

Inspire Integrated Bilingual Assessments

Candidate's Guidelines

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Inspire Integrated Bilingual Assessments

Inspire Assessments – Overview

Inspire’s integrated bilingual assessments combine a computer-based assessment (CBA) and a simulation lab assessment (SLA) to evaluate candidates’ competencies for Health Care Aides (HCAs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs), and Registered Nurses (RNs) at the entry level. Unlike a traditional pass/fail examination, Inspire does not focus on a binary outcome. Instead, it concentrates on identifying the assessment taker’s (AT’s) strengths and areas for improvement.

The assessment encompasses a spectrum of content, ranging from fundamental care, to handling stable or predictable health conditions, all the way to managing complex care in unpredictable scenarios. This content is tailored to align with the specific roles of HCAs, LPN, and RN.

To develop the assessment, the Inspire team collaborated with stakeholders and professionals in the nursing and health aide communities. They meticulously crafted and validated the content and structure of the competency framework, drawing from critical components outlined in national entry-level competency standards for each profession.

The resulting competency framework comprises ten categories, as illustrated in Figure 1. Inspire Competency Framework categories:

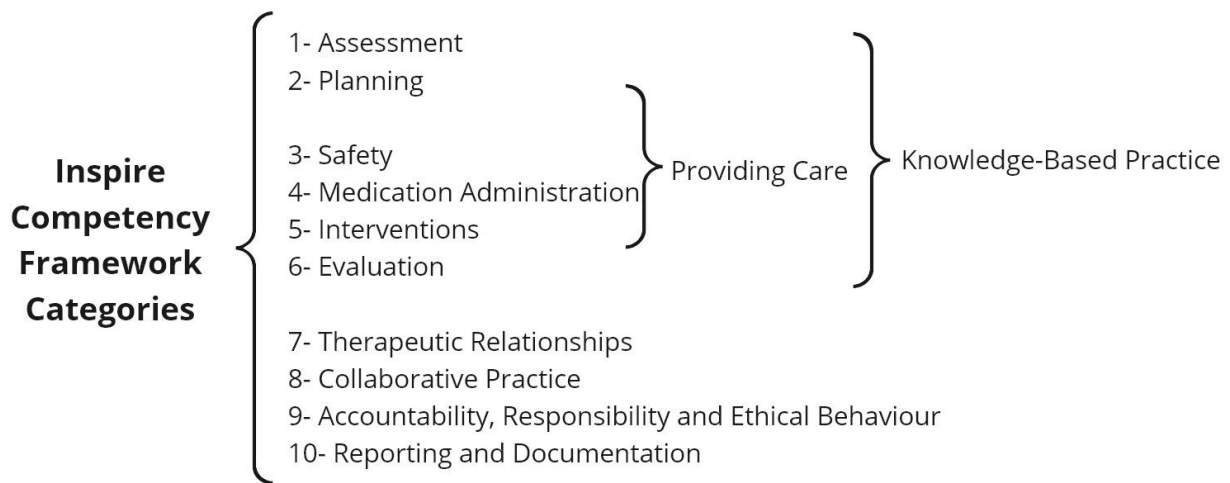


Figure 1. Inspire Competency Framework Categories

Inspire Competency Framework

The Inspire Competency Framework groups national and regional entry-level competencies into ten distinct reporting categories. These categories encompass a comprehensive range of skills that are essential for nursing practice.

Six of the categories are considered knowledge-based: Assessment, Planning, Safety, Medication Administration, Interventions, and Evaluation. These areas address fundamental aspects of the nursing process that are crucial for entry-level practice. Within these, Safety, Medication Administration, Interventions, and Evaluation are considered the Providing Care categories, emphasizing their significance in delivering patient care.

In addition to the critical nursing process elements, the Inspire Competency Framework emphasizes broader aspects that are essential for safe, competent, and ethical care. These include Therapeutic Relationships, Collaborative Practice, Reporting and Documentation, and Accountability, Responsibility, and Ethical Behaviour.

