

Physician Assistant Licence: Requirements and Conditions

Section:	Registration		
Applicable Legislation:	Sections 39, 63(a-e) of the Medical Practitioner Regulations		
Approved by: Council	Approval Date: March 22, 2024	Reviewer: Deputy Registrar	Review Date: March 2027

PREAMBLE

Physician assistants (or PA's) function as physician extenders. The physician/physician assistant relationship is central to the PA's scope of practice.

Amendments to the Medical Practitioner's Regulations¹ have given the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (the College) the authority to regulate physician assistants in Nova Scotia, effective April 1, 2024.

A Physician Assistant licence can only be registered on the Conditional Register maintained by the College. Section 39 of the Medical Practitioners Regulations (the Regulations) describes the criteria for registration on the Conditional Register.

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the minimum requirements and conditions to obtain a Physician Assistant licence.

SCOPE

All physician assistants practising in Nova Scotia must hold a Physician Assistant licence. Only persons holding a Physician Assistant licence may use the designation 'physician assistant' or 'P.A.' or any derivation or abbreviation of those designations.

POLICY

A Physician Assistant licence will only be issued to candidates who meet the requirements of this policy and who are employed or who have a confirmed offer of employment to practise as a physician assistant within a College-approved Physician Extender program.²

1. Eligibility Criteria for a Physician Assistant Licence

<u>Qualification</u>	<u>Description</u>
Graduate of an Accredited Physician Assistant Program	<p>Must be a graduate of a Canadian Physician Assistant Program recognized by Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC) or</p> <p>A graduate of an American program accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA).</p>
Certification in Canada or the United States	<p>Must hold certification with the Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC)³ or the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA)⁴</p>

2. Requirements for a Physician Assistant Licence outlined in the Regulations:

- Demonstrate English language proficiency⁵
- Canadian citizenship or legally entitled to live and work in Canada
- Provide a criminal record screening report⁶
- Participate satisfactorily in a continuing professional development program⁷
- Demonstrate currency of practice⁸
- Demonstrate capacity, competence and character⁹
- Must have professional liability insurance.

3. Additional Conditions and Requirements

- a) Physician assistants are always under the supervision of a physician approved by the Program Director.
- b) Physician assistants must practise within their individual scope of practice within their role description and within the parameters of a physician assistant program approved by the College.
- c) The College endorses the national standard of practice for physician assistants developed by the Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA).¹⁰
- d) The Registrar, Registration Committee or Registration Appeal Committee shall impose such other conditions, restrictions or requirements as determined necessary to support safe, competent, and effective practice. Any such conditions, restrictions or requirements will be set out in the Licensing Agreement.

RESOURCES:

1. [Medical Practitioners Regulations \(amended link pending\)](#)
2. [Physician Extender Programs](#)
3. [Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada](#)
4. [National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants](#)
5. [English Language Proficiency](#)
6. [Criminal Record Screening](#)
7. [Continuing Professional Development: Requirements](#)
8. [Currency of Practice Experience](#)
9. [Capacity, Competence and Character for Safe and Ethical Practice](#)
10. [Canadian Association of Physician Assistants Competency Framework](#)