A Candidate's Guide

TO

PORTFOLIO

DEVELOPMENT

FOR

ASSESSMENT OF PRIOR LEARNING

Portfolio Development

Introduction

Assessment of prior learning is a process which involves the identification, documentation and assessment of learning acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning. Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) involves recognizing a candidate's previous certified and uncertified learning in order to ascertain his level of competence/qualification based on the national /regional qualifications framework. Assessment of Prior learning is the means by which persons can reflect, identify and demonstrate their range of knowledge and skills through a valid and reliable process.

What is a Portfolio?

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of pieces of evidence demonstrating work produced by the learner over a period of time from a variety of sources. A well-constructed portfolio incorporates a selection of evidence which is clearly benchmarked against the relevant competency units and indicates performance relating to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in accordance with industry standards. It is an organized and convenient means of presenting material which records and verifies a candidate's learning achievements and relates them to the requirements of a training programme. It showcases different items of evidence required by the occupational standard.

Definition of evidence

Evidence refers to the actual proof provided by the candidate or other parties about the candidate's ability to perform as required in the assessment criteria. Evidence can come from a variety of sources and can be divided into the following main categories / types:

a. **Direct evidence** – this is actual evidence produced by the learner. This is evidence which has been validated /verified by direct observation by a verifier. The evidence can be materials that were produced by the individual, photographs as evidence of performance, and reports describing what the candidate has been observed doing. All photographs which are submitted must be signed, dated and/or stamped (at the back) on the day of direct observation, by the verifier (anyone who can confirm the candidate's claim of competence).

b. **Indirect evidence -**. This is spoken or written evidence that cannot be validated by direct observation by a verifier. This type of evidence is produced about the learner from another source other than the assessor and the learner. Claims of expertise, experience or skills need to be confirmed by the employer and or trainer concerned. For this kind of verification, the NTA specifies that the following be done:

- The verifier's report/statement/testimonial **must** be written on a letter that displays the company's letterhead. However , if the verifier does not belong to a company which uses a letter-head, all demographic data such as name, address, and telephone number **must** be clearly indicated.

- The report must contain the date when competence/achievement was observed by the verifier

- The company's stamp should be clearly displayed on the report and/or the verifier's signature must be written in a manner in which it can be easily recognized

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

The type of evidence to be collected is determined by the standard and may be collected directly or indirectly, written or oral depending on the quality of the evidence available. The evidence presented must be verifiable and relevant for the assessment of the qualification for which certification is being sought.

Who can provide evidence?

Evidence can be provided by the candidate, Assessor, colleagues, clients /customers and the candidate's supervisor/ employer.

Sources of evidence

Evidence can come from the following sources:

- The candidate's daily work activities
- The candidate's prior work experiences
- Certificates from previous learning activities (courses/programmes)
- Leisure activities
- Job descriptions
- testimonials/recommendations
- video and audio recordings
- observation by assessor/mentors
- authenticating reports
- certificates/transcripts
- case studies
- historical evidence
- personal statements
- workplace assignments
- projects undertaken
- products/work samples/models/ drawing plans
- photographs with explanation
- signed statements form clients describing work done for them (private jobs)
- Bills showing materials purchased to perform a task/job in a particular skill area
- Invoices and quotations for jobs
- Resume of work history

Rules of evidence

Regardless of the source/type of evidence, the assessor must ensure that the evidence meets the following principles:

a. **Validity-** This mean that the evidence must actually help the assessor to make the judgment

which he needs to make. As a result, it must cover the broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes which are essential for competent performance as required by the competency standard.

b. *Currency -* The evidence presented must actually reflect the candidate's current capacity to perform   the work covered in   the standard.   The evidence must indicate competence in the skill area should be demonstrated no later   than five years prior to the assessment period to be deemed current

c. **Sufficiency** - The evidence presented must be enough to meet all the criteria needed to certify the learner as competent. It requires collection of enough appropriate evidence to ensure that all aspects of competency have been satisfied and that competency can be demonstrated repeatedly. The evidence must cover all the performance criteria, range and underpinning knowledge in the regional occupational standard being used. If the evidence is insufficient, additional assessment will be required

d. **Authenticity**-This refers to the extent to which the assessment can be shown to relate to the learner's own individual work.

Planning the Development of the Portfolio

1.   The candidate and an advisor meet to review the candidate's learning and experience in relation to the units of the competency standard and outcomes competency

2.   The candidate and advisor match the candidate's learning and experiences to the units and outcomes of the award.

3. The candidate and the advisor agree on a plan for collating existing evidence, the generation of new evidence and the provision additional training required

4. The candidate is now mainly responsible for collating the evidence, taking into consideration the performance criteria, range and knowledge and understanding that are given in the standards/action plan.

