

# 2015–2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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Fair Registration Practices Act

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Fair Registration Practices Act  
2015-2016 Annual report  
Department of Labour and Advance Education  
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# LETTER TO THE MINISTER

The Honourable Labi Kousoulis  
Minister of Labour and Advanced Education  
5151 Terminal Road, 6th floor  
Halifax, NS B3J 2T8

Dear Minister Kousoulis:

In accordance with Section 15 (1) of the *Fair Registration Practices Act 2008*, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for 2015–16 from the Review Officer for submission to the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

Cara Spittal  
Review Officer  
Fair Registration Practices Act  
Department of Labour and Advanced Education  
2021 Brunswick St.  
Halifax, NS



# FAIR REGISTRATION PRACTICES ACT

The *Fair Registration Practices Act, Bill 211*, received Royal Assent on November 25, 2008 and was proclaimed on December 7, 2009. The Act aims to ensure that regulated professions are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair and focuses on facilitating a better understanding of registration practices in Nova Scotia, for both nationally and internationally trained applicants.

## Mandate of the Act

The *Fair Registration Practices Act* (FRPA; the Act) makes regulatory authorities responsible for carrying out registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair. In Nova Scotia, regulatory authorities (also called regulatory bodies or regulators) set the standards and regulate the activities for an occupation(s). Occupations can be regulated directly by government or self-regulated by an external organization (i.e. an organization with delegated authority by government).

FRPA applies to regulatory bodies in Nova Scotia (NS), covering 59 occupations and 69 designated trades.

## Review Officer

The Act allows the Review Officer to:

- assess the registration practices of the regulators and agencies as set out in Schedules A and B of the Act;
- set guidelines for the content and format of the regulatory body's reports;
- receive and assess the reports;
- work with the regulatory bodies to identify the changes necessary to comply with the Act;
- make recommendations to the regulatory body regarding their legislation and any necessary additions or adjustments required to meet the requirements of the Act;
- make recommendations to a minister of the Crown responsible for a regulating body where legislation or regulations need to be amended or revoked;
- issue compliance orders, where necessary; and
- provide information and advice on matters respecting the Act and regulations.

The Act requires the Review Officer to:

- provide regulators with information and advice to help them meet their obligations under the Act;
- establish guidelines and assist the regulators to prepare the required reports;
- review registration practices of regulators for compliance with the Act;
- make recommendations and work directly with the regulators;
- act as a resource for government departments and other stakeholders;
- submit an annual report to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education on the implementation and effectiveness of the Act; and
- provide any information and reports as required by the Minister.

## Regulatory Body

To meet the requirements under the Act, the regulating body must make publicly available clear and understandable information about:

- registration requirements and assessment criteria;
- length of time the registration process takes;
- applicant supports;
- required fees;
- acceptable alternative documentation; and
- internal review processes.

All regulating bodies must:

- respond to inquiries from applicants in a reasonable time;
- provide written confirmation within a reasonable time whether registration is granted or not granted;
- provide written decision when registration is not granted, which include the reasons for the decision;
- provide information regarding measures or programs that may assist the applicant to obtain registration in the future, where practical;
- provide applicants who are not granted registration information regarding the regulatory body's internal review and access to information processes; and
- ensure the people hearing the appeals are independent decision-makers and that they have had appropriate training.

## Implementing Fair-access Legislation in Nova Scotia

The FRPA Review Process was developed to ensure that Nova Scotia regulatory bodies are in compliance with the Act. The principles of procedural fairness, objectivity, impartiality and transparency which underlie fair-access legislation in Nova Scotia articulate a vision for government and key stakeholders to act to improve international qualification assessment and recognition systems in the province.

Recently, the Nova Scotia government has been vocal about the need to attract immigrants who can integrate into the local labour market and help solve demographic challenges faced by the region, which has an aging population<sup>1</sup>. In 2015 and early 2016, the province lobbied the federal government for an increase in the allocation for the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and was granted an additional 300 immigration nominations for its two new express entry streams, nearly doubling the province's total nomination allocation for 2015<sup>2</sup>.