Together, these ten categories house over a hundred competencies, delineating the scope of the Inspire assessment and performance reporting for each assessed role.

Inspire Performance Report

Drawing from Miller's (1990) pyramid approach, Inspire recognizes the significance of assessing candidates' abilities at both the knowledge and application levels, termed "knows-how" and "shows-how" levels. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough and accurate evaluation of candidates' competencies.

Upon completion of both the CBA and SLA components, an AT will receive a performance report from Inspire. This report provides scores for each of the ten competency framework categories, which, together, aim to identify both strengths and areas for improvement.

The Inspire performance report amalgamates data from both the CBA and SLA into a bar graph format. The graph includes two cut score lines to aid in interpreting the scores. These lines delineate performance levels as undemonstrated, emergent, and consistent.

The performance report serves as a snapshot of the AT's proficiency in entry-level competencies necessary for safe practice in Canada at a specific moment. Inspire Bilingual Assessments' holistic approach empowers candidates to swiftly navigate the path towards registration and employment in a diverse range of healthcare roles, enabling them to make well-informed decisions. See Table 1 for the three performance reporting categories.

Table 1. Inspire Performance Report

Performance Reports	Performance Reporting Categories
RN Performance Report	Assessment, Planning, Safety, Medication Administration, Interventions, Evaluation, Therapeutic Relationships, Collaborative Practice, Reporting and Documentation, Accountability, Responsibility, and Ethical Behaviour
LPN Performance Report	Assessment, Planning, Safety, Medication Administration, Interventions, Evaluation, Therapeutic Relationships, Collaborative Practice, Reporting and Documentation, Accountability, Responsibility, and Ethical Behaviour
HCA Performance Report	Common Health Challenges; Client Mobility; Providing Care; Cognitive and Mental Health Challenges; Medication Assistance Planning, Time management, and Organization; Therapeutic Communication; Infection Control; Collaborative Practice; Reporting and Documentation; Accountability, Responsibility, and Ethical Behaviour

Scoring for Inspire’s CBA and SLA employs a range of procedures and scoring types. Data from both assessments is integrated during the scoring process, with contributions from CBA and SLA informing the category-level score. This scoring process is designed to mirror the significance and intricacy of the nursing process, as well as the critical thinking necessary to accurately respond to each item (CBA) or indicator (SLA).

Assessment Design

Inspire assessments are firmly grounded in a validation and program evaluation framework that prioritizes fairness and key assessment qualities, such as validity, reliability, and comparability. Inspire Assessment Services is committed to developing and providing integrated, bilingual, person-centred, culturally sensitive assessments aimed at ensuring fairness for all candidates, irrespective of characteristics unrelated to the evaluated construct.

To achieve this goal, Inspire adheres to a rigorous methodology encompassing design, development, delivery, and scoring of candidate performance. Table 2 outlines the quantitative characteristics of the assessments.

Table 2. Inspire Assessments Structure by Level of Care

	Intended Audience	Component		Time Available to Complete Assessment	
		CBA	SLA	CBA	SLA
Advanced Care	RN	172 items	5 scenarios	5 hours	3.5 hours
Intermediate Care	LPN	119 items	3 scenarios	3 hours	2.5 hours
Basic Care	HCA	69 items	1 scenario	3 hours	1 hour

Today, technological advancements enable us to assess candidates’ “shows-how” levels not only in traditional settings but also in virtual environments. By incorporating various item types, we have transitioned from solely evaluating “knows-how” to assessing both “shows-how” and “knows-how” in CBA settings.

The SLA component of the Inspire assessment evaluates candidates’ practical abilities in simulated real-life environments. SLA involves diverse case complexities simulated through standardized patients, high-definition mannequins, and realistic hospital-like environments. Observers (raters) score candidates’ performances using binary and Likert scale indicators.

All Inspire candidates follow a standardized process that enables them to demonstrate their skills and capabilities freely. This approach provides them with opportunities to learn and excel in both components of the examination.

Computer-Based Assessment

The Inspire CBA comprises a sequence of cases designed to reflect the content outlined in the assessment blueprint, evaluating entry-level competencies relevant to each assessed role. Each case provides the background information needed in order to understand and correctly respond to the items within it. These cases typically contain 5 to 12 questions. Depending on the role being assessed, candidates may need to respond to anywhere from 8 to 20 cases.

Candidates are tasked with employing critical thinking alongside their knowledge and experience to address the items within each case, drawing upon the context and client information provided. The Inspire assessment encompasses a diverse array of case environments and complexities, with items ranging from low to high levels of complexity.

The Inspire CBA incorporates various item types to facilitate assessment, including multiple-choice questions, multiple-select responses, matching exercises, hotspot identification, sequencing tasks, written open responses, audio-based responses, and prompts featuring

video and images. Each item type is deliberately chosen to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge effectively and engage with the assessment content. These item types capture information at both the “shows-how” and “knows-how” levels of Miller’s pyramid, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of candidates’ abilities.

Simulation Lab Assessment

The Inspire SLA comprises a series of cases aligned with the assessment blueprint assessing entry-level competencies tailored to each role under evaluation. ATs are tasked with demonstrating their proficiency within simulated healthcare environments.

Conducted at an assessment centre, the SLA replicates real hospital or healthcare settings. Depending on the role being assessed, candidates may navigate through one to five distinct scenarios. Within each scenario, candidates interact with either a standardized patient or a high-fidelity mannequin, voiced by a standardized actor.

Each scenario is equipped with all necessary tools pertinent to the portrayed case.

Each SLA case will take up to 25 minutes and includes:

- 5 minutes for candidates to read the case description.
- 15 minutes to provide care for a client.
- 5 minutes to close the case and provide a report if required.

Both the standardized patients and the Inspire observers, also referred to as raters or assessors, undergo rigorous training. Assessors are seasoned nursing professionals, while standardized patients are professional actors. Inspire meticulously trains them and evaluates their performance according to stringent criteria.

To ensure quality assurance and training effectiveness, all SLA sessions are recorded. Candidates’ performances in SLA environments are assessed by the observers using a rubric with standardized binary and Likert-type rating scales, either electronically with a tablet or through traditional paper forms.

Getting Ready for Inspire Assessments

To prepare for an Inspire assessment, we recommend the following steps. Keep in mind that each candidate may be evaluated for one or multiple roles, leading to variations in exam content and required resources. The steps provided below are general guidelines, and the specific documentation to review will depend on the role(s) being assessed:

1. Review the Candidate’s Guidelines (this document).
2. Familiarize yourself with the Inspire assessment blueprint.

3. Understand the entry-level competencies relevant to the role(s) being assessed.
4. Examine the case description and types of items included in the assessment (refer to this document, pages 9-13).
5. Use the training videos available on the Inspire website¹.
6. Review the performance report categories to grasp the definition of each assessed category (refer to this document, page 5).

Getting Ready for the Computer-Based Assessment

In this section we will describe the format and content of the Inspire CBA assessment. The CBA includes the following sections:

Opening information

This section serves as a welcome for candidates, providing details about the duration and format of the assessment. It offers a moment for candidates to acclimate to the CBA environment before beginning the evaluation. During this phase, candidates will encounter a case example followed by various types of items used in the CBA. This practice session allows candidates to familiarize themselves with the assessment environment and verify the content displayed. After completing the opening information, candidates will begin the assessment.

Assessment

Depending on the role assessed, candidates will see from 8 to 20 cases, each followed by a series of items. A case can have from 5 to 12 items. Each case will present a different healthcare set and client characteristics, and this information must be used when answering the items. See an example of a case below.

¹ [How to Prepare \(inspireassessments.org\)](https://inspireassessments.org)

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

In this section, you will be given an opportunity to answer practice questions with a case description as displayed below. You will see an example of an exam case followed by 6 questions. Read the case carefully, and then answer the practice questions. Please pay attention as this is a training exercise. After you complete the 6 practice questions, you will be taken to the beginning of the exam.