5. The advisor guides the candidate in putting together the portfolio in the format listed below.

6. The completed portfolio is submitted to the Assessor for assessment.

Format of the Portfolio

Each portfolio must include information under the following headings:

- Title Page

- Table of Contents

- Acknowledgement

- Résumé

- Certificates/Transcripts

- Core Evidence Presentation

- Testimonials

- Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

- Bibliography

1. *Title Page*

   o Candidate's Name

   o Skill Area and Level

   o Name of Award

   o Date Submitted

Sample Title Page

**PORTFOLIO
OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD ADMINISTRATION
CVQ-GD LEVEL 111**

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR GCTVET
CERTIFICATION**

Monalisa Joseph

March 20, 2012

2. *Table of Contents*

   o Introduces the headings/title for each section of the portfolio

   o Shows the arrangement (what comes before, after)

   o Gives the page number for quick reference

   o Provides a list of tables and figures

3. *Acknowledgement*

   o Those who provided authenticating information

   o Those who helped the candidate in putting together the portfolio

4. *Résumé*

   o Organisation of your résumé is key. Ensure that it is neat and visually appealing. Check for grammar

- o Identify your skills and abilities relevant to your occupational area
- o Highlight your relevant work experiences, and responsibilities (put most recent first)
- o Highlight your educational achievements by institution, type of award and date (put most recent first)

Sample Résumé

Monalisa Joseph	Pearls St. Andrew 442-0015

CAREER OBJECTIVE
To provide opportunity for and facilitate quality early childhood care, education and development to children within my immediate community and surrounding environment.

EDUCATION/QUALIFICATION

1998 – 2000	University of the West Indies, School of Continuing Studies ❑ Diploma in Child Psychology
1995–1997	T.A.Marryshow Community College ❑ Diploma in Early Childhood Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1993 – Present   Belair Government School
      Department Head

Responsibilities:
- ❑ Owner/operator of a basic school
- ❑ Supervised a staff of 15 teachers and 4 support persons
- ❑ Created development programmes for students
- ❑ Directed the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities

1990– 1992   Tivoli Infant School
      Classroom Teacher

Responsibilities:
- ❑ Taught students in the infants classes
- ❑ Assisted in developing materials to support teaching

HOBBIES   Aerobics, gardening and reading

REFERENCES   Available upon request

5. *Certificates/Transcripts*

Present all certificates and transcripts from institutions attended that were listed in your résumé.

6. *Core Evidence Presentation*

Organise your evidence by the job function or a combination of related functions stipulated by the standards for your skill area. For this purpose you can use the clusters (grouping of related units) which were identified by your assessor as your action plan. These are the same functions/tasks against which you will be assessed in order to judge your competence in the occupational area.

Ensure that you have an explanation for all the functions and tasks stipulated on your action plan – this is your main piece of evidence. It gives details on **what was done, why it was done and how you accomplished the functions/tasks for your job** as stipulated by the standards for your skill area/job. You can support your explanation with any number of supporting evidence such as photographs. Even if it is an audio/visual presentation, narrate your explanation to accompany the activities just as if it is a documentary.

In your presentation, also show evidence of calculation, science and communication skills as they relate to the functions and tasks performed.

Present main Evidence

- Provide explanation
- Provide supporting evidence

Supporting Evidence can be any of these:

- Sketches/Drawing/Plans
- Samples – miniature replica of finished product or piece
- Audio recording
- Video recording – can be a main evidence supported by certificates
- Menus
- Forms – such as administrative forms.
- Case Study
- Floor Plan
- Budget
- Reports
- Photographs

