

Trade Qualification Program (Guidelines and Process)

In Nova Scotia, there are more than 60 designated trades. Of these, several are compulsory under the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act*, while some are compulsory under other regulatory authorities.

If you wish to work in one of the compulsory trades in Nova Scotia, there is a legal requirement to be certified or registered as an apprentice. There is no legal requirement in any of the other designated trades. However, certification is recommended as it may increase your employability. The table below identifies the trades that are currently deemed compulsory. For the most up-to-date listing, please refer to the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Training Division website at www.nsapprenticeship.ca/trades/index.shtml.

Section 30 of the General Regulations of the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act* makes provision for persons other than registered apprentices to be examined for certification. If you have extensive experience working hands-on in a trade and can prove that your skills and work experience meet the standards set for a certified skilled tradesperson in Nova Scotia, you may be able to apply under the Trade Qualification Program for approval to write the certification examination.

To qualify to write the certification exam you must:

- Schedule an interview with a Training Officer with the Apprenticeship Training Division
- Complete the application form
- Provide documented evidence of your work experience in the trade
- Provide documented evidence of support from two qualified references who are able to attest to your competence in the trade
- Pay the non-refundable fee in Canadian funds (\$679.78)

If approved under this program, you will be scheduled to write the certification exam within 90 days. In most trades, the certification examination is the Interprovincial Standard Red Seal Exam (Red Seal Exam). The Red Seal Exam is a nationally recognized certification examination in Canada.

Note: If you hold a certification issued by another regulatory authority (from within Canada) in a trade that is also designated in Nova Scotia, you may be eligible to apply for certification under another program. Refer to the website at www.nsapprenticeship.ca for more information on credential recognition.

Compulsory Trades in Nova Scotia	
Compulsory under the <i>Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act</i>	Compulsory under other Regulatory Bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automotive Service Technician • Automotive Service Technician (Service Station Mechanic) • Boilermaker • Bricklayer • Construction Electrician • Motor Vehicle Body Repairer (Metal and Paint) • Oil Burner Mechanic • Plumber • Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic • Sprinkler System Installer • Steamfitter/Pipefitter • Truck and Transport Mechanic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaster • Gas Fitter • Hairstylist • Power Engineer • Mobile Crane Operator

Trade Information

For a brief description and regulatory requirements (including the required hours) for a specific trade, refer to the applicable trade regulations found at www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#atq.

To determine if your skills and work experience meet the standards set for a skilled tradesperson in one of the designated trades, review the detailed National Occupational Analyses (NOAs) found on the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal website at www.red-seal.ca (click on the side bar for Red Seal Exams, find your trade in the list and click on the link). The NOAs outline the scope of the trades as practiced in Canada and are the documents upon which the Red Seal Exams are based. These analyses are excellent self-assessment tools that may assist you in determining your readiness to write the certification examination.

Fees

There is a \$679.78 CDN non-refundable fee, which covers the review of the application, the verification of your work experience and references and one writing of the trade examination (if applicable). If the fee is not submitted with the application, the application will not be accepted and will be returned to you. If you are required to re-write the certification examination, a fee of \$135.95 will be required.

Note: Personal cheques are not accepted and will be returned. Fees should be submitted in the form of a certified cheque or money order payable to the MINISTER OF FINANCE. Debit and Credit card payments are accepted at the Halifax, Sydney and Truro offices. Cash payment is accepted in the Halifax Office with exact change only. Fees are subject to change without notice.

Confirmation of Work Experience Letters - [Required Support Documentation]

The required work experience (hourly requirement) for each trade is identified in the applicable trade regulations and can be found at: www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#atq. This hourly requirement must be fulfilled by hands-on work experience, not supervisory duties. Some of this experience must be within the past 10 years.

The work experience must be supported with original (or *certified true copies) of confirmation letters from each of your employers. The letters must be signed, on company letterhead, in English or French (translations done by a certified translator) and contain:

- Complete employer contact information
- Start and end dates of the employment period
- Number of hours of hands-on work experience
- A description of the job duties, tasks or work performed

See Appendix 1 for a sample of an acceptable "Confirmation of Work Experience" letter.

