

HANDBOOK

PLAR APPLICANT



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General Information

This handbook has been prepared to assist individuals who received their naturopathic training outside of a Council on Naturopathic Medical Education ([CNME](#)) accredited program, and who are seeking assessment through the College of Naturopaths of Ontario (the College) Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Program to establish their eligibility for registration with the College.

PLAR applicants who need additional assistance or clarification, after reviewing this handbook, should contact the Entry-to-Practise Team at applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca or by phone at 416-583-5997.

About the College of Naturopaths of Ontario

The College of Naturopaths of Ontario (the College) is the regulatory authority governing naturopaths in Ontario in the interest of the public. Its mandate is to support patients' rights to receive safe, competent and ethical naturopathic care. The College meets its mandate by ensuring that individuals wishing to be naturopaths in Ontario meet the entry- to-practise requirements, maintain their competency, set and maintain Standards of Practice in Ontario and by holding naturopaths accountable through the complaints and disciplinary processes

Collection, Use and Disclosure of Information

Information collected as part of the registration process is collected under the authority of the [Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#) (RHPA) and the [Naturopathy Act, 2007](#) and the regulations made under the legislation. Additional information is collected in accordance with the By-laws of the College.

Information that is collected is used to make a decision on each applicant's eligibility for registration with the College and to provide information to the public and to the Government of Ontario for health human resource planning purposes as required under the legislation.

What Is PLAR?

The College's PLAR program is a series of assessments, both paper-based and demonstration-based, allowing individuals whose naturopathic education was obtained outside of a CNME-accredited program to demonstrate that they have the necessary naturopathic competencies, both knowledge and skill-based, to practise naturopathy safely and competently in Ontario, keeping in mind that this is a [multi-stage assessment process](#), and not a training or bridging program.

PLAR applicants who successfully complete the PLAR program are deemed to have the knowledge, skill and judgement that are "substantially equivalent" to an applicant trained through a CNME-accredited program. Successful PLAR applicants will be invited to complete Entry-to-Practise (ETP) Examinations and make an application for registration. Please refer to the [Entry-to-Practise Requirements](#) section of this handbook for additional information.

The Basic Principles of PLAR

The College adheres to the following basic principles when assessing PLAR applicants:

- All applicants for registration are assessed using the same objective criteria regardless of where they received their naturopathic education.
- Judgements regarding the equivalence of education and experience are based upon criteria that are relevant to the practice of naturopathy in Ontario, and which protect the public's safety.
- The College's core competencies as well as accreditation standards set by CNME are used as the basis for the rubric to evaluate the naturopathic skills and educational knowledge of applicants whose training was completed outside of accredited institutions in naturopathy.
- The College supports the principles set out by the [Office of the Fairness Commissioner](#) and conducts its assessments of applicants from non-accredited institutions in naturopathic medicine accordingly.



- PLAR applicants from non-accredited institutions are not required to meet different or higher standards than those required of applicants who have graduated from a CNME-accredited educational program.

Translation of documents

All materials provided to the College to support PLAR assessments for any stage of the PLAR program (including establishing eligibility) must be in either English or French. PLAR applicants are required to provide certified translations of all materials not written in either official language, at their own expense.

If transcripts and official university documents are in a language other than English or French, translation by a certified translator, an individual who is a member in good standing of a professional translation association in Canada or abroad, is required. Their certification must be confirmed by a seal or stamp that shows the translator's membership number. All stamps and seals that are not in English or French must also be translated. To ensure that translations have not been modified in any way, translations must be sent directly from the certified translator to the College.

Translations must be performed by qualified professionals who are certified by a government organization, such as the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) or a translator who has been certified by a member organization of the [International Federation of Translators](#).

To find a certified translator, visit the [Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario \(ATIO\)](#) or contact the ATIO at Tel: 1- 800-234-5030 or by email at info@atio.on.ca.

Inability to obtain documentation due to exceptional circumstances

PLAR applicants who are unable to obtain a document to support an assessment of eligibility or of their education or experience, because of exceptional circumstances, may seek to have alternative documentation considered in accordance with the [Alternate Documentation Policy](#).

Exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- an inability to obtain one's records due to war or civil unrest;
- loss of documentation due to natural disaster;
- an inability to obtain one's records as a result of political, ethnic or religious persecution; and,
- the issuing body/institution no longer exists.

For additional information, please contact applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca.



Obtaining An Accommodation

A PLAR accommodation is viewed as any granted modification or adjustment to address a PLAR applicant's current needs resulting from a disability (whether physical or cognitive, pregnancy-related need, health issue, or religious requirements).

To ensure PLAR applicants are provided a fair and equal opportunity to complete the PLAR program, accommodation requests received from any PLAR applicant will be considered within the framework set out by the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#).

Requests for accommodation(s) may be submitted at any stage in the PLAR program, except for accommodation(s) being requested for scheduled PLAR examinations, or accommodation(s) being requested for a scheduled [demonstration-based assessment](#). These requests must be received a minimum of **30 days** prior to the date of the scheduled demonstration-based assessment or by the exam registration deadline for the Ontario Biomedical or Clinical Sciences exams, to allow time for appropriate arrangements to be made for any granted accommodation(s).

To request accommodation you must pay the Accommodation Request Fee of \$25 + HST and complete and submit the [Accommodation Request form](#) to the College. This form must specify the type of accommodation being requested, address the grounds for the request, and include written authorization for the College to contact the provider of any supporting documentation. In requesting accommodation, you have a duty to ensure both your request form and supporting documentation are truthful and complete. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or designated College staff may request additional documentation (as deemed necessary) to make a decision regarding any requests for accommodation(s).

In all cases, accommodation(s) are granted on an individual basis and will reflect the nature and extent of the identified need.

General requirements

Any supporting documentation submitted to validate a PLAR applicant's request for accommodation(s) must:

- be dated within six months of initiating PLAR, or no more than six months of a scheduled assessment or exam;
- substantiate the reason for the accommodation and outline the specific accommodation(s) required (e.g., if requesting additional time, how much time and why it is required); and
- contain the contact information for the individual providing supporting documentation, and authorization to contact them should additional information be needed to validate the request for accommodation(s).

