

Pathway to Licensure for International Medical Graduates via a Practice Ready Assessment: Family Medicine

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| Section: | Registration | | |
| Applicable Legislation: | Medical Practitioners Regulations Sections 14-15, 36-38, 39-45, and 59-63 | | |
| Approved by: Registration Policy Committee Council | Approval Date: February 10, 2022 March 25, 2022 | Reviewer: Deputy Registrar | Review Date: June 2022 |

Purpose

This policy outlines a pathway to licensure for independent practice in Nova Scotia via a Practice Ready Assessment (PRA).

The policy applies to physicians who are trained and certified in Family Medicine or General Practice in an international jurisdiction that is not recognized by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC)²⁶.

One of the requirements for licensure for independent practice in Nova Scotia is that physicians must be certified by the CFPC or are eligible to challenge the certification examinations. An international medical graduate (IMG) may acquire this eligibility, as well as a Defined licence⁷ to practise medicine in Nova Scotia, by successfully completing a PRA.

Overview of Licensure for Independent Practice

Requirements for Licensure

The requirements for licensure to practise medicine in Nova Scotia are set by the *Medical Act*¹ and the Medical Practitioners Regulations².

Licence Types

There are three relevant licence types for independent practice as the Most Responsible Physician in Nova Scotia:

| Licence Type | Description |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Full licence ⁷ | <p>The Full licence is an ongoing, renewable licence for practice without supervision or conditions or restrictions.</p> <p>A Full licence may be granted to physicians holding:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Medical Degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools¹⁰; 2. The LMCC²³ or an acceptable alternative to the LMCC¹⁶; and 3. Certification by the RCPSC²⁵ or the CFPC²⁶ or the CMQ²⁷. |
| Restricted licence ⁷ | <p>The Restricted licence is an ongoing, renewable licence typically issued to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians who meet all or most of the criteria for a Full licence but have conditions and/or restrictions on their practice imposed by the College; or • Relevant to this policy, a physician on a Defined licence who successfully undergoes a Comprehensive Clinical Assessment of Practice (CCAP)¹⁷ as determined by the Registration Committee will be issued a Restricted licence |
| Defined licence ⁷ | <p>The Defined licence is a renewable, but time-limited licence, issued for a maximum of 60 months to physicians who have a medical degree, but who have not yet obtained the LMCC and Canadian certification.</p> <p>Defined licensees must practise under the sponsorship and supervision of another physician¹⁵ as they pursue the qualifications for Full or Restricted licensure.</p> |

Pathway from PRA to Independent Practice

Upon review by the Registrar, successful completion of a PRA leads to a Defined licence⁷ to practise medicine in Nova Scotia. All Defined licensees are required to pursue the Full licensure requirements, namely the LMCC and certification with the CFPC.

In accordance with Section 14 of the Medical Practitioners Regulations², if the Registrar has any concerns related to the applicant's capacity, competence or character to safely and ethically practise medicine, the applicant will be referred to the Registration Committee for adjudication.

Defined licensees who achieve CFPC certification²⁶ and the LMCC²³ (or an acceptable alternative¹⁶), are issued a Full licence⁷.

Defined licensees who do not achieve CFPC certification may be eligible to challenge a Comprehensive Clinical Assessment of Practice (CCAP)¹⁷. Success in the CCAP leads to a Restricted licence⁷ with conditions and restrictions that are, in part, informed by the results of the CCAP.

Practice Ready Assessments in Nova Scotia

A PRA is a practice-based assessment used to determine whether the physician is ready for independent practice in Nova Scotia.

PRA in Family Medicine are conducted by the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program – Family Medicine (NSPRAP)²⁰.

Candidates must also meet the requirements for licensure outlined in this policy. The College will refer eligible candidates to the NSPRAP for review.

The NSPRAP makes the final decision whether to accept a candidate into the program.

The PRA is conducted over a minimum of 12 weeks, by a minimum of two assessors, under a Clinical Assessment licence⁷. This licence type is designed strictly for assessment purposes only and the physician holding this licence is never the most responsible physician.

The cost of the assessment itself is the responsibility of the NSPRAP. The licence fee⁸ for the assessment and for ongoing licensure in Nova Scotia is the responsibility of the candidate.

For more information, please refer to the College webpage for Practice Ready Assessments for International Medical Graduates⁶.

Eligibility Criteria

A note about documentation:

Candidates must provide evidence that they meet the eligibility criteria listed in this document. Documents may be required at various stages of the application and referral process.