If you are unable to obtain employer letters, an affidavit may be acceptable. An affidavit is a written statement which you have sworn or affirmed officially to tell the truth, and which might be used as proof in a court of law. Affidavits must be signed and stamped by a Canadian-recognized Notary Public, Commissioner of Oaths or lawyer. Along with the information noted above, the affidavit must affirm:

- The reason you are unable to obtain the employer letters (i.e., the employer is out of business or deceased; you were unable to contact; you worked temporary or contracted assignments; you were self-employed; other extenuating circumstances; etc.) and what action you took to obtain the information.
- That the hands-on work you performed was in the scope of the trade as defined in the Nova Scotia Trade Regulations. Trade-specific regulations can be found at: www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#atq

Other documentation may support the affidavit, such as records of employment, work orders, T-4 slips, etc.

*Certified true copy: This legal term describes a document that has been duly declared a true (exact) copy by a Commissioner of Oaths, Notary Public, lawyer or other recognized authority.

References - [Required Support Documentation]

References are required from two qualified individuals who can attest to your competence in the trade. The references may include employers, certified journeypersons, supervisors, association or union representatives, etc. They will be asked to outline their experience and background in the trade and indicate in which capacity they have worked with you.

Each reference must complete a reference form, which is included in the application package (an original letter or *certified true copy may be submitted in lieu of the form). See Appendix 2 for a sample reference form.

If you are unable to obtain reference letters, an affidavit may be acceptable. An affidavit is a written statement which you have sworn or affirmed officially to tell the truth, and which might be used as proof in a court of law. Affidavits must be signed and stamped by a Canadian-recognized Notary Public, Commissioner of Oaths or lawyer. The affidavit must affirm:

- The reason you are unable to obtain the references (i.e., the employer is out of business or deceased; you were unable to contact; you worked temporary or contracted assignments; you were self-employed; other extenuating circumstances; etc.) and what action you took to obtain the information.
- That the hands-on work you performed was in the scope of the trade as defined in the Nova Scotia Trade Regulations. Trade-specific regulations can be found at:
www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#atq

***Certified true copy:** This legal term describes a document that has been duly declared a true (exact) copy by a Commissioner of Oaths, Notary Public, lawyer or other recognized authority.

Examination

You must pass a written theory examination that is specific to the trade. The pass mark for all trade examinations is 70%. If approved under this program, you will be scheduled to write the examination within 90 days of approval of your application. (See below for exam preparation resources).

If you are unable to report to your scheduled examination, you may withdraw from that session and reschedule one time only without penalty. However, you must notify the Apprenticeship Training Division a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours in advanced of the exam session. Examination fees will be forfeited if you fail to report for a scheduled examination or do not contact the Division with advanced notice.

If you are unsuccessful on the first writing, you will be permitted one re-write (subject to an additional fee of \$135.95). If you fail both the first attempt and the re-write, you will be recommended to complete training approved by the Director and/or enrol in an apprenticeship program.

Note: If you require the services of a translator, need to have the examination administered to you orally or require other special accommodations, ask your Training Officer about available options. Special accommodations must be approved prior to scheduling the examination.

Exam preparation resources are available on the Red Seal website at www.red-seal.ca (click on the side bar for Red Seal Exams, then click the link for the "Preparation Guide". This guide answers some frequently asked questions and offers tips and techniques on how to study for and write a Red Seal Exam.

On the same webpage, select the applicable trade to get an exam breakdown by subject area, exam practice questions and the National Occupational Analysis (NOA). The NOA defines the scope of the trade and provides the content upon which the Red Seal exam questions are based.

Review the NOA, specifically Appendix F: Task Profile Chart. This chart is a simple visual tool that can be used as a checklist to help you compare what you know with what will be tested on the exam. Using the chart, check off the sub-tasks that you have already mastered. This will help you identify potential skill gaps and guide your studies. Appendices A and B offer useful information about the tools of the trade and a glossary of terms.

