

PBLA Practice Guidelines FAQ

Key Considerations for Language Companions and Learner Portfolios

In response to questions posed by LINC/ESL/EAL community members, the following are key considerations around 1. Language Companion binders and 2. learner portfolios for in-person and online or blended settings.

1. Language Companion Binders

Language Companion (LC) binders to support Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) are a project of IRCC. The CCLB is not involved with procurement, on-site storage, or disposal of abandoned Language Companion binders. Questions of this nature must be addressed to a provider's IRCC officer.

The text sections of Language Companions (Introduction, Canadian Language Benchmarks, My Canada, Where I Live, Helpful English) are available in electronic PDF format on Tutela for download and distribution to learners. An electronic book version of the LC binder text is available to learners enrolled in Avenue.ca. The ebook version of the LC binder text is not available outside the Avenue.ca platform.

Videos to help learners understand the purpose and use of LC binders are available on the CCLB website: <https://www.language.ca/resources/expertise/my-pbla/>

Key Considerations Around LC Binders

It is up to providers to determine whether to issue physical or electronic Language Companions to learners.

Please be aware that the file sizes for the Literacy (approx. 54 MB) and Stage I (approx. 28 MB) texts are too large for transfer by most email platforms. Another transfer method will likely need to be determined by providers if transferring electronically.

2. Portfolio Sections of Language Companion Binders

PBLA artefacts are evidence of a learner's ability to meet level-appropriate CLB-aligned criteria of real-world tasks. The learner portfolio section of Language Companion binders (About Me, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Other) is provided as a place for learners to store and organize their artefacts and other personal information relevant to their language level and learning journeys.

The learner portfolio sections of Language Companions are not available in electronic format (i.e. as an eportfolio) through the CCLB.

Across the country, providers use various in-person and online class configurations, including a variety of platforms for online learning components, in order to best meet the needs of their programs and learners. At this time, there is not one standard electronic solution to artefact and personal information storage available or acceptable to all providers, and movable between diverse program platforms.

Providers with blended or online Courses in Avenue.ca can use the Avenue eportfolio for learners. The Avenue eportfolio is not available to providers who do not use Avenue.ca for online or blended learning.

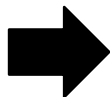
Key considerations around learner portfolios are based on the *Principles of PBLA Assessment Practice* found in the [PBLA Practice Review Framework](#).

Principles 3 and 4 are the most relevant for learner portfolio considerations as they relate to learners' abilities to reflect on and study their artefacts, and to take responsibility for learning.

Key Considerations for Electronic Learner Portfolios

Principle of Assessment 3: Assessment should be part of a process of teaching that enables learners to understand the aims of their learning and how the quality of their achievement will be judged.

Principle of Assessment 4: Assessment methods should promote the active engagement of learners in their learning and its assessment.



Whether PBLA artefacts are paper-based or electronic, learners should have possession and control of their artefacts for self-reflection, for study and to enable movement between providers.

To enable personal responsibility for learning, physical Language Companion binders should be brought home daily by learners and not stored onsite with the service provider. If using eportfolios for learners, it is up to providers to determine how to ensure learners have access to their artefacts and other personal information.

- Artefacts may be distributed to learners only electronically, only as paper printouts, or in some combination of electronic and paper formats. If artefacts are to be distributed only electronically, the digital skills of learners should be taken into account and accommodated as needed.
- Electronic artefacts may be transferred completely to learners (i.e. only learners have access to the artefacts; teachers and providers must be granted access for evaluations), or, with learner consent, be held in a storage format that is readily accessible to the learner and to the learner's teacher and program (i.e. an online folder that both learner and the learner's teacher and program have access to).
- If an online storage format is used
 - security and privacy must be considered, particularly around personal information. In a shared platform, other learners should not be able to access a classmate's portfolio.
 - a method for moving the artefacts to another provider must be available. For example, the artefacts must be in a format that can be downloaded by or for the learner for transfer to another provider.

Once artefacts are distributed by a provider and are in a learner's possession, it is up to the learner to organize and keep track of their artefacts. Electronic inventory sheets should be provided for eportfolios.

Note: Although a learner's artefacts once transferred to them are their possession and responsibility, providers should consider a response to the situation where a learner, particularly a learner with digital literacy issues who might struggle with electronic artefacts if using eportfolios, requests copies of their artefacts or suggests they have not been received from the provider. A record of artefacts with dates of distribution may be helpful to address such requests by learners.

For questions on these or any other PBLA issues not covered in the PBLA Practice Guidelines <https://pblapg.language.ca/>, please contact the CCLB at pbla@language.ca.

Checklist of Considerations for Learner Portfolios (Physical or Electronic)

This checklist is provided as a courtesy to help service providers ensure learner portfolios reflect the key considerations given on page 1 and 2 of this document.

- Learners have possession and control of their artefacts and other personal information related to their language level and learning journeys outside of the classroom.
- Learners are provided with a portfolio (binder or electronic platform) by the service provider organization to store and organize artefacts and other personal information.
- Learners have primary access to and responsibility for the storage of their artefacts and personal information in their portfolios.
- Learner portfolios are secure and private and are shared with teachers and Administrators with consent.
- Learner portfolios have some mechanism of internal organization (physical dividers with labels for sections, or ability to divide the electronic space into About Me, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Other, and inventory sheets or files for each skill area)
- Learners are supported to access and organize their portfolios as needed (taking into account literacy and digital literacy requirements).
- Learner portfolios are transferrable to other providers if a learner chooses to change service providers.
- Separate records of learners' completed skill-using and assessment tasks are recommended to be kept by the provider as insurance against loss.