documentation and remitting the required fee to the FNHMA.

8. Upon notice of the PLAR Portfolio Assessment review, complete additional educational and work experience as identified, and resubmit with new evidence to demonstrate that competency deficiencies have been met.

When all requirements have been met and candidates are eligible for professional certification, the professional designation will be granted.
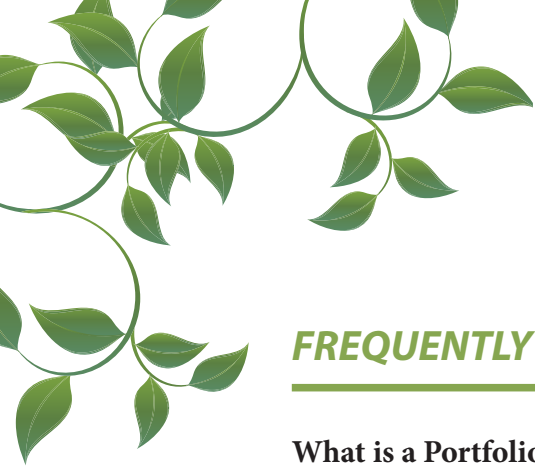
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

What is a Portfolio?

A portfolio is a record of your learning from educational, work and personal experience. It is developed by you to support your claim of competence and credit toward being accepted as a candidate member.

What is a PLAR Portfolio Assessment?

Upon receipt, the FNHMA shall assign two (2) qualified and unbiased assessors to determine if your portfolio demonstrates the equivalent experience and education necessary to meet the required Competency Standards for acceptance as a candidate.

What should my PLAR Portfolio contain?

A brief overview of items that your portfolio must contain includes:

- A letter of introduction that briefly describes yourself
- The completed evidence grid for each of the competencies you are seeking advanced standing for
- Evidence to prove the competencies you are applying for, such as: descriptions of the activities you have undertaken at your place of employment; any courses, professional development, or self-directed study that you have completed; evidence from supervisors, clients, colleagues and others about your skills and abilities related to the competency for the advanced standing you are applying for.

- A resumé that demonstrates seven or more years of practical health services management experience.
- Evidence of related education.
- Letters from two sponsors; who can attest to your health management experience.
- Portfolio assessments will be based on submitted materials only. Assessors will not consider portfolios that direct them to websites or public documents in order to access materials.

Who are the assessors?

Assessors are experienced professionals with a sound awareness of the competency standards and training in the assessment of portfolios. The assessors follow a guide and evaluate each submission according to the national competency standards.

What fees are required to submit a portfolio?

Your portfolio submission must be accompanied by a completed Request for Portfolio Assessment application form and payment by cheque, payable to the FNHMA in the amount of $375 plus applicable taxes.

How will I find out the results of my portfolio submission?

The results of your portfolio assessment will be communicated to you in writing once your portfolio has been reviewed. Portfolios

are assessed once per month. Where competency deficiencies are noted, you will be required to obtain equivalent experience and/or education. Upon meeting the noted requirements you can re-submit your application and revised portfolio.

What can I do if I am unsatisfied with the decision made by the assessors?

Your portfolio is reviewed by two assessors. If the assessors disagree, it is sent to a third assessor for a final decision. If you are unsatisfied with the decision made by the assessors it is up to you to obtain the necessary evidence and re-submit your portfolio.

How many times can I make a submission?

Applicants pursuing PLAR will be allowed up to three portfolio submissions.

PORTFOLIO PREPARATION

Self-assessment

All applicants who apply for PLAR must have a minimum of seven years of practical health services management experience which can be properly documented.

Preparing a portfolio takes a significant amount of time and effort. As such, your first step should be a self-assessment of your competencies compared with those required for certification. This may lead to a discovery that you require additional development in certain competency areas or a re-assessment of whether the PLAR path to certification is right for you at this time. For these reasons, we recommend that you complete the Competency Self-Assessment and follow the instructions to complete your self-assessment prior to building a portfolio.

