



Registration Requirements and Criteria: Regular Application 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)**. Any references within this document to "Candidate Registrants" or the "Candidate Register" should be interpreted in accordance with these 2025 statutory designations.

For greater clarity, this document is intended for applicants who have obtained their academic credentials from an institution in Canada or the US, and who:

- do not possess any current registration with a psychology regulatory body
- possess registration with a psychology regulatory body that constitutes a provisional type of registration
- possess registration as a psychologist but in a category that does not represent full registration, e.g. retired registration, non-practising registration, etc.
- possess registration in another jurisdiction but it is not with a psychology regulatory body, e.g., counselling, marriage and family therapy, etc.

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

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

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.

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

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.

It is understood that one's employment may change over time. Following entry into the **Conditional Register** and the issuance of a **Candidate Psychologist Conditional Licence**, it is possible to submit a Learning Plan to appropriately expand one's populations or activities in a manner achievable during the period of candidacy. However, such a process should be considered after one has begun meeting with their supervisor and had the opportunity to review their current workload and discuss a potential learning plan with their NSRP Supervisor. More information about developing a Learning Plan can be found in the NSRP Supervision Handbook, available via the following URL:

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

Such a requirement is also an aspect of the process after an individual's name is added to the **Conditional Register** (commencing the legislated period of supervision as a **Candidate**), and after beginning the required examinations.

To be clear, supervision must be completed while one is registered and licensed as a Psychologist (Candidate Register) and working in Nova Scotia. For more information on the examinations and candidacy requirements, please visit the FAQ page for Candidate Psychologists, available via the following URL:

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