

An overview of registration processes for
internationally educated health
professionals pursuing a career in
Respiratory Therapy in Nova Scotia

Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals Manual: Pathway to licensure

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GENERAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED APPLICANTS

Respiratory Therapy is a regulated profession in Nova Scotia and to practice as a Respiratory Therapist you must possess a valid license issued by the Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists (NSCRT).

To qualify for licensure as a Registered Respiratory Therapist in the province of Nova Scotia you must meet the following education requirements:

1. EDUCATION:

You must have graduated from an [approved Canadian Respiratory Therapy Education program](#)

OR

You must have graduated from a program offered outside Canada either in Respiratory Therapy or in a closely related field and shall submit to a competency assessment to determine whether your education and experience is equivalent to a Canadian Respiratory Therapy education program.

2. ASSESSMENT:

If you have **not graduated** from an approved Canadian Respiratory Therapy Education program, to be eligible for licensure you must first successfully demonstrate through a prior learning and competency assessment process that you have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgement necessary for safe practice. The assessment process is performed by the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTO) and is based on the [National Competency Framework \(NCF\)](#). The NCF lists all entry-to-practice competencies individuals must have for entering the practice of Respiratory Therapy in Canada. If your first language is not English or your relevant education program was not in English, **you must first meet the approved language proficiency benchmarks to qualify for referral for a competency assessment (See page 14).**

You are responsible for all fees related to the competency assessment process, including travel expenses and translation expenses. The competency assessment includes:

- a) an Education Program Review;
- b) a Behavioral Descriptive Interview; and
- c) a Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA).

The interview portion of the assessment may be performed virtually at the discretion of the CRTO; however, you must travel to Toronto for the CSA.

More information on the competency assessment can be found in the CRTO [Applicant and Assessment Guide](#) and the [Clinical Skills Assessment Guide](#).

3. LICENSING:

If you meet the educational requirements and have successfully completed the competency assessment process, including reaching competency in any areas of practice where the Canadian standard has not

been demonstrated during assessment, you may be granted a temporary graduate license (following payment application fee, licensing fees and the completion of the NSCRT online jurisprudence exam) while waiting to write the approved credentialing examination. If you hold a temporary graduate license, you may use the title Graduate Respiratory Therapist (GRT) and you can practice under the general supervision of a Registered Respiratory Therapist.

4. EXAMINATION:

To be eligible for an active practice license you must successfully challenge the NSCRT's registration examination administered by Health Professional Testing Canada (HPTC). The examination is mandatory. To be eligible to write the HPTC exam you must meet the education requirement and successfully complete the competency assessment process, including reaching competency in any areas of practice where the Canadian standard has not been demonstrated during assessment.

You will have 18 months (about 1 and a half years) to successfully challenge the credentialing examination, after this period you will no longer qualify for a license in any category. The examination is offered 2 times per year in an online format with virtual proctoring.

Once you have passed the mandatory credentialing examination, you will then be eligible for licensure as a full active practicing Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) in the province of Nova Scotia. You may not practice Respiratory Therapy or identify yourself as a Respiratory Therapist in Nova Scotia until after you have been issued a license to practice.

PATHWAY TO LICENSURE – ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Graduate of an approved Canadian Respiratory Therapy Education program

Not a Graduate of an approved Canadian Respiratory Therapy Education program

DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS:

1. Language Proficiency Test Results (if required)
2. Course-by-Course Credential Evaluation and Authentication Report from a member of the [Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada](#)
3. [Statement of Professional Standing](#) form or letters of good standing
4. Completed Declaration Form
5. Verification of eligibility to work in Canada
6. International Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check

***Proof of eligibility to work in Canada and criminal record check required before a license can be granted**

Review of [National Competency Framework](#) (NCF)

Step 1: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Create NSCRT Online Profile

Submit pre-registration documents for review.

Credential Committee review of application and recommendation

Referral to CRTO for Competency Assessment

Step 2: CRTO Competency Assessment

Educational Program Review and Behavioral Descriptive Interview: Interim Assessment report provided to Credentials Committee and applicant (30-day appeal window).

