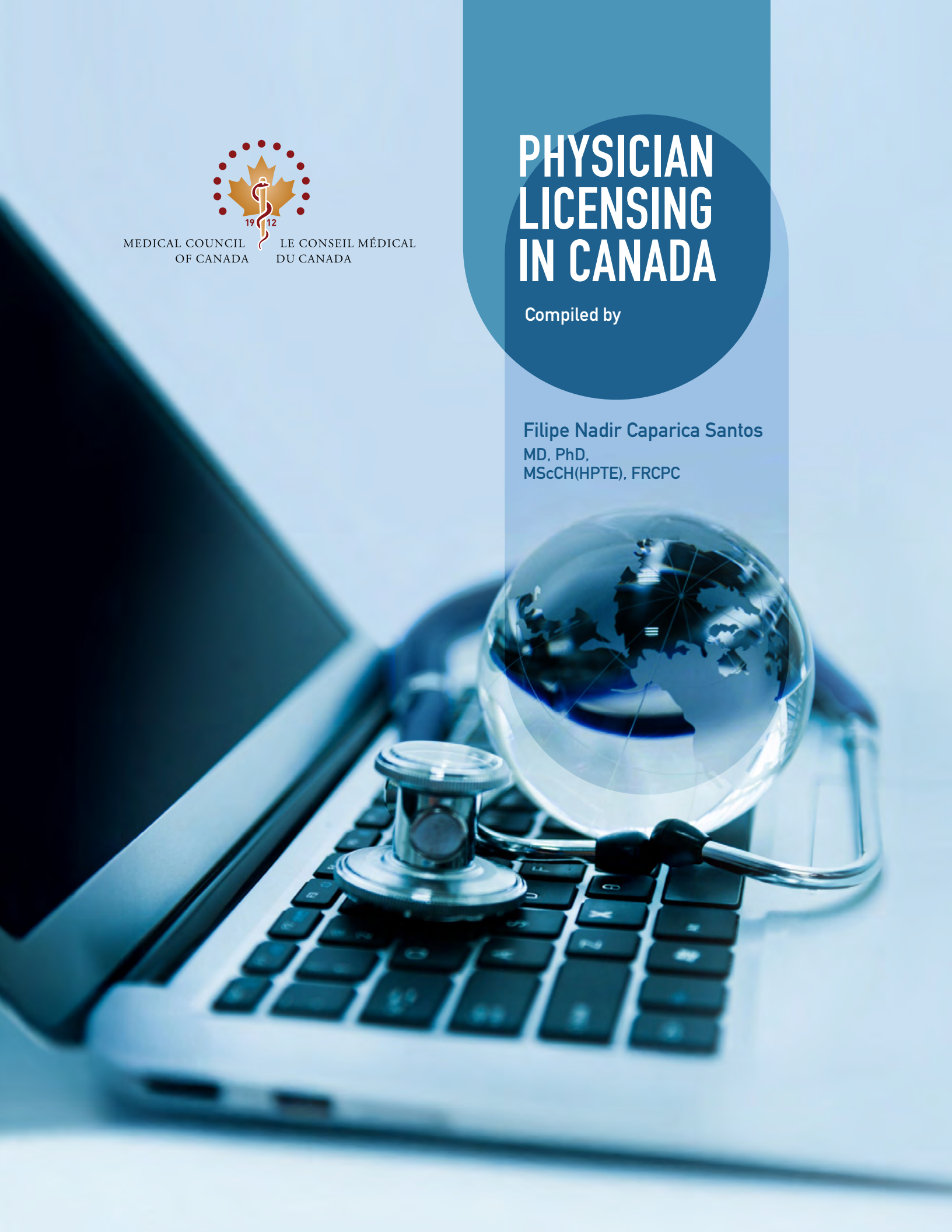

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PHYSICIAN LICENSING IN CANADA

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A guide to clinical assistant, associate physician and Practice-Ready Assessment pathways

This is a summary of publicly available information from Canadian medical regulatory authorities and Practice-Ready Assessment programs.

Eligibility and selection requirements can change at any time and without notice. Always confirm requirements directly with your preferred provincial or territorial program.

Updated July 9, 2026.

Language requirements

Every region requires you to be proficient in the language of practice: generally English or, in New Brunswick, either English or French, or, in Quebec, French. Proof of English or French language proficiency, current in the last 24 months, may be required, depending on the language in your home country. This is generally still required if you were trained in a country where English is not the first language (even if English was the language of instruction).

Generally, English proficiency is demonstrated by achieving minimum scores on an English language proficiency (ELP) test. ELP options include:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic version: minimum score of 7.0 in each of the four components in one sitting
- Occupational English Test (OET) Medicine version: minimum grade of B in each subset in one sitting
- Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPIP) General: minimum score of 9 in each component in one sitting

In Quebec, French language proficiency is demonstrated by a pass result on the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) examination or a proof of knowledge of French (in accordance with the applicable exemptions).

All requirements can change. Always confirm requirements directly with your preferred provincial or territorial program.

In the interest of continued improvement, if you notice inaccuracies or information that should be adapted, email *communications@mcc.ca*.

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Clinical assistants and associate physicians

1. Associate physician licence in British Columbia

Type of licence

The associate physician class is a restricted licensure that permits a physician, with medical training PPacceptable to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia (CPSBC) and who is not eligible for any other class of registration, to practise under supervision in accredited structured team-based care.

Acute care category

- Setting: This category is designed for hospital-based settings, where health care is provided to patients with severe or urgent conditions.
- Scope of practice: Associate physicians in acute care typically work in emergency departments, intensive care units, or other hospital wards where they provide hands-on care to patients in critical condition. Their work is highly focused on managing acute, life-threatening conditions.
- Supervision: Since the work involves high-stakes medical situations, acute care associate physicians must operate under close supervision by a fully licensed physician, especially because they often deal with complex cases requiring immediate and precise medical intervention.

Primary care category

- Setting: This category applies to outpatient settings, where care is delivered in community clinics, family practices, or other non-hospital environments.
- Scope of practice: Associate physicians in primary care focus on managing general health concerns, chronic diseases, preventive care, and routine check-ups. They typically see a broad range of patients, from children to the elderly, addressing various non-emergency medical issues.
- Supervision: Supervision in primary care is also required, but the nature of the work—being less acute and more focused on ongoing management of patient health—means that it can be somewhat less intensive than acute care. Nevertheless, the associate physician is still required to consult with a supervising physician, especially for more complex cases.

Key differences

- Type of care: Acute care deals with urgent, life-threatening conditions in a hospital, while primary care is about long-term, general health management in a community setting.
- Level of supervision: Associate physicians providing either type of care require supervision, but the provision of acute care involves more immediate, hands-on oversight because of the high-risk nature of the work.
- Training requirements: Acute care typically requires more intensive and specialized training in hospital settings, whereas primary care focuses on a broad range of less acute medical issues in outpatient settings.

Requirements

Associate physician registration may be granted to physicians who are not otherwise eligible for registration in the provisional or full class as determined by the registration committee, and who are practising under the direction and supervision of an attending physician. An associate physician may not be the most responsible physician.

For the purposes of section 20(2) of the Health Professionals Act (British Columbia), to be granted registration in the associate physician class, an applicant must:

- Have a medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Submit with the application a sponsorship letter from a health authority, satisfactory to the registration committee, that:
    - Identifies the applicant's sponsor
    - Describes how the applicant will engage in the practice of medicine
    - Notes that the applicant will be working under the direction and supervision of an attending physician (acute care class) OR notes that the applicant will be working in a community setting under the direction and supervision of an attending physician (primary care class)
- Have completed a minimum of one year of accredited training as a medical or surgical specialist before applying for registration (acute care class) OR have completed a minimum of one year of accredited training as a general practitioner before applying for registration (primary care class)
- Have Canadian citizenship, be a permanent resident, or be legally able to live and work in British Columbia

Associate physicians must limit their practice to the provision of services in connection with fulfilling the terms set out in their sponsorship letter. Associate physician registration is cancelled if the health authority withdraws sponsorship provided under section 2-25(2)(b) of the Health Professionals Act (British Columbia).

NOTE: Health Match BC does not necessarily accept internship to count towards postgraduate training. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure that the requirements set forth by Health Match BC and CPSBC are met accordingly.

Application process

Prescreening assessment

1. In your email to *Health Match BC*:
    a. Outline your interest in employment opportunities
    b. Include a recent curriculum vitae (CV)
2. Health Match BC will work with eligible candidates to:
    a. Apply for open positions as they are made available
    b. Assist successful applicants with submission of a registration package to CPSBC

3. Request for preliminary assessment by CPSBC:
   Health Match BC will forward the application documentation to CPSBC for preliminary assessment. The application documentation must include a job description of an accredited associate physician program.
4. Eligibility review by CPSBC:
   Applicant files are reviewed by the executive director of the registration department to determine initial eligibility for registration and licensure in the associate physician—specialty or associate physician—primary care classes.
5. Applicants will receive a letter six to eight weeks after CPSBC receives the application documentation from Health Match BC.
6. Meeting the requirements for pre-registration:
   The applicant must fulfil pre-registration requirements (mentioned above) outlined in the letter, including providing either a sponsorship letter or a contract of supervision that confirms employment and program accreditation.
7. Processing the application:
   If no additional follow-up is required, the file manager will submit the candidate file for a final review and approval.
8. Application package:
   The file manager will email an application package to the applicant. The applicant submits to CPSBC a completed application along with required documentation. This step will take a minimum of six to eight weeks. The file manager will review the completed application to ensure that no additional follow-up is required.

