

# **Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency Farm Technician Trade Advisory Committee**

## **Terms of Reference**

### **1. Introduction**

Under the authority of the *Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency Operating Charter*, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency Board (the “Board”) shall seek the advice and recommendations, where appropriate, from industry by establishing Trade Advisory Committees in order to advise the Board with regards to decisions it may make and to allow the Board, where appropriate, to advise and make recommendations to the Minister regarding the apprenticeship system.

This Terms of Reference (ToR) shall govern the activities of the Farm Technician Trade Advisory Committee (TAC).

### **2. Mandate**

The Farm Technician TAC will advise, make recommendations and provide supporting rationale to the Board on matters assigned to it by the Board.

The TAC is expected to engage and consult with stakeholders, employers and employees regarding trade-specific issues assigned to the TAC by the Board.

The TAC may be responsible to develop a work plan, including deliverables and timeframes for approval by the Board.

The Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project (AAHP) is underway to align the rules, processes, and standards for apprenticeship in the four Atlantic Provinces. The result of this project will be more consistency and efficiency in the way people enter the trades and work toward certification. Atlantic Trade Advisory Committees (ATACs), consisting of industry and training representatives and appointed by the Board, continue to support the work of the AAHP. Additionally, there is a national initiative, through the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA), to harmonize trades. All harmonization activities are outside of the mandate of this TAC unless the Board seeks input from the TAC.

### **3. Purpose**

The Farm Technician TAC will advise and make recommendations to the Board, on the following tasks:

- a) Review the application to designate Farm Technician as a trade;
- b) Review and verify trade-specific labour market information and outlooks;
- c) Review key components of the Farm Technician Trade, with reference to the program that currently exists in Prince Edward Island including, but not limited to trade definition, ratio, and term of apprenticeship and pre- apprenticeship;
- d) Advise on other matters as assigned by the Board.

### **4. Membership**

The Farm Technician TAC will be comprised of no fewer than 4 persons, at least one of whom is an employer representative and one of whom is an employee representative.

TAC members are to be actively involved in the related trade/industry. Actively involved means: practitioner; currently working in the related trade(s); working in a supervisory role with apprentices and/or journey person(s) in the related trade(s); or, considered appropriate for TAC membership by the Board.

In addition to being a qualified person, a person appointed by the Board to the Farm Technician TAC must be reflective of the balance of interests in relation to the issue that is the subject of the mandate.

The TAC is to reflect the diversity that exists in Nova Scotia and the Board shall strive to appoint, where possible, Aboriginal People, African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible Persons, Persons with Disabilities and Women working in the Farm Technician occupation, where they are under-represented.

The TAC will recommend to the Board one of the members of the TAC to be the Chair of the Committee. The Chair will provide leadership to the Committee and encourage the members to consider issues from a broad perspective.

#### **The Chair, working in collaboration with the Agency staff:**

- a) will be appointed for a two-year term or for the life of the TAC, whichever is shorter. The TAC may nominate to the Board a new chair or recommend the reappointment of the existing chair, once the two-year term has ended.
- b) will convene and chair TAC meetings and communicate the results of the TAC, and any recommendation(s), to the Board;

- c) will approve prepared agendas;
- d) will follow-up on action items as required;
- e) will review and approve meeting minutes prior to distribution;
- f) can deem any meeting require mandatory in person attendance based on his/her discretion (with reasonable notice to members); and
- g) can request validation of criteria at any time from a Committee member.

The Board may fill a vacancy on the Committee by appointing a person to fill the former Committee Member's unexpired term.

Should the Chair not be available for a period of time due to illness or personal circumstances, Agency staff may proceed with convening TAC meetings. The TAC may select a temporary Chair or someone to act in the Chair's absence, whether needed for one meeting or a series of meetings.

## **5. Governing Principles**

- a) The role of the TAC is advisory in nature. It will provide advice and recommendations to the Board.
- b) Meetings of the TAC will be supported by the Agency staff without prejudice to the issues at hand. This includes preparing meeting documentation, recording minutes and other meeting output, making all logistical arrangements for all meetings of the TAC and liaising with government officials and other stakeholders.
- c) All advice and recommendations will be arrived at by consensus.
- d) Meeting quorum will consist of fifty percent (50%) of the current voting membership (excluding vacant seats), plus the Chair or acting Chair of the TAC.
- e) TAC members are to encourage open and forthright examination of all issues and, when conflict arises among competing interests, act in the greatest interest of Nova Scotians.
- f) TAC members are to ensure public interest is considered in its decisions and actions.