Credentials Committee recommendation and discussion of options with Registrar

CRTO Clinical Skills Assessment: Final report sent to NSCRT Credentials Committee

Credential Committee recommendation: Decision on eligibility for Temporary Graduate License/HPTC Exam

YES – License granted in appropriate category

NO

Discussion of options

Temporary Graduate License granted.

NSCRT credentialing exam successfully challenged (within 18 months)

YES

Full Active practicing license granted.

NO (3 attempts)

Ineligible for licensure

Ineligible for referral: Letter sent to applicant with reasons for denial and appeal process.

Step 1: Application Requirements

Please ensure that all the following steps are taken to prevent incomplete applications from being returned.

A. Review of Relevant Material (prior to application)

☐ Review of NCF 2016

The National Competency Framework 2016 (NCF) is a list of competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment) deemed necessary to practice as an entry to practice level registered Respiratory Therapist. This document was developed by the National Alliance of Respiratory Therapy Regulatory Bodies (NARTRB) and is used in the development of the national educational program's curriculum.

https://www.nscrt.com/images/NCF_Part_I_Entry-to-Practice_English_February_2017.pdf

B. Application for Licensure:

☐ **1. Completion of [NSCRT Online Application form](#), including all relevant education and work experience.** NOTE: Please do not submit any payment at this time.

☐ **2. Language Proficiency:** If your first language is not English or language of relevant education is not English, fluency must be demonstrated by submitting the test scores from a recognized language proficiency test. ***Please note that the applicant is responsible for all costs associated with language proficiency testing.** Accepted language proficiency tests and scores can be found on page 14.

☐ **3. Course by Course Credential Evaluation:** You are required to have a Course-by-Course Credential Evaluation and Authentication Report from a member of the [Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada](#). **Please note that you are responsible for all costs associated with credential evaluation services, including translation of documents.**

☐ **4. Completion of Statement of Professional Standing Form:** You must provide additional information if you have ever been registered / licensed to practice as a Respiratory Therapist or in other related health profession(s). You must complete section 1 of the [Statement of Professional Standing](#) for and send it to your current regulatory body to complete section 2. Alternatively, you may have your current regulatory body submit a letter of good standing. If you have been practicing in a non-regulated jurisdiction, you must provide a letter of good standing from your employer.

☐ **5. Completed NSCRT Declaration Form:** Print and sign this [form](#) then upload it to your online profile. Applications will not be reviewed until this form is received.

Please note that once it is determined that you possess all of the Canadian Respiratory Therapy entry-to-practice competencies and are eligible for licensure, you will be required to provide the following additional documents before a license can be granted. These documents are not required for the assessment process:

- **6. Proof of Canadian citizenship, permanent residency status or a valid work:** Upload a copy of one of the following: birth certificate from a Canadian province or territory, valid Canadian passport, certificate of Canadian Citizenship, permanent residency card, or a valid work permit.
- **7. Criminal Background Check, including a Vulnerable Sector check:** Upload a copy of a Criminal Records Check/Vulnerable Sector Check. It must be obtained within the past 6 months and performed by a local police agency, the RCMP, or private organizations such as CSI Screening or My Backcheck. If you reside outside of Canada or have recently moved to Canada from another country, an international criminal records check is required. Applicants who have a criminal record should upload a Declaration of Criminal Record to expedite the registration process.
- International Criminal Record Check (ICRC) and Vulnerable Sector Check
<http://www.rcmp.gc.ca/en/criminal-record-checks>

If applying from a country which does not provide vulnerable sector checks, a comparable check acceptable to the NSCRT is required.

***Please note that English is the official language recognized by the NSCRT. All documents submitted to the NSCRT must be translated into English by a certified translator. The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with translation requirements.**

As part of the pre-registration process, applicants must complete all requirements in Step 1 of the application process and submit all documents listed above to the NSCRT. All forms are accessible via the hyperlinks above or on the NSCRT website - click [HERE](#) for a link to registration documents. Upon request, paper copies of all information and forms can be mailed to the applicant. The NSCRT will notify applicants of any missing information.

