



Nova Scotia
Apprenticeship Agency

Harmonization Update:

Nova Scotia advances apprentice
mobility in the Atlantic region and
across Canada



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About this report

Nova Scotia is making it easier for apprentices to move seamlessly across Canada to continue their apprenticeship training, and for employers to hire the people they need. The core challenge is that provinces and territories across Canada are separately responsible for apprenticeship training, resulting in 13 different systems. The approach is to collaborate with other jurisdictions to harmonize key features of the systems.

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) works with industry, training partners, and provincial/territorial apprenticeship colleagues to advance harmonization of identified trades, improve mobility of apprentices across jurisdictions, and increase efficiencies across various apprenticeship systems.

This report from NSAA offers stakeholders an update on harmonization initiatives at the national level and in the Atlantic region. It also highlights five regulatory changes that the province must make soon in order to move forward with these initiatives. The report includes a feedback form so that you can let us know how apprenticeship mobility, training harmonization, and the proposed amendments might affect you and your industry.

Please submit your comments by **January 31, 2016**.

Definitions

Atlantic Apprenticeship Council (AAC): means the apprenticeship directors and board chairs in the Atlantic provinces, mandated to encourage the standardization of apprenticeship training and certification programs and to provide greater mobility across Atlantic Canada for skilled workers. The AAC oversees the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project.

Atlantic Trade Advisory Committee (ATAC): means a trade advisory committee established by the four Atlantic apprenticeship boards, consisting of one training provider, one employer, and one employee representative from each jurisdiction.

Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA): means the directors of apprenticeship and the apprenticeship board chairs from each of Canada's 13 jurisdictions, in addition to two federal government representatives. The CCDA provides a forum for the jurisdictions to collaborate toward the goal of developing a certified, highly skilled and mobile trades workforce in Canada.

Harmonization: means the process of aligning key elements of apprenticeship technical training for individual trades. This includes agreeing to the same trade name, same number of levels in a trade, and a common order in which the training is taught.

Hours: means the measure of time that is used to determine the standard of practical experience required in an apprenticeship program or as a trade qualifier. One level of apprenticeship training will be 1800 practical experience hours.

Jurisdiction: means a province or territory that administers the apprenticeship and trades qualifications legislation and training system in that province or territory.

Level: means a stage of practical experience and related technical training within an apprenticeship program.

Term of Apprenticeship: means the number of years required to complete an apprenticeship program, usually measured in practical experience hours and levels of technical training. A typical Term of Apprenticeship is four years.

Trade Qualifier: means a person who has applied to write a Certificate of Qualification examination based on work experience completed in the trade, without having completed an apprenticeship program for that trade.

National harmonization initiatives

Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Protocol

Premiers, through the Council of the Federation, have created a Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Protocol. The protocol obligates ministers responsible for apprenticeship to commit to clear, consistent information for apprentices and employers, and to recognize hours worked and technical training successfully completed by apprentices, regardless of the jurisdiction in which they are obtained. The protocol applies to apprentices moving permanently or temporarily, and to recent graduates of college trades programs. Its overall aim is to ensure the availability of a skilled, competitive workforce across the country. Jurisdictions have agreed to implement the protocol by January 2016.

Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) Harmonization Initiative

The Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) is responsible for the Red Seal Program, which develops common interprovincial standards and examinations.

The CCDA is undertaking the Harmonization Initiative in 30 Red Seal trades by 2020. Nova Scotia is an active participant in this initiative.

The goal is to substantively align apprenticeship systems across Canada by making apprenticeship training requirements more consistent in the Red Seal trades.

As part of this work, the CCDA identified the following harmonization priorities in consultation with industry and training stakeholders:

1. Use the Red Seal trade names consistently across jurisdictions.
2. Use the same number of training levels.
3. Set consistent minimums for the number of trade hours (in-school and on-the-job) an apprentice must complete in order to advance to the next training level.
4. Use the most recent National Occupational Analysis to standardize the sequencing of technical training content at each training level.