Registration and licensure

A licence is issued once the file is approved. Registration and licensure in the associate physician class is contingent on the following:

1. Submission of a complete application for registration package
2. Submission of written documentation confirming that the employment position offered to the associate physician applicant is in a health authority associate physician program that has been accredited by CPSBC
3. Sponsorship letter from the health authority that confirms employment for the applicant in the accredited associate physician program
4. Compliance with the requirements for registration and licensure under the Health Professions Act and related bylaws
5. The health authority obtains and maintains program accreditation

Reference

Associate physician licence | CPSBC | September 2024

2. Associate physician licence in Alberta

Type of licence

Limited practice registration is available for physicians and osteopaths who don't currently meet our criteria for independent practice but have successfully completed Alberta Health Services (AHS) or Covenant Health's Associate Physician orientation program.

Physicians and osteopaths on the limited practice register may provide limited medical services as Associate Physicians while under supervision. To apply for an Associate Physician position within AHS or Covenant Health, you must meet certain licensure requirements.

Eligibility

You may be eligible for limited practice registration as an Associate Physician if you:

- Have successfully completed AHS or Covenant Health's Associate Physician orientation and assessment process

  AND
- Have ongoing support from AHS or Covenant Health to remain on the limited register

Requirements

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Postgraduate training (minimum of one year)
  - For associate physicians, this needs to be hospital-based training in clinical services providing direct patient care interaction in the acute care setting. Medical or clinical research, full-time administrative activity, and instruction in aspects of medicine not contributing to direct patient care do not qualify.
- Pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)*
- A criminal record check or police certificate is required from all locations you have practised and/or trained for more than 90 days in the last five years. Canadian criminal record checks are nation-wide, so only one is required. Although we don't need it, we will accept a vulnerable sector check if it is a part of your criminal record check.
- Demonstration of currency of practice: within the last three years, you need to have been in postgraduate training or independent practice for at least six months
- Letter of offer from AHS or Covenant Health
- Successful completion of the AHS or Covenant Health's Associate physician orientation program

Application process

1. To begin the prescreening process, complete the *application form* and submit the necessary documents (the details of the documents are mentioned above) to *caprescreen@ahs.ca*.
2. Successful applicants will receive a letter indicating they have passed the prescreening process. They can then begin applying for associate physician positions.

References

Associate Physicians | Alberta Health Services | March 2025
Apply for Limited Practice | College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) | March 2025

3. Clinical assistant licence in Saskatchewan

Type of licence

In Saskatchewan, clinical assistants are registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) under the policy for "Licensure of Physicians to Work in Limited Roles in Saskatchewan." This policy applies to alternative forms of licensure for physicians who do not meet the normal criteria for independent registration. Such physicians will be restricted to providing limited medical services under supervision in a variety of specific settings.

> **Note:** The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) decides independently when they want to open a program for limited roles licensure. Physicians who seek to work in limited roles in a variety of settings should be required to follow the same process as for independent practice licensure. The CPSS will refer to the physicians working in restricted roles as "clinical assistants."

Requirements

Candidates seeking licensure for clinical assistant positions shall meet the non-exemptible standards and standards applicable to all classes of licensure in *regulatory bylaw 2.3*:

- A medical degree from a university listed in either the World Directory of Medical Schools or Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) directory or a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from a school in the United States accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation
- Pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)* or successfully completed medical licensing examinations in the United States of America acceptable to CPSS, or an acceptable alternative
- Provide evidence of currency of practice in accordance with *regulatory bylaw 4.1* (Engaged in 5 months of clinical practice within the past 5 years or must complete an assessment and retraining satisfactory to CPSS at the physician's expense)

Assessments of physicians working in limited roles

Initially, the SHA will be required to provide information to the CPSS to demonstrate that the candidate has the necessary skills and knowledge. On the basis of this information the CPSS can:

- Issue an educational licence to permit the physician to engage in an assessment program before making a decision to grant or refuse a licence to practise in the restricted role
- Grant a provisional time-limited licence to practise in the restricted role
- Refuse a licence

Reference

Licensure of Physicians to Work in Limited Roles ("Clinical Assistants") | CPSS | September 2024

4. Clinical assistant licence in Manitoba

In Manitoba, clinical assistants are health care professionals with a medical background who provide medical services under the supervision of a licensed physician.

Requirements

- Satisfactory completion of one of the following approved assessments:
  - Pass result on the National Assessment Collaborative *(NAC) Examination*
  - Satisfactory completion of the Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (*LMCC*), which requires a pass result on the MCC Qualifying Examination (MCCQE)
- One of the following:
  - Hold a degree in medicine from a nationally approved faculty of medicine or a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from a school in the United States accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation
  - Be a graduate of an approved and accredited physician assistant or clinical assistant training program that is restricted to a field of practice
  - Be a member in good standing of a regulated health profession in Manitoba
  - Hold certification at the highest level of emergency medical attendant certification

Application process

Once you have met the eligibility requirements, you can proceed with the registration process through the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM). Visit *CPSM Registration* for more information.

Reference

Clinical assistants and physician assistants | CPSM | April 2024

5. Clinical assistant role in Ontario

Type of role

Ontario does not have a clinical assistant or associate physician licence class. The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) does not register, examine, or set entry requirements for clinical assistants. There is no protected title for the role, no public register, and no provincial program through which an internationally trained physician (ITP) applies for the position.

In Ontario, the work that other provinces license as clinical assistant or associate physician is performed by an unregulated worker under delegation of controlled acts. The legal framework is provided by the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA), section 27(2), and by the CPSO Professional Obligations: Delegation of Controlled Acts policy and its accompanying Guidance for the Profession (CPSO, 2026a, 2026b).

> **OBSERVATION**
>
> Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada that does not issue a registered intermediate licence class for physicians who are not eligible for full or provisional registration. The territories also do not issue this class. The clinical assistant role exists in Ontario solely as private employment under delegation. Physician assistant (PA) became a regulated registrant class in Ontario on April 1, 2025, through amendments to Ontario Regulation 865/93 under the Medicine Act, 1991 (O. Reg. 865/93). The PA role is described later in this section.

Legal and policy framework

Under section 27(1) of the RHPA, only authorized regulated health professionals, or properly supervised delegates, may perform a controlled act. Section 27(2) lists 14 controlled acts, including communicating a diagnosis, administering a substance by injection or inhalation, performing procedures below the dermis or below the surface of a mucous membrane, applying a prescribed form of energy, prescribing or dispensing a drug, and managing labour (Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991). Any health-related activity not on this list, such as taking a history or performing a physical examination, is in the public domain and may be performed by anyone competent. No delegation is required for public domain activities.

When a clinical assistant performs a controlled act, the supervising licensed physician must comply with the seven requirements set out in the CPSO Professional Obligations: Delegation of Controlled Acts policy (CPSO, 2026a):

- Clinically assess the patient before delegating, or within two business days of the delegate's first encounter with the patient, except in specified emergency, public health, and remote-care exceptions
- Use a clear and specific direct order, written or verbal, or a written medical directive containing all required elements
- Verify that the delegate has the knowledge, skill, and judgment to perform the act safely
- Remain physically onsite to supervise, unless an exception applies
- Have protocols in place to manage adverse events
- Monitor and evaluate the care provided through delegation
- Document in the medical record who performed the act

The supervising licensed physician remains fully accountable for every act performed under delegation.

> **NOTE**
>
> The May 2026 CPSO Guidance for the Profession added two clarifications specific to IMGs working as clinical assistants (CPSO, 2026b). First, the supervising licensed physician cannot rely on credentials or licences obtained in other jurisdictions to confirm an ITP's competence. The physician must directly assess the ITP's knowledge, skills, and judgment, regardless of training completed abroad. Second, ITPs who are not registered with CPSO cannot use the titles "physician," "surgeon," "doctor," or any variation of those titles, including "M.D.," in the course of providing health care in Ontario.

Eligibility and application process

There is no centralized application process for the clinical assistant role in Ontario. Eligibility is determined by the hiring licensed physician or institution, not by CPSO or any provincial program. CPSO does not maintain a register of clinical assistants, does not list eligibility criteria for the role, and does not issue a certificate of registration for clinical assistant work.

There is no mandatory examination requirement set by the province. Individual employers may request evidence of a pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (MCCQE) or the National Assessment Collaboration (NAC) Examination, but neither is required by law or by CPSO policy to be hired as a clinical assistant.

Employment is established by private contract between the worker and the hiring physician or institution. Most clinical assistant positions in Ontario are in office-based settings. Hospital-based clinical assistant positions exist but are less common than in provinces with a registered clinical assistant or associate physician licence class.

Accountability and recognition of practice

CPSO has jurisdiction over the supervising licensed physician. It does not have jurisdiction over the unregulated clinical assistant. Concerns about a clinical assistant's conduct are typically addressed through the supervising physician's CPSO file, through the RHPA's provincial-offence framework for unauthorized practice or unauthorized title use, through enforcement of the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA) by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, or through civil action (Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004; Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991).