Disability accommodations (physical and cognitive)

In addition to the general requirements, supporting documentation for PLAR applicants requesting accommodation(s) due to a disability, as defined in s. 10(1) of the [Human Rights Code](#), must:

- be provided by a regulated health care practitioner (as defined in the *RHPA*) or other relevant regulated professional, qualified to make an assessment or diagnosis on the condition (or physical injury), and who currently has or has previously had a doctor-patient relationship with the PLAR applicant, and
- be provided on the [Health Professional Recommendation Form](#), which asks the provider of the supporting documentation to substantiate the reason for the accommodation(s) being requested, and to provide information regarding how the requested accommodation(s) relates to the disability.



Religious accommodations

In addition to the general requirements as described above, documentation supporting a PLAR applicant's accommodation request due to religious requirements must:

- be provided by the applicant's religious leader;
- provide information regarding how the requested accommodation(s) relates to the PLAR applicant's religious requirements; and
- provide information regarding the religious holiday if the request is for an alternate assessment or examination date due to a religious observance.

Pregnancy-related or breast-feeding accommodations

Documentation supporting a PLAR applicant's accommodation(s) request due to a pregnancy-related condition or issue, must:

- be provided by a regulated health care practitioner, as defined in the *RHPA*; and
- include the submission of the [Health Professional Recommendation Form](#), which provides information regarding how the requested accommodation(s) relates to the PLAR applicant's pregnancy.

Applicants who require accommodation(s) to permit them to breastfeed onsite during a demonstration-based assessment must request this a minimum of **30 days** prior to the exam date and provide information which speaks to the frequency of feedings as this information will need to be considered with respect to the overall assessment schedule and feasibility of the request in comparison to the time constraints of the assessment component.

NOTE: Please note that breast-feeding accommodation(s) will also be reviewed in the context of any health and safety measures in place at that time which may include but are not limited to assessment day screening protocol and having to limit the number of individuals onsite at an assessment.

Review of requests to the College

PLAR applicants who have made a request for accommodation(s) will be advised of the decision within 10 business days of the original request unless the College requires additional information to effectively evaluate the request for accommodation(s). In this case, the PLAR applicant will be notified of the need for additional information and will be provided with the revised timeline for a decision on their request.

The CEO or their delegate cannot guarantee that the particular form of accommodation(s) will be granted and may, in some circumstances, contact the applicant to offer alternative forms of accommodation(s).



Are You Eligible For PLAR? – What Documents To Submit

To be eligible for assessment through the PLAR program, you must be able to establish identity, sufficient fluency in English or French and have at minimum an undergraduate degree **in a health-care discipline reasonably related to naturopathy from a Canadian university** or its equivalent from an accredited academic institution.

Proof of Identity

To initiate PLAR, the College must receive the following to confirm your identity:

A completed online Application for Pre-Registration

- Please refer to College Account Setup section of this handbook for information on how to create an account and how to access and complete the form.

A copy of Valid Photo Identification

- Accepted types of ID are noted under Photo Identification section of this handbook.

The Application for Pre-Registration form collects the following basic information:

- all current and past names: middle names, maiden names, previous names, and nicknames or other names used,
- date of birth,
- contact information: address, email, and telephone number; and
- language of formal education.

Proof of formal education

If you completed your education **outside of Canada**, you must have your degree(s) assessed by a credential evaluation agency that is a member of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACES).

These currently include the following agencies:

- [Comparative Education Service](#) (CES),
- [International Credentials Assessment Service of Canada](#) (ICASC),
- [International Credential Evaluation Service](#) (ICES),
- [International Qualifications Assessment Service](#) (IQAS),
- [Ministry of Immigration, Francization and Integration](#) (MIFI), or
- [World Education Services](#) (WES).

The third-party assessment report must explicitly include information on the following:

- Authentication of the documents provided (i.e., diplomas and transcripts).
- Verification of the program, year of study, field of study, and issuing institution.
- A list of courses and their grades.
- A statement on the equivalency/comparability of the education completed as compared to the Canadian system of education.

Results of the formal education assessment must be sent directly to the College from the credential evaluation agency. Please contact the credential agency for information about credential assessment fees. Please note, the assessment report is not required to include a course-by-course assessment of naturopathic education.

If you completed your education **in Canada**, you must arrange to have your original university transcripts sent directly to the College. If the university is unable to send an original transcript directly, we will accept a



certified copy of the transcript. From this report, the College will assess whether the education completed was in a healthcare-related field reasonably related to naturopathy.

If transcripts and official university documents are in a language other than English or French, you must arrange to have them translated by a certified translator, refer to [Translation of Documents](#). Applicants will be responsible for any associated fees.

Proof of Language Proficiency

Applicants for registration must be able to communicate effectively in English or French as per section 3(3) of the [Registration Regulation](#). Where the applicant's first language is neither English nor French, or where any part of the applicant's education program was not in English or French, the applicant must demonstrate fluency in either official language.

In order to be deemed to have met language proficiency requirements, you must provide the following evidentiary documents in accordance with the College's [Language Proficiency Policy](#):

- a signed declaration with the College which attests that you can comprehend and communicate fluently (both written and orally) in English or French; and
- a letter or transcript from the program in which your education was obtained that confirms the education was provided in English or French.

OR

Test results of a language proficiency test from one of the following institutions:

- [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) – Total score total of 100 (including Home and Paper Edition) with a minimum of 25 on all skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking).
- The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) – level 7 (General) required on all skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking). In Ontario: www.ieltscanada.ca, International: www.ielts.org.
- [Canadian Academic English Language Test \(CAEL\)](#) – A minimum overall score of 70.
- [Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program Test \(CÉLPIP\)](#) – Level 8 (General) required on all skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking).
- [Pearson Test of English \(PTE Core\)](#) – A general English test: minimum 69 in reading, minimum 79 in writing, minimum 71 in listening and a minimum 76 in speaking.
- [Test d'Évaluation de Français \(TEF\)](#) – (For demonstrating French proficiency only) – minimum 462 in Reading, minimum 472 in Writing, minimum 462 in Listening and a minimum 494 in Speaking.
- [Test de connaissance du français \(TCF\)](#) – (For demonstrating French proficiency only) – minimum 499 in reading, minimum 12 in writing, minimum 503 in listening and a minimum 12 in speaking.

For information on the costs associated with obtaining a test, please contact the language testing agency directly.

Test results **must be submitted to the College directly from the language testing agency** and must all have been completed on the same testing date. Test results submitted by applicants, or results obtained from tests taken on different dates will not be accepted. Test results are valid for two years from the date of the applicant passing the test.