Now you can start with the following practice questions.

Workplace setting

You are working in an acute care hospital Emergency department.

Client profile

Martha Anderson is an 86 year old widow. She lives in a Long-term care facility. She has 2 grown daughters who live in another province.

Health Status

The Long-term care facility sent Mrs. Anderson to the Emergency department after she complained of left hip pain after slipping out of bed onto the floor. She walks with a walker. Mrs. Anderson requires cuing for all activities for daily living (ADLs) and frequently wanders throughout the day and night. She is cooperative and responds well to directions.

Health History

- Alzheimer's Disease (2018)
- Hypertension (2013)

Vital signs

HR: 78 bpm
RR: 18/min
SpO2: 96% on room air
BP: 145/90 mm Hg
T: 36.8 °C oral

Orders

None at this time as she is waiting to see the Emergency practitioner.

Figure 2. Inspire Case Example

Candidates will answer one question at a time, and they will not be able to change their response once the item is completed. Candidates can only move forward through the CBA. If a candidate does not respond to an item, a warning message will appear when they try to move on to the next item. Depending on the assessment role, candidates will have from 3 to 5 hours to complete the entire CBA.

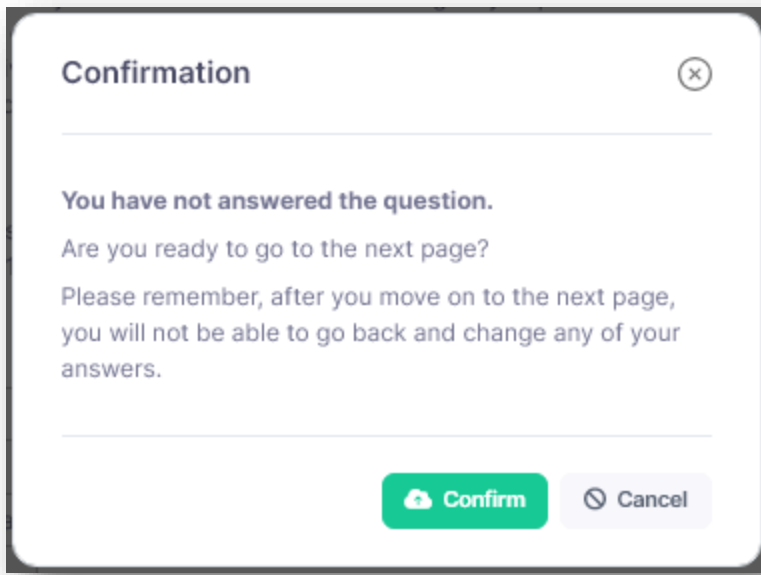


Figure 3. Inspire's CBA Delivery System Warning Example

Candidates taking the Advanced assessment will have up to five hours to complete the CBA. Due to the extended duration, the RN CBA is divided into two sections. The first section encompasses half of the exam content. It is followed by a scheduled 15-minute break. The second section comprises the remaining half of the exam content.

Candidates taking Intermediate or Basic assessments will have up to three hours to complete the CBA. In these instances, candidates progress through the cases and answer the items sequentially until the exam is finished.

As they answer the questions pertaining to a case, candidates have access to the case information at any point. The case description remains consistent while the candidate addresses the questions specific to that case. However, the item description varies across items, offering additional information that, in conjunction with the case description, guides the correct response.

CBA Item Description

Candidates must read the case and item description carefully before answering the item question. The item description will include a specific question. Some examples of how questions can be formulated are as follows:

- What 6 items should you check as part of a? Click on the areas of the image that correspond to your answer.
- Which of the following tasks should you do first?

- Which of the following actions should you take? Select all that apply.
- Why would you advise against this? Write your answer (include 1 reason) in the space below (20 words or less).
- What other information would be important to know about ...? Write your answer (include 5 elements) in the space below (30 words or less).
- Which of the following actions should you take to ensure ... during the procedure?
- How will you document this information in the file?
- Which of the following is your priority action?
- How do you respond? Record your answer.