Portfolio Approach

Determining what to include in your portfolio may seem daunting. We suggest that you approach the task in the following manner:

- Take a look at your completed competency self-assessment and evidence grid to familiarize yourself with the competencies and knowledge you will need to demonstrate to those who will assess your portfolio

- Identify the appropriate sources of evidence (transcripts, correspondence, certificates, work projects, etc.) you will need to support your demonstrated competencies

- Gather the evidence

- Review your portfolio with a professional health services manager or a colleague – a second set of eyes is often helpful

14 Tips *To Help Build a Portfolio*

1. Approach building your portfolio as you would a resumé and/or preparing for a comprehensive job application.

2. Make it look professional and organized. A well organized portfolio will demonstrate your competencies more effectively.

3. Be thorough and accurate by providing the necessary background information.

4. Give numbers, show results, give facts; not opinions or impressions.

5. Be succinct, yet descriptive. Remember you must demonstrate your mastery of the competencies.

6. Avoid information that does not add to your claim.

7. In general, quality is better than quantity.

8. Show your mastery of the competencies – read the competencies to make sure your evidence demonstrates your mastery of them.

9. Try not to duplicate information unless it is necessary.

10. Use the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid as a tool to refer to supporting documentation which applies to more than one competency.

11. We recommend no more than three pages of evidence for each competency sub-domain.

12. To keep your submission manageable and within the page limitations, you may want to provide a summary list, with a brief point form description for work related reports and projects that support your claim instead of including full documents – the assessors will request more detail if necessary.

13. Providing evidence for education or professional development can be more concrete. For example, course descriptions, transcripts and program outlines can be useful as evidence.

14. Providing evidence for professional experience will require additional details to demonstrate your competence such as report summaries, job descriptions, a summary of special projects, letters of reference and performance appraisals.

PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT

Organize your Portfolio

It is important that your portfolio is compiled in a professional and organized manner – this will help us ensure that the assessors are able to assess it promptly, fairly and objectively. Please follow the Portfolio Format Guidelines to avoid unnecessary delays in processing your submission. Your goal for the portfolio should be to create a format that is easy to follow, for which evidence is clearly labelled. Moreover, evidence should be directly mapped to the appropriate competency on the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid.

Submitting your Portfolio ✓ Checklist

- ❑ a cover letter – summarize the goal of your submission and your involvement in health services management related to your PLAR submission

- ❑ request for Portfolio Assessment form (Appendix A)

- ❑ portfolio with the competency self-assessment and evidence grid and related attachments to provide evidence for academic courses and experiences relevant to the competencies

- ❑ assessment fee

- ❑ resumé to support the seven years of practical health services management experience

- ❑ provide copies of transcripts

- ❑ detailed and current job description – if applicable

- ❑ additional supporting documentation and evidence

- ❑ letters from two sponsors

Portfolio Format Guidelines

- ❑ use a maximum of three pages of evidence per competency sub domain

- ❑ limit your portfolio to 60 pages or less

- ❑ place your portfolio in a word or PDF file with appropriate sections

Documents to Submit

- ❑ copy of your portfolio and cover letter in word or PDF files

- ❑ a Request for Portfolio Assessment and payment of the Assessment Fee of $375 plus applicable taxes

Supporting Documentation and Evidence

- ❑ is relevant to the competency you are requesting credit(s) for

- ❑ has met most of the criteria for each credit for which you are applying

- ❑ has not breached confidentiality of any sensitive information

- ❑ follows the guidelines of three or less pages of evidence per competency sub domain

- ❑ is laid out in a clear and consistent way

- ❑ is easy for assessors to understand and follow when assessing your portfolio
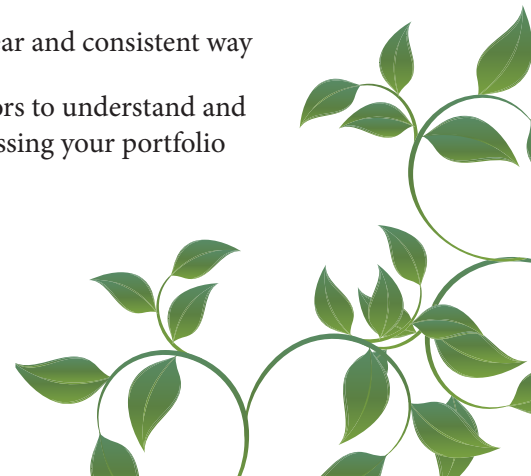
EVIDENCE FOR YOUR PORTFOLIO