Step 2: Competency Assessment Process

The NSCRT Credentials Committee will review the required pre-registration document submissions listed above to ensure you meet the criteria for referral for a competency assessment. If the NSCRT Credentials Committee determines that you meet the requirements necessary to proceed with a competency assessment, your file will be referred to the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTC) to administer the competency assessment. The NSCRT staff will advise candidates of the decision of the committee in writing. Once the NSCRT has referred you to the CRTC for the competency assessment process, the CRTC will contact you directly with instructions.

The CRTC's Internationally Educated Health Professional (IEHP) Entry-to-Practice (ETP) Competency Assessment process provides a mechanism for IEHPs to demonstrate that they have the required entry-to-practice competencies to provide safe and effective care. These entry-to-practice competencies are listed in the [National Competency Framework \(NCF\) – Part 1 Entry-to-Practice](#) developed by the National Alliance of Respiratory Regulatory Bodies (NARTRB).

The CRTO's IEHP ETP Competency Assessment consists of three (3) distinct evaluations:

1. Educational Program Review
2. Behavioral Descriptive Interview
3. Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA)

1. Educational Program Review and Behavioral Descriptive Interview

Internationally trained applicants come from a variety of educational backgrounds and there can be a wide variation in the didactic and clinical training received. For this reason, the CRTO will need to review the content of your educational program to determine whether the program covered the Canadian entry-to-practice competencies.

The CRTO will contact you via email. The email will include:

1. A payment form for this portion of the competency assessment process.
2. An Educational Program Review Worksheet: To complete this worksheet you will need to review your curriculum and provide course reference(s) to demonstrate that each specific area was covered in the program. You may need to contact your school to obtain copies of supporting documentation (e.g., course outlines, and details of clinical placements). To do so, please use the [Document Request Form](#) posted on the CRTO website.

Please note that until the CRTO receives payment, they are unable to proceed with any portion of the assessment.

The Educational Program Review is paper-based and is conducted by CRTO staff. Once the Educational Program Review has been completed, the CRTO will schedule the Behavioral Descriptive Interview. The interview is used to compare your knowledge, skills, and experience acquired through both education and employment against the competencies listed in the NCF. The Behavioral Descriptive Interview takes place with the candidate and two trained assessors via videoconference.

This portion of the assessment takes 1-3 months depending on the scheduling availability of CRTO staff. Fees for this portion of the assessment are \$500 paid directly to the CRTO. These fees do not include costs related to obtaining required documentation, translation of documents, video conference/interview, or travel costs.

2. Credential Committee Review and Interim Assessment Report

The CRTO will provide the NSCRT Credentials Committee with the results of the Educational Program Review and the Behavioral Description Interview. Upon receipt of this Interim Report, the Credentials Committee will:

- a. Provide a copy of the interim report to you and inform you of the appeal process as per the CRTO Entry-to-Practice Competency Appeal Policy.

- b. Schedule a follow-up meeting with you to discuss the assessment results and the next steps in the assessment process.

Following the discussion on the assessment results, you may choose to:

- a. Proceed with next phase of assessment process;
- b. Bridge gaps identified in the initial phase of the assessment pending availability of resources; or
- c. Withdraw from the assessment process.

3. Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA)

Upon referral to the Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA), the CRTO will send you a payment form for completion. The CSA will not be scheduled until payment is received by the CRTO.

In the CSA, you will be asked to demonstrate your clinical skills in a simulated environment (i.e., clinical environment that mimics real-world practice, for example, an operating room, intensive care unit). The CSA consists of a series of simulated clinical scenarios, each designed to measure whether you can demonstrate specific clinical competencies at an entry-to-practice level. You will also be assessed on your communication skills, professionalism, clinical problem solving, and health and safety. The CSA Guide can be found [HERE](#).

CSAs are conducted on an as-needed basis at a CRTO approved simulation facility in Toronto, Canada and are dependent on the availability of CRTO staff and may take 3-6 months to complete depending on number of applicants requiring assessment and availability of assessment facility and staff. Fees for the CSA are \$5000.00, not including associated travel costs.

