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Licensing and Certification

To practise medicine in Ontario, all physicians are required to obtain a certificate of registration (license) from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO). The CPSO offers an independent practice certificate, and restricted registration policies for physicians with training from other similar jurisdictions. The pages contained in this module outline the key registration and certification requirements, policies, and processes. Some physicians will have a choice to make regarding which CPSO registration policy they wish to pursue.

For more information, please **select** the option that matches your credentials.

- **Physicians with Canadian certification (CCFP or FRCPC/FRCS) and Medical Council of Canada exams (LMCC)**
(Certificate of Registration Authorizing Independent Practice)
- **Physicians licensed in another Canadian jurisdiction**
(Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) / Out of Province license holders)
- **Family physicians with post-graduate training and certification from Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, or Ireland**
(College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) jurisdiction approved training)
- **Specialists with post-graduate training from Australia, the United States, Ireland, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore, Switzerland, or Hong Kong**
(Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPS) approved jurisdiction route)
- **Physicians with post-graduate training and certification from the United States**
(Alternate Pathways to Registration – Pathways 3 and 4)
- **Physicians being recruited at the rank of Assistant, Associate or Full Professor**
(Academic Certificate of Registration)

If your training and credentials do not match any of these categories please visit the HFO MRA **[Access Centre for Internationally Educated Health Professionals](#)** for information and advice.

The content in the Physician Relocation Guide is based on HFO MRA expertise in the areas of physician licensing and certification, immigration and recruitment. HFO MRA is not responsible for the policies outlined in these modules, and policies may change without notice. While HFO MRA strives to keep information as up to date as possible, please contact/visit the responsible organization's website to verify policies and check for updates.



Certificate of Registration Authorizing Independent Practice

Who is eligible?

This College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) registration option is available to physicians with the following credentials:

- ✓ A medical degree from an approved school (listed in the [World Directory of Medical Schools](#)).
- ✓ Successful completion of the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Part 1 and Part 2 (LMCC).
- ✓ Certification from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC).
- ✓ Canadian citizenship, permanent residency, or a valid work permit.
- ✓ Completion of one year of post-graduate training or active medical practice in Canada.

Note: The CPSO **One year Canadian Practice Experience Exemption** policy exempts physicians from the one year Canadian practice experience requirement if all other independent registration requirements have been met at the time of application.

What is an independent certificate of registration?

A certificate of registration for **independent practice** authorizes a physician to engage in independent medical practice in Ontario in the areas in which he or she is educated and experienced.

What are the processing times?

Completed applications should be submitted at least three months in advance of the physician's anticipated start date. Initial assessment of an application may take up to five weeks.

Processing time may also depend on how efficient an applicant is at arranging the required documentation and whether there are any current or past complaints or breaks in practice or training.

Visit the CPSO [Registration Applications and Forms](#) page for instructions.

For more information about applying to the CPSO, please visit the [Additional Resources and Frequently Asked Questions module](#).



Physicians Registered in another Canadian Jurisdiction

(Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) / Out of Province license holders)

Who is eligible?

This College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) registration policy applies to physicians who hold:

- ✓ An active, independent certificate of registration to practise medicine in another Canadian province or territory (excluding Nunavut). The registration must not contain any restriction, definition, or limitation.

What is AIT?

The **Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)** is a federal-provincial agreement that allows for labour mobility between provinces for some regulated professions.

What are the processing times for Out of Province applications?

Most Out of Province applications will require review by the CPSO Registration Committee. Applications requiring review may take four to five months to complete and must meet CPSO credentialing deadlines before being reviewed by the Registration Committee.

Processing time may also depend on how efficient an applicant is at arranging the required documentation. Any current or past complaints or breaks in practice or training may also delay the CPSO registration process.

Please review the Registration Committee **Processing Times and Meeting Dates** for more information.

Will I be recognized as a specialist?

Specialty recognition is an important consideration for physicians utilizing the Out of Province / AIT registration route. Specialist physicians who plan to bill the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) on a fee-for-service basis must meet additional requirements under the College's **Specialist Recognition policy**.