Sample Action Plan

Assessment of Prior Training (APL) Action Plan		
Name:		
Skill Area: Early Childhood Administration		**Level: 3**
Functions and Requirements		**Evidence**
EC1	**CARING FOR CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL AND NUTRITIONAL NEEDS**	
EC1.6	Provide structure for optimal physical and nutritional development of children	
EC2	**PROVIDING STIMULATION AND CARE FOR INFANTS**	
EC 2.13	Create a developmental programme for infants	
EC3	**PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**	
EC3.9	Promote children's social and emotional development	
EC4	**FACILITATING THE APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR**	
EC4.5	Establish a framework and develop policies for the appropriate management of children's behaviour	
EC5	**PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING DAILY ACTIVITY PLANS FOR CHILDREN**	
EC5.10	Direct the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities for children	
EC6.	**PROMOTING CHILDREN'S SENSORY AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT**	
EC6.5	Promote children's sensory and motor development	
EC7.	**PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING COGNITION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN CHILDREN**	
EC7.7	Develop the language levels and communication abilities of individual children	
EC7.13	Develop cognition and imaginative expression in children	
EC8	**OBSERVING/DETECTING AND RESPONDING TO SIGNS OF ABUSE IN CHILDREN**	
EC8.6	Establish and implement procedures for child protection	
EC9	**OBSERVING/RECORDING DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND TAKING APPROPRIATE ACTION**	
EC9.4	Observe and record children's performance on specific tasks and activities	
EC9.5	Establish programmes to address developmental problems in children	
EC10	**MAINTAINING SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF CHILDREN AND USING FIRST AID**	
EC10.3	Apply emergency procedures	
EC10.6	Establish and implement health and safety policies and emergency procedures	

Sample Action Plan

Assessment of Prior Training (APL) Action Plan Early Childhood Administration Level 3 Functions and Requirements	Evidence
EC14 **PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF AND INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS**	
EC14.3 Exchange information with parents/guardians about their children	
EC14.4 Facilitate the involvement of parents/guardians in children's care and development	
EC15 **PERFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS FOR AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE**	
EC15.1 Establish and maintain admissions and record keeping systems for an early childhood service	
EC15.2 Share expectations and establish and maintain written agreements with parents/guardians	
EC15.3 Prepare and present a report to a management committee	
EC15.4 Prepare job description/specification	
EC15.5 Interview applicant for employment	
EC15.6 Orientate new member of staff	
EC15.7 Supervise a member of staff	
EC15.8 Conduct staff meeting	
EC15.9 Maintain employment records	
EC16 **CONTRIBUTING TO A HARMONIOUS AND EFFICIENT WORK ENVIRONMENT IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTING**	
EC16.9 Identify and resolve conflicts	
EC 17 **DEALING WITH PAYMENTS AND OTHER MONETARY TRANSACTIONS**	
EC17.1 Prepare payroll	
EC17.2 Make payroll payments	
EC17.3 Prepare tax returns	
EC17.4 Receive and account for payments	
EC17.5 Prepare and maintain cash summary	
EC17.6 Conduct routine banking transactions	
EC17.7 Maintain cash book	
EC17.8 Prepare bank reconciliation statement	
EC17.9 Administer float and petty cash systems	
EC17.10 Monitor and update accounts	
EC17.11 Deal with and account for cash transactions	
EC17.12 Implement a budget	
EC18 **CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF AND OTHER STAFF**	
EC18.1 Develop self within the job role	
EC18.2 Plan, implement and evaluate staff training	
EC18.3 Assess staff achievement and provide feedback	

Sample Action Plan

Assessment of Prior Training (APL) Action Plan Early Childhood Administration Level 3 Functions and Requirements	Evidence
EC19 PLANNING, IMPLEMENTING AND USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS	
EC19.1 Provide information	
EC19.2 Communicate information verbally	
EC19.3 Deal with written communication	
EC19.4 Compose correspondence	
EC19.5 Develop records management system	
EC20 MAINTAINING AND CONTROLLING STOCK	
EC20.1 Monitor stock levels	
EC20.2 Maintain inventory records	
EC20.3 Prepare cost justification	
EC20.4 Purchase goods and services	

Functions are in bold, for example **EC1 - Caring for Children's Physical and Nutritional Needs**

Tasks/Activities: These are not in bold, for example EC1.6 - Provide structure for optimal physical and nutritional development of children

In the case of the sample *Action Plan* given, evidence **must** be presented for all functions EC1 to EC20 and their tasks/activities, EC1.6 to EC20.4.

7. *Testimonials*

- Are more than a mere recommendation or character reference
- Provide detailed information
- Point to specific outcomes which satisfy the standards
- Speak to your competence in having satisfactorily mastered the functions/tasks as stipulated by the standards for your skill area

8. *Glossary*

- This is a list of all technical terms and abbreviations which were used in the portfolio, with their meanings.

9. *Bibliography*

This focuses on all the sources of information used during the development of the portfolio, such as the competency standard, relevant textbooks, manuals and websites.

- Concludes your portfolio and contains the entire source information. Your bibliography should include:
    - Author/writer
    - Publisher
    - Place of publication
    - Title
    - Date of publication
    - Place from which information was extracted – page number

Bibliography

1. A Guide to portfolio development
    Prepared by HEART TRUST /NTA, Vocational Training Development Institute,
    November 2009.

2. Best Practices in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Handbook: A documentation
    of Best Practices in PLAR. Prepared by: Barrington Research Group, Inc.
    Calgary, Alberta, Canada. May 11, 2005

3. PLAR QUALITY DOCUMENT – Draft document. National Training Agency of Trinidad
    and Tobago.

4. Principles for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Academic Credit or Other
    Formal Qualifications. Canadian Institute for Recognizing Learning (CIRL) 2005.

5. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): 'Realizing Potential through Certification'.
    National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago.

6. Quality Assurance in PLAR: A Guide for Institutions
    Prepared by: Shirley et al November, 2007

7. Workforce Assessment Centre Operations Manual
    Produced by the National Training Agency of Trinidad and Tobago.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assessor

An assessor is a specialist who conducts evaluation to determine a candidate's learning outcomes based on established performance criteria. The assessor is a person with the required knowledge and experience in the area being assessed.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of measuring a candidate's performance against pre-determined employment standards.

Assessment of Prior Learning

This is an assessment process which is used to assist adult learners to reflect upon and demonstrate learning to be measured against some standard in an occupational area. Through this process, the learners provide evidence to validate their achievements which ultimately leads to certification at the appropriate level.

Award

An award is a certificate, diploma or degree presented to an individual or institution in recognition of the attainment of work competencies or criteria governing the occupation.

Certificate

A certificate is a type of award designated to the achievement of set standards as determined by an area of study or skill

Certification

Certification is the issuance of a formal document recognising that a person has attained a standard of proficiency in a set of skills, knowledge and attitude that has been identified as requirements for employment.

Certification of Prior Learning

The certification of prior learning is the designation of an award based on the assessment of learning outcomes gained through life experiences.

Competency

A set of measurable skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained through formal and non- formal education, work experience or life experiences. These knowledge, skills and attitudes are required to perform work activities to the standards required in employment.

Competency Assessment

The measurement of skills, knowledge and attitudes obtained by various means, with the purpose of determining the candidate's ability to perform work activities to the standards required in employment.

Current

To be deemed current, competence in the skill area should be demonstrated no later than five years prior to the assessment period.

Duty

A duty is a cluster of related tasks into a broad functional area or general area of responsibility.

Evidence

The variety of samples produced in the form of written documents, work samples, or demonstrations to substantiate a claim of competence attained through prior learning.

Function

A function is the major activities of an occupational area. It is a combination of elements that make up an employable skill and which, when assessed, can lead to a vocational qualification.

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ-GD)

The National Qualifications of Grenada is a certificate of competence awarded to an individuals based on the attainment of competencies ascribed to the level of the skill for which the individual is assessed. The NVQ-GD is offered at five levels of attainment.

Job

A number of functions that may be classified as an employable skill and which represents a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ-GD) award.

Occupation

An occupation refers to a group of jobs consisting of a set of competencies or related functions.

Performance Criteria

Performance criteria are statements of performance that are used as the basis of assessing an individual's competence in a skill area.

Portfolio

A formally presented document that describes learning achieved from prior experience. It is a package of assembled documented evidence that supports a candidate's claim of competence.

Portfolio Assessment

This refers to the evaluation of the evidence provided as proof of competence in a skill attained through prior learning experiences. The evidence is presented as a collection of documents that are validated against the occupational standards.

Portfolio Development

This is a process of collecting, substantiating and organising documented evidence to support claims of prior learning outcomes.

Prior Learning Assessment

The assessment and recognition of knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired through formal and non-formal education, training or experience as they relate to specific criteria as set by the examining body.

Registration

Formal entry following admission to a programme of training, assessment or professional body in compliance with the regulations governing the organisation or profession.

Skill

A skill is a set of functions, tasks and duties that is identified within an occupation and measurable through a variety of assessment instruments.

Standards

Standards are the benchmark achievements used as a measure of skills, knowledge and attitudes required in performing the functions and tasks within an occupation.

Sufficient

Enough evidence must be presented to adequately support claim of competence. If evidence is insufficient, additional assessment will be required.

Transcript

This is an official document recording the candidate's achievements within a training institution or programme. The transcript identifies modules taken, grades achieved and awards granted.

Valid

This requires that assessment must cover the broad range of skills and knowledge which are essential to competent performance. It also ensures that the judgment of competence is based on sufficient evidence.

This is related to the outcomes, performance criteria, range, and evidence statements of the units being attempted by the candidate.

Verifier

A verifier is a specialist who confirms the authenticity of evidence of performance presented for the certification of candidates.

Verification

Verification is the confirmation of the authenticity of evidence of performance presented for the certification of candidates.