Insufficient language proficiency

PLAR applicants, who do not meet the language proficiency requirements cannot move forward in the PLAR program until they have met the requirement.



Language proficiency exemption criteria

If you are unable to prove language proficiency with the evidentiary documents, as noted in the [Proof of Language Proficiency](#) section of the handbook (above), but believe you can demonstrate a degree of fluency in English or French, through alternative objective evidence, you may be eligible to seek an exemption.

Exemption requests are reviewed by a panel of the Registration Committee (the Panel) on an individual basis. In its review, the Panel will consider:

- to what degree the alternative objective evidence provides proof of language proficiency that is substantially equivalent to the requirements;
- whether the granting of an exemption will pose a risk to public safety or competent care; and
- whether the granting of an exemption will unduly hinder the PLAR applicant from being able to competently complete each component of the PLAR program.

Alternative objective evidence – Language proficiency

The following may be provided as alternative objective evidence of language proficiency:

- Documentation of the language tests and scores you have achieved to date (an original hard-copy document, fax or as a PDF copy).
- Evidence of experience with verbal communication, validated by letters of support, sent directly from third parties to the College. These may be provided by naturopaths, other regulated healthcare professionals, previous practice supervisors, previous clients, employers, or members of the public.
- Evidence of related health care employment where written documentation was required, validated by letters sent directly from third parties to the College. These may be provided by naturopaths, other regulated healthcare professionals, previous practice supervisors, previous clients, employers, or members of the public.
- Evidence of successful, functional communication as demonstrated and validated in a previous supervised practice experience (e.g., completed through an externship or similar). This should be provided directly to the College as an original document, or PDF signed by a preceptor and/or supervisor.
- Other evidence that you wish to present.

PLAR applicants whose alternative objective evidence does not satisfy language proficiency requirements but demonstrates a sufficient degree of fluency to enable them to competently complete each PLAR stage may be granted an exemption to be permitted to proceed with initiating the PLAR program. This exemption may be reviewed again at the point of application for registration to determine whether a term, condition or limitation (TCL) on a certificate of registration is required in the interest of public safety. In such instances, PLAR applicants are given the opportunity to provide additional documentation to address language proficiency again when applying for registration.

PLAR Eligibility Outcome

Once the College has received all documents and has determined your eligibility (approximately 7-10 business days following receipt of all required documents), you will be notified by email.

If eligible for PLAR, you will be sent an invitation to complete the Document of Education and Experience (DEE) to initiate [Stage 1: Paper-based Assessment](#). For additional information see Initiating PLAR on the College website.

If ineligible, you will be sent the reason for your ineligibility and information about other options you may wish to consider, such as enrolment in a CNME-accredited program or seeking an alternate career path which better aligns with your education and experience.



PLAR Program Fees

To ensure PLAR applicants do not incur unnecessary costs, PLAR fees are broken out by assessment type, and are billed only once a PLAR applicant is eligible and has elected to initiate the assessment.

Following successful completion of the PLAR program, i.e., deemed substantially equivalent, PLAR applicants will be required to complete the Ontario Clinical (Practical) Examinations and the Ontario Jurisprudence Examination before being eligible to complete the registration process for obtaining a certificate of registration to practise naturopathy in Ontario.

For the full list of fees, please refer to the [Applicant fees page](#) of the College website.

All fees are non-refundable, and payable in Canadian dollars. Payments can be paid online with Visa or Mastercard only (excluding debit cards) or by mailing a cheque or money order made payable to "The College of Naturopaths of Ontario" (abbreviations are not accepted). An NSF charge of \$75 + HST is applied for cheques returned due to insufficient funds or for processing payments against credit cards that are declined.

Understanding PLAR program fees

Fees charged within the PLAR program are directly related to the cost incurred by the College to conduct each assessment component, such as the cost of paying an assessor for their time to review documentation or to conduct an interview, or the cost of renting outside facilities for administering a demonstration-based assessment. This ensures that the process of assessing individuals through the PLAR program remains cost neutral.

College Account Sign-up

To access the Application for Pre-Registration form, register for College exams and apply for registration, all candidates and applicants are required to sign up for a College account.

To create a College account:

- Access the [Login page](#) on the College website.
- Select **Sign Up** to create your account by entering your personal email address. To ensure your account is secure, we strongly recommend that every account holder use their own personal email to set up and later log into their account. Please do not use a generic business or shared family email (general@, contact@, info@) that other individuals have access to.
 - once you have entered your email address, select next.
 - enter your first name and last name (as it appears on your government issued photo ID).
 - agree to the Terms and Conditions upon complete review of them; and click sign up.
- Within 15 minutes you will receive a **Confirm your Alinity account** email (check your spam/junk folder). If you do not receive this email within 15 minutes, please contact applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca.
- Follow the instructions in the email to create your new College password and gain access to your College profile.

Note: Each time you log in to your College account, a one-time code will be automatically generated and sent to your email account on file as part of the Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) set up by the College. This is a secure, and effective added layer of protection on top of your username and password to limit the potential for unauthorized access to your College account. Please make sure to check your junk/spam folders for the code prior to contacting the Entry-to-Practise Team at application@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca for assistance.



Completing The Application For Pre-Registration Form

Following successful login, you will be directed to your College profile. On the dashboard next to candidate click on **Apply** to complete the pre-registration form.

Registration Eligibility

- Select the 'I am applying for PLAR Program' option.

Personal Information

- FIRST NAME, MIDDLE NAME(S) AND LAST NAME

Enter your full name as it appears on your legal documents. If you have been known by any other names (e.g., a maiden name, an abbreviation of your given name, a nickname, etc.), these names must be provided in the application, as well as all names you intend to use while practising. For example, if your legal name is Robert but you also use Rob and Robbie, you would list both names as "alias names."

NOTE: If you do not have any previous names, alternate names, or preferred names that are different from your legal name, please select **No**.

If you select **Yes** to add any previous names, aliases, or nicknames, click the **Add** button to enter the name(s).

- GENDER

Select a gender option from the drop-down list. Information about gender is not used for any other purpose but HealthForceOntario reporting and is not published by the College.

- BIRTH DATE

Enter your birthdate. Note that you must first select the year, then the month and then the day.

- RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

All future registrants and current registrants of the College must provide their residential information both for College contact purposes and for reporting to HealthForceOntario, which requires home address postal codes for all registrants to identify the relationship between where naturopaths live and work. While the College keeps this information on file, the College does not publish it on the Public Register.