Because of changes to the NSNP and recent influx of Syrian refugees, the population of the province has grown significantly. According to recent statistics from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the admission of permanent residents to Nova Scotia has increased by 63% from the previous year<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, the total of 3,418 newcomers who arrived in the province between January and June of this year is already slightly more than the 3,403 who arrived in Nova Scotia in all of 2015, a previous record year<sup>4</sup>.

1 | Third Session of the 62nd General Assembly of the Nova Scotia Legislature Speech from the Throne, October 13, 2016.

2 | Nova Scotia Shows Other Provinces the Way after Latest Immigration Allocation Increase," CIC News: Canada Immigration Newsletter, March 22, 2016.

3 | Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Permanent Residents as of March 31, 2016.

4 | "Immigration at 10-Year High," Nova Scotia Office of Immigration Press Release, September 14, 2015: [novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20160914003](http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20160914003).

Population growth is part of the Nova Scotia government's overall vision to grow the economy. Recent data shows that 70% of newcomers to Nova Scotia in 2015–2016 arrived under economic categories—men and women who obtained high levels of education and training (Bachelor's degree or above) before arriving in Canada<sup>5</sup>. Non-recognition of foreign credentials has been identified as the prevailing problem impacting immigrant economic performance. As a result, the promotion of fair-access principles has become ever more important in Nova Scotia and across Canada<sup>6</sup>.

A key component of Nova Scotia's strategy to attract and retain internationally trained and educated immigrants is the Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA). The Act reflects government's commitment to ensuring that applicants to regulated professions and trades who are educated outside of Nova Scotia have access to registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair. The FRPA Review Office's continuous improvement approach to compliance with the Act enables it to work with regulatory bodies to monitor emerging issues, identify improvements that are meaningful and achievable and highlight best practices that can be shared with other regulatory bodies to provide constructive examples of how improvements can be made. The Review Office conducts education and outreach activities with regulatory bodies on their fair-access obligations and advises them as they build capacity to tackle the complex challenge of international qualification recognition (IQR).

Nova Scotia works both provincially, through the Review Office, and nationally to support the recognition of the experience and education of people trained outside of Canada. This work is guided by a national framework called the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications*. The Foreign Qualification Recognition Working Group (FQRWG) is a federal, provincial and territorial (F/P/T) working group established under the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) to guide and support implementation of the Framework. The Framework helps improve IQR processes across Canada for internationally trained professionals.

In 2015-2016, Nova Scotia took on the provincial Co-chair and Secretariat role of the Foreign Qualification Recognition Working Group (FQRWG). This work has resulted in further connectivity in IQR at the national level; for example, Nova Scotia regulators participated in the FQRWG Monitoring and Evaluation survey for the target occupations. The FRPA Review Officer also completed the Monitoring and Evaluation survey for fairness commissioners. The data from these surveys will generate baseline information that can be used to measure progress and shed light on the challenges and successes of IQR systems. Going forward, the Review Office will continue to work with federal-provincial-territorial working groups to harmonize pan-Canadian data collection with fairness data collection.

Now more than ever, Nova Scotia is committed to developing a flexible and responsible learning recognition system to harness the diverse skills and strengths that newcomers bring to the province<sup>7</sup>. The implementation of fair-access legislation in Nova Scotia transforms immigrant outcomes by increasing accessibility to credential assessment for international graduates and improving the credential recognition process to ensure that they can work to their fullest potential and help grow the economy.

## FRPA Review Findings

Nova Scotia regulatory bodies submit data through the FRPA Review Process. With this data, the FRPA Review Office can track regulatory bodies' registration practices over time, follow trends and identify areas for improvement. Annual data submission also allows regulatory bodies to meet their reporting obligations under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and the *Pan Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Credentials*. The FRPA Review Officer uses the data to inform IQR Program Funding decisions and support the analysis included in the FRPA Annual Report.

5 | Yoko Yoshida (Dalhousie University), Howard Ramos (Dalhousie University), Gerry Mills (ISANS), Nabihah Atallah (ISANS), *Who are Recent Immigrants and what are their Economic Activities? An Analysis of Socio-demographic Profiles and Economic Activities Across Immigration Categories*, Pathways to Prosperity: Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada, December 2015.