Upon initiation of the application process, you will be assigned a Registration Coordinator who will direct you regarding the **specific** documentation required for your application. You will also be advised **when** the documentation is required. Required documentation could include, but is not limited to:

- Confirmation of credentials, source verified by physiciansapply.ca²⁴
- Certificates of Professional Conduct¹⁴
- Proof of eligibility to work in Canada
- Proof of offer of employment in Nova Scotia
- Letters of employment and letters of reference
- Curriculum vitae
- Criminal record check

In accordance with Section 39 of the Medical Practitioners Regulations², candidates for a Practice Ready Assessment must demonstrate the “capacity, competence and character to safely and ethically practise medicine” by meeting the eligibility criteria listed below.

1. Eligibility to Work

Candidates:

- Must be Canadian citizens *or* legally entitled to live and work in Canada.
- Must not be prohibited or restricted from practising medicine through the decision of any adjudicating body or through voluntary agreement or otherwise (other than by conditions or restrictions imposed on a licence by a regulator).
- Must not have a criminal record.

2. Credentials

Candidates must have all of the following credentials:

| Credential | Description |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Medical Degree | Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools ¹⁰ . |
| Medical Council of Canada (MCC) | Be a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC) or Qualify for an Acceptable Alternative to the LMCC ¹⁶ . |

3. English Language Proficiency

In accordance with Section 39 of the Medical Practitioners Regulations², candidates are required to demonstrate proficiency in the English language, in a manner prescribed by the Registrar.

All physicians must have the ability to effectively communicate with patients, other professionals and the College as described in the College policy on *English Language Proficiency*¹².

4. Postgraduate Training

Candidates must have successfully completed a postgraduate training or internship program leading to certification, recognition and practise in Family Medicine or General Practice in their training jurisdiction.

The program must include 24 months of training in Family Medicine or General Practice, with a minimum of 8 weeks of postgraduate training successfully completed in the following rotations:

- a) Family Medicine/ General Practice
- b) Internal Medicine
- c) Surgery

- d) Pediatrics
- e) Psychiatry*
- f) Obstetrics/ Gynecology*
- g) Emergency Medicine**

* At the discretion of the Registrar, candidates for practice ready assessment in Family Medicine, may be excused the requirement for 8 weeks of postgraduate training in Psychiatry and/or Obstetrics/Gynecology, provided they have the equivalent amount of extra training in Family Medicine.

** The College will consider Emergency Medicine rotations as part of the 24 months of postgraduate training required.

5. Practice Experience

Candidates must have the following independent practice experience:

- At least 24 months of independent practice in Family Medicine or General Practice following completion of 24 months total of postgraduate training or internship in Family Medicine.
- Currency of practice in Family Medicine must include a minimum of 450 hours of independent family practice in the 3 years immediately before the date of application to the College.

All candidates must provide an explanation for any gaps in practice.

6. Prior Practice Ready Assessments

Candidates must have fewer than two previous unsuccessful attempts in Canadian practice ready assessment programs, as collected by physiciansapply.ca²⁴.

7. Requirements for Entering Practice

At the time of licensure, candidates must have the following:

- A Medical Identification Number for Canada (to be issued at time of licensure).
- Medical liability protection, malpractice insurance or other form of indemnity in the manner and amount required by the Registrar.
- Enrolment in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program with the College of Family Physicians of Canada²⁶.

Note that there are other requirements for practising medicine in Nova Scotia that are outside the requirements of licensure. For more information, please refer to the College website page on What You Need to Know to Practise Medicine in Nova Scotia⁵.

Getting Started with a PRA

Before starting an application for a PRA, candidates should review:

- The eligibility criteria in this document. Contact the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia⁴ for questions related to eligibility.
- The 'How to Apply' section on the College webpage for 'Practice Ready Assessment for International Medical Graduates'⁶. This page outlines all of the steps in the application process for PRAs.
- The website for the Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program – Family Medicine²⁰.

Family Medicine candidates start the application process for a PRA by applying for licensure through physiciansapply.ca²⁴. The College reviews the application and if the candidate is eligible for licensure, refers the candidate to the NSPRAP. The NSPRAP makes the decision of whether to accept the candidate into the program.

Practice Ready Assessment Process

Approval for Practice Ready Assessment

All PRAs must be conducted in accordance with this policy and with agreement between the College, Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program²⁰, and Nova Scotia Health¹⁸ or the IWK Health Centre¹⁹. A PRA will not be endorsed in a retrospective manner by the College under any circumstances.

Once the assessment has commenced, it will be considered a PRA attempt whether the candidate withdraws or completes the assessment. All PRA attempts are reported to the Medical Council of Canada and will be noted in future applications.

