

PLAR

SELF-ASSESSMENT



This guide is intended as a helpful resource for general contractors who do not have the required training to qualify for a new residential builder licence in B.C.

Completing this self-assessment will help you decide if you may qualify for a licence through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) review process or if you need more training before applying. It's important to complete the self-assessment before submitting your PLAR application form. The instructions below explain the seven competency areas and how to complete your self-assessment.

Remember, this tool is for your personal use. **Please do not send your completed PLAR Self-Assessment to BC Housing.**

OVERVIEW

There are seven minimum standards of competency required for builders applying for a new residential builder licence, as outlined in the *Homeowner Protection Act* Regulation:

1. **Relevant Enactments (Building Code)**
2. **Construction Management and Supervision**
3. **Construction Technology**
4. **Customer Service and Home Warranty Insurance**
5. **Financial Planning and Budget Management**
6. **Legal Issues**
7. **Business Planning, Management and Administration**

A general contractor applicant must demonstrate proficiency in each area of competency by successfully completing training as required under the regulation. This includes training from approved post secondary institutions or construction associations in British Columbia. It may also include training from educational bodies or institutions in other jurisdictions that are recognized by the Registrar as being equivalent in nature. Training courses must include successful completion of a graded exam or assignment. You can find a list of pre-approved courses that meet the qualification requirements on the Education Registry on our BC Housing website.

If you have not completed pre-approved training, but feel you have equivalent training and/or experience, you can choose to participate in the PLAR review process. The PLAR process considers hands on experience as well as training in other education settings to establish equivalent qualifications for licensing. It's important to carefully consider your options when choosing the best pathway: whether to proceed with a PLAR review or take additional training to demonstrate proficiency. A PLAR review typically requires a significant investment of your time and commitment to complete, and there is no guarantee of a successful outcome. Taking additional training is an investment in your future.

Nominee

More than one person listed as a person in control of your company can be used to demonstrate proficiency in the competency areas. Only one person in control of the company can be listed per competency. You should consider your strongest nominee for each competency area to maximize your chances of successfully applying for a residential builder licence.

Evidence

As part of the requirements for a PLAR review, you must be able to provide evidence to support your training and experience and include this with your PLAR application.

Evidence cont'd

If you've completed training that BC Housing has not pre-approved for qualifications, but feel it may be equivalent to one of the competency areas, you will need to submit evidence of successful completion with your new licence application. A course outline or syllabus along with your certificate of completion or transcript is recommended.

If you have not completed any training, but have equivalent experience, you need to consider what evidence you can provide to prove that you have the required knowledge. You'll find helpful examples of the types of evidence considered for each competency area in the self-assessment section (See Types of Evidence at the end of each section). Remember, these are suggestions only and do not guarantee approval, as each application is reviewed on an individual basis. You know your experience better than anyone else. Submitting documents that best support your experience will increase your chances of success.

If you have not completed any formal training and request a PLAR review based on your hands on experience, you will need to be able to demonstrate that you have significantly more experience than the minimum 24 months. We recommend not pursuing the PLAR pathway, unless you can provide evidence of having a **minimum of five years experience** relevant to that competency.

Instructions for completing the PLAR Self-Assessment:

In the next section you will find all seven competencies listed with a detailed description of the learning outcomes related to each competency. Learning outcomes state what a builder is expected to understand and can demonstrate. Follow the steps below which explain how to complete your self-assessment:

- Review each competency. Consider if you have a nominee that has completed training relevant to the competency and covers the majority of the learning outcomes. Training that required you to complete a graded exam or assignment will be given more weight during a PLAR review. If you have not completed training, consider if any nominee has substantial experience that is relevant to the competency.
- As you review each competency, rank your knowledge for each learning outcome on a scale of 1-5 by selecting the appropriate number indicated in the table below:

Level	Description of understanding and competency level
1	I apply this in my business. I understand the topic, concept or practice. I understand it well enough to teach it to someone else.
2	I have a good understanding of this topic, concept or practice. I could give a general explanation to someone else.
3	I have awareness of this topic, concept or practice. I may not do this myself or have a lot of knowledge, but I know enough to ask for advice or get someone else to do it.
4	I am developing skills and knowledge in this area.
5	I am not familiar with this topic, concept or practice.

- Consider what evidence you can provide to support your training or equivalent experience for each competency. Just telling us about your experience is not adequate for a successful PLAR review. Should you decide to apply, you must be able to submit evidence to support your claims
- Review your results. If you achieved mostly 1s and 2s with a few 3s for the competency level, and are reasonably sure you could provide evidence of equivalency, you could consider choosing a PLAR review for the competency area. To do so, visit the PLAR section of our website, download a separate application form for each competency for which you are seeking a PLAR review, and submit it with your licence application.
- If you answered mostly 4s and 5s for a competency area, or don't think you could provide evidence of your knowledge and skills, you should consider taking an approved training course for that competency before applying for a licence.