4. Credential Committee Review and Final Assessment Report

Within 30 days of the completion of the assessment process, the Credentials Committee will receive a comprehensive assessment report prepared by the CRTO Staff. The report will incorporate the results of the behavioral descriptive interview and clinical skills assessment. Upon receipt of the Final ETP Assessment Report, the Credentials Committee will immediately provide a copy of the report to you.

Within 14 days of receipt of the report, the NSCRT Credentials Committee will render a decision regarding the application to practice Respiratory Therapy in Nova Scotia. A copy of the Committee's decision, with reasons for the decision, will be provided in writing to you. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you have the right to appeal. Details on how to appeal a decision are provided in decision letters.

Step 3: Applying for a Temporary Graduate License

Following the competency assessment, if the NSCRT Credentials Committee deems that you are eligible for a temporary graduate license you must complete the following:

1. Submission of proof of eligibility to work in Canada;
2. Submission of Criminal Records Check completed within the last 6 months
3. Payment of the licensing and application fees (Registrar will provide applicant with invoice)
4. Completion of the online jurisprudence exam (located on your NSCRT member profile)

The Registrar will then approve your application for a temporary graduate license to practice. Approval of your license can take up to 5 days following a completed application. The license period is from April 1 to March 31. The license fees will be prorated for the remaining months of licensure in the fiscal year. Your license must be renewed annually.

Applicants are eligible for a temporary graduate license for a period of up to 18 months (about 1 and a half years) in which time they must successfully challenge the NSCRT credentialling examination.

Step 4: Registration Examination

Health Professionals Testing Canada (HPTC) administers the NSCRT registration examination. Upon approval of the temporary graduate license, the Registrar will:

1. Provide you with information on registering for the examination; and
2. Confirm your eligibility to write the examination with HPTC.

Upon successful completion of the examination, the Temporary Graduate member will be granted a full Active-Practicing license with no restrictions to practice and may use the professional designation of Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT). There is no additional fee to be upgraded to a full practicing license.

More information about this examination process can be learned at www.hptc.ca

Step 5: Appeal Process

If the Credentials Committee determines you do not meet the requirements for licensure, you may appeal the decision by filing a written notice to the NSCRT within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) from the date of the decision.

The Registration Appeal Committee shall hold a hearing within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) of the receipt of the appeal to review the evidence presented, including the original decision made. You have a right to attend the hearing, with or without legal counsel, and make submissions at the hearing.

Within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) of the hearing, the Registration Appeal Committee will make their decision. The committee will provide you with the decision in writing, including reasons, via registered mail. The decision of the Registration Appeal Committee is final.

ESTIMATED TIMELINES AND FEES

Step 1: Prior Learning Assessment Process	Timeline	Fee
<p>Pre-registration process:</p> <p>The NSCRT Credentials Committee reviews the required documents to ensure that you meet the criteria for referral for a competency assessment. The length of time to complete this will be dependent upon your submission of the required documents and/or third-party organizations documents.</p> <p>DOCUMENTS REQUIRED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of online application 2. Language Proficiency Test 3. Credential Evaluation and Authentication Report 4. Statement of Professional Standing or Letter of Good Standing 6. Completed Declaration Form <p>If the application meets the requirements to proceed with the assessment, the applicant will be referred to the CRTO for the competency assessment process.</p>	Variable	No Fee
Step 2: Competency Assessment Process		
<p>i. Educational Program Review and Behavioral Descriptive Interview:</p> <p>Once the NSCRT Credentials Committee has determined that you meet the requirements necessary to proceed with a competency assessment, you will be referred to the College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTO).</p> <p>Upon referral to the CRTO for a competency assessment, you must complete and CRTO payment form and submit payment to the CRTO. Once payment has been received, the CRTO will contact you regarding payments and with the requirements for the educational program review. They will also schedule the Behavioral Descriptive Interview. The CRTO will require additional documentation to complete the educational program review.</p> <p>Within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) of the assessment, the CRTO will provide the NSCRT with the results of the educational program review and the Behavioral Descriptive Interview.</p>	1-3 months	\$500 CAD
<p>ii. Credential Committee Review and Interim Report</p>	10-15 business days after	No fee