Photo Identification

As part of the Application for Registration, applicants must upload a copy of valid (not expired) government-issued photo identification (from the list of approved ID noted below), clearly showing full name, date of birth and signature.

- Canadian Driver's licence.
- Canadian Passport.
- Canadian Permanent Residence card with signature.
- Secure Certificate of Indian Status Card *issued on or after December 15, 2009*.
- Temporary visitor's permit.
- Other Passport (*international*).
- Provincial identification card *formerly known as the Age of Majority card*.
- Canadian Citizenship Card with photo.

Note: Photo Health cards cannot be accepted.



Language Proficiency

In this section of the form, you must declare whether you can comprehend and communicate fluently in English or French. If you select **Yes**, you must click **Add** to select English or French as a language from the drop-down list.

If you select **No**, click **Add** to select your primary language of communication from the drop-down list.

Note: you will also be required to add the language in which you completed your formal education. College staff will be in contact with you to detail the next step for providing evidence of language proficiency.

PLAR applicants are encouraged to add any other languages, in addition to English or French, in which they can competently provide professional services.

Naturopathic Registration History

If you have never held registration with a regulatory body to practice naturopathy, please select No.

If you hold or have held a certificate of registration/license with another naturopathic regulatory body outside of Canada, click on the "not listed" box. The non-Canadian ND Registration section will populate allowing you to enter the information required. You must type in the full correct name of the regulatory body (acronyms are not accepted), website, state and country in the sections provided. If you have resigned or were revoked, you must enter an expiry date as well.

Declaration

Review the declaration and select **I acknowledge and accept the above declaration.**

Note: The College strongly recommends reviewing entered information for accuracy before making a submission. Once the form has been submitted you will not be able to make edits to the online form. If you need to make a change to the information submitted, please contact the Entry-to-Practise Team at applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca.

The PLAR Assessment Stages

The general philosophy applied to the structure of PLAR is that a PLAR applicant must first demonstrate their academic understanding of the naturopathic profession, and then be able to apply that understanding in practice.

To properly assess required competencies, the PLAR program is divided into two major components:

- Component I: Assessment of Naturopathic Knowledge (Stages 1, 2 and 3), and
- Component II: Assessment of Professional Competency (Stages 4 and 5).

Stage 1: Paper-based Assessment

In the initial stage of the PLAR program, a paper-based assessment is conducted of a PLAR applicant's academic transcripts, formal education course descriptions and evidence of practise and experience using an evaluation schema that is based on the CANRA National Entry to Practice Competency Profile and the CNME accreditation standards. This evaluation schema is the Document of Education and Experience (DEE). As a PLAR applicant, you will be required to use the DEE to match your education, training and experience to the required content areas and subject matter areas, before submitting it to the College along with supporting evidentiary documentation.

To ensure that PLAR applicants possess critical knowledge related to the practice of naturopathy, evidence for naturopathic or similar related training for all four of the following content categories, and their supporting 25 content areas, is required:



- 1) Body systems and their interactions
 - Biochemistry
 - Anatomy
 - Gross Anatomy
 - Microbiology
 - Pathology
 - Physiology
 - Embryology
 - Histology
 - Genetics
- 2) Patient assessment
 - Diagnostic Assessment
 - Differential Diagnosis
 - Patient Charting & Record Keeping
 - Physical Exam
 - Psychological Assessment
- 3) Treatment
 - Acupuncture & principles of traditional Chinese medicine Botanicals (Western)
 - Clinical Nutrition
 - Counselling
 - Classical Homeopathy
 - Naturopathic Principles & Theory
 - Physical therapies including naturopathic manipulation
- 4) Prognosis and management
 - Disease Prevention
 - Health Education & Promotion
 - Inter-professional Collaboration
 - Therapeutic – emergency

In addition to the above four naturopathic-based content categories, PLAR applicants must also provide evidence of having obtained formal education in a minimum of 14 of the following 20 general medical subject matter areas. These 14 general medical subject matter areas must include the 10 subject matter areas (noted in bold font) that have been deemed mandatory for the safe and competent practise of naturopathy. Within these 14 subject matter areas, PLAR applicants must demonstrate having obtained a minimum of 1,000 learning hours.

- **Cardiology**
- Dermatology
- EENT (Ears, Eyes, Nose & Throat)
- **Endocrinology**
- **Gastroenterology**
- Geriatrics



- **Gynecology**
- **Hematology**
- **Immunology**
- **Neurology**
- Obstetrics (excluding childbirth)
- Oncology
- Orthopedics
- **Pediatrics**
- **Pharmacology**
- Proctology
- Psychology
- Pulmonology
- Rheumatology
- Urology

Finally, as a healthcare profession, PLAR applicants are required to demonstrate and provide evidence of having obtained a minimum of 960 clinic hours through their education, field placements or work experience. 960 hours is 80% of the total number of clinic hours required of CNME-accredited program graduates.

For a copy of the DEE form, which is a fillable/formulated excel file, please contact applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca.

For information on the DEE, including detailed instructions on how to fill out the form, or for detailed descriptions of the content and general medical subject matter areas, please review the [PLAR Document of Education and Experience \(DEE\) Guide](#). When completing the DEE, please refer to Appendix B of the DEE Application Guide, this document provides information with respect to anticipated knowledge/training for each content area, and information regarding which content areas may be supported with documentation that speaks to your experience and which require supporting documentation to speak to having obtained formal education in that area. When completing this information, please keep in mind that the purpose of this document and any supporting reference information being submitted is to demonstrate having obtained the required knowledge and training in these content areas. We strongly recommend that all PLAR applicants read through this information prior to making a DEE submission.

Stage 1: Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes for Stage 1:

- **Approved**—the PLAR applicant has demonstrated education and/or experience in all four of the naturopathic content categories and at least 14 of the 20 general medical subject matter areas. PLAR applicants deemed by the PLAR Committee as “approved” will be invited to move onto Stage 2: PLAR Exam #1 (Biomedical).
- **Partially approved**—the PLAR applicant has demonstrated education and/or experience in all four of the naturopathic content categories and 11-13 general medical subject matter areas. The PLAR applicant will be informed by the PLAR Committee of gaps that must be remediated.
- **Substantially non-equivalent**—missing any of the four naturopathy content areas or having only 10 or fewer of the general medical content. Applicants deemed substantially non-equivalent by the PLAR Committee will be directed to complete an accredited full-time program in naturopathy or seek an alternate career path.