Hours worked as a clinical assistant in Ontario are not recognized as Canadian practice hours by provincial medical regulatory authorities or by Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) programs. Clinical assistant work in Ontario is private employment under delegation. It is not regulated practice and is not documented under any provincial licensing framework.

How the PA role differs from the clinical assistant role in Ontario

Beginning April 1, 2025, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) regulates physician assistants (PAs) under the Medicine Act, 1991. Physician assistant is a new registrant class established within the existing Medicine Act framework, through amendments to Ontario Regulation 865/93 (O. Reg. 865/93). PA is not a separate profession on Ontario's list of 27 regulated

health professions. The titles “Physician Assistant” and “PA” are protected under the Medicine Act, 1991, and only individuals registered with CPSO may use these titles in Ontario.

The PA role and the clinical assistant role are commonly confused and are sometimes used interchangeably in employment listings, but they are distinct under Ontario law. The differences are summarized below.

Feature	Physician assistant (PA)	Clinical assistant (CA)
Regulation	Regulated by CPSO since April 1, 2025	Unregulated
Title	"Physician Assistant" and "PA" are protected titles	No protected title
Public register	Yes, maintained by CPSO	None
Entry pathway	Graduation from an accredited PA education program plus a certifying examination	Determined by the hiring licensed physician or institution
Professional liability insurance	Minimum $10 million, mandatory	Not mandated by any provincial body
Continuing professional development	Mandatory; tracked by the certifying body	Not mandated by any provincial body
Scope under delegation	Performs controlled acts under delegation from a supervising licensed physician	Performs controlled acts under delegation from a supervising licensed physician

Both PAs and clinical assistants in Ontario perform controlled acts under delegation. The legal mechanism is the same. The roles differ in regulatory status, title protection, and entry-to-practice pathway.

Internationally trained physicians cannot register as physician assistants in Ontario on the basis of their medical degree. PA registration requires:

- Graduation from an accredited Canadian or United States physician assistant education program (CPSO, 2025a)
- Successful completion of a certifying examination administered by the Physician Assistant Certification Council of Canada (PACCC) or the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA) (CPSO, 2025a)
- At least $10 million in professional liability insurance issued by a company licensed to carry on business in the province (CPSO, 2025b)

A medical degree from a foreign jurisdiction does not satisfy the PA education program requirement. The PA program is a distinct educational pathway from medical school.

The CPSO addresses this directly on its Physician Assistant Registration page (CPSO, 2025a):

> *Internationally trained physicians may continue to practise through delegation but may not call themselves a PA. The title “Physician Assistant” or the abbreviation “PA” is protected under the Medicine Act, 1991. Internationally trained physicians will only be able to practise as a PA where they meet the standards and qualifications set out in the Registration regulation (requisite education and certification) and are registered with CPSO.*

IMGs may continue to practise in Ontario through delegation of controlled acts under the framework described above. They cannot use the titles “Physician Assistant” or “PA.”

References

Clinical assistants and physician assistants | CPSM | April 2024
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (2025a). *Physician assistant registration* | May 19, 2026.
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (2025b). *Being a CPSO registrant* | May 19, 2026.
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (2026a, March). *Professional obligations: Delegation of controlled acts*.
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (2026b, May). *Guidance for the profession: Delegation of controlled acts*.
Medicine Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 30. Ontario e-Laws.
O. Reg. 865/93: Registration. Medicine Act. Ontario e-Laws.
Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, S.O. 2004, c. 3, Sched. A. Ontario e-Laws.
Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, S.O. 1991, c. 18. Ontario e-Laws.

6. Clinical assistant licence in New Brunswick

The clinical assistant licence is an initiative to address health care workforce shortages. The program is a collaboration between the provincial government, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick (CPSNB), and the regional health authorities (Horizon Health Network and Vitalité Health Network).

The clinical assistant must be sponsored by a regional health authority for the purpose of employment within a CPSNB-approved clinical assistant program.

Requirements

- Have obtained a degree from a medical school outside Canada but listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools or be an internationally trained osteopathic physician who meets specific criteria
- Must have the designation of Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (*LMCC*) or qualify for an acceptable alternative to the LMCC
- Must have engaged in clinical practice for at least 450 hours within the five years preceding application
- Must have successfully completed a training program or have a combination of training and practice experience relevant to the intended discipline of practice
- Be legally entitled to live and work in New Brunswick
- Have successfully completed:
    - Two years of a postgraduate training or internship program resulting in certification, recognition, and practice plus one year of independent practice experience

      OR

- One year of a postgraduate training or internship program resulting in certification, PLUS
- Two years of independent practice experience

Application process

All applicants must submit a complete application for medical registration (*AMR*) to the CPSNB via *physiciansapply.ca*.

1. CPSNB application fees of $450 are nonrefundable and do not guarantee eligibility. The MCC-AMR application fee is also nonrefundable.
2. When you are completing your AMR, read the instructions and answer each question carefully. Any errors, discrepancies, or omissions will delay the review of your application and may cause it to be deemed ineligible.
3. Prepare all required documents in advance, including ensuring all credentials required (medical degrees, specialty certifications) are submitted for source verification via physiciansapply.ca, translated to English or French and shared with CPSNB where applicable.
4. Once the application is completed, the CPSNB determines the applicant's eligibility and will send a decision email regarding the application and next steps, if applicable.
5. Additional documents may be requested after you are deemed eligible for licensure. This may include:
    a. Identification documents
    b. Proof of Canadian employment eligibility
    c. Criminal record check
    d. Language proficiency test results, if applicable
    e. Certificate of professional conduct
    f. Letters of reference

For more information, contact *registration@cpsnb.org*.

Reference

Licensure in New Brunswick | CPSNB | May 2024

7. Clinical assistant licence in Nova Scotia

Type of licence

A clinical assistant licence in Nova Scotia is a restricted licence issued by the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS) to internationally trained physicians. This licence allows them to work under the supervision of a fully licensed physician within a hospital setting.

Requirements

All candidates must:

- Meet the criteria for a clinical assistant licence as set out in Section 49 of the *Medical Practitioners Regulations*;

  AND

- Have acquired two years of postgraduate training and one year of licensed, independent, unsupervised practice experience OR one year of postgraduate training and two years of licensed, independent, unsupervised practice experience;

  AND

- Be a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (*LMCC*) or have an acceptable *alternative to the LMCC*;

  AND

- Have practised medicine independently and unsupervised, and/or acquired postgraduate training, within the last five years

To be considered current in clinical practice, a physician must have engaged in independent, unsupervised medical practice for at least 450 hours within the last five years, to the proposed practice start date as an associate physician in Nova Scotia.

Candidates must not have been out of independent practice for more than five years.

Exceptions

- Practice experience as an associate physician in another Canadian jurisdiction where such a program exists and is sanctioned by the provincial or territorial medical regulatory authority may be considered in lieu of independent, unsupervised practice for determination of currency at the discretion of the CPSNS.
- Verifiable postgraduate training may be considered in lieu of independent, unsupervised practice for determination of currency at the discretion of the CPSNS.

The CPSNS must approve your credentials before you can accept a job offer.

Before CPSNS issues you a licence, you must send proof of an offer of employment as a clinical assistant with either Nova Scotia Health or IWK Health.

If you are approved for licensure and secure a job offer, you will be issued a clinical assistant licence to practise medicine in Nova Scotia.

Application process

Step 1: Submit your credentials to be verified

a. Complete the application for medical registration and submit your credentials through MCC's *physiciansapply.ca*.

b. Pay the fees. Fees are non-refundable.

For more information about licensing, contact CPSNS at 1-877-282-7767 or 902-422-5823, or email *registration@cpsns.ns.ca*.

Step 2: CPSNS reviews your application

a. If you qualify, you will be emailed a request for documentation.

b. If you do not qualify, you will receive an explanation.

It can take four to six weeks for you to collect and send all the documents needed.

Step 3: CPSNS notifies you about your registration

a. If you qualify, CPSNS will send you instructions and information to pay the applicable fees. Once they receive payment, CPSNS will aim to issue your licence within 10 business days.

b. If you do NOT qualify, CPSNS will explain why.

Step 4: You receive your licence to practise

a. If you are approved for a licence, CPSNS issues your licence to practise medicine in Nova Scotia. You will receive a notification by email outlining your responsibilities.

b. If you do not meet the requirements set out in the Medical Act and Medical Practitioners Regulations, your application will be referred to the registrar.

c. The registrar may:

   i. Approve your application and grant a licence, with or without conditions;

   ii. Deny your application and give you information about how to appeal this decision;

   iii. Order a competency assessment;

   and/or

   iv. Refer your application to the Registration Committee.

Reference

Clinical Assistant Licence | *CPSNS* | April 2024

8. Associate physician licence in Prince Edward Island

Observation

Prince Edward Island (PEI) is the only province that offers both clinical assistant and associate physician licences, with each having distinct roles and scopes of practice. Other provinces typically offer only one of these roles, which generally have similar responsibilities across jurisdictions. In British Columbia, there are two distinct types of associate physician licences, each with specific roles. Unlike other regions, PEI clearly differentiates between clinical assistant and associate physician licences, and the terms are not interchangeable.

