



## **Registration Requirements and Criteria: International Applicants Stream**

### **Note on Regulatory Transition (December 2025)**

As of November 24, 2025, the *Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (NSBEP)* has transitioned to the Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology (NSRP) under the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA).

Under this new framework, the former "Register of Candidates" is formally designated as the **Conditional Register**. In accordance with the *Psychology Regulations*, individuals registered in this category are authorized to use two specific protected titles: **Candidate Psychologist** and **Psychologist (Candidate Register)**.

In the limited cases where applicants successfully qualify for a **Transfer Application**, registration is subject to a specific practice condition (e.g., six months of supervised practice). These registrants hold the title of **Psychologist** with their status on the public register noted as **Conditional**.

International Applicants refers to applicants:

- who received their graduate training outside of Canada and the US, **and**
- who are **not** fully registered/licensed as psychologists in Canada or the US **or**
- are not and have not been fully registered with the UK Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) for a period of 4 years on the basis of a master's degree *or* 1 year of registration that is based on a doctoral degree in psychology.

### ***Academic Requirement***

As per the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) and the Psychology Regulations, applicants for registration as psychologists are required to show they have obtained a master's, doctoral or equivalent degree in psychology that is acceptable to the NSRP.

**Degrees Not Accepted:** Degrees in education, counselling, guidance, family studies, mental health studies, child studies, or rehabilitation are **not** normally considered degrees in psychology.

- **Examples:** At **Mount Saint Vincent University**, the M.A. (School Psychology) is acceptable; the M.Ed. (Educational Psychology) is not. At **Acadia University**, the M.Sc. (Clinical Psychology) is acceptable; the M.Ed. (Counselling) is not.

**No Post-Degree Augmentation:** All requirements must be met within the formal graduate program. Completing courses after the degree is awarded does not convert an unacceptable degree into an acceptable one. **This ensures that base knowledge, core competencies, and supervised practica are taught in a cohesive environment**

**overseen by psychology faculty. Coursework taken outside of this formal structure—after a degree is conferred—lacks the faculty oversight and program integration required to ensure professional competence and public safety.**

The Board has adopted the Position of the Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations (ACPRO) that the National Standard for registration as a Psychologist is graduation from a doctoral program in Psychology accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA). Consequently, a doctoral program in Psychology accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) automatically constitutes a degree in psychology that is acceptable to the Board. The full document containing the National Standard is available from the following URL:  
<http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/ACPRONationalStandard.pdf>

**(1) In the absence of graduation from a CPA accredited doctoral program in psychology, the degree in psychology obtained by the applicant will be reviewed by the NSRP to determine whether it meets the following criteria:**

i) The program must be an integrated, organized sequence of study, standing as a recognizable, coherent organizational entity within the institution. Wherever it may be administratively housed, the institution's officers must identify it as a psychology program, and the majority of its faculty as psychologists. For greater clarity, the Board requires the core faculty and majority of program faculty to be comprised of psychologists. **(Note: See 'No Post-Degree Augmentation' policy above regarding the requirement for program integration).**

ii) The program must have required an undergraduate degree in psychology (or equivalent courses in psychology) as part of the entrance requirement. To clarify, this criterion does not simply require the applicant to possess an undergraduate degree in psychology but an undergraduate degree in psychology (or equivalent courses in psychology) must be an admittance requirement of the program.

iii) The faculty of the program must have clear authority and primary responsibility for the core and specialty areas whether or not the program cuts across administrative lines.

iv) The program should have a body of resident students who are enrolled in that program. Programs that are primarily based on-line are not acceptable to the Board. For further clarification, the Board has adopted the Section on Residency from the **ASPPB Model Licensing Act** recently approved by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards. It states:

“Residency means physical presence, in person, at an educational institution or training facility in a manner that facilitates acculturation in the profession, the full participation and integration of the individual in the educational, and training experience and includes faculty student interaction. Training models that rely exclusively on physical presence for periods of less than one continuous year (e.g. multiple long weekends and/or summer intensive sessions), or that use video conferencing or other electronic means as a substitute for any part of the minimum requirement for physical presence at the institution do not meet this definition of residency.”