6 | "Survival to Success: Transforming Immigrant Outcomes," *Report from the Panel on Employment Challenges of New Canadians*, Employment and Social Development Canada, 2015.

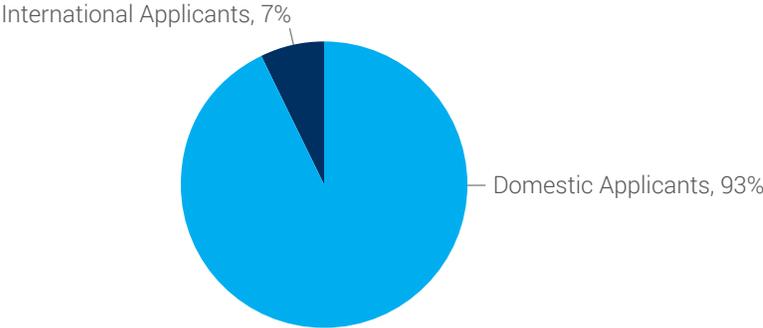
7 | Michael Grant, *Brain Gain 2015. The State of Canada's Learning Recognition System*, The Conference Board of Canada, 2016.

Registration data collected by the Review Office from Nova Scotia regulatory bodies in 2015 identified three core areas for regulatory improvement with respect to fair-access:

- 1. low licensure rates of internationally educated applicants;
- 2. complex and confusing processes; and
- 3. systemic barriers (i.e. international credential recognition; access to original documentation; proficiency in English; difficulty obtaining Canadian experience).

Per registration data collected from regulators in 2015, internationally educated professionals (IEPs) represented 7% of all applicants who applied for licensure in Nova Scotia, including domestically educated applicants and those classified as transfers under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT).

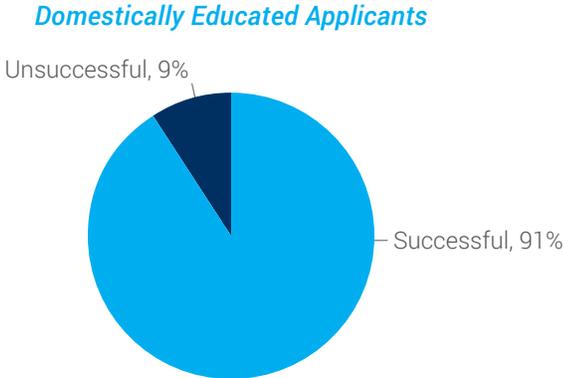
## Distribution of Applicants, 2015



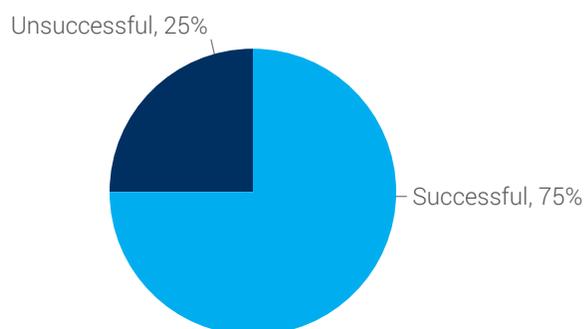
Although small relative to domestically educated and AIT ‘transfer’ applicants, the percentage of IEPs seeking learning recognition will grow as Nova Scotia expands its immigration capacity.

## Licensure Outcomes, 2015

In 2015, low licensure outcomes for IEPs in Nova Scotia, relative to domestic applicants, highlight the problems of fair-access to regulated trades and occupations.



### Internationally Educated Applicants



Based on available information from regulators, while 91% of domestically educated applicants obtained license to practice in the fields in which they were trained and educated, fewer than 75% of IEPs gained licensure.

## Cost of Licensure

Full licensing costs for IEPs vary by profession and the circumstances of the applicant. The table below provides fee information collected from Nova Scotia regulators for 2015, indicating that the average cost for an international applicant is 7% higher than costs incurred by applicants who are educated domestically.