PEI is currently the only province that issues a limited role licence without the requirement that an applicant (1) be a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (MCC), (2) have a pass result on the National Assessment Collaborative *(NAC) Examination*, or (3) have an acceptable alternative to the Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (*LMCC*) as per the corresponding provincial medical regulatory authority policies.

Type of licence

A new class of registration with the College of Physicians & Surgeons of PEI (CPSPEI) will allow foreign-trained physicians who have completed their postgraduate training to apply for a licence to practise in PEI as associate physicians. Other changes have also been made to facilitate ease of licensing, including the removal of the requirement that a jurisdictional examination be completed before registration.

Common areas of practice for associate physicians include primary care, emergency medicine, long-term care, surgery, and obstetrics and gynecology, and other care settings on the basis of their training and experience.

Requirements

An applicant for associate physician registration shall:

- Have a medical degree from a medical school or faculty of medicine that is accredited at the time the degree is granted
- Have one of the following:
    - Have successfully completed a postgraduate medical training program

      OR
    - Have qualifications, experience, and training that, in CPSPEI's opinion, are substantially equivalent to the successful completion of a postgraduate medical training program
- Demonstrate currency of professional knowledge and skills by having done one of the following within the five years immediately preceding the application:
    - Successfully completed the training requirement; or have successfully completed a postgraduate medical training program; or have qualifications, experience, and training that, in CPSPEI's opinion, are substantially equivalent to the successful completion of a postgraduate medical training program

- Actively practised medicine in the province or in another jurisdiction recognized by CPSPEI to an extent that is acceptable to them
- Successfully completed a refresher program approved by the CPSPEI; and be certified by an organization, recognized by CPSPEI, governing family medicine in another jurisdiction

For licensure as an associate physician, individuals must have been engaged in clinical practice for at least 450 hours within the last five years.

A medical practitioner with associate registration shall not practise medicine except under the supervision of a designated supervisor.

Reference

Regulated Health Professions Act Medical Practitioners Regulations | CPSPEI | November 2024

9. Clinical assistant licence in Prince Edward Island

Observation: PEI is the only province that offers both clinical assistant and associate physician licences, with each having distinct roles and scopes of practice. Other provinces typically offer only one of these roles, which generally have similar responsibilities across jurisdictions. In British Columbia, there are two distinct types of associate physician licences, each with specific roles. Unlike other regions, PEI clearly differentiates between clinical assistant and associate physician licences, and the terms are not interchangeable.

The clinical assistant registration is intended to allow physicians with postgraduate medical training acceptable to the CPCPEI, who are not otherwise eligible for registration in PEI, to work under supervision in a team-based care setting to increase capacity and service delivery.

Requirements

An applicant for clinical assistant shall:

- Have a medical degree from a medical school or faculty of medicine that is accredited at the time the degree is granted
- Have successfully completed:
  - The Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (*MCCQE)*;

    OR
  - An examination administered in another jurisdiction that, in the opinion of the Council of CPSPEI, is substantially equivalent
- Training:
  - Have successfully completed a postgraduate medical training program;

OR

- Have qualifications, experience and training that, in the opinion of the Counci of CPSPEI, are substantially equivalent to the successful completion of a postgraduate medical training program
- Demonstrate currency of professional knowledge and skills by having done one of the following within the five years immediately preceding the application:
  - Actively practised medicine in the province or in another jurisdiction recognized by CPSPEI to an extent that is acceptable to CPSPEI
  - Successfully completed a refresher program approved by the Council of CPSPEI

    AND
  - Be enrolled in the Canadian Medical Register as a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada or have qualifications that CPSPEI accepts as an alternative

Currency of practice

For licensure as clinical assistants, individuals must have been engaged in clinical practice for at least 450 hours within the last five years.

Training requirements

One of the following:

- Two years of postgraduate training and one year of licensed independent unsupervised practice experience

  OR
- One year of postgraduate training and two years of licensed independent unsupervised practice experience

  OR
- Qualifications, experience, and training that the Council of CPSPEI considers equivalent to successful completion of a postgraduate medical training program

The clinical assistant shall not practise medicine except under the supervision of a supervisor approved by the Council of CPSPEI with signed supervision agreements in place.

Reference

Regulated Health Professions Act Medical Practitioners Regulations | *CPSPEI* | November 2024

10. Clinical assistant licence in Newfoundland and Labrador

The program targets increasing access to health care services by bringing in qualified medical professionals who might not qualify for a full practice licence because of their background or training pathway.

Requirements

To be eligible for a clinical assistant licence in Newfoundland and Labrador, you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Hold a medical degree from a faculty of medicine acceptable to the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL)
- Be a licensed or registered health care professional under an act of the Newfoundland and Labrador Legislature (e.g., nurse practitioner)
- Be certified as an emergency medical attendant, Level III
- Be a graduate of an accredited physician assistant or clinical assistant training program acceptable to the CPSNL (currently not a common pathway)

You must have practised medicine independently for at least six months of the past four years to be eligible.

Application process

The CPSNL is responsible for issuing clinical assistant licences in Newfoundland and Labrador. Here is a general outline of the licensing process:

1. Pre-assessment:
   Review the CPSNL's Determine Your Eligibility flowcharts to get a preliminary sense of your eligibility basd on the basis of your qualifications.
2. Formal application:
   If you meet the pre-assessment criteria, submit a formal application to the CPSNL. This will involve completing application forms, providing supporting documents (such as your degree, transcripts, and proof of experience) and paying applicable fees.
3. Assessment:
   The CPSNL will assess your application to ensure you meet the qualification requirements. This might involve additional documentation verification and evaluations.
4. Licensing decision:
   Upon successful assessment, the CPSNL will issue your clinical assistant licence.

Reference

Determine Your Eligibility | CPSNL | April 2024

11. Comparison table: Clinical assistant and associate physician licences

Province	Exams required	Currency of practice required	PGT	Independent practice experience (IPE) required
British Columbia – associate physician	None	960 hours in the last 3 years	1 year	None
Alberta	MCCQE*	6 months in the last 3 years	1 year	None
Saskatchewan	MCCQE*	5 months in the last 5 years	None	None
Manitoba	MCCQE* or NAC Examination	None	None	None
Nova Scotia	MCCQE*	Must have practised within the last 5 years	1 to 2 years	If 1 year of PGT → 2 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → 1 year of IPE
New Brunswick	MCCQE*	450 hours (approx. 3 months) in the last 5 years	1 to 2 years	If 1 year of PGT → 2 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → 1 year of IPE
Newfoundland & Labrador	MCCQE*	6 months in the last 4 years	1 to 2 years	If < 2 years of PGT → 2 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → no IPE required
Prince Edward Island – associate physician	None	450 hours in the last 5 years	Must have completed internship or other PGT	None
Prince Edward Island – clinical assistant	MCCQE*	450 hours in the last 5 years	At least 1 training program completed or equivalent qualification	If 2 years of PGT → 1 year of IPE If 1 year of PGT → 2 years of IPE

*** NOTE:** Although the MCCQE is listed as the required exam, you may also be required to have the designation of a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (LMCC). Refer to each provincial medical regulatory authority for details. Additionally, each province has a list of what is considered an "acceptable alternative to the LMCC" and this varies across provinces.

Abbreviations: AP: Associate Physician; IPE: independent practice experience; MCCQE: Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination; PGT: postgraduate training.

Other program

1. Family physician training program (MLPIMG) in Manitoba

The Medical Licensure Program for International Medical Graduates (MLPIMG) is designed to enhance the current skills of internationally educated family physicians. MLPIMG physicians will work in rural and underserviced areas of Manitoba for return of service and will work to obtain medical licensure as family physicians.

- Expected program duration: one year
- Program structure:
    - Emergency medicine – two rotations (four weeks urban, four weeks rural)
    - Family medicine – three rotations (12 weeks urban and rural)
    - Gynecology – one rotation (four weeks)
    - Obstetrics – one rotation (four weeks)
    - Internal medicine – two rotations (eight weeks)
    - Pediatrics (outpatient) – one rotation (four weeks)
    - Pediatrics (ward) – one rotation (four weeks)
    - Psychiatry – one rotation (four weeks)
    - Vacation – one rotation (four weeks)

Following completion of the program, you will work for your sponsoring regional health authority employer for return of service. You will be eligible to apply for Provisional Registration – Family Practice Limited with College of Physicians & Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM). You will be assigned a practice supervisor for the duration of your provisional licensure.

Requirements

- Permanent resident (landed immigrant) or Canadian citizen
- Preference for residents of Manitoba
- Pass results on the National Assessment Collaborative *(NAC) Examination*
- One-year independent practice experience working as a physician in general practice, family medicine, or primary care. Postgraduate training (internship/residency) does not count towards this requirement.
- One-year of Postgraduate Clinical Training (including at least one month in each of the following rotations: General Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Pediatrics, and General Surgery).
- Currency in practice: must not have been out of independent practice as a general/family practitioner for longer than five years. If out of practice for longer than five years, a minimum of 12 consecutive months of independent clinical practice is required.