First 10 Red Seal trades selected for harmonization

Strong industry and stakeholder engagement has resulted in significant progress in harmonizing the first 10 Red Seal trades. Changes are being implemented in most jurisdictions for the following trades, with apprenticeship intake planned for September 2016:

- Carpenter
- Welder
- Metal Fabricator (Fitter)
- Ironworker (Generalist)
- Ironworker (Structural/ Ornamental)
- Ironworker (Reinforcing)
- Mobile Crane Operator
- Mobile Crane Operator (Hydraulic)
- Tower Crane Operator
- Heavy Duty Equipment Technician

Next eight Red Seal trades selected for harmonization

Moving forward, the CCDA will focus on the following eight trades, aiming to harmonize the training in most jurisdictions by September 2017:

- Automotive Service Technician
- Truck and Transport Mechanic
- Agricultural Equipment Technician
- Construction Electrician
- Industrial Electrician
- Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)
- Plumber
- Steamfitter/Pipefitter

Consultation process

The National harmonization initiative involves discussions and consultations with industry stakeholders connected to the respective trade. For each Red Seal trade, industry is engaged at the national and provincial/territorial levels to propose and validate recommendations for harmonization. This consultation takes the form of face-to-face meetings, webinars, and electronic information.

To kick-start the new round of Red Seal trades, Nova Scotia is sending out a letter explaining the proposed changes to harmonize the trade name, number of training levels, and total trade hours across Canada. Interested employers and industry representatives will have the opportunity to participate in further discussion around the sequencing of technical training content through national webinars. The webinars will take place in 2016 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Consultation timelines

TRADE	INITIAL CONSULTATION	NATIONAL WEBINARS
Automotive Service Technician	November 2015	February/March 2016
Truck and Transport Mechanic	December/January 2016	March/April 2016
Agricultural Equipment Technician	December/January 2016	March/April 2016
Construction Electrician	December/January 2016	March/April 2016
Industrial Electrician	December/January 2016	March/April 2016
Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)	February 2016	May 2016
Plumber	April/May 2016	June/July 2016
Steamfitter/Pipefitter	May/June 2016	July/August 2016

Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project (AAHP)

The Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project (AAHP) was created to align the rules, processes, and standards for apprenticeship in the four Atlantic provinces. This regional initiative will result in more consistency and efficiency in the way people enter the trades and work toward certification. The Atlantic Apprenticeship Council (AAC) has the oversight for the AAHP.

These are the project's objectives:

- Meet industry demand for a skilled workforce.
- Maximize access to training (in both official languages, as appropriate by jurisdiction) to meet the needs of employers, apprentices, and trade qualifiers.
- Facilitate labour mobility and create a better training and working experience for apprentices.
- Maximize operational efficiencies.
- Maximize employer and apprentice awareness and engagement.
- Develop a shared information technology (IT) system.

As a result of the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project, 10 trades will be harmonized throughout the region. These are the 10 trades, in order of development:

1. Bricklayer
2. Cook
3. Welder
4. Metal Fabricator (Fitter)
5. Carpenter
6. Instrumentation & Control Technician
7. Construction Electrician
8. Industrial Electrician
9. Plumber
10. Steamfitter/Pipefitter

These trades were chosen based on criteria including, but not limited to, trade mobility, demand/volume, related trades that can be harmonized at the same time, the age of curriculum standards, and industry endorsement.

As well as harmonizing standards (e.g., curriculum, logbooks, and exams) in the 10 identified trades, the Atlantic provinces will implement common policies and processes to increase consistency in apprenticeship training and certification requirements (see Figure 2). A shared IT system will assist harmonization; enhance reporting capabilities; and enhance online functions and services for employers, apprentices, and training providers.

To date, a steering committee and several sub-committees, consisting of representatives of the Atlantic Workforce Partnership Secretariat staff and jurisdictional apprenticeship/board authorities have been working to develop common policies, processes, and standards to harmonize apprenticeship training and certification requirements within Atlantic Canada. As well, Atlantic Trade Advisory Committees (ATACs), consisting of industry and training representatives, have and continue to be active in guiding the work of the project.



Figure 2. Key activities for the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project



Five changes Nova Scotia needs to make to the General Regulations

Most of the changes needed to implement the Premiers' Protocol and national and Atlantic harmonization recommendations can be made through policy; however, regulatory changes are needed in the following five areas.

1) Clarify the ratio and wage rates for Nova Scotia apprentices working out-of-jurisdiction

By law, apprentices are subject to the employment laws of the jurisdiction in which they are working. Journeyperson-to-apprentice ratio and wage rates may vary by jurisdiction. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency needs the ability to clarify that Nova Scotia apprentices working temporarily in jurisdictions where these conditions vary are subject to the ratio and wage rates applicable in that jurisdiction.