There are other exam preparation resources identified on the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship website at www.nsapprenticeship.ca. Select "Examination Preparation Resources" under Quick Links on the home page and then select "Study Materials and Resources". (Note: The Alberta and British Columbia websites offer free practice examinations and additional sample questions in several trades.)

Process

1. Contact the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education, Apprenticeship Training Division and schedule an appointment with a Training Officer to discuss certification options and eligibility requirements. You will receive an application form at your interview.
2. When you have completed the application form and collected the supporting documentation, make a copy, and contact the Training Officer for a second interview to review your complete application package.
3. If your application is complete and meets criteria, the Training Officer will sign it and provide you with an examination application form and a schedule of available exam dates. Select a preferred date to write the trade examination within 90 days. (**Note:** If your package is incomplete, it will be returned to you. Incomplete packages will not be processed. If you do not meet the eligibility requirements, you will be advised about other options for certification.)
4. Mail or bring your signed application package, your complete exam application form (with exam date noted) and the applicable fee to the nearest Apprenticeship Training Division office within 10 days.
5. Your application will either be returned to you because it requires further information to be considered complete; or
You will receive written confirmation of your scheduled examination date, location and time.
6. Attend the scheduled examination session and write the certification examination.

Important: All support documentation must be provided in one of the official languages of Canada, English or French. If translations are necessary they must be prepared and signed by a certified translator. In Nova Scotia, you can find translation services at www.atins.org or speak to someone at Immigration Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS) at 902-423-3607. (Note: If submitting translations, please include copies of the originals with your application.)

Contact Information

For more information about certification options and eligibility requirements, contact a Training Officer at the Apprenticeship Training Division.

Labour and Advanced Education
Apprenticeship Training Division
PO Box 578, 2021 Brunswick Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2S9

Telephone: (902) 424-5651
Toll Free: 1-800-494-5651 (within NS only)
Facsimile: (902) 424-0717
Email: apprenticeship@gov.ns.ca
Website: www.nsapprenticeship.ca

Appendix 1 - Sample Employer Confirmation of Work Experience Letter (hourly requirement)

(Company letterhead)

{insert date}

Labour and Advanced Education
Apprenticeship Training Division
PO Box 578, 2021 Brunswick Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 2S9

To whom it may concern:

Subject: Confirmation of Work Experience for {insert name}

Mr./Ms. {insert name} was employed by this company as a {insert name of trade}. During his/her employment with this company, he/she performed the duties of the trade as described in the Nova Scotia trade regulations.

Start date of employment: {insert date}

End date of employment: {insert date}

Total hours: {insert exact number of hours spent performing hands-on duties in the trade}

If you have any questions or if you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by telephone {insert daytime telephone number}, by facsimile {insert facsimile number} or by e-mail {insert email address}.

Sincerely,

{insert full name - signature}

{insert full name - printed}

{insert business title}

References

To fulfill the reference requirement, your references must provide detailed contact information and sign the declaration below. You may attach an original letter (signed and on company letterhead, if applicable) for each reference in lieu of this form.

Two qualified references must attest to your competence in the trade. References may include employers, certified journeypersons, supervisors, association or union representatives, etc. Please ensure that your two references have a chance to review the relevant trade regulations at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations/rxaa-l.htm#atq>.

Reference

Last Name		First Name		Middle Name(s) (no initials)			
Home Mailing Address and Apartment Number		City/Town		Province/State			
Country		Postal Code		Email Address			
Home Phone (include all country, area and city codes)		Business Phone (include all country, area and city codes)		Cellular Phone (include all country, area and city codes)			
Trade		Certificate of Qualification Number		Date of Birth	YYYY	MM	DD
Date Issued	YYYY	MM	DD	Province/Territory Issued by			

If NOT a Certificate of Qualification holder, describe your experience in the trade

Position (title)	Describe your working relationship with the applicant (e.g., supervisor, co-worker, employer)
------------------	---

Declaration

I have seen a copy of the trade regulations and I believe _____ has the trade skills and is operating at a
(print name of applicant)
journeyperson level. In my opinion he/she should be given the opportunity to write the trade certification examination.

Signature	Date	YYYY	MM	DD
-----------	------	------	----	----