PLAR applicants deemed partially approved or substantially non-equivalent may seek to have a supplemental review conducted of **documentation not previously provided** to the College as part of their DEE submission.



This review is conducted by the same assessor who performed the initial review and is limited to a review of only additional documentation.

To initiate a supplemental review, a request, and any additional supporting documentation you wish to have reviewed, must be received within 30 days of receipt of the Stage 1 notice of decision. Should the applicant decline this additional submission the Assessor's report will be forwarded to the PLAR Committee for review and decision.

PLAR applicants who have requested a supplemental review will be apprised of the timeline for a decision upon receipt of the additional documentation, which may vary depending on the number of documents submitted and the extent of the supplemental review.

Applicants who disagree with the outcome of Stage 1 may appeal this decision as per the [PLAR Appeals Policy](#). For additional information on appeals see the [PLAR decision](#) section of this handbook.

Stage 2: PLAR Exam #1 (Biomedical)

PLAR Exam #1, the Ontario [Biomedical Examination](#) is a three-hour multiple-choice exam (i.e., an exam which presents a series of 150 questions, each one having associated answer options from which the test taker must pick the correct answer). This exam assesses an applicant's knowledge of body systems and their interactions and is also completed by CNME-accredited program graduates seeking registration in Ontario.

Stage 2 requires PLAR applicants to pass the examination by obtaining a minimum scaled score of 550. PLAR applicants who score 550 or higher may move to Stage 3 of the PLAR program.

Timing and Attempts

Stage 2 must be initially attempted within one year of receiving notification of successful completion of Stage 1 of the PLAR program. Two scheduled sittings of the Biomedical examination are offered each year, administered by the College's contracted third-party test administration company, Measure Learning.

Stage 2 must be successfully completed within three attempts, and no more than two years of the date of the first attempt of PLAR Exam #1.

Preparing for the Biomedical Exam

The Ontario Biomedical Exam [Reference Guide](#) has been prepared to assist you in preparing to sit the PLAR Exam #1 and will help you understand the content areas you will be tested on.

Retaking the Exam

Three attempts are granted to sit and pass the examination. After an unsuccessful second attempt, a Panel of the Registration Committee will be provided with information about how you performed during both attempts of the exam. The Panel will then be required to set a plan of remediation detailing what additional training or education you will be required to complete to address areas where performance was poor before you are able to make a third attempt of the exam. After a third unsuccessful attempt, you will be ineligible to move forward in the PLAR program.

Appealing Results

If an exam failure was attributed to a procedural irregularity (e.g., you were given less time than others sitting the exam), an environmental irregularity (e.g., a fire alarm went off during the exam), or perceived undue bias (e.g., an unfair judgement or opinion based on, but not limited to, gender, creed, ethnicity or disability, which has a material adverse impact on your examination performance), you may seek to appeal the result in accordance with the [Exam Appeals Policy](#). If an appeal is granted, you may be provided with an opportunity to sit the exam again at an adjusted price or to not have the previous exam attempt counted. In no instance can a failed result be overturned by the Exam Appeals Committee.



Stage 3: PLAR Exam #2 (Clinical Sciences)

PLAR Exam #2, the Ontario [Clinical Sciences Exam](#) is a four-hour multiple-choice exam (i.e., an exam which presents a series of 200 questions, each one having associated answer options from which the test taker must pick the correct answer). This exam assesses an applicant's knowledge of necessary naturopathic competencies for the assessment and treatment of patients and is also completed by CNME-accredited program graduates seeking registration in Ontario.

Stage 3 requires PLAR applicants to pass the examination by obtaining a minimum scaled score of 550. PLAR applicants who score 550 or higher may move to Stage 4 of the PLAR program.

Timing and Attempts

Stage 3 must be initially attempted within one year of receiving notification of successful completion of Stage 1 of the PLAR program. Two scheduled sittings of the Ontario Clinical Sciences examination are offered each year, administered by the College's contracted third-party test administration company, Meazure Learning.

Stage 3 must be successfully completed within three attempts, and no more than two years from the date of being deemed eligible for PLAR Exam #2.

Preparing for the Clinical Sciences Exam

The Ontario Clinical Sciences Exam [Reference Guide](#) has been prepared to assist you in preparing to sit the PLAR Exam #2 and will help you understand the content areas you will be tested on.

Retaking the Exam

Three attempts are granted to sit and pass the examination. After an unsuccessful second attempt, a Panel of the Registration Committee will be provided with information about how you performed during both attempts of the exam. The Panel will then be required to set a plan of remediation detailing what additional training or education you will be required to complete to address areas where performance was poor before you are able to make a third attempt of the exam. After a third unsuccessful attempt, you will be ineligible to move forward in the PLAR program.

Appealing Results

If an exam failure was attributed to a procedural irregularity (e.g., you were given less time than others sitting the exam), an environmental irregularity (e.g., a fire alarm went off during the exam), or perceived undue bias (e.g., an unfair judgement or opinion based on, but not limited to, gender, creed, ethnicity or disability, which has a material adverse impact on your examination performance) you may seek to appeal the result in accordance with the [Exam Appeals Policy](#). If an appeal is granted, you may be provided with an opportunity to sit the exam again at an adjusted price or to not have the previous exam attempt counted. In no instance can a failed result be overturned by the Exam Appeals Committee.

Stage 4: Demonstration-Based Assessment (Structured Interview)

In the Structured Interview, PLAR applicants are assessed on their understanding of fundamental research concepts and methodologies, and their ability to interpret and apply that information.

Format:

Part 1: At arrival, you will receive a peer-reviewed article and a list of follow up questions. One hour is provided to read the article and draft answers to the questions. You will be allowed to bring your notes into the interview.

Part 2: You will meet with a panel of three PLAR assessors for a 90-minute structured interview. PLAR assessors are registered NDs trained to assess PLAR applicants using assessment rubrics that include entry-to-practise performance indicators to support an objective interview process. During this interview, the



Panel will pose questions related to the article and questions on the topic of naturopathy, to which you will be asked to respond.

Following the interview, the PLAR assessors will meet to discuss and deliberate. The scoring rubrics and notes from all three assessors will be collected by College staff and provided to the PLAR Committee for review and determination.