1. RELEVANT ENACTMENTS (BUILDING CODE)

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

1.a I can describe the role of the BC Building Code (the “Building Code”)

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- 1.a.i Describe how the Building Code is developed (objective-based) and what it accomplishes
- 1.a.ii Identify who enforces the Building Code and the general permit process
- 1.a.iii Understand how the Building Code relates to other codes, e.g. electrical regulations, BC Fire Code

1.b I can describe what the Building Code governs and identify the location of all key aspects of Division B, Parts 9 and 12, relating to residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- 1.b.i Identify soil-bearing capacity and problematic soil conditions on a building site
- 1.b.ii Identify structural materials and methods of assembly to reduce damage from movement for:
 - Foundations
 - Superstructure
 - Roof structure
- 1.b.iii Identify building envelope and keeping the weather out, and resolving simple issues
 - Foundation drainage
 - Insulation and air/vapour barriers
 - Windows and doors
 - Flashing and cladding types – EIFS as a drained (rainscreen) system
 - Flashing and roofing types – flat roofs
- 1.b.iv Identify sound transmission into residential units, and solve simple problems
 - No requirements for impact noise but consider mitigating
 - Lab tests cannot be replicated onsite, therefore consider increasing STC for assemblies
 - Plumbing and mechanical noise
- 1.b.v Identify heating and ventilation systems controlling indoor air quality
 - Design temperatures
 - Air conditioning not required
 - Ventilation equipment, sizing and ducting
- 1.b.vi Identify septic systems: overview of design and operation
- 1.b.vii Identify installation of interior finishes, e.g. flooring, cabinetry, trimwork, etc.

1.c I can demonstrate an understanding of the British Columbia Fire Code and its application to residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

1.d I can demonstrate a general understanding of how local bylaws may affect residential construction and where to locate the bylaws

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

1.e I understand the application of relevant building codes and enactments in areas with no local bylaws

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Relevant Enactments** are:

- Testimonials from industry experts, such as building inspectors, engineers, designers or architects who have worked with you and can speak to your competency or evidence that you hold one of these designations
- For previous licensed builders, a reference from a home warranty insurance provider with claims history
- Red Seal Certification (carpentry)
- Description of a project on a unique or especially challenging site with inspection reports
- Evidence of completing Part 9 building code related training

2. CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

2.a I can describe and use project planning in my business

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- Compare and contrast ways of meeting human resource requirements through staff and subcontractors: advantages and disadvantages of each approach, need for job descriptions
- Understand tendering: bid requirements and practices, trade selection
- Prepare and use scheduling: value of scheduling, scheduling guidelines, critical scheduling stages, time management

2.b I can organize and implement project supervision

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Organize material and labour acquisition: purchasing order system and guidelines, substitutions, timing, storage and care
- ii. Understand responsibility for pre-construction activities: site logistics, site servicing, mitigating environmental impacts, contingency plans (e.g. bad weather)
- iii. Describe best practices for working relationships with people involved in the construction process, including employees, sub-contractors, suppliers and inspectors; describe key elements of a human resources plan
- iv. Understand contract compliance and plan checks
- v. Understand different types of inspections and be able to apply inspection guidelines (e.g. for building officials or engineers)
- vi. Understand key elements of quality control: performance benchmarks, associated requirements
- vii. Describe reporting requirements (internal and external)
- viii. Describe how to set-up and monitor cost control: comparison of costs with budget
- ix. Describe how to use a change/work order system

2.c I can identify and implement project site work safety

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Identify and implement guidelines on safe site conditions
- ii. Identify and implement guidelines from occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation
- iii. Identify and implement guidelines from WHMIS regulations
- iv. Identify and implement guidelines from WorkSafeBC standards, including site specific safety plan, company safety plan, and insurance requirements

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Construction Management and Supervision** are:

- Letters from people you've worked with describing your ability to effectively manage a project
- A project plan from the last year
- A sample quality assurance checklist you use
- Your documented quality standards
- Written health and safety policies or procedures
- A site safety plan you developed for a specific worksite
- Records of risk assessments and hazard control efforts
- Written emergency procedures
- Labour estimates for a recent project
- Examples of purchase orders and/or change orders for a recent project
- For previous licensed builders, a reference from a home warranty insurance provider with claims history
- Evidence of completing construction management related training

3. CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

3.a I can explain the “house-as-a-system” concept

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

3.b I understand how building science affects durability and occupant comfort

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Explain controlling heat flow (heat flow mechanisms, i.e. conduction, convection and radiation)
- ii. Explain controlling moisture flow (moisture movement mechanisms, i.e. bulk moisture movement, capillary action, air-borne moisture and vapour diffusion)

3.c I can categorize indoor air quality contributors and detractors, and identify material selection

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

3.d I can explain the following objectives in sustainable development: energy efficiency, resources efficiency, and environmental responsibility

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

3.e I understand building envelope details

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Classify air barriers (materials and details)
- ii. Classify vapour barriers (materials and details)
- iii. Distinguish foundation design: types of foundations, heat loss control, and moisture control
- iv. Distinguish floors: details for heat flow control, moisture management, details at critical locations, vibration telegraphing sub-floors
- v. Distinguish wall design: heat loss and moisture control, alternate details
- vi. Distinguish roof construction and attics: air leakage into attics, details at critical locations, heat loss control, details to deal with specific problems (e.g. truss uplift and ice damming)
- vii. Distinguish windows and doors: installation guidelines to control heat loss and gains, and moisture
- viii. Distinguish off-site panelized wall and floor systems

3.f I understand the basics of mechanical systems

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Distinguish heating, cooling and ventilation principles
- ii. Distinguish heating systems
- iii. Distinguish heat distribution systems
- iv. Distinguish ventilation systems: benchmarks, alternate systems, HRVs and ERVs, plus design and installation considerations

3.g I can explain the basics of integrated mechanical systems

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

3.h I understand the correct use of engineered building components, such as trusses, insulated concrete forms and load-bearing steel studs

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

3.i I can identify how geographical and geological features can affect residential construction and explain how to mitigate risk due to these features

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Construction Technology** are:

- Testimonials from industry experts, such as building inspectors, engineers, designers or architects who have worked with you and can speak to your competency or evidence that you hold one of these designations
- Red Seal Certification (carpentry)
- For previous licensed builders, a reference from a home warranty insurance provider with claims history
- Examples of innovative projects you have worked on that speak to your knowledge of building science with permits, plans or reference letters that support your role in the project
- Evidence that you have completed one of the green building certification programs such as Natural Resources Canada's Energy Star for New Homes, R-2000, Passive House, Net Zero Home or LEED
- Completion of any other relevant courses that relate to building science

4. CUSTOMER SERVICE AND HOME WARRANTY INSURANCE

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

4.a I can explain what customer service is

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Describe the main factors of service excellence
- ii. Demonstrate understanding of customer values, behaviours and expectations

4.b I understand what a good customer service framework includes

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Explain how to establish expectations and why this is important for good customer service
- ii. Understand the steps in transferring a home to the customer
- iii. Describe the elements of a walk-through inspection and its relationship to customer service and home warranty
- iv. Explain the importance of customer orientation, including key components of an effective maintenance manual
- v. Explain how to plan for warranty service work, including time management, budget contingency, and sub-contracts

4.c I know how to handle common difficult customer situations and methods for resolving conflicts

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Identify the common causes of disputes and customer dissatisfaction
- ii. Explain techniques for resolving disputes; identify and briefly describe the key processes for resolving disputes

4.d I can construct and use a quality customer service action plan

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Represent attributes of an effective customer service strategy
- ii. Explain procedures for identifying customer service problems and solutions

4.e I can explain the roles of homeowner, builder and home warranty insurance provider in identifying and responding to possible construction defects

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Customer Service and Home Warranty Insurance** are:

- For previous licensed builders, a reference from a home warranty insurance provider with claims history
- Customer feedback and testimonials
- Results of a professional customer satisfaction survey
- Documented quality assurance activities
- Documents related to handling and resolving customer complaints, including a customer service plan
- Examples of follow-up work such as repairs or warranty work
- Walk-through check list
- For builders who worked with warranty providers outside of B.C., a reference letter from the warranty provider which includes the number of homes built and the claims history for those projects

5. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND BUDGET MANAGEMENT

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

5.a I can describe financial planning

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- Show integration with business plan, purpose and main elements of the business plan
- Construct financial projections
- Compute pro-forma statement of operations (budget)
 - Explanation/elements (sales, costs, gross income, net income, etc.)
 - Purposes of the pro-forma statement of operations
- Compute pricing: alternate methods, factors to consider
- Compute break-even analysis: explanation
- Discuss overhead costs
- Apply margin/mark-up: explanation and guidelines
- Pro-forma statement of financial position: explanation and elements
- Calculate pro-forma cash flow statement