Licensure for Practice Ready Assessment

Candidates selected for a PRA will be assessed for licensure and, if successful, issued a Clinical Assessment licence⁷ for the purpose of the PRA. This licence type is designed strictly for assessment purposes only and the physician holding this licence is never the most responsible physician.

Practice Ready Assessment Recommendation

The Registrar of the College will review the reports from the Recommendations Committee of the NSPRAP to determine one of the following:

1. The physician has demonstrated the competencies necessary for Defined licensure⁷, with or without conditions and restrictions on the licence.
2. The physician has demonstrated the competencies necessary for a different form of licensure.
3. The physician has not demonstrated competencies for any form of licensure.
4. The Registrar is not prepared to make a licensing decision and will refer the physician to the Registration Committee for adjudication.

Outcomes of Practice Ready Assessment

1. For candidates who have demonstrated the competencies necessary for Defined licensure⁷:
 - The College will provide a letter of recommendation to the CFPC to endorse the candidate's eligibility for the CFPC certification exam. The CFPC will then provide confirmation of when the candidate will be eligible to challenge the certification examination.
 - Based on the Registrar's review of the PRA results, the licence may include additional conditions and/or restrictions beyond those typically applied to a Defined licence¹³. The Registrar may also refer the physician to the Registration Committee if there are any concerns related to the physician's capacity, competence or character to safely and ethically practise medicine. The College will issue the candidate a Defined licence with supervision, starting at Standard Level supervision¹⁵. Within three months of their Defined licence being issued, the candidate will be required to apply to the CFPC²⁶ for their eligibility to challenge the certification examination. The candidate must provide confirmation of the application to the College.

Please refer to the College policies regarding Defined licensure^{13, 15} for more information.

2. For candidates who have demonstrated the competencies necessary for a different form of licensure, the candidate will be invited to apply for that licence type.
3. For candidates who have not demonstrated competencies necessary for any form of licensure, the candidate will be denied licensure. This must be disclosed to other Medical Regulatory Authorities if asked about a history of being denied licensure. As with any application for licensure, the candidate can request to withdraw their application. In this case, there will be no licensing decision rendered.

Appeal of the Registrar's Decision

The candidate has the option to appeal the decision of the Registrar through the College's Registration Committee.

The candidate must notify the Registrar of their intent to appeal the decision within 30 days from the date of the Registrar's initial decision.

Once the Registrar receives the candidate's request for an appeal, they will give the Registration Committee all the information required to conduct a thorough and fair review of the candidate's file, including but not limited to:

- all of the information reviewed by the Registrar in making their decision;
- the decision of the Registrar; and
- any supporting documentation provided by the candidate.

The Registration Committee is comprised of three physicians and at least one representative of the public. All decisions of the Registration Committee can be appealed to the Registration Appeal Committee.

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- all of the information provided to the Registration Committee;
- the decision of the Registration Committee; and
- any supporting documentation provided by the candidate.

The Registration Appeal Committee is comprised of three physicians and at least one representative of the public. All decisions of the Registration Appeal Committee are final.

Resources

Legislation

1. [Medical Act](#)
2. [Medical Practitioners Regulations](#)
3. [Section 59-63 of Regulations for Restricted Licence](#)

College Website

4. [Home Page](#)
5. [What You Need to Know to Practice Medicine in Nova Scotia](#)
6. [Practice Ready Assessment for International Medical Graduates](#)
7. [Licence Types](#)

College Policies

8. [Fee Schedule](#)
9. [Registration & Licensing Policies and Guidelines](#)
10. [University or School Approved by Council](#) + [World Directory of Medical Schools](#)
11. [Currency of Practice Experience](#)
12. [English Language Proficiency](#)
13. [Requirements and Conditions for a Defined Licence](#)

14. [Certificates of Professional Conduct](#)
15. [Supervision Levels for College-Directed Supervision](#)
16. [Acceptable Alternatives to the LMCC](#)
17. [Comprehensive Clinical Assessment of Practice](#)

Nova Scotia Health Authorities

18. [Nova Scotia Health](#)
19. [IWK Health Centre](#)

Practice Ready Assessment in Family Medicine

20. [Nova Scotia Practice Ready Assessment Program in Family Medicine](#)
21. [NAC PRA Family Medicine Standards](#)

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine

22. [Home Page](#)

Medical Council of Canada

23. [MCC Examinations](#)
24. [physiciansapply.ca](#)

Certifying Colleges

25. [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada](#)
26. [College of Family Physicians of Canada \(CFPC\)](#)
27. [Collège des Médecins du Québec \(CMQ\)](#)