Timing:

Applicants must attempt the Structured Interview within six months of receiving notification of successful completion of Stage 3 of the PLAR program.

Stage 4: Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes for Stage 4:

- Substantially equivalent—A passing grade of 75% or higher, in which case PLAR applicants may move forward to Stage 5.
- Non-passing grade—between 50% and 74%, in which case applicants will be allowed one re-attempt.
- Substantially non-equivalent—A failing grade of below 50%, in which case PLAR applicants are referred to a CNME-accredited program and/or [HealthForceOntario](#) to seek an alternate career path.

Applicants who achieved a non-passing grade on their initial attempt, and who wish to re-attempt Stage 4 must notify the College within 30 days of receiving their Stage 4 results.

Applicants who do not notify the College that they wish to re-attempt Stage 4 after an initial non-passing grade, will be deemed to have withdrawn from the PLAR program. PLAR applicants who disagree with their Stage 4 result, may appeal in accordance with the [PLAR Appeals Policy](#). Please refer to the [Appealing a PLAR decision](#) of this handbook for additional information.

Stage 5: Demonstration-based Assessment (Simulated Patient Case Review and Interactions)

Stage 5, Interaction with (live or simulated models, allows PLAR applicants to demonstrate to assessors their clinical competencies, such as physical examination techniques clinical reasoning, and apply their naturopathic knowledge. Cases presented in the interactions are both common and important situations that a naturopath is likely to encounter in real practice.

Format:

- 1) **Part 1:** At arrival, you will be provided with a 10-minute briefing on what to expect about the structure for the day.
- 2) **Part 2:** Following the briefing, you will then review and complete three simulated patient cases. For each of the three cases you will read through a short statement of a hypothetical patient's presenting complaint, complete activities as directed by PLAR assessors related to the hypothetical patient case, such as demonstrating practical techniques and performing patient charting or "SOAP" notes and answering questions posed by PLAR assessors around assessment, differential and working diagnoses, treatment plans, concerns and referral indicators.

A 15-minute break is provided between each case.

The total length of time for completing all three cases, including the briefing and short break, is approximately 3 hours.

Timing & Attempts

Applicants must attempt the Simulated Patient Case Review and Interactions within six months of receiving



notification of successful completion of Stage 4 of the PLAR program.

PLAR applicants who achieved a non-passing grade on their initial attempt and who wish to re-attempt Stage 5 must notify the College within **30 days** of receiving results notification. Applicants who do not notify the College that they wish to re-attempt Stage 5 after an initial non-passing grade, will be deemed to have withdrawn from the PLAR program.

Stage 5: Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes for Stage 5:

- **Substantially equivalent**—A passing grade of 75% or higher, in which case PLAR applicants are notified of having successfully completed the PLAR program and will be invited to sit Entry-to-Practise (ETP) Examinations for registration with the College.
- **Non-Passing Grade**—between 50% and 74%, in which case PLAR applicants will be allowed one re-attempt.
- **Substantially Non-equivalent**—A failing grade of below 50%, in which case PLAR applicants are referred to a CNME-accredited program and/or [HealthForceOntario](#) to seek an alternate career path.

PLAR applicants who are not successful in Stage 5 will be informed that their education and experience is not substantially equivalent to the training and education of a CNME-accredited program graduate, and that they are ineligible for registration with the College, having not successfully completed the PLAR program.

If a PLAR applicant fails Stage 5 of the PLAR program they may appeal in accordance with the [PLAR Appeals Policy](#) or seek to have the final decision of being “substantially non-equivalent” and ineligible for registration with the College reviewed, by making an application for registration and appealing the decision to refuse registration to the [Health Professions Appeal and Review Board](#) (HPARB). HPARB is an independent adjudicative agency which conducts reviews and hearings of orders of the Registration Committees of the Colleges.

PLAR Decisions

PLAR Assessors & the PLAR Committee

Decisions on whether a PLAR applicant is eligible for and has successfully completed each stage of the PLAR program, are made by the PLAR Committee, which is comprised of registered naturopaths and public representatives.

In making these decisions, the Committee reviews and considers all documentation, including submissions made by the applicant to support an assessment, documents received from third parties (e.g., language testing or credential assessment agencies), as well as recommendations made by PLAR assessors assigned to your PLAR file. It is important to know that these determinations are made based on what is submitted by you (the PLAR applicant).

PLAR assessors are registered NDs who have been trained on how to perform impartial and objective assessments of your education, training, experience, knowledge and skills using College provided assessment schema and marking rubrics. Additional information on PLAR assessor criteria is noted in the [PLAR Program Policy](#).

In some cases, you may disagree with the Committee’s decision and may wish to appeal. Appeals for Stages 1, 4 and 5 are reviewed and decided on by the PLAR Appeals Panel, which is a panel of PLAR Committee members who have not been involved in making decisions on your PLAR file.

Appealing a PLAR Decision (Stages 1, 4 and 5)

PLAR appeals are limited to questions concerning:



- A procedural irregularity, which is an irregularity resulting from changes to a process or procedure. For example, being told you have an hour to complete an assignment but only being provided with 45 minutes.
- An environmental irregularity, which is an inequality resulting from changes in the testing or assessment environment. For example, a fire alarm sounds during your assessment.

OR

A perception of undue bias, which is an awareness of having been treated differently (for example, by an assessor or examiner) based on your gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, creed, country of origin or other.

Timelines for Appealing

To appeal the decision of Stages 1, 4 or 5, you must submit a request in writing to the College, noting the reason for the appeal, within 30-days following receipt of results of the assessment.

This letter must:

- outline the procedural or environmental irregularities, or perceived undue bias at issue; and
- provide facts which demonstrate that the procedural or environmental irregularities and/or undue bias noted had an adverse impact on your assessment result.

Appeal of Stages 4 or 5 – Required Supporting Documentation

For demonstration-based assessments, PLAR applicants who feel that a procedural or environmental irregularity, or incident related to undue bias could have affected the results of their assessment, are required to complete an [Incident Reporting Form](#) within 48 hours following the completion of the demonstration-based assessment. Without this document, the grounds for the appeal cannot be verified and the appeal will not be reviewed.

Assessors and/or College staff must also complete an Incident Reporting Form if they are witness to or feel that a procedural or environmental irregularity, or incident related to undue bias occurred during the assessment.

Process & Fee

Upon receipt of your appeal request, a review will be performed by College staff to ensure that the appeal criteria have been met. PLAR program appeal requests which, at face value, meet the appeal criteria (grounds and supporting documentation) will be submitted by the CEO or their designate to the PLAR Appeals Panel for review.