Reference

International Medical Graduate Programs | *University of Manitoba* | March 2024

Practice-ready assessments for family physicians / general practitioners

1. Practice Ready Assessment – British Columbia (PRA-BC)

PRA-BC is an assessment program for internationally trained family physicians who have completed family medicine residencies outside of Canada.

PRA-BC is a competitive program, comprised of two parts:

1-week Centralized Orientation in Vancouver, BC

12-week Clinical Field Assessment (CFA) within the sponsoring health authority region

PRA-BC conducts two intakes per year. Eligible applicants are referred to our participating health authorities for possible interview, selection, sponsorship, and participation in a PRA-BC intake. Candidates who successfully complete program components go on to fulfill a 3-year Return of Service in a BC community of need.

Sponsored candidates are supported by PRA-BC during the assessment with:

- Reimbursement for travel from Vancouver to their CFA site
- Single-occupancy accommodation for the duration of the Orientation and CFA
- Stipend payment during the Orientation and CFA

Immigration status in Canada is NOT required to apply for PRA-BC

Applicants may apply from any country. Upon selection into a PRA-BC intake, overseas applicants are provided with guidance on applying for Canadian permanent residency through our sister program, Health Match BC.

Applicants must first meet pre-screening criteria based on eligibility requirements as set out by PRA-BC and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (CPSBC), which include:

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Two years of postgraduate training leading to registration or recognition as a general or family physician
- Completion of seven core rotations:
    - A minimum of four weeks of postgraduate training in internal/general medicine, general surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry, and emergency medicine;
    - A minimum of eight weeks of postgraduate training in family medicine.
- Completion of a minimum of two years of discipline-specific time in independent practice as a general or family practitioner in an international jurisdiction
- Academic credentials verification on physiciansapply.ca

- Currency in practice – a minimum of 960 hours of clinical practice as family physician in the preceding three years
- A current curriculum vitae (CV) that fully explains all activities, professional or otherwise

PRA-BC accepts applications year-round. There are no application deadlines.

Additional program requirements:

Applicants must achieve a pass standing on the Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination* prior to participating in a CFA.

Reference

Apply to PRA-BC | March 2025

2. Practice Readiness Assessment Alberta (PRA-AB)

A Practice Readiness Assessment (PRA) is the required final step of an alternate path to independent practice in Alberta for international medical graduates (IMGs) from outside the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA)'s list of approved jurisdictions, and Canadian graduates who fail a national exam.

Once registered with the CPSA, the candidate must pass this 2-part assessment of their clinical competence, chart management and professionalism, to join CPSA's temporary Provisional Register.

The PRA is composed of two parts that applicants must pass in succession before receiving an independent practice permit on the CPSA's Provisional Register Conditional Practice.

Part A: Preliminary clinical assessment (PCA) – 12 weeks

Part B: Probationary assessment (PA) – 12 weeks

Requirements

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Successful completion of a Registration Exam: a nationally recognized standardized examination in Canada (MCCQE) or in an *Approved Jurisdiction* as approved by the Registrar, which evaluates the medical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional competencies required to practice medicine in Canada. The complete United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) is accepted as an equivalent to the MCCQE. A partial USMLE is not accepted.
- At least 1 year of recent practice or postgraduate training in intended specialty (within the last 3 years).
- Completion of all postgraduate training required for your discipline. For family medicine:

    - a university-affiliated program, including 4 months of community-based primary care and 8 weeks in at least 3 of the following: pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, surgery, and internal medicine
- If applying as a family medicine specialist, have passed the Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination*.
- A criminal record check or police certificate is required from all locations you have practised and/or trained for more than 90 days in the last five years. Canadian criminal record checks are nation-wide, so only one is required. Although we don't need it, we will accept a vulnerable sector check if it is a part of your criminal record check. In Canada, criminal record checks must be obtained through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) or local police services. Any third-party or online criminal record checks (or police certificates) will not be accepted.
- Patient Relations education is required under the Health Professions Act (HPA) and mandatory for CPSA registration. Applicants are provided with a link to complete this training at the applicable stage.

Application process

Steps to take before you start your PRA:

1. Submit review of qualifications and receive eligibility letter. CPSA will confirm if you meet eligibilty requirements and send an eligibility letter.
2. Secure sponsorship and pass the TDM Examination (Family Medicine only): Apply for eligible sponsored jobs via *DoctorJobsAlberta.com*. Note: Your sponsor must send us a sponsorship form.
3. Submit all supporting documents: Your CPSA Registration Administrator will contact you after we receive your TDM Examination results (if applicable) and sponsorship form.

References

Apply for Independent Practice | CPSA | November 2025
Practice-Ready Assessment (PRA) | CPSA | November 2025
Policies | CPSA | September 2025
Approved Jurisdictions | CPSA | October 2025

3. Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA)

SIPPA is *comprised of two parts*, Orientation to Family Practice in Saskatchewan and the Clinical Field Assessment (CFA).

- There are typically three SIPPA iterations per calendar year
- Candidates who are selected for SIPPA are:
    - Provided accommodation for the duration of the in-person orientation and assessment
    - Provided stipend while participating in SIPPA
    - Required to sign a three-year return of service agreement to provide service in a specific underserved rural community in Saskatchewan

IMGs residing in Saskatchewan can apply to a Saskatchewan government grant to have required SIPPA eligibility expenses reimbursed up to $6,000. This includes Medical Council of Canada (MCC) fees such as:

- Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)*
- National Assessment Collaboration *(NAC) Examination*
- Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination*
- Application for medical registration (*AMR*)

  AND
- English proficiency
- Review of qualifications of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS)

Only expenses incurred after December 1, 2022, are eligible for reimbursement. To apply for the grant, IMGs must register with the *IMG Support Program*.

Requirements and procedure

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Interview for sponsorship/ family practice suitability
- Enter SIPPA – Centralized Orientation and Clinical Field Assessment (CFA)
- Postgraduate training with a generalist scope. May include rotations in family medicine, emergency medicine, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and psychiatry. Other postgraduate training will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Successfully completed a postgraduate/internship/residency training program in family medicine that is a minimum of 12 months in duration. You require training or practice experience in the areas of general surgery, pediatrics, internal medicine, obstetrics & gynecology and psychiatry. If you are deficient in a rotation, you will need to be able to prove experience practising in the area of deficiency as an independently practising family physician.

- Completed three years of full-scope practice as a family physician if your post-graduate /internship / residency training program was less than 24 months in length
- Submit documents for source verification through the MCC's *physiciansapply.ca* account
- Have a pass result on the MCCQE
- Have a pass result on either the MCCQE Part II (2021 or before) or the NAC Examination
- Pass the TDM Examination
- Obtain and maintain a preliminary ruling from the CPSS. Provided that your Review of Qualifications and supporting processes are successful you will be issued a Preliminary Ruling from the CPSS. The Preliminary Ruling will indicate that you are eligible for an Educational License and allows you to be considered for selection. Preliminary Rulings are subject to expiration if any of the time-sensitive requirements expire.
- SIPPA accepts most responsible physician (MRP) Family Medicine, licensed Clinical Assistant/Associate Physician work, and relevant additional post-graduate training as currency of practice, and will consider GP-Specialist practice.
- A Saskatchewan Health Authority family practice suitability sponsorship interview.
- Permanent residency is not a requirement, however if you are not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, it is your responsibility to obtain a work permit.

Program structure and duration

- **Orientation:** This initial phase, lasting about five weeks, includes an introduction to the Canadian health care system
- **Clinical field assessment:** Typically lasts around 12 weeks. During this period, candidates are assessed on their clinical skills and competencies in a real-world health care setting in Saskatchewan
- **Licensing and supervision:** Candidates who successfully complete the Clinical Field Assessment will begin practice as a family physician in the community to which they were assigned for their return of service. Candidates also enter SIPPA supervision, while on a provisional licence, which spans approximately two years. Physicians under supervision are actively engaged in a continuing education program with regular feedback and coaching, meaningful support and a facilitated pathway to full licensure.

Reference

Introduction to SIPPA | *University of Saskatchewan* | March 2025

4. Practice-ready assessment in family medicine – Manitoba

The Practice Ready Assessment Manitoba – Family Practice (PRAMB-FP) program is designed for family physicians seeking accelerated licensure in Manitoba. Upon successful completion of the program, you will work as a family physician in rural, underserviced areas of Manitoba, fulfilling a return of service requirement.

This assessment program lasts for three months. It consists of three components:

Acute care in an emergency department setting (four weeks)

Clinic 1 (four weeks)

Clinic 2 (four weeks)

Requirements

- Residency status: Preference will be given to established residents of Manitoba
- You must pass the National Assessment Collaboration *(NAC) Examination*
- Satisfactory completion of two years of postgraduate clinical training in family medicine (rotations in general medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology) that is accredited with a national postgraduate training authority at the time training was taken,

  OR
- Satisfactory completion of one year of postgraduate clinical training in family medicine (rotations in general medicine, general surgery, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology) and have a total of at least three years of practice experience in family medicine in the preceding five-year period.