Competence is the ability to perform a task to a professional standard. Your evidence must demonstrate that you can apply your knowledge in a competent manner. The amount of evidence required will depend on a number of factors. The minimum requirement is two items of evidence per competency, provided this meets the competency criteria outlined within the evidence grid for each competency. A single item of evidence is unlikely to demonstrate your competence in a particular area unless it is a course or a significant project; in these cases, provide the course outline or project information to meet the requirement.

Is there evidence of knowledge and application?

Knowledge and application of skills are critical to competent performance. You must be able to demonstrate that you have the appropriate supporting knowledge and understanding related to the competencies. The assessors may want to ask you some questions when you submit your portfolio to verify your knowledge and understanding related to the competencies that you are demonstrating. We will notify you if further information is required.

Authenticity of the evidence in your Portfolio

The assessors must be sure that all of the evidence is your own work. It may be necessary for the assessors to ask questions about the evidence that you have provided or to collect further evidence in order to confirm that the content of your portfolio is authentic. For multi-member project teams it is important to clearly identify the work that was produced by you.

Letter of Competency Verification

In some cases a Letter of Competency Verification would help to confirm the authenticity of your evidence. Letters of Competency Verification can provide an indirect, authenticated account of your performance as it relates to the competencies.

They may be collected from colleagues, supervisors, managers, customers or suppliers. The Letters of Competency Verification should:

- be specific to the competencies in question

- give a brief description of the circumstances and context of the observation

- give a brief description of the background and qualifications of the individual (verifier) signing your Letter of Competency Verification and the relationship of the verifier to the candidate

- give a brief background of the observed activity

- identify aspects of the competence demonstrated and how this relates to the competency being requested

Letters of Competency Verification may be used in a variety of ways in attesting to your performance. In some instances, they may simply authenticate a piece of work as having been produced by you. In other cases, they may provide an account of your performance in a project and include comment on it in relation to the competencies. It is important that verifiers are familiar with the competencies being assessed, and are able to comment authoritatively on your performance and competence in those areas.

**Sufficient Evidence**

Sufficient evidence has been achieved if:

⬙ all of the competencies have been correctly addressed;

⬙ your evidence is authentic;

⬙ your performance is consistent and can be demonstrated over a period of time;

⬙ you can demonstrate that you have the relevant knowledge and understanding and can apply it to health services management; and

⬙ you have included evidence for each competency sub-domain.

Types of Evidence

The best practices in the assessment of prior learning indicates that diverse sources of evidence should be used to support one's claims of competence.

KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE	PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE	EVIDENCE OF PRIOR LEARNING
Gathered from any or all of the following sources:	Gathered from any or all of the following sources:	Gathered from any or all of the following sources:
· Tests, reports, documents · Designs · Products · Projects or assignments · Testimonials from employers /teachers	· Observations in workplace · Workplace examples · Simulations · Skill tests · Current job description · Performance appraisals · Testimonials	· Certificates, diplomas · Transcripts · Course outlines and descriptions related to health services management · Workshops and conferences · Outlines or descriptions
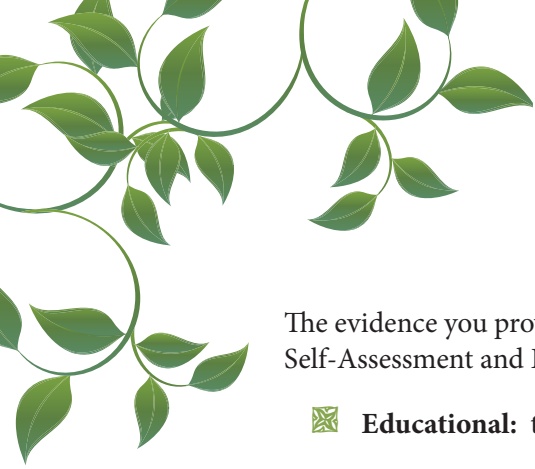
The evidence you provide could be categorised into five different areas within the Competency Self-Assessment and Evidence Grid. Examples for each category are provided as a guideline only:

- **Educational:** transcripts, certificates, course descriptions

- **Projects and Reports:** course tests, projects, assignments or strategies

- **Professional Experience:** workplace products or assessments, job descriptions, work history, resumé

- **Letters of Verification**

- Other (publications, etc.)