Appeal requests may be rejected for the following reasons:

- the procedures and/or requirements outlined in this policy were not followed;
- the procedures and/or grounds of the appeal are not based on the circumstances or grounds necessary for a valid appeal; or
- the request to appeal does not possess sufficient information or facts necessary to support those circumstances or grounds.

Information about whether the appeal request has been accepted for referral to the PLAR Appeals Panel will be sent to you within 14 days of receipt of the documentation. At acceptance of each appeal, the PLAR Appeal fee of \$75 + HST is charged.

The PLAR Appeals Panel will review the following documentation, where available/applicable, in deliberating a PLAR appeal request:



- the PLAR applicant's appeal letter;
- statements from the College concerning the assessment process in question;
- reports from assessors; and
- any other material, documentation, or information which the Panel determines necessary, relevant, and appropriate.

A final decision from the PLAR Appeals Panel on your appeal request will be communicated within 60 business days of receipt of the appeal request.

Appeal Outcomes

If the PLAR Appeals Panel decision is to grant the PLAR appeal, the Panel has the authority to make the following decisions:

Stage 1 Appeals – Paper-based assessment:

- to grant an administrative reconsideration; and/or
- to grant an administrative reconsideration at an adjusted fee.

Stages 4 & 5 Appeals – Demonstration – based assessments:

- to allow the PLAR applicant to re-attempt a failed assessment component, such as in instances where the PLAR applicant's assessment outcome does not grant a re-attempt option under the PLAR Program Policy; and/or,
- to allow the PLAR applicant to re-take an assessment component at an adjusted fee.

The PLAR Appeals Panel cannot change the result of an assessment, i.e., they cannot change a failed result to a pass.

If the PLAR Appeals Panel's decision is to deny the appeal, no further action will be taken by the Panel on the matter and the PLAR applicant will be notified.

Entry-To-Practise (ETP) Requirements After PLAR

PLAR applicants who have successfully completed the PLAR program, having been deemed substantially equivalent, will be invited to attempt registration examinations. To be eligible for registration, PLAR applicants must successfully complete the College's [Ontario Clinical \(Practical\) Examinations](#) and the online Ontario Jurisprudence Examination prior to making an application for registration to the College.

These examinations are designed to determine whether applicants have the entry-level competencies for professional practise and are a mandatory part of the registration process.

For additional information regarding these requirements, please refer to the [Entry-to-Practise \(ETP\) Examinations](#) page of the College's website. Examination handbooks for each exam are available in the ETP Exams Resources and Policies page of the College website.

Applying for Registration

To practise naturopathy in Ontario, PLAR applicants must be registered with the College. For information on registering as an ND in Ontario please see section under the [Apply for Registration](#) tab on the College website. Additional information regarding the registration process, fees, timelines etc., is available in the [Application for Registration Handbook](#).



Contacting The College

Mailing Address:

THE COLLEGE OF NATUROPATHS OF ONTARIO
ATTN: APPLICATIONS DEPT
10 KING STREET EAST, SUITE 1001
TORONTO, ON M5C 1C3

Website: www.collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca

Please be aware that, the College's office is closed to the public and visits are by appointment only. Documents may be sent to the College by regular mail, registered mail or courier. To drop off items in-person, please contact Entry-to-Practise team at applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca to book an appointment.

Application (Entry-to-Practise) and PLAR Inquiries:

- Phone (Entry-to-Practise Coordinator): 416-583-6002
- Email: applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca

Examination Inquiries:

- Phone (Examinations Coordinators): 416-583-5996 or 416-583-5979
- Email: exams@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca

Other Resources & Contacts

The following optional resource is available to assist internationally educated professionals:
[HealthForceOntario's Resources for Internationally Educated Professionals](#)

HEALTH PROFESSIONS APPEAL AND REVIEW BOARD (HPARB)

151 BLOOR STREET WEST, 9th FLOOR
TORONTO, ON M5S 1S4

TELEPHONE: 416-327-8512
TOLL-FREE: 1-866-282-2179
FAX: 416-327-8524
EMAIL: hparb@ontario.ca

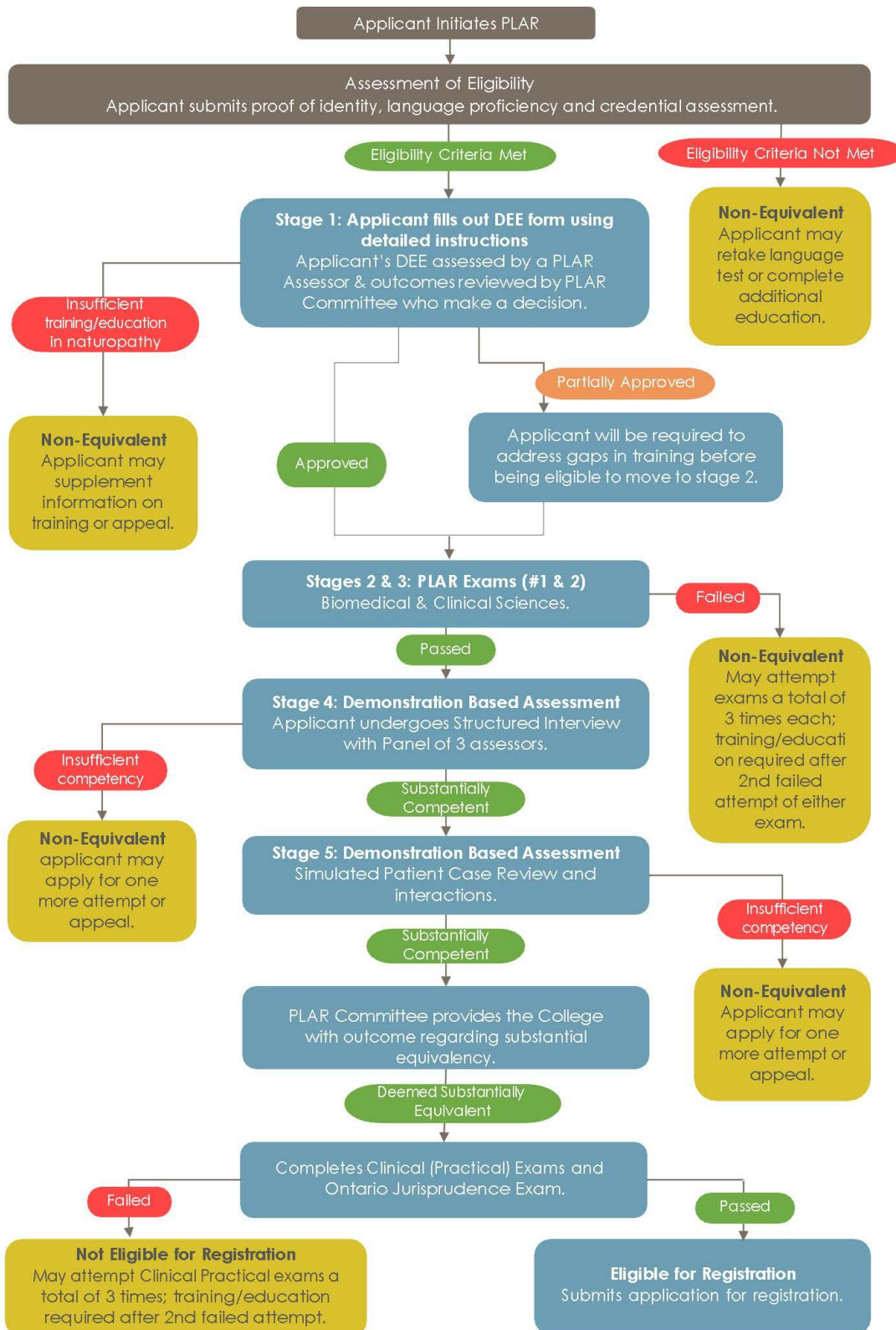
CANADIAN COLLEGE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