- **Note:** The minimum period of one continuous year of residency is in addition to any practica or internship completed as part of the program requirements.

v) Curriculum requirements of the program must include adequate theoretical content in psychology and supervised practicum, internship, field or laboratory training appropriate to psychology. In order to meet these requirements, the master's level degree must be at least two years in duration.

Coursework titles/descriptions must use clear psychological terminology/abbreviations such as the words “psychology”, “psychological” “psych.”

Applicants are assessed with respect to competency in [five core competency areas](#):

1. Assessment and Evaluation;
2. Intervention;
3. Research;
4. Ethics and Standards; and
5. Interpersonal Relationships.

Course work and experience in these core competency areas must be listed by the applicant.

Below is a link to the Core Competencies in Psychology:

[http://ns-rp.ca/downloads/Core\\_Compencies.pdf](http://ns-rp.ca/downloads/Core_Compencies.pdf)

### **Practicum and Supervision Requirements:**

The program must include supervised practica, internships, or field training appropriate to psychology.

- **Minimum Hours:** A minimum of **500 hours** of integrated practica or internships.
- **Primary Supervision:** In accordance with Board's authority to set standards for supervised practice, the **primary supervisor(s) must be a psychologist**. While members of other allied regulated professions may serve as secondary supervisors, they may not serve as primary supervisors.
- **Integration:** The practica must be an organized and integrated component of the graduate training program.
- **Documentation:** For students beginning programs in September 2025 or later, hours must be tracked via standardized NSRP methods (e.g., Time2Track):  
<https://www.ns-rp.ca/nsbep-new-policy-tracking-hours/>

vi) In addition to the foregoing, the applicant must demonstrate sufficient [foundational knowledge](#) in four general areas: Knowledge of the biological bases of behaviour; Knowledge of the cognitive-affective bases of behaviour; Knowledge of the social bases of behaviour; and Knowledge of the psychology of the individual. This must be demonstrated with at least one full course or two half courses, in each of the four areas. Introductory level courses are not acceptable for meeting this requirement.

**Note:** Applicants may refer to the following two documents for expanded examples in these areas:

Evaluation Of Foundational Knowledge In Psychology As Required By the (Amended) MRA:

[http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Foundational\\_Knowledge.pdf](http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Foundational_Knowledge.pdf)

ACPRO National Standard (Appendix A):

<http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/ACPRONationalStandard.pdf>

**(2) The NSRP will consider whether the educational institution has recognized standing or accreditation.**

**(3) Degrees in education, counseling, guidance, family studies, mental health studies, child studies, rehabilitation and other such designations, are not normally considered degrees in psychology.**

The M.A. (School Psychology) program at Mount Saint Vincent University meets the requirements noted above; the Education Psychology (M.Ed) does not. At Acadia University, the counseling M.Ed is not accepted, but the clinical psychology (M.Sc.) is an acceptable program for registration as a Psychologist. The M.Ed. programs at either of these universities may lead to qualifications as a guidance counselor, school counselor or counselor, but they do not lead to psychology registration or prepare you to take the prerequisite examination for Professional Practice in Psychology.

For a list of acceptable programs from within Atlantic Canada, those accredited by the Canadian Psychological Association, and more information concerning acceptable programs, please [click here](#).

At times the NSRP is contacted by individuals who possess a degree in a related field (e.g., counselling); however, their degree is not specifically in psychology and/or does not meet the NSRP's requirements for acceptable degrees in psychology. If applicable, you might consider checking with the [Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists](#) for registration eligibility. The College of Counselling Therapists is the provincial governing body for counselling therapy.

NSRP does not evaluate individual programs until an application for registration is completed.

### **Eligibility for the Practising Register**

To be eligible for registration on the **Practising Register**, international applicants must satisfy specific post-degree practice and registration thresholds:

- **Post-Degree Practice Thresholds:**
  - **Master's Degree Holders:** Must have completed a minimum of **four years** of full-time practice in a psychology position after the awarding of the degree and following registration with a regulatory body in psychology.
  - **Doctoral Degree Holders:** Must have completed a minimum of **two years** of full-time practice in a psychology position. In all cases, a minimum of **one year** of this practice must have been completed after the awarding of

the doctoral degree and following registration with a regulatory body in psychology.