Currency in practice:

- You must provide evidence of currency in practice
- You must have a minimum of three years of independent clinical practice as a general or family practitioner
- This practice must have occurred within the five years immediately preceding the application deadline
- Applicants without general or family practice training and/or experience will not be considered

Credentials:

- Hold a medical degree from a nationally approved faculty of medicine or a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from a school in the United States accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation.
- Establish one of the following are met:
    - Confirmation by the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) of eligibility for certification by:
        - Successful completion of a family medicine program in Canada
        - Successful completion of a family medicine program in an approved jurisdiction recognized by CFPC

- Hold certification in family medicine from the Collège des médecins du Québec
- Hold certification from the American Board of Family Medicine
- Satisfactorily completed an approved family practice assessment

- Submit for source verification through the Medical Council of Canada (MCC)'s *physiciansapply.ca*, enabling document sharing for the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM), the following:
  - Medical diploma
  - Family medicine postgraduate training document
  - Specialty certificate (if applicable)

NOTE: To avoid delays in processing your application, ensure all documentation is complete.

Application process

1. Complete an *application for medical registration* (AMR) through the physiciansapply.ca account.
   a. AMR fees from the MCC and CPSM documentation fee will be required at that time.
   b. Note: fees are non-refundable.
2. An application must be submitted to the University of Manitoba PRA-FM program.
3. Candidates who meet eligibility criteria are then ranked and the top candidates are nominated to sit the the Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination*.
4. Top ranked candidates who receive a pass on the TDM Examination are invited to sponsorship interviews.
5. For those who are offered an assessment, the practice locations and assessors are assigned in three different locations throughout Manitoba.
6. If the candidate is successful in their assessment, they will be issued a provisional certificate of practice (provisional license) and is expected to do a return of service in an underserviced area of Manitoba.

Reference

Provisional registration – Family Practice Limited | CPSM | April 2025

5. Practice-ready assessment in family medicine – Ontario

Practice Ready Ontario (PRO) offers a route to practise in the province for internationally trained family physicians with demonstrated competence and in-depth practice experience outside Canada. It aligns with the Medical Council of Canada's (MCC) National Assessment Collaboration (*NAC*) pan-Canadian standards for practice-ready assessments. Applications will be reviewed in two phases. In the third phase candidates complete a clinical field assessment.

Eligibility and process

Phase 1: Application and screening

- Assess medical qualifications, postgraduate training, and independent practice experience
- Applicants are deemed eligible or ineligible

Phase 2: Verification and selection

- Eligible applicants submit evidence, and shortlisted candidates take the Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination*, and undergo a multiple mini-interviews
- Applicants accepted into PRO apply for provisional certificates through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)
- Selection for Phase 2 does not guarantee progression to Phase 3

Phase 3: Clinical field assessment

- Candidates complete a 12-week clinical assessment after program orientation
- A three-year return of service agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Health must be signed before starting the assessment

Return of service:

- A three-year return of service agreement with the Ministry of Health is required for those who successfully complete the clinical assessment

Program requirements:

- Canadian citizenship or permanent residency
- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Must have a total of 48 months (four years) of training and practice experience as a general/ family physician at the time of PRO application
- Ability to demonstrate completion of the seven core rotations:
    - Minimum of **eight weeks** of postgraduate training in family medicine or general practice
    - Minimum of **four weeks** of postgraduate training in emergency medicine, general surgery, internal medicine, obstetrics/gynecology, pediatrics, and psychiatry

Training in the required seven rotations must be from an approved university-affiliated program. Community experience or observerships do not count towards postgraduate training.

- If a candidate has a gap in any of the listed rotations, the program may accept practice experience in lieu of training in the following way:
    - Each one year of independent practice as a family physician / general practitioner that includes the gap in a practice experience rotation will be considered as equivalent to four weeks of postgraduate training in that area for up to three rotation deficiencies

      AND
    - Attestation to prove practice experience in the area(s) of the postgraduate rotation gap is required from a physician or a chief administrator in a health care setting such as a chief nursing officer, chief of staff, department or division head, director of care, senior colleague, program director, medical director, or academic director who can attest to the candidate's clinical skills and experience
- Evidence of independent practice as a general/family physician
- A pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)* and be a Licentiate of the Medical Council of Canada (*LMCC*)
- Passing the MCCQE Part II (2021 or before) or the NAC Examination
- Evidence of recent clinical practice:
  960 hours in the last three years (25% of these hours can be from virtual care or having had specified licensed postgraduate education or practice in a Canadian jurisdiction in the past three years)
- Valid medical identification number for Canada (MINC) and other required documentation

Reference

Practice Ready Ontario | *Touchstone Institute* | March 2025

6. Practice-ready assessment in family medicine – Quebec

The restrictive permit is a specific licence that limits practice to authorized health care institutions, prohibiting independent or private practice. It is valid for one year and can be renewed annually. The permit also restricts the professional acts authorized under it. Clinicians holding this permit may convert it to a "regular" permit upon meeting specific requirements. However, the permit can be revoked if the holder resigns from or is removed from the Roll of the Order, loses privileges in their health care institution, or ceases to practise.

Requirements:

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Practised competently in the area of medical expertise for which the restrictive permit application is being submitted for 12 months during the three years preceding the application

- A pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)* or the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 2 CK
- Completed postgraduate training that is generally equivalent to Quebec's requirements for the intended specialty
- Hold a specialist's certificate or equivalent in the relevant discipline
- Successfully completed an assessment period
- Participation in the ALDO-Québec educational activity before permit issuance

Application process

1. Pass one of the examinations from the requirements section above.
2. Obtain sponsorship with a health care institution through Recrutement Santé Québec (RSQ).
3. Submit an application for medical registration and the required documents (documents vary, see details at the reference link below).
4. Review of the complete file by the Committee on Admission to Practice (CAP) that meets every 6-8 weeks. A decision will be available within 15 business days of the committee's meeting. If an application is successful, it will move to step 5.
5. Provide proof of French language proficiency or have obtained a pass result on the Office québécois de la langue française examination.
6. Succeed an assessment period of 12 weeks (preceded by a week of observation).
7. Review of the complete file by the CAP, including result of assessment period. The committee makes the decision to authorize the issuance of the restrictive permit.

NOTE: Given the length of the process (9-18 months on average) and the requirement to maintain your clinical experience, we encourage you to keep practicing as you complete the steps.

Reference

Restrictive permit – Clinician – Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) | Collège des médecins du Québec | April 2025

7. Practice Ready Assessment New Brunswick (PRA-NB)

The PRA-NB program provides an alternate route to licensure for internationally trained physicians in family medicine offered through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick (CPSNB), with the support of the Government of New Brunswick and the collaboration of multiple provincial and national partners. PRA-NB is the only fully bilingual PRA program, providing candidates with the option to complete the assessment in either a fully English or French stream.

Requirements

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident or legally entitled to work in New Brunswick
- Training and practice experience:
    - **Option 1:** Two years of postgraduate training + one year of independent practice
    - **Option 2:** One year of postgraduate training + two years of independent practice
- Core rotations: Have successfully completed seven core rotations during postgraduate training (or internship program) in the following fields:
    - A minimum of eight weeks in family medicine or general practice,

      AND
    - A minimum of four weeks in each of: surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, obstetrics / gynecology, and psychiatry
- Currency of practice: Minimum 450 hours of clinical practice in the last three years
- Be of good character: Proof of professional conduct, including certificates, references, criminal record check, etc.
- Exams: A pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)*, preference given to those who have also passed the National Assessment Collaboration *(NAC) Examination*
- PRA attempts: No more than one unsuccessful attempt in a Canadian PRA program in the last five years

Application process

Step 1: Application

- Continuous application process with a $450 non-refundable fee
- Submit application through *physiciansapply.ca* with all necessary documentation and fees
- Eligible candidates will be informed of their status and next steps

Step 2: Selection

- Suitability review: Applicant file's will be reviewed and assessed against suitability criteria to be selected to move forward to the interview process
- Interview: Virtual multiple mini interview (MMI) conducted to assess suitability for practising family medicine in New Brunswick

- Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination*: Required if not previously passed
- RHA matching process: Candidates selected after interview will pass a secondary interview with regional health authorities (RHA), who will recommend suitable candidates to PRA-NB
- Final selection: Based on examination results, suitability review, interview scores, and RHA matching

Step 3: Assessment

- Selected candidates will complete a program orientation and an Observership period, followed by a clinical field assessment. Candidates will spend two 6-week periods under the supervision of experienced family physician assessors. These assessors will observe, evaluate, and provide feedback on the candidates' clinical and non-clinical skills relevant to family medicine.

Step 4: Return of service

- Candidates who successfully complete the clinical field assessment will be required to enter into a three-year agreement with the Department of Health. Return of service communities will be designated according to emerging needs within the Regional Health Authority Organizations.

Reference:

Selection Process Overview (PRA-NB) | CPSNB | September 2024

8. Nova Scotia Physician Assessment Centre of Excellence (NS PACE)

PACE offers a unique pathway to independent licensure in office-based primary care; combining an in-depth orientation to the Canadian health-care system (the *Welcome Collaborative*) with an assessment program hosted in a primary care clinic operated by PACE. It is a centralized model with all of the assessors and candidates working from the PACE Clinic. The care provided to the patients attached to the PACE Clinic is provided by the candidates, overseen by the assessors. PACE employs a competency-based approach to assessment, allowing for rolling entry into the program and individualized assessment durations. The assessment typically takes approximately 12 weeks on average, with a maximum duration of 20 weeks.