Example of Evidence for a Competency

COMPETENCY	EVIDENCE
1.4 Managing Change: 1.4.1. The ability to guide and manage change, consistent with the vision and values of the organization. · Implements and sustains positive change. · Leads staff through stressful or unusual situations and maintains positive morale. · Empowers staff to undertake their own problem-solving and organizational improvements.	**Educational:** Successfully completed the U of M course, working with Change 205. See Appendix one for the course description. **Professional Experience:** I have put in place three new health programs and phased out one. Using managing change techniques, disruptions were limited and an orderly transition occurred.

Appendix A

Request for Portfolio Assessment

First Name:		Last Name:		FNHMA Member #:
Organization Name:			**Position:**	
Street Address:				
City:		**Province:**	**Postal Code:**	**Telephone:**
Email:				

Your signature below indicates that you understand the following:

· Applicants requesting a Portfolio Assessment are required to pay an assessment fee.

· The assessment fee is $375 plus applicable taxes and is non-refundable. No refund is provided if a candidate's portfolio is not approved.

· Acceptance is not automatic. The FNHMA is under no obligation to approve a portfolio if evidence of competency level is graded below 80 percent.

· Additional demonstration of learning may be requested by the FNHMA. If the portfolio evidence is incomplete, the applicant may be required to provide additional information or engage in professional development activity.

· If the application is denied, the applicant may re-apply at a later date.

· Assessors may contact references, employers or academic institutions as named in the portfolio to verify sources of documentation.

· If this is a re-submission, attach a copy of your previous portfolio assessment and recommendation.

❑   By checking this box, I certify that all of the information/documents provided to support this assessment are authentic, accurate and true.

I agree that my application may be denied if I have falsified any information in any way. I authorize the use of my submitted documentation, assignments, projects, exams and portfolio for the purpose of the assessment.

Signature: _____   Date: _____
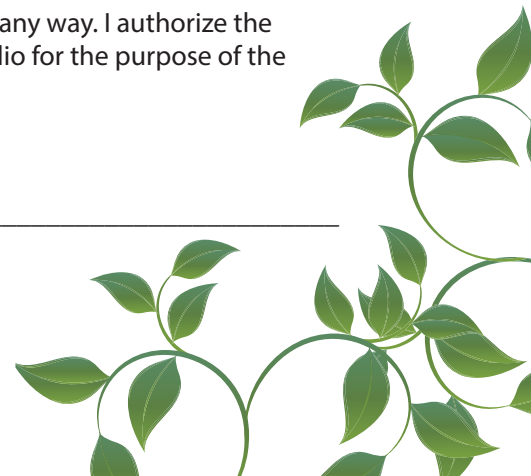
Total Fee with taxes included:

Tax is based on your province of residence. Please select one (GST/HST# 811344852):

☐ QC, AB, SK, MB, BC, NWT, NV, YK (with 5% GST added) $ 393.75	☐ PEI, (with 14% HST added) $ 427.50
☐ ON, NB, NFLD, (with 13% HST added) $ 423.75	☐ GST/HST exempt (no tax added)* $ $375.00
☐ NS, (with 15% HST added) $ 431.25	* Please include proof of tax exemption at time of application (A letter of exemption from your employer and/or a copy of your status card – you must have an on-reserve mailing address)

☐ **I have enclosed a cheque payable to "FNHMA"**   ☐ **Visa** ☐ **MasterCard**

Card Number: **Expiry Date:**   **Cardholder Signature:**

/

Name on Card: **Amount Paid:**

First Nations Health Managers Association

Association des gestionnaires de santé des Premières Nations

Mail to:

FNHMA
300 March Road, Suite 203
Ottawa, ON K2K 2E2

or e-mail: info@fnhma.ca

Notes

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