- **Transfer Application Criteria:** An application may be considered as a **Transfer Application** only where the applicant holds a certificate of registration from a jurisdiction with standards deemed by the NSRP to be at least equivalent to the standards required under the *Regulated Health Professions Act*.
- **Mandatory Prerequisites:** An applicant **cannot be considered for a transfer** if the mandatory post-degree practice and registration thresholds noted above are not met.

### The Transfer Examination

For all applicants determined to qualify for a transfer, a **Transfer Examination** is a mandatory requirement.

- **Scope:** This examination is used to assess the applicant's understanding of professional practice, ethical issues, and local practices and conditions in Nova Scotia.
- **Regular Stream Default:** If registration standards or experience thresholds from the home jurisdiction are not deemed equivalent, the application will be considered using the regular registration requirements for placement on the **Conditional Register**.

### Mandatory Nova Scotia Supervision

All approved applicants—including those who successfully qualify for a transfer—must complete at least a **six-month period of supervised practice in Nova Scotia**.

- **Supervision Standard:** This practice must be conducted under the supervision of a psychologist **registered in Nova Scotia**.
- **Regulatory Intent:** The purpose of this period is to assist newly arrived psychologists with practice and ethical issues and to ensure a developed understanding of local practice and conditions in the province.
- **Non-Waiverable Requirement:** This local integration period is a mandatory requirement for entry to the Practising Register and is **not waived** based on prior experience or specific population expertise in other jurisdictions.

### Legal Entitlement to Practice in Canada

You may begin compiling documents and completing your application for registration prior to arriving in Canada. However, please note that the NSRP cannot finalize an application or grant registration until proof of work authorization is provided.

**Important:** Under the *Psychology Regulations*, the NSRP cannot grant registration or issue a licence until you provide proof that you are either:

- A **Canadian citizen**; or
- **Permanently entitled** to live and work in Canada (Permanent Resident); or

- **Legally entitled to work** in Canada under a valid work permit that specifically allows the practice of psychology.

### **Professional Liability Insurance**

In accordance with the Regulated Health Professions Act and the Psychology Regulations, all registrants of the Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology (NSRP)—including those on the Conditional Register and the Practising Register—are required to maintain professional liability insurance.

- **Minimum Coverage:** Registrants must maintain professional liability insurance in an amount not less than \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence.
- **Scope of Coverage:** The insurance must cover all psychological services provided within the registrant's individual scope of practice.
- **Proof of Coverage:** Proof of adequate insurance must be provided to the NSRP within 30 days of an applicant being placed on a register.
- **Employer Coverage:** While some psychologists are covered by employer-held policies (e.g., through a Health Authority or School Board), the NSRP requires all registrants to ensure their coverage is sufficient for their specific practice. In many cases, a personal liability policy is required to ensure full protection for the public and the practitioner across all professional actions.
- **Ongoing Requirement:** Maintaining current insurance is a requirement for the annual renewal of your licence. Registrants are also required to maintain "tail" or "gap" coverage if they cease practice or move out of the province to cover any prior professional actions.

### **Currency of Practice & Candidacy (Bylaw 21.1)**

To ensure professional competence and public safety, all applicants must demonstrate a current connection to the practice of psychology. An applicant meets the currency requirement if they satisfy one of the following two criteria:

- **Recent Graduation:** Successful completion of an approved psychology degree within the **three years** immediately preceding the date of application; **OR**
- **Professional Practice:** Documented completion of at least **1500 hours** of professional psychological practice within the **three years** immediately preceding the date of application.

**Note on Professional Practice:** The 1500 hours must consist of post-degree professional work. Hours accrued as part of a student training program, practicum, or internship required for a degree **cannot** be counted toward this currency requirement. This ensures that "currency" reflects independent or professional-level engagement with the field.