Requirements

Please note: The College of Physicians and Surgeons Nova Scotia determines an applicant's eligibility for PACE and defers to PACE regarding the selection of eligible candidates for the program.

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident or legally entitled to work in Nova Scotia
- Currency of practice: Minimum 450 hours of clinical practice in the last five years

- Training and practice experience:
    - **Option 1:** 24 months of internship or postgraduate training resulting in certification, registration or recognition in Family Medicine or General Practice **and** 12 months of independent unsupervised licensed practice in family medicine or general practice;

      OR
    - **Option 2:** 12 months of internship or postgraduate training resulting in certification, registration or recognition in Family Medicine or General Practice **and** 24 months of independent unsupervised licensed practice in family medicine or general practice. *Core rotations*: Have successfully completed these core rotations* during postgraduate training (or internship program) in the following fields:
        - A minimum of 8 weeks in family medicine or general practice,

          AND
        - A minimum of 4 weeks in each of: surgery, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics / gynecology**, and psychiatry**

NOTE:

* If the applicant has a gap in any of the listed rotations, the College may accept practice experience in lieu of training as follows:
    - Each 1 year of independent practice as a family physician/general practitioner that includes the gap in practice experience rotation will be considered as equivalent to 4 weeks of postgraduate training in that area for up to 3 rotation deficiencies.

      AND
    - Applicants must provide an acceptable attestation to prove practice experience in the area(s) of postgraduate rotation gap.

** At the discretion of the Registrar, candidates for practice ready assessment in office-based primary care, may be excused the requirement for 4 weeks of postgraduate training in psychiatry and/or obstetrics/ gynecology, provided they have the equivalent amount of extra training in family medicine.

Application process

For applications, PACE is partnering with a Nova Scotia based healthcare talent agency, Launchpad.

If you are interested in applying to the PACE Assessment Program, visit the *More Than Medicine* website and select ‘Start Your Assessment Journey Today’.

References

Pathway to Conditional Licensure for Internationally Trained Physicians via a Practice Ready Assessment – Office-Based Primary Care | June 2025
Selection and Review for PACE Assessment Program | June 2025
Overview of PACE Assessment Program | June 2025

9. Practice-ready assessment in family medicine – Newfoundland and Labrador

Practice Ready Assessment – Newfoundland and Labrador (PRA-NL) is a 12-week clinical field assessment (CFA) during which a candidate is placed on the Education Register of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPSNL), and is assessed for practice readiness under a provisional medical licence in family medicine in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- Before applying to PRA-NL, candidates must obtain a letter from CPSNL confirming eligibility for a provisional licence in family medicine (this requires a pass result on the the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination *(MCCQE)* or acceptable alternative)
- All required documentation, including exam scores, must be submitted and verified via *physiciansapply.ca* at the time of application
- Proceeding through one phase does not guarantee progression to the next or selection for the clinical field assessment (CFA)

Requirements

- Must have a valid letter from CPSNL verifying eligibility for a provisional licence in family medicine
- Pass result on the MCCQE Part II (2021 or before)
  OR
  the National Assessment Collaboration *(NAC) Examination*
- No more than one prior unsuccessful attempt in Canadian PRA programs.
- Two years of postgraduate training OR one year of postgraduate training (with required rotations) with three years of independent practice.

Additional qualifications considered:

- Postgraduate training: Focused specifically on family medicine
- Canadian clinical work experience: clinical assistant or associate physician licence
- Clinical certifications: Up-to-date certifications such as Basic Life Support (BLS), Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS), Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS), and Pediatric Advance Life Support (PALS)
- Consistent practice experience: Continuous practice as the most responsible physician in family medicine, especially in rural or remote emergency settings

Screening and selection process:

Phase 1: Preliminary assessment

- A pass result on the Therapeutics Decision-Making *(TDM) Examination* is required for all applicants

Phase 2: Selection process

- Selection interview conducted virtually; applicants are responsible for associated costs
- Academic committee review: Reviews application, interview results, and clinical practice history

- Final selection: If recommended, confirmation of candidate's commitment to move forward with the CFA and signing of Candidate Agreement
- PRA-NL forwards the candidate's curriculum vitae (CV) to Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services (NLHS) for sponsorship for the 12-week CFA

Phare 3: Candidate orientation

- Mandatory completion of online continuing professional development (CPD) modules and mandatory attendance of virtual program orientation prior to CFA start date.
- NLHS site specific orientation prior to CFA start date.

Phase 4: 12-week CFA:

- Conducted in the candidate's NLHS zone of sponsorship with direct and indirect supervision
- Assessors evaluate patient care performance using PRA-NL's assessment tools

Candidate responsibilities:

- Documentation: Complete all documentation required by PRA-NL, CPSNL, and NLHS
- Licensure continuation: Ensure ongoing eligibility with CPSNL
- Insurance: Provide proof of Canadian Medical Protective Association coverage
- Orientation: Complete PRA-NL candidate orientation requirements
- Costs: NLHS may cover the Candidate CFA fees. The Return of Service (ROS) is negotiated by NLHS with the candidate, outside of Memorial University, Faculty of Medicine

NOTE: No guarantee of licensure. Passing the 12-week CFA does not guarantee the applicant's ability to meet the CPSNL's requirements for full licensure in Newfoundland and Labrador or elsewhere in Canada.

Reference

PRA-NL | *Memorial University* | April 2025

10. Comparison table: Provincial PRA programs in family medicine

PROV.	MCCQE	NAC Examination	TDM Examination	Requires Permanent Residency	GAP	PGT	IPE
BC	No	No	Yes	No	960 hours in last 3 years	2 years	2 years
AB	Registration exam*	No	Yes	No	1 year in last 3 years	Required rotations	1 year in the last 3 years if PGT is not recent
SK	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	6 months in last 3 years; licensed CA time may break gap	1 year	If less than 2 years of PGT → 3 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → no IPE required
MB	No	Yes	Yes	No, preference for residents of MB	3 years within 5 years immediately preceding the application deadline	1 to 2 years	If less than 2 years of PGT → 3 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → no IPE required
ON	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	960 hours in last 3 years (720 hours in-person min.); licensed CA time may break gap	1 to 2 years	If 1 year of PGT → 3 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → 2 years of IPE
QC	Yes	No	N/A	Not mentioned. Must be proficient in French	1 year in last 3 years	2 years	1 year
NB	Yes	Suggested but not required	Yes	No	450 hours in last 3 years	1 to 2 years	If 1 year of PGT → 2 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → 1 year of IPE
NS	No	No	**No**	No	450 hours in last 5 years	1 to 2 years	If 1 year of PGT → 2 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → 1 year of IPE
NL	Yes	Yes	**Yes**	No	450 hours in last 3 years	1 to 2 years	If 1 year of PGT → 3 years of IPE If 2 years of PGT → no IPE required

Abbreviations:
Provinces: AB: Alberta; BC: British Columbia; MB: Manitoba; NB: New Brunswick; NL: Newfoundland and Labrador; NS: Nova Scotia; ON: Ontario; QC:Quebec; SK: Saskatchewan.

Other: MCCQE: Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination; NAC: National Assessment Collaboration; TDM: Therapeutics Decision-Making; IRCC: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; GAP: Currency of practice requirements; PGT: Postgraduate training requirements in family medicine rotations; IPE: Independent practice experience as the most responsible physician; CA: Clinical assistant or associate physician licence; N/A: Information not clear or not available on the medical regulatory authority website

*Have successfully completed a nationally recognized standardized examination in Canada or an Approved Jurisdiction as approved by the Registrar, which evaluates the medical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional competencies required to practice medicine in Canada. The MCCQE fulfills this requirement.

Practice-ready assessment for specialists

1. Practice Readiness Assessment (PRA-AB) for specialists in Alberta

A Practice Readiness Assessment (PRA) is the required final step of an alternate path to independent practice in Alberta for international medical graduates (IMGs) from outside CPSA's list of approved jurisdictions, and Canadian graduates who fail a national exam.

Once registered with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), the candidate must pass this 2-part assessment of their clinical competence, chart management and professionalism to join CPSA's temporary Provisional Register.

The PRA is composed of two parts that applicants must pass in succession before receiving an Alberta medical practice permit:

Part A: Preliminary clinical assessment (PCA) – 12 weeks

Part B: Probationary assessment (PA) – 12 weeks

Eligibility requirements

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Successful completion of a Registration Exam: a nationally recognized standardized examination in Canada (MCCQE) or an *Approved Jurisdiction* as approved by the Registrar, which evaluates the medical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional competencies required to practice medicine in Canada. The complete United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) is accepted as an equivalent to the MCCQE. A partial USMLE is not accepted.
- At least 1 year of recent practice or postgraduate training in intended specialty (within the last 3 years).
- Completion of all postgraduate training required for your discipline:
    - Discipline specific specialty training equivalent to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) standards, with specialist certification.
- A criminal record check or police certificate is required from all locations you have practised and/or trained for more than 90 days in the last five years. Canadian criminal record checks are nation-wide, so only one is required. Although we don't need it, we will accept a vulnerable sector check if it is a part of your criminal record check. In Canada, criminal record checks must be obtained through the RCMP or local police services. Any third-party or online criminal record checks (or police certificates) will not be accepted.
- Patient Relations education is required under the Health Professions Act (HPA) and mandatory for CPSA registration. Applicants are provided with a link to complete this training at the applicable stage.