Visit the CPSO **Registration Applications and Forms** page for instructions.



Restricted Certificate of Registration for Exam Eligible Candidates – Family Medicine

(College of Family Physicians of Canada Jurisdiction Approved Training)

Who is eligible?

This College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) registration policy is suitable for physicians who meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Family Medicine physicians with an official letter of eligibility to write the certification exam of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) or those approved for the designation of certification “without examination” from the CFPC.
- ✓ Have secured a practice location and supervising physician(s) in Ontario.
- ✓ Have successfully completed or intend to complete the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exams Part 1 and Part 2 within three years.

What is the Restricted Certificate of Registration for Exam Eligible Candidates policy?

The **Restricted Certificate of Registration for Exam Eligible Candidates policy** allows a physician to apply for restricted CPSO registration. Under this policy, the physician can begin to practise (under supervision) until all independent registration requirements are successfully completed. This is a time-limited certificate of registration that provides a maximum of three years to successfully complete all required examinations.

*Independent CPSO registration requirements include the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Parts 1 and 2, and certification from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC).

What is CFPC Certification without Examination?

CFPC Certification without Examination is a special designation for family medicine physicians who have completed accredited post-graduate training and hold certification in a CFPC-recognized jurisdiction, and who are registered/licensed in a Canadian province or territory.

The countries included on the CFPC list of **approved jurisdictions** are the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia.

Is it possible to obtain CFPC Certification without Examination without being registered to practise in Canada?

Relocating physicians who meet all CFPC requirements for certification without examination except licensure in a Canadian province or territory can obtain a confirmation letter from the CFPC. This letter will support their application for registration with the CPSO. Upon CPSO approval, the CFPC will finalize the special designation of Certification without Examination.

Physicians must start the CFPC process by having the required credentials source verified by physiciansapply.ca.

How long does it take to obtain a CFPC confirmation letter?

Depending on individual circumstances, source verification of documents through physiciansapply.ca can take many months. Once all required documentation is verified, an application can be submitted to the CFPC. Completed applications are processed in approximately four weeks. A CFPC confirmation letter is typically issued within two to three business days following approval. This letter is required to start the application process with the CPSO.

How long does the CPSO registration process take?

All applications for restricted registration require review and approval by the CPSO Registration Committee and may take four to five months to complete. Processing time may also depend on how efficient an applicant is at arranging the required documentation, securing a practice location with supervision, and their Canadian work status. Any current or past complaints or breaks in practice or training may also delay the CPSO registration process.

Please review the Registration Committee [Processing Times and Meeting Dates](#) for more information.

Visit the [CFPC website](#) for detailed information and application instructions.

Visit the CPSO [Registration Applications and Forms](#) page for instructions.

For more information about this policy and applying to the CPSO, please visit the [Additional Resources and Frequently Asked Questions module](#).



Restricted Certificate of Registration for Exam Eligible Candidates – Specialists

(Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Approved-jurisdiction route)

Who is eligible?

This College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) registration policy is suitable for physicians who meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Physicians with post-graduate residency training from a Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) recognized jurisdiction who have undergone an assessment of training from the RCPSC that resulted in an official letter of exam eligibility (with no preconditions).
- ✓ Have secured a practice location and supervising physician(s) in Ontario.
- ✓ Have successfully completed or intend to complete the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exams Part 1 and Part 2 within three years.

What is the Restricted Certificate of Registration for Exam Eligible Candidates policy?

The **Restricted Certificate of Registration for Exam Eligible Candidates policy** allows a physician to apply for restricted registration with the CPSO. Under this policy, the physician can begin practice (under supervision) until all exams required for independent registration are successfully completed. This is a time-limited certificate of registration that provides a maximum of three years to successfully complete all required examinations.

*Independent CPSO registration requirements include the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Parts 1 and 2, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) certification examination.

What steps are involved in applying for a RCPSC letter of eligibility?

To obtain an RCPSC letter of eligibility a physician must apply for an assessment of Jurisdiction Approved Training.