Upon reviewing the item description and question, follow the instructions provided when providing your answer. For instance, if the question requires an open response of 30 words or less, ensure your answer does not exceed this limit. Any information beyond the question's parameters will not be evaluated and will not contribute to the candidate's score.

Technology-Enhanced Item Types

Some examples of item descriptions and questions are presented below.

Multiple-choice question (example)

You read the emergency triage report and see that Mrs. Anderson has a history of dementia. Based on your knowledge of dementia, what function does dementia affect? Select the most appropriate answer.

Musculoskeletal function

Kidney function

Cardiovascular function

Brain function

Multiple-select response question (example)

You enter Mrs. Anderson's room and notice she appears distressed and agitated.
What should you do?
Select all that apply.

- Inform Mrs. Anderson that her behaviour is not acceptable.
- Speak to Mrs. Anderson using a calm, positive voice.
- Call security to ensure the safety of Mrs. Anderson and the staff.
- Leave the room to allow Mrs. Anderson to have time to gather her thoughts.
- Raise your voice to get Mrs. Anderson's attention, which will distract her.
- Listen and try to understand why Mrs. Anderson is feeling frustrated.

Hotspot (example)

You enter the bedroom to complete a risk assessment. You observe the following (see image below):
What 2 items should you check as part of the risk assessment?
Click on the areas of the image that correspond to your answer.



Sequencing (example)

It has been several months since you have used a mechanical lift. In the event you have to use the ceiling hoist to move Mrs. Anderson, you read your hospital policy for the sling lift procedure the emergency department has.








Put the following steps in sequential order.

- Check the weight of the patient
- Choose the correct sling according to patient ability
- Check the hoist and sling to ensure everything is working properly
- Help the patient onto the right-sized sling
- Attach the sling to the hoist

Open response (example)

Mrs. Anderson was admitted to a long-term care facility because her dementia was affecting her ability to live independently. As a member of the health-care team, you know that people with dementia may need help with activities they used to do independently.

List 3 activities / tasks Mrs. Anderson may need assistance with.



B I H |    |   |  | 

Audio recording (example)

There is a team meeting to discuss Mrs. Anderson's plan of care. You have been asked to speak about how to communicate clearly and effectively with patients with dementia. State key points of how you would communicate with Mrs. Anderson.

Your response should be no longer than 60 seconds. You have up to three attempts.

Attention: This is the last practice question. After the completion of this question, you will be taken to the beginning of the exam.

Recording Time: 01:00.000 Attempts: 0/3  

The recording time is limited to 1 minute.

Supporting Documents

Inspire assesses a selection of entry-level competencies for each healthcare profession according to the competency profiles developed by each profession's regulatory body.

Health care assistants: BC Ministry of Health's B.C. Health Care Assistants Core Competency Profile (2023)

Licensed practical nurses: Canadian Council for Practical Nurse Regulators' Entry-Level Competencies for Licensed Practical Nurses (2019)

Registered nurses: Canadian Council of Registered Nurse Regulators' Entry-Level Competencies for the Practice of Registered Nurses (2018)

Definitions

Category or Dimension – a combination of entry-level competencies.

Competence – The quality or ability of a nurse to integrate and apply the knowledge, skills, judgments, and personal attributes required to practise safely and ethically in a designated role and setting. Personal attributes include, but are not limited to, attitudes, values, and beliefs.

Consistent – the assessment taker (AT) consistently demonstrated the expected ability, set of skills, or behaviours related to competency themes.

Emergent – the assessment taker (AT) demonstrated emerging but inconsistent mastery of, or proficiency with, an ability, set of skills, or behaviours related to competency themes.

Entry-level competency – the education, knowledge, skill, judgment, and attitudes required of beginning practitioners to provide safe, competent, ethical nursing care in a variety of settings for clients of all age groups.