2) Revise the definition of "occupational analysis"

The Red Seal Program has developed a new product called the Red Seal Occupational Standard (RSOS). This document will, over time, replace the current National Occupational Analysis (NOA) for each applicable trade. The definition of "occupational analysis" in the General Regulations will need to be updated to reference the RSOS so the agency can access the most current information for program development.

3) Require identity cards with full-face photograph

The agency needs authority to require that certification cards they issue include a full-face photograph of the certification holder. This will allow employers, workers, compliance officers, and the general public who employ tradespeople to confirm that the holder of the card has been trained to do the work.

4) Change the minimum standard for practical experience to 1800 hours per level of training

Most jurisdictions across Canada use a minimum standard of 1800 hours of practical experience per level of training in an apprenticeship program. Nova Scotia's current standard is 2000 hours. Although this standard is not explicitly stated in the current General Regulations or trade-specific regulations, the term of apprenticeship and wage schedules are based on a 2000-hour requirement. Changing to an 1800-hour standard will bring Nova Scotia in line with other jurisdictions. It will also support efforts being made as part of the AAHP to adopt common standards for apprenticeship training across the Atlantic region.

This change will have the following impact:

- The term of apprenticeship will change (for example, a four-level trade will now have a term of apprenticeship of 4 x 1800 hours = 7200 hours). This will align Nova Scotia with the other jurisdictions and improve apprentice mobility.
- The wage schedules will be adjusted to the 1800-hour level, allowing apprentices to progress through apprenticeship training in a manner consistent with the term of apprenticeship.
- Trade qualification hours will be aligned with other jurisdictions in relation to the term of apprenticeship. For example, the trade qualifier term will be set at 1.5 times the term of apprenticeship. For a 4-level trade, the term will be 10,800 hours (7200 x 1.5).
- The Certificate of Proficiency based on 10 years' experience will change to 18,000 hours from 20,000 hours, based on an 1800-hour level.

5) Reduce waiting time between exam attempts

The current regulatory requirement states that an apprentice or trade qualifier must wait a period of three months to rewrite the certification examination after an unsuccessful attempt. The proposed change would reduce this waiting time from three months to 30 days, and would apply to apprentices training throughout the Atlantic provinces. This will better support trade qualifiers and apprentices who are in a position to rewrite the certification exam earlier.

Recent actions and future milestones

The Government of Nova Scotia recently amended legislation to allow apprentices to remain registered in Nova Scotia while they work temporarily in other jurisdictions. This new flexibility allows apprentices to have a home base, access technical training in Nova Scotia and avoid unnecessary administration.

Figure 3 summarizes some key milestones to anticipate for 2016 and beyond.

Figure 3. Harmonization timeline

WHO	WHAT	WHEN
Canada's 13 provinces and territories	Implement the Provincial-Territorial Apprenticeship Mobility Protocol.	January 2016
Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA)	Finish harmonizing the first 10 Red Seal trades identified in the national CCDA Harmonization Initiative.	2016 Training Year
	Finish harmonizing the next 8 Red Seal trades identified in the national CCDA Harmonization Initiative.	2017 Training Year
	Finish harmonizing the remaining 12 Red Seal trades (for a total of 30 trades) identified in the national CCDA Harmonization Initiative.	2020
Atlantic Apprenticeship Council	Complete implementation of training and system harmonization in the Atlantic Region	2017 Training Year
	Start build of the shared information technology system	2016

We want to hear from you!

Feedback Form

Let us know how apprentice mobility, training harmonization, and proposed amendments will affect you and your industry. Attach additional comments if you need more space.

Does your company employ apprentices? Yes No

If Yes, how many apprentices does your company currently employ? _____

In which trade(s): _____

Comments on the Harmonization Update, December 2015: _____

Are you interested in becoming more involved with your trade? (Participating on a trade advisory committee, attending provincial/national industry meetings and workshops, sharing success stories and promoting apprenticeship to youth, etc.) Yes No

Please comment: _____

Contact Information:

Company Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Company Representative: _____

Workplace telephone: _____ Mobile/cell telephone: _____

Email: _____

Feedback may be submitted via:

Email: apprenticeshiptraining@novascotia.ca

Fax: (902) 424-0717

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