Applicant Registration or Certification Costs	Range	Average
Nova Scotia Qualified	\$0–4600	\$470.71
Other Costs	\$0–2400	\$148.78
Internationally Qualified	\$0–2800	\$477.04
Other Costs	\$0–2000	\$245.05
AIT Qualified	\$0–2800	\$410.07
Other Costs	\$0–2000	\$90.93

While it takes additional time for regulatory bodies to assess the qualifications of international applicants, it should be noted that these numbers do not include additional costs incurred by IEPs to obtain: third party credential assessment and verification; original documentation; translated; language proficiency testing; criminal record checks; exam preparation courses; examinations; and gap training.

## Timelines to Full Licensure

In addition to the often prohibitive cost of obtaining licensure in Nova Scotia, IEPs often experience long assessment processes. Based on information collected from regulators in 2015, the figure below represents the average timeline from application to the Nova Scotia regulator to full licensure for domestically educated and internationally educated applicants.

### *Domestically Educated Applicants*



### *Internationally Educated Applicants*



### *AIT Applicants*



Data indicates that for 35% of internationally educated applicants, it took up to 12 months or more to obtain licensure, compared with 27% of domestically educated and 21% of Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) applicants.

## Qualitative Data Findings

In addition to requesting quantitative data from Nova Scotia regulators on an annual basis, the Review Office audits the registration practices of regulated profession and trades through the collection and analysis of qualitative data.

FRPA Review Office findings in 2015–2016 indicate that specific barriers to licensure include:

- verification and assessment of credentials;
- acquiring original documentation;
- demonstrating language proficiency;
- identifying and participating in gap training;
- accessing and passing qualifying exams; and
- meeting Canadian work experience requirements.

## Supporting Continuous Improvement

The FRPA Review Office's continuous improvement philosophy enables Nova Scotia regulatory bodies to set meaningful and achievable goals for improving registration practices. The objective of the FRPA Review Process is to support continuous improvement with compliance guidelines that offer a benchmark against which registration processes are measured. During the review, a benchmark is established for each regulatory body. Following the review process, the benchmark informs the regulator's Action Plan and highlights areas of improvement in registration practices. Action plans may include the following tasks or activities:

- improve website by enhancing navigation, providing well-defined pathways to licensure, steps in the registration process, translation, including relevant links, etc.;
- develop (and publish on website) a table or flowchart which includes information on response time, fees and documents required at each step of the application process;
- develop a policy (requirements for registration) on communicating fee structure, timelines and steps in registration process;
- develop an internal procedures manual which includes: a policy on accommodation for applicants with physical or mental disabilities; a formal process for providing written decisions and access to records; information about the internal review process; and Agreement in Trade (AIT) provisions;
- document process of appeals for unsuccessful applicants;
- improve transparency of timelines to respond to applicants; and
- create an internal policy document which includes examples of alternative information that will be accepted if original documents cannot be obtained.

The Review Office supports Nova Scotia regulators in meeting their fair-access obligations by conducting education and outreach activities. It also advises and influences regulators to continuously improve their registration practices, monitor emerging issues, identify improvements and creates opportunities to share best practices.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW AND 2016–2017 INITIATIVES

In 2015–2016, the FRPA Review Office's strategy for continuous improvement of registration practices continued to evolve in alignment with the principles of procedural fairness, objectivity, impartiality and transparency. Highlights from 2015–2016 include:

- the appointment of new FRPA Review Officer;
- collection of qualitative and quantitative data;
- launch of 5 FRPA Reviews;
- update of FRPA Review schedule;
- ongoing development of compliance order policies and procedures;
- conception of scoping document for FRPA/IQR Program Evaluation;
- organization of education and outreach and activities for Nova Scotia regulatory bodies; and
- facilitation of collaboration and outreach activities at the local and national level.

Refer to Table 1 (page 10) for the key deliverables that were identified in the 2014–2015 Annual Report.

**Table 1: Key 2015–2016 deliverables and status**

<b>Commitment</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Actions/Comments</b>
FRPA Reviews	5 reviews ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of Professional Engineers Nova Scotia</li> <li>• Nova Scotia College of Pharmacy</li> <li>• Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapy</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Association of Dental Technicians</li> </ul>
	6 reviews scheduled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers</li> <li>• Nova Scotia College of Medical Laