

	Policy Relating to Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)	Issue 01 Revision: 05 Date: 10 April 2019 Review by: H. Hunt Approval: D. Parkes
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Purpose

This policy relates to the assessment of diving personnel who have applied or who intend to apply for certification by the DCBC, who have no occupational (commercial) diver certification acceptable to the DCBC (e.g. NEB, ADAS, HSE) but who have proof of formal training as an occupational diver.

Scope

This detailed policy concerning the assessment of occupational diving personnel was developed to ensure that all Diver Training Establishments (DTE) accredited to the DCBC use substantially the same procedures to assess diver competencies, thus ensuring fairness and transparency in all DCBC diver assessments. DCBC needs to ensure, for quality control, standardisation (ISO) and liability reasons that every diver who possesses a DCBC certificate has been assessed against the same set of base skills and knowledge; this is particularly important in the area of stand-by diver drills, diver rescue and accident and emergency management.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer of the DCBC has the responsibility to review and approve PLARs received by the DCBC.

Policy

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the acknowledgement of competencies obtained through formal training and prior work experience.

The assessment must be at the level indicated by the candidates training and experience; e.g. a SCUBA diver cannot be assessed for surface supplied diving.

The purpose of the assessment is to offer appropriate candidates the opportunity to demonstrate substantially equivalent competencies to those described in the Canadian Standards Association's Competency Standard for Diving Operations (CAN/CSA Z275.4).

PLAR is intended to treat candidates equally without discrimination based on the source of their learning. To be equitable, the PLAR process should hold candidates to the same standard of competency or qualification as individuals who have not undertaken PLAR. PLAR should not involve assessment processes that are more rigorous than assessment of knowledge and skills through more traditional means.

PLAR Procedure.

In order to achieve this purpose:

1. PLAR candidates for a five-year certificate must be experienced occupational divers who have at least 4 years of legal occupational diver experience following successful completion of formal diver training.

2. The candidate must have participated in a minimum of 100 diving activities, within the past 5 years, prior to commencing the PLAR (i.e. dives undertaken during the PLAR do not count towards the prior diving activities). Diving activities may include a combination of tending and/or diving but the candidate must have completed at least 50 dives appropriate to the level of competency being applied for.
3. Candidates who have completed formal training at a DCBC accredited DTE but who do not have the experience shown in 1 and 2 above, may undergo a PLAR as described herein but may be issued a two-year certificate only.
4. The assessment must take place at, or under the supervision of, a diver training establishment or assessment organization (DTE) which has been accredited to the DCBC at the level of the assessment.
5. Prior to or during the assessment the DTE will ensure that the candidate has the opportunity to review the competency criteria and performance standards of the appropriate section of CSA Standard Z275.4.
6. The DTE will assess the knowledge-based competencies of the candidate through the use of tests and exercises which reflect the competencies described in CSA Z275.4. The DTE will use assessment tests supplied by the DCBC or tests that are equivalent to the DCBC tests. The tests and exercises may be conducted on the DTE's site or at a testing establishment acceptable to the DCBC. PLAR candidates must achieve the same passing grades as other candidates at the DTE. PLAR candidates who fail to achieve passing grades must receive further instruction in the subjects in which knowledge is lacking.
7. The DTE will assess the skills-based competencies by reviewing the logged experience of the candidate and by practical diving exercises which reflect the competencies described in CSA Z275.4.
 - Dive logs must be recorded in the candidate's personal daily record book or in certified company dive records.
 - The DTE will verify all dive logs which have not been counter-stamped by the employer, and at least 25% of the total.
 - The results of these verifications shall be documented and retained with the candidate's record of assessment.
 - Where the candidate is a diver the total logged practical diving experience should be at least as stated in the appropriate Tables 1 to 4 of CAN/CSA Z275.4.
 - Where the required logged diving experience is deficient the candidate may complete the required experience under the supervision of the DTE.

- For all PLAR candidates the assessment will include a sufficient number of dives at the level of competency being applied for to allow the candidate to demonstrate the following competencies:
 - a. Preparation of equipment; dress in correctly; complete pre-dive checks; entry; exit; and stand-by diver duties;
 - b. Chamber operations, where applicable;
 - c. Diver rescue.
- 8. The DTE will determine if the candidate's competencies are substantially equivalent to the competencies described by CAN/CSA Standard Z275.4.
- 9. If the candidate is deemed to be competent the assessment organization shall recommend, by written letter, to the DCBC that the candidate be issued a certificate. The letter shall:
 - Address the assessment of one candidate only;
 - Provide the name of the training provider and the date of training.
 - Confirm that the candidate's competencies are substantially equivalent to those described in CAN/CSA Z275.4.
 - Confirm that the DTE has viewed and retained copies of the candidate's appropriate certificates including, but not limited to, current medical, first aid, O2 Provider.
 - Confirm that the DTE has viewed and retained copies of the candidate's dive logs necessary to demonstrate the above-noted requirements.
 - Confirm that sample logs have been confirmed with one or more contractors.
 - Make note if the candidate was required to demonstrate diving competencies.
 - Recommend that the DCBC issue a certificate to the candidate at the level to which the candidate was assessed.
- 10. If the candidate is not deemed to be competent at the level he/she applied for the candidate may be found competent at a lower level of qualification. In such a situation the assessment organization shall recommend to the DCBC that he/she be issued a certificate at the appropriate level.
- 11. Regardless if the candidate passes or fails the assessment the assessment organization must advise the DCBC of the assessment and the result.
- 12. Candidates should have the right to appeal an unsuccessful assessment of their prior learning through a formal process.
- 13. If the candidate is not deemed to be competent he/she may not be re-assessed during the thirty (30) days immediately following the assessment.