1255 SHEPPARD AVE EAST
NORTH YORK, ON M2K 1E2

TELEPHONE: 416-498-1255 OR 1 (866) 241-2266 (toll-free)
EMAIL: info@ccnm.edu
WEB: <https://www.ccnm.edu>



Appendix 1: PLAR Program Process Flowchart



Appendix 2: PLAR Timeline Table

Step/Process	Required Actions and Documents	Required Outcome/ Performance Standard	Fees	Estimated Timeline
Pre-registration Application: Establishing identity with the College.	Complete the online Application for Pre-Registration form and submit with a copy of valid photo identification.	Form properly completed and submitted, including a copy of applicant's legal identification.	None.	3-5 business days.
PLAR Eligibility Assessment: Education a) Assessment of education by 3rd Party Credential Assessment agency OR original diploma/transcripts if education completed in Canada. Documents must be sent directly to the College by the Credential Assessment Agency or Canadian accredited academic institution	Education completed outside of Canada: submit all official diplomas, transcripts and any other documents required to a College approved credential assessment agency. Access the list of College approved credential agencies by clicking here .	Submit proof of education ¹ : - Canada: 4-year undergraduate degree. - International: equivalent to a minimum of a 4-year undergraduate degree.	\$200–\$300 depending on agency (fees paid directly to 3 rd party agency).	7–10 business days after receipt of credential report or transcripts. Additional time may be needed by the College if additional verification is required. <i>Credential assessments take 15 - 60 business days on average; credential assessment reports are generally received by the College within 5-15 business days of a request being made.</i>
PLAR Eligibility Assessment: Language Proficiency b) Proof of language proficiency in either English or French.	Submit evidence of language proficiency in accordance with the College's Language Proficiency Policy .	Declare fluency in English or French AND provide proof of education showing language of instruction in English or French OR Submit results of a College-approved language test. Access the list of College-approved language tests and required scores by clicking here .	\$200–\$300 if a language test is needed. Cost depending on the test (fees paid directly to 3 rd party institution).	7–10 business days after receipt of evidence of language proficiency, or language test results directly from a 3 rd party. <i>Language test scoring takes 10-15 business days on average; test results are generally received by the College within 7-15 business days of a request being made.</i>

¹ *Original transcript or certified copy. Degree must be in a healthcare discipline reasonably related to naturopathy.



Stage 1: Paper-Based Assessment.	- Fill out and submit the Documentation of Education and Experience (DEE) form. Copies of the DEE are available from applications@collegeofnaturopaths.on.ca. - Provide supporting documents (transcripts, course descriptions, work experience, etc. as per PLAR DEE Guide).	Substantial proof of relevant education through previous education programs and/or an acceptable combination of formal education and work experience (see detailed lists and descriptions of content areas and mandatory requirements in the PLAR DEE Guide).	\$300 + HST.	2–3 months following receipt of all required documents and the fee. May take longer if additional verification or information is required.
Stage 2: PLAR Examination #1 (Ontario Biomedical)	- Complete exam registration form (assesses need for exam accommodation, etc.). - Pay exam fee. - Write the exam.	Pass exam (minimum scaled score of 550 required).	\$700 + HST, Testing Centre Surcharge \$75 + HST . (per attempt)	2–6 months from notice of eligibility to sit PLAR Exam #1. (Two sessions offered annually, every 6 months).
Stage 3: PLAR Examination #2 (Ontario Clinical Sciences)	- Complete exam registration form (assesses need for exam accommodation, etc.). - Pay exam fee. - Write the exam.	Pass exam (minimum scaled score of 550 required).	\$850 + HST, Testing Centre Surcharge \$75 + HST. (per attempt)	2–6 months from notice of successful completion of PLAR Exam #1. (Two sessions offered annually, every 6 months.)
Stage 4: Demonstration-based Component: a. Structured Panel Interview	Participate in the review of a peer-reviewed article and answer questions posed by a Panel of 3 PLAR assessors in a structured, entry-to-practise, competency-based interview .	Demonstrate a minimum of 75% of the assessed competencies (as determined by at least two of the three assessors).	\$600 + HST. (per attempt)	2–3 months from notice of eligibility to participate in the Panel Interview.
Stage 5: Simulated Patient Case Review and Interactions:	Participate in the review of three simulated patient cases and perform relevant physical exams and practical techniques (“interactions”) on live and simulated models. Perform patient charting or “SOAP” notes and respond to questions posed by assessors around differential and working diagnoses, treatment plans, concerns and referral indicators.	Demonstrate a minimum of 75% of the assessed competencies (as per competency evaluation metrics).	\$600 + HST.	2–4 months from notice of eligibility to participate in simulated patient case review and interaction following successful completion of the structured interview.