- g) The TAC may request input from Agency staff and such other stakeholders, experts and members of the industry as it deems advisable to fulfill the TAC's mandate.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities of the Members**

Committee members are entrusted to direct the activities of the TAC in the interest of the Farm Technician occupation. Individual Committee members are expected to:

- a) adhere to the TAC's Terms of Reference;
- b) participate in good faith in all the activities of the TAC and attempt to achieve consensus in all recommendations the TAC may deliberate on;
- c) review and consider all documentation prepared for or by the TAC;
- d) as appropriate, maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the business and discussions of the TAC, and materials provided to or produced by the TAC;
- e) communicate the status and decisions of TAC to industry and other stakeholders as per Board policy and as directed by the Board;
- f) be aware of concerns, challenges, and perspectives of other Committee members and stakeholders in order to participate in Committee discussions on a basis consistent with their role;
- g) attend meetings either in person or via teleconference / video conference;
- h) be prepared for Committee meetings and represent views and perspectives of their industry constituents as well as their own. Once individual views are communicated, Committee members are expected to work together to achieve consensus;
- i) be equally responsible and accountable for providing direction and oversight for all aspects for the recommendation to the Board;
- j) be bound to support recommendations made by the Committee in communicating with internal and external stakeholders;
- k) provide reasonable advance notice to Agency staff in the event they cannot attend a scheduled TAC meeting;

- l) notify the Chair of the Committee regarding changes to their eligibility criteria;  
and
- m) provide feedback on the effectiveness of the Committee through the completion of an evaluation.

## **7. Meetings**

- a) In consultation with Agency staff, the Chair shall schedule meetings as necessary to accomplish tasks on the workplan.
- b) The inaugural meeting of the TAC will require that all members be available. Meetings could be held by teleconference call or video conference (unless otherwise directed by the Chair – see section 4).
- c) Agendas for all meetings will be prepared by the Chair with support of Agency staff and circulated to members in a timely manner in advance of the meeting date.
- d) Non-voting persons may be permitted to attend and participate in discussions in an advisory role when deemed necessary by the members of the TAC.
- e) Locations for meetings should take the travelling convenience and availability of the group members into consideration.
- f) Meetings of the TAC will be supported by the Agency staff without prejudice to the issues at hand. This includes preparing meeting documentation, recording minutes and other meeting output, and making all logistical arrangements for all meetings of the TAC.
- g) Agency staff will also provide support to the TAC members in the drafting of a final report and recommendations to the Board.
- h) The time commitment for the completion of the TAC mandate and tabling of recommendations should be detailed on the TAC Work Plan as an indication of the duration on the TAC.

## **8. Attendance**

Committee members are expected to be available to attend meetings. If a member of the TAC fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without reasonable cause, the membership status of the member will be reviewed.

## **9. Decision Making**

All advice should be made by consensus. In the event the TAC is unable to reach a consensus, divergent views/positions will be noted in meeting minutes. If consensus cannot be reached, then the options will be presented to the Board for decision.

## **10. Remuneration and Expenses**

Each member and the Chair of the TAC shall be paid remuneration and shall be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses necessarily incurred by them in fulfilling their duties as members of the TAC as follows:

- a) \$200 for each TAC meeting that exceeds 3.5 hours in length and involves preparatory time on behalf of the member to participate fully in the meeting;
- b) \$100 for each TAC that exceeds 30 minutes and less than 3.5 hours in length;
- c) TAC members who travel over 200kms to attend TAC meetings will receive a travel amount of \$200 roundtrip in addition to actual and reasonable expenses incurred during travel (there are standard per diem amounts for meals and fuel); and
- d) any member traveling less than 200kms may claim travel expenses at the government rate only.

## **11. Accountability**

The TAC will be accountable to the Board and provide regular progress reports to the Board. Although TAC members will be expected to conduct themselves as independent advisors, an affiliation with apprenticeship activities will enable a strong foundation for the provision of advice as it pertains to the Farm Technician occupation.

If a TAC member finds it necessary to resign from the Committee, a letter to that effect should be sent to the Committee Chair and Agency staff.

All TAC members are required to sign the Code of Practice as required by board policy.

Should there be a performance issue identified concerning the Chair of the TAC, a non-confidence vote may be taken.

**Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency  
Farm Technician Trade Advisory Committee**

**Code of Practice**

As a Farm Technician Trade, Advisory Committee Member, I agree to:

- Be an ambassador and representative of the Agency
- Attend meetings on a regular basis and prepare in advance of the meeting
- Contribute to the Committee’s perspective and wisdom by sharing knowledge and experience
- Listen and consider the opinions of others
- Encourage diversity and inclusiveness as they pertain to the Committee’s mandate
- Support decisions that are made by the Committee
- Treat Committee matters confidentially, as appropriate, and respect communications protocol
- Declare conflicts of interest as required
- Conduct myself in a manner consistent with the TAC Terms of Reference

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_