5.b I understand the main components of financial management

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Explain financial management practices: records requirements and operating guidelines, e.g. timely reporting, communicating guidelines
- ii. Explain accounting concepts, principles and practices
 - Accounting cycle
 - Alternate accounting benchmarks
 - Accrual accounting
 - Accounts receivable
 - Accounts payable
- iii. Bookkeeping: explanation, concepts and practices: journal entries, double-entry, preparation of ledgers, trial balance, etc.
- iv. Describe financial statements
 - Statement of operations: explanation, elements (sales, costs (fixed, variable), gross income, net income)
 - Statement of financial position: explanation; elements (assets, liabilities, shareholders' equity)
 - Cash flow statement: timing of costs, income and guidelines
 - Analysis of variances (between forecasts and actual results)
- v. Describe financial performance measures: financial ratios, benchmarking
- vi. Give examples of financing: types of construction financing
- vii. Describe lender policies and working with lenders
- viii. Describe credit arrangements
- ix. Describe loan and collateral security requirements and arrangements
- x. Apply cost control (general and specific, i.e. overhead, construction, sales, administration costs)
- xi. Define purchase order system
- xii. Construct a system to control/account for extras and changes

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Financial Planning and Budget Management** are:

- Financial Statements
- Quotes received and selected
- A contract budget you prepared in the last year
- A preliminary estimate or estimate worksheets you prepared for a recent project
- A tender submission you prepared in the last three years
- A proposal you prepared in the last three years
- Chartered accountant designation or completion of a financial management, accounting, bookkeeping or other relevant course

6. LEGAL ISSUES

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

6.a I can summarize the main legal requirements of contracts used in residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.b I can demonstrate how to construct basic contracts

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.c I can describe the common types of contracts used in residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.d I can explain the difficulties between an Agreement of Purchase and Sale and a contracted home

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.e I can describe the basics of the land registry system and related topics

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.f I can summarize builder liability

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.g I can explain builders lien legislation

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.h I can describe dispute resolution mechanisms available for residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

6.i I can describe how provincial legislation and local bylaws may affect residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to understand:

- i. Zoning and easements
- ii. Development permits
- iii. Building permits
- iv. Inspection requirements
- v. Occupancy permits

6.j I can describe how regulatory requirements or prohibitions regarding health, the environment, riparian areas, and energy performance may affect residential construction

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Legal Issues** are:

- A description of how you comply with privacy legislation (a privacy policy or steps you take to secure information)
- Description of basic types of contracts used in residential construction with evidence of contracts you have personally used (personal information may be redacted)
- Description of builders liens legislation and any specific examples of an instance where you had to use a lien
- Description of mechanisms you could use for dispute resolution and any specific examples of any disputes you have had in the past and the steps taken to resolve the dispute
- Copy of your builder liability insurance
- Past project example of any local bylaw-specific requirements that placed restrictions on the project and what you did to comply
- Completion of any construction law related training

7. BUSINESS PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Person with this qualification: _____

I have equivalent training:

Name of course: _____

Name of training provider: _____

Date of course completion: _____

I have equivalent experience:

Name of employer: _____

Length of service: _____

7.a I can explain my business vision, objectives and goals

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- Describe statement of vision, objectives and goals
- Explain statement of company rationale, values, directions and risks
- Explain statement of ethics
- Explain products and services

7.b I understand the purpose of financial plans as they relate to a business plan

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

7.c I understand the basic concepts of a marketing plan

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Explain the following terms: market research, marketing, marketing plans
- ii. Describe elements of a marketing plan: market environment, target market, positioning, pricing, strategy, sales strategy (public relations plan, advertising plan and referrals plan)

7.d I understand the various elements of an operating plan

Level of understanding (select): 1 2 3 4 5

You will be required to provide evidence showing your ability to:

- i. Describe different business forms (i.e. sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, limited partnerships, partnerships of corporations) and some pros and cons of each model
- ii. Explain why and when a new/updated plan should be developed
- iii. Manage change: give examples of when changes to one part of the business plan affect other parts
- iv. Explain importance of communications to business success and develop guidelines for effective communication

TYPES OF EVIDENCE

Types of evidence that may be applicable for the competency **Business, Planning, Management and Administration** are:

- A copy of your business plan
- Letters of support from people you work with showing that you manage your business professionally
- A letter from your bank or lender demonstrating your relationship with them
- Your pricing method or system
- A copy of your company's marketing plan
- Degree in business (BBA/BBM) or any other courses relevant to the competency

Please visit our website for more information about applying for a residential builder licence through the Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition (PLAR) process or to download the PLAR application form.

Licensing and Consumer Services
Branch of BC Housing

203-4555 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4T8

Phone: 604-646-7050
Toll-free: 1-800-407-7757
Fax: 604-646-7051

Email: qualifications@bchousing.org
Website: www.bchousing.org