Upon receipt of the interim report from the CROTO, the Committee will provide you with the report and schedule a meeting to review the results of the educational program review and behavioral descriptive interview.	receipt of interim report	
<p>iii. Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA)</p> <p>If you decide to proceed with the CSA, the NSCRT will inform the CROTO. You must then complete the CSA payment form and submit it to the CSRT (Payment form). Once payment has been received, the CROTO will contact you to schedule the CSA.</p> <p>The CSA will be conducted in Toronto at a simulation facility. You will be contacted a week prior to the CSA to confirm details. On the day of the CSA, you will have an orientation to the lab setting and equipment. The orientation begins at 7:45 and you can expect to be in the lab for the full day. Lunch will be provided by the CROTO.</p> <p>Within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) of the assessment, the CROTO will provide the NSCRT with an assessment report.</p>	3-6 months (after the CSA fee is received).	\$5000 CAD (plus associated travel costs)
Step 3: Final Assessment Report Review and Registration Decision		
<p>The Credentials Committee will receive a comprehensive assessment report prepared by the CROTO Staff. The report will incorporate the results of the Behavioral Descriptive Interview and clinical skills assessment. Upon receipt of the Final ETP Assessment Report, the Credentials Committee will immediately provide a copy of the report to you.</p> <p>Within 14 days of receipt of the report, the NSCRT Credentials Committee will render a decision regarding the application to practice Respiratory Therapy in Nova Scotia. A copy of the Committee's decision, with reasons for the decision, will be provided in writing to you. If you are not satisfied with the decision, you have the right to appeal. Details on how to appeal a decision are provided in decision letters.</p>	30 days	No fee
Step 4: Graduate License/Temporary License with Conditions and Restrictions		
<p>Following the competency assessment, if the NSCRT Credentials Committee deems you are eligible for a Temporary Graduate License you must complete and/or provide the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proof of eligibility to work in Canada 2. Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check 3. Payment of the licensing and application fees 	5 days	<p>\$600 + costs related to requirements 1 and 2</p> <p>(\$525 license + \$75 app fee)</p>

4. Completion of the online jurisprudence exam (located on your NSCRT member profile)		*License Fee increase to \$650 as of April 1, 2025
Step 5: NSCRT Credentialing Examination		
Applicants are eligible for a temporary graduate license for a period of up to 18 months (about 1 and a half years) in which time they must successfully challenge the NSCRT credentialing examination. Full active practicing license granted within 10 (about 2 weeks) of receipt of letter from HPTC indicating success.	Exams are offered twice per year, in January and July	\$1033.85 CAD per attempt
Step 6: Appeal		
If the Credentials Committee determines you do not meet the requirements for licensure, you may appeal the decision by filing a written notice to the NSCRT within 30 days (about 4 and a half weeks) from the date of the decision.	30 days following Hearing	No fee

ACCEPTED PROFICIENCY TESTS AND SCORES

The Table below contains a list of the Language Proficiency Tests that the NSCRT accepts, as well as the minimum benchmark scores that must be achieved by the applicants. For test results to be accepted by the NSCRT, all four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) must be tested in a single testing session. Overall scores alone are not accepted. Test results are valid for two (2) years from the date of language assessment.

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) www.ielts.org/default.aspx				
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Overall
7	7	7	7	7
Michener English Language Assessment (MELA) www.themela.com				
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Overall
8	8	9	9	N/A
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT www.ets.org/toefl				
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Overall

22	20	24	24	90
Canadian Academic English Language Test (CAEL) www.cael.ca				
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Overall
70	70	80	70	70
Pearson Test of English (PTE) Core www.pearsonpte.com				
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Overall
69	79	82	76	N/A
Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program www.celpip.ca				
*(CELCPIP – General LS is not accepted by the NSCRT as proof of language proficiency)				
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Overall
8	8	9	8	N/A