

Exam Validation Policy

Effective: February 2, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides of Alberta (CLHA) has the **authority** under the *Health Professions Act* (HPA) to carry out its activities and **govern** Health Care Aides (HCAs)* in a manner that protects and serves the public interest.

The CLHA owns, develops, administers, and sustains the Alberta HCA Registration Examination (AHRE). This examination is delivered as a computer-based examination.

Please see the *Alberta HCA Registration Examination* policy and *Alberta HCA Registration Examination Candidate Handbook* for more information on **requirements** of examination administration and delivery. Additionally, the handbook articulates the **candidate's** statement of understanding, which identifies the rules a candidate must agree to before they are able to access and write the exam to maintain the security and **confidentiality** of the exam content.

Terms found in the definition section are **bolded** where they appear for the first time in this document

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the criteria and framework the CLHA utilizes when an exam **violation** is suspected or reported. The CLHA is **responsible** for ensuring that examination candidates do not use assistance or **unauthorized means** to pass the exam and for ensuring that the examination content remains secure.

POLICY

Exam Violation Framework

When a potential exam violation occurs, either identified by an incident report or other means, an **investigation** to verify such a violation is conducted. The investigation is to validate that an examination score was achieved legitimately, without unauthorized assistance, and in accordance with the rules outlined and agreed to in the candidate's Statement of Understanding.

* In this document, "HCA(s)" has the same meaning as "regulated member(s)" in the *Health Professions Act*.

Potential exam violations are investigated by the CLHA. Investigations may be triggered:

- when an incident report is received from the **exam provider**, and it indicates that an incident report has been processed;
- after review of a recorded exam session, and an exam violation(s) is evident;
- after a report of an exam violation is submitted by a **whistleblower**;
- if suspicious activity is seen during a regular exam history audit, including:
 - unusually low exam scores that may indicate the potential of harvesting exam questions,
 - an exam written and completed in less than 30 minutes,
 - several candidates writing at one IP address that is not a testing center, or
 - any other suspicious activity seen or heard by the investigator;
- upon notification from the exam provider that exam content has been found online; or
- any other circumstances that suggest an exam violation has occurred.

Exam Investigation Process

The exam investigation process can include:

- not releasing the candidate's passing grade, whenever possible, if a suspected violation has occurred or has been reported;
- an opportunity for the candidate to respond to the information obtained during the investigation to date, and the opportunity to provide their response in writing;
- a potential forensic investigation being requested by the CLHA of the exam provider to identify unauthorized computer assistance, unusual behaviours, and computer manipulations that may not be easily seen by a proctor during the exam session;
- informing the candidate if there are additional requirements during the investigation process, such as needing additional time to investigate; and
- creating a written exam violation report, including a decision regarding the outcome of the exam validation.

Exam Investigation Results

Potential results of the investigation process or report include:

- If exam content appears to be **compromised**, appropriate actions are taken to suspend or remove exam content from future exam writings.
- The candidate's passing grade may be invalidated when sufficient evidence proves an exam violation, and the candidate may be flagged as high risk for any future testing sessions.
- If a breach is confirmed, a pending pass result is invalidated.
- Evidence is appropriately stored and kept for future potential legal action should theft of content be an issue.

- If the HCA has been awarded their HCA credential prior to February 2, 2026, the **post-secondary institution** where the candidate attended may be notified of the outcome, so they may consider whether the conduct has any impact on the credential issued by the PSI.
- If it is determined that exam misconduct occurred or was confirmed, the CLHA may handle it using one or more of the following measures:
 - Through the examination process itself (considering the writing attempt a fail, counting it toward an exam attempt, making the applicant ineligible to re-write another time, etc.).
 - Through the registration or renewal process, as a **good character and reputation** issue.
 - Through a referral to the CLHA's Complaints Director.

These paths are not mutually exclusive, and more than one response may be appropriate, depending on the nature of the evidence and the degree of certainty that cheating occurred.

- If it is determined that an exam violation has not occurred, the candidate's passing grade will stand, and the candidate will be notified.
- If the investigation is inconclusive, a rewrite may be required at no extra charge, without penalty.

Whistleblower Protection

Individuals who report suspected exam misconduct in good faith are protected from retaliation, ensuring they can come forward without fear of punishment. Such reports can be made confidentially to the Registrar or a delegate, the Exam Manager, or the Complaints Director at the CLHA. However, it's important to note that providing false or malicious reports is serious and may lead to disciplinary action, as it can undermine the integrity of the process and cause undue harm to others.

CONCLUSION

Candidates are monitored for any irregularities during the proctored exam that may indicate a possible exam violation. Some incident reports may require further investigation to validate the final results of an exam sitting.

Documents are updated frequently. For the most current version and access to related documents and resources, please visit the Knowledge Hub on clha.com.

If after reading this document you have questions about this topic, please contact the CLHA's Registration Department at hcaregistration@clha.com, 780-484-8886 or 1-800-661-5877 (toll free in Alberta).

DEFINITIONS

Authority: the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. It can also mean the appropriate person to give orders or make decisions.

Candidate: a provisional HCA or individual who is eligible to write the Alberta HCA Registration Examination.

Compromised: a situation where the security, integrity, or confidentiality of an examination has been violated, making the results untrustworthy or invalid.

Confidentiality: the ethical duty to protect information.

Good character and reputation: a requirement that HCAs demonstrate integrity, honesty, and professionalism. Criminal charges, convictions, or other concerns may contribute to character.

Govern: to lead, control, or manage an organization or group, often by creating rules and making decisions that guide their actions.

Investigation: a formal process to gather information, verify facts or claims, or check for accuracy and compliance, which is usually summarized in a written report.

Post-secondary institution: any school, college, university, or institute offering education after high school (secondary school), providing degrees, diplomas, or certificates for careers or further study.

Requirements: something that is needed.

Responsible: the ability to respond and answer for one's actions and duties. Being responsible means that an individual is trustworthy and reliable.

Unauthorized means: during an exam refers to any materials, devices, or methods used to obtain information or assistance that have not been explicitly permitted by the exam provider or exam regulations.

Violation: an action that breaks or acts against a law, agreement, principle, or standard.

Whistleblower: a person who exposes or reports information about wrongdoing or illegal activities.