### **Psychological work experience**

The NSRP's academic requirements include completion of a **minimum** period of 500 hours of supervised work in the form of a practicum or internship as part of the academic training program. However, applicants must have psychological work experience in the particular area(s) for which they are declaring. This experience requirement not only

includes the broad area of practice declared by the applicant, but it would apply to the populations or activities declared by the applicant. If the declared practice area(s) and/or population(s) are not consistent with the applicant's experience and training, the NSRP may decline to approve the area of practice or population that is not supported by the application. The NSRP has the ability to [restrict the practice](#) of a psychologist where appropriate.

Some applicants have been under the impression that during the application they should declare activities and populations with which they are unfamiliar because they might like to pursue such work in future. Here are some examples (that should not be considered exhaustive). It would be inappropriate to declare children as a population to be served if one has not had such experience as part of their practicum or internship. Similarly, it would be incongruous to offer couples counselling or psychoeducational assessments without first having such experience. Detailed guidelines have been developed that will assist in completing the Psychological Practice Profile and these should be thoroughly reviewed:

[https://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Practice\\_Profile\\_Revised\\_Instructions.pdf](https://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Practice_Profile_Revised_Instructions.pdf)

The intention of the Declaration of Psychological Practice, which is part of the Online Application for Registration, is to realistically consider what one would be carrying out in their candidacy, in the immediate future.

### **Note on Professional Growth and Learning Plans**

It is understood that a registrant's professional focus may evolve over time. While on the **Conditional Register**, any expansion of one's populations or activities must be documented via a **Learning Plan** developed in collaboration with an **NSRP Supervisor**. This ensures that new competencies are acquired safely during the local integration period. More information about developing a Learning Plan while on the Conditional Register can be found in the NSRP Supervision Handbook, available via the following URL:

<http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/SupervisionHandbook.pdf>

Once a registrant is transferred to the **Practising Register**, they are independently responsible for maintaining and expanding their individual scope of practice in accordance with NSRP Standards. Any significant shift in practice areas should be supported by a self-directed learning plan. Detailed information on the requirements for expanding one's areas of practice can be found in the **Scope of Practice and Learning Plans Policy**: [https://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Scope\\_LearningPlans.pdf](https://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Scope_LearningPlans.pdf)

### **Language Proficiency**

The Psychology Regulations require one to speak and write English with reasonable fluency. This requirement is informally considered throughout the NSRP's review of the Application. As well, if one's first language is not English, one may be required to complete a language proficiency exam.

## **Evidence of good character**

[This requirement](#) is assessed throughout the Application, and specifically via background checks (criminal and child abuse), a background questionnaire, references, and information about any registration history in other jurisdictions.

## **Demonstrate an understanding of professional practice and ethical issues, and have an understanding of local practices and conditions**

This requirement is initially assessed throughout the completed application, particularly under the Core Competency section for Ethics and Standards.

Prior to registration with the Nova Scotia Regulator of Psychology, applicants are required to attest that they have reviewed the relevant local jurisprudence, standards (which includes the Sexual Abuse & Sexual Misconduct Standard), and resources. For information purposes, a document on the Attestation Process is accessible directly below.

[http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Information\\_Attestation.pdf](http://www.ns-rp.ca/downloads/Information_Attestation.pdf)

## **Final Statutory Notice**

### **For Regular Stream Applicants (Conditional Register):**

For those entering the **Conditional Register** via the regular international stream, entry commences the legislated period of candidacy, supervision, and examinations (including the EPPP) required for initial registration in Nova Scotia. This period must be completed while holding the title of **Candidate Psychologist** or **Psychologist (Candidate Register)**.

- **Candidacy FAQ:** <http://www.ns-rp.ca/information-for-registrants/for-candidate-registrants/faq/>

### **For Transfer Applicants:**

In the limited cases where an international applicant successfully qualifies for a Transfer, they proceed toward the **Practising Register** under a **Conditional** license. While they must satisfy a mandatory six-month period of local supervised practice and the Transfer Examination in accordance with **Section 12** of the *Psychology Regulations*, they are exempt from the separate multi-year candidacy requirements and entry-level examinations intended for the regular stream.