Application process

Steps to take before you start your PRA:

1. Submit review of qualifications and receive eligibility letter. CPSA will confirm if you meet eligibility requirements and send an eligibility letter.

Secure sponsorship: Apply for eligible sponsorship jobs via DoctorJobsAlberta.com. Note: Your sponosor must send us a sponsorship form.

Submit all supporting documents. Your CPSA Registration Administrator will contact you after we receive your sponsorship form.

References

Apply for Independent Practice | CPSA | November 2025
Practice-Ready Assessment (PRA) | CPSA | November 2025
Policies | CPSA | September 2025
Approved Jurisdictions | CPSA | October 2025

2. Practice-ready assessment for specialists in Manitoba

This program helps international medical graduates (IMGs) who have obtained eligibility for board exams to achieve full medical licensure in Canada by securing a fellowship or job. It is for internationally trained physicians who have completed residencies and practised medicine abroad.

Expected duration: minimum three months

Provisional (specialty practice-limited) class 3.16(1)

An applicant for registration as a provisional (specialty practice-limited) member must:

- Establish that they hold:
  - A medical degree granted from a nationally approved faculty of medicine,
    OR
  - A doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from a school in the United States accredited by the American Osteopathic Association Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation;
- Establish that they meet one of the following criteria:
  - Holds the qualifications to engage independently in the practice of medicine in a specialty field of practice in a jurisdiction outside Canada in which the applicant has trained
    AND
  - Has satisfactorily completed postgraduate clinical training in the specialty that took place in one or more facilities that provide health care and are recognized by a

national postgraduate training authority, was accredited by a national postgraduate training authority, and is approved by the registrar
    - They hold Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) certification or is confirmed by the Royal College to be eligible for Royal College certification
    - They hold member board certification or is confirmed by a member board to be eligible for board certification
    - They hold certification in a specialty field from the Collège des médecins du Québec
- Establish that they hold a certificate issued by the minister stating that the applicant is required to provide medical services in a specified geographical area or practice setting
- If applicable, establish that they have engaged in the professional practice that they intend to practise in Manitoba within the approved time period
- If applicable, provide a description of the continuing professional development activities that the applicant was required to complete as a condition of authorization to practise medicine in any jurisdiction in Canada in the three years immediately preceding the application and indicate how they met those requirements
- Establish that they have entered into a satisfactory arrangement with a practice supervisor AND have:
    - Satisfactorily completed an approved assessment in their specialty field of practice, AND
    - Entered into a satisfactory arrangement with a practice mentor

Key requirements

- Medical degree: An MD degree from a program acceptable to the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM)
- Residency completion: Completing a residency program with certifying exams in your home country is generally considered a strong qualification
- Clinical experience: Recent and relevant clinical practice experience is essential
- Enrolment in the program requires an approved sponsor and a job offer in a specialty deemed to be in high need in the province of Manitoba

Application process

NOTE: Do not apply until you have confirmed steps 1–3 as applications expire six months from the date they are received.

1. Ensure all documents are submitted to and source verified by physicansapply.ca. Document sharing must be enabled for College of Physicians & Surgeons of Manitoba (CPSM), and the documents include:
    a. Medical diploma
    b. Internship document
    c. Specialty postgraduate training document
    d. Specialty certificate (if applicable)

2. Ensure there is an employment/sponsorship opportunity in your specialty through Health Careers Manitoba.
3. Complete an application for medical registration (AMR) through physiciansapply.ca. The AMR fees from the Medical Council of Canada (MCC) and the CPSM documentation fee will be required at that time. Please note that fees are nonrefundable.
    a. CPSM will receive your application directly from the MCC and will review your postgraduate training and practice experience to ensure requirements are met. Once the review has been completed, you will receive an email from CPSM with a list of outstanding documents. Some of the documents include, but are not limited to, the balance of documentation fee, references, evidence of good standing, and satisfactory criminal record and abuse checks.
4. Should CPSM requirements be met, Health Careers Manitoba and the University of Manitoba International Medical Graduate (IMG) Program will be informed of your eligibility for registration.
5. If CPSM receives confirmation from the University of Manitoba IMG Program that the assessment has been scheduled and all documentation is complete, a certificate of practice (licence) and a certificate of registration will be issued.
    a. Documentation includes the required fees, practice undertaking, professional liability insurance, and identification (a passport and one of the following: work permit, permanent resident status or Canadian citizenship).

Reference

International Medical Graduate (IMG) Programs | University of Manitoba | April 2024

3. Practice-ready assessment for specialists in Quebec

The restrictive permit is a specific licence that limits practice to authorized health care institutions, prohibiting independent or private practice. It is valid for one year and can be renewed annually. The permit also restricts the professional acts authorized under it. Clinicians holding this permit may convert it to a “regular” permit upon meeting specific requirements. However, the permit can be revoked if the holder resigns from or is removed from the Roll of the Order, loses privileges in their health care institution, or ceases to practise.

Requirements:

- Medical degree from a school listed in the World Directory of Medical Schools
- Practised competently in the area of medical expertise for which the restrictive permit application is being submitted for 12 months during the three years preceding the application
- A pass result on the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination (*MCCQE*) or the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) Step 2 CK

- Completed postgraduate training that is generally equivalent to Quebec's requirements for the intended specialty (4-6 years)
- Hold a specialist's certificate or equivalent in the relevant discipline
- Successfully completed an assessment period
- Participation in the ALDO-Québec educational activity before permit issuance

Application process

1. Pass one of the examinations from the requirements section above.
2. Obtain sponsorship with a health care institution through Recrutement Santé Québec (RSQ).
3. Submit an application for medical registration and the required documents (documents vary, see details at the reference link below).
4. Review of the complete file by the Committee on Admission to Practice (CAP) that meets every 6-8 weeks. A decision will be available within 15 business days of the committee's meeting. If an application is successful, it will move to step 5.
5. Provide proof of French language proficiency or have obtained a pass result on the Office québécois de la langue française examination
6. Succeed an assessment period of 12 weeks (preceded by a week of observation).
7. Review of the complete file by the CAP, including result of assessment period. The committee makes the decision to authorize the issuance of the restrictive permit.

NOTE: Given the length of the process (9-18 months on average) and the requirement to maintain your clinical experience, we encourage you to keep practicing as you complete the steps.

Reference

Restrictive permit – Clinician – Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) | Collège des médecins du Québec | April 2025

4. Practice-ready assessment for specialists in Nova Scotia

The Practice Ready Assessment (PRA) for Specialists program is for specialists who:

- Have specialty training and certification from a jurisdiction other than the 29 accepted by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College)
    - For more information, see the Royal College Specialty Training Requirements to compare your postgraduate training with the Canadian standard
- Meet the screening criteria for PRA for Specialists

Eligibility and process

- Candidates must be Canadian citizens or legally entitled to live and work in Canada.
- Candidates must not be prohibited or restricted from practising medicine through the decision of any adjudicating body.
- All credentials must be source verified by the Medical Council of Canada's *physiciansapply.ca*.
- All candidates must have completed postgraduate training that is substantively equivalent in amount of time as compared with Canadian training programs in the relevant primary specialty.
- Candidates must have completed a minimum of three years of unsupervised, independent practice as the most responsible physician in the primary specialty.
- Candidates must meet the currency of practice requirements in the primary specialty outlined in the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS) policy Currency of Practice Experience in the three years immediately before the date of application to the CPSNS.
- To be considered for a PRA, a candidate must be jointly recommended by the relevant health authority and the relevant department in the faculty of medicine at Dalhousie University.
- The cost of the assessment itself, including the CPSNS' administration fee, is the responsibility of the relevant health authority and the Department of Health and Wellness. The licence fee for the assessment and ongoing licensure in Nova Scotia is the responsibility of the candidate.
- Once the health authority and the relevant department in the faculty of medicine at Dalhousie University choose the candidate, the health authority will provide a letter of endorsement to the CPSNS representing a commitment to this process and the relevant roles and responsibilities.
- Once candidates have the endorsement of a health authority, they must apply for a Clinical Assessment licence for the duration of the assessment. This licence type is for assessment purposes only and the physician holding this licence is never the most responsible physician. It may take approximately six months to obtain all of the required documentation for a Clinical Assessment licence.

Reference

Pathway to Licensure for IMGs via a PRA: Specialists | CPSNS | April 2024

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About the author

Since embarking on his medical journey in Canada in 2017, Dr. Filipe Santos has become a dynamic force in the health care system. With an MD and master of science in community health, Dr. Santos combines his clinical expertise with a passion for mentorship and guidance. As an assistant professor at the University of Toronto, he plays a crucial role in the development of health care professionals. A former IMG himself, Dr. Santos has firsthand experience navigating the challenges of practising in Canada.

PHYSICIAN LICENSING IN CANADA

April 9, 2025
Ottawa, Ontario