As a first step, physicians with recognized training are encouraged to review the RCPSC **Specialty Training Requirements** (STRs) for their specialty to ensure their training is similar to Canadian programs. Training completed in RCPSC approved jurisdictions can vary in content and duration and may not meet all of the RCPSC requirements.

What are the RCPSC processing times?

It is recommended that physicians submit an application for an assessment of training by April 30th of the year *before* the physician would like to sit the examination. In most cases, the assessment of training will take approximately six months. The RCPSC primary specialty certification exams occur in the spring of each year.

How long does the CPSO registration process take?

All applications for restricted registration require review and approval by the CPSO Registration Committee and may take four to five months to complete. Processing time may also depend on how efficient an applicant is at arranging the required documentation, securing a practice location with supervision, and their Canadian work status. Any current or past complaints or breaks in practice or training may also delay the CPSO registration process.

Please review the Registration Committee **Processing Times and Meeting Dates** for more information.

Visit the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada website for more information about applying for an assessment of training:

- Applicants with **ACGME Accredited Training** from the United States.
- Applicants with Training from other **Acceptable Jurisdictions**.

Visit the CPSO **Registration Applications and Forms** page for instructions.

For more information about this policy and applying to the CPSO, please visit the **Additional Resources and Frequently Asked Questions module**.





Physicians with Training and Board Certification from the United States

(Pathway 3 and Pathway 4)

Who is eligible?

These College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) registration policies are suitable for physicians who meet the following criteria:

- ✓ A medical degree from an approved school (listed in the [World Directory of Medical Schools](#)).
- ✓ Successful completion of a residency program that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in the US.
- ✓ Completion of all steps of the United States Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLEs).
- ✓ Certification from a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) in their respective specialty.
- ✓ Hold full/independent registration or eligibility for registration in a US state.

What is Pathway 3 / 4?

Pathway 3 and **Pathway 4** provide a route to restricted registration with the CPSO based on US ACGME-accredited training and licensing and certification exams. Pathway 3 and 4 require an initial 12-18 months of supervised practice and a successful practice assessment before the transition to independent practice can take place.

What is the difference between Pathway 3 and 4?

In addition to successfully completing ACGME-accredited training and US board certification exams:

- Pathway 3 applicants obtained a recognized medical degree in the US or Canada and hold an independent registration in any US state.
- Pathway 4 applicants obtained a recognized medical degree outside of the US or Canada and are eligible for an independent registration in any US state.

What are the CPSO processing times?

All Pathway applications require review by the CPSO Registration Committee and may take four to five months to complete. Processing time can also depend on how efficient an applicant is at arranging the required documentation, securing a practice location with supervision, and their Canadian work status. Any current or past complaints or breaks in practice or training may also delay the CPSO registration process.

Please review the Registration Committee **Processing Times and Meeting Dates** for more information.

Visit the CPSO **Registration Applications and Forms** page for instructions.

For additional information about this policy and applying to the CPSO, please visit the **Additional Resources and Frequently Asked Questions module**.





Academic Certificate of Registration

Who is eligible?

This College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) registration policy is suitable for physicians who meet the following criteria:

- Have an offer of academic appointment at the rank of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor from an Ontario medical school.
- Notified by the medical school that a Confirmation of Academic Appointment Form confirming the position/rank and the start date will be provided to the CPSO.

What is Academic Registration?

Academic Registration permits a combination of academic and clinical practice. The CPSO Academic Registration policy provides a route to registration in Ontario for physicians who are offered an Academic Appointment at the required rank.

What are the processing times?

If an applicant does not meet the requirements for independent registration in Ontario (i.e. RCPSC or CFPC certification and LMCC) their application will require review by the CPSO Registration Committee. If Registration Committee approval is required, the process may take four to five months to complete. Please review the Registration Committee, **Processing Times and Meeting Dates** for more information.

Processing time may also depend on how efficient an applicant is at arranging the required documentation. Any current or past complaints or breaks in practice or training may also delay the CPSO registration process.

Applicants can contact the CPSO by **email** or by phone at 416-967-2617 to request an application package once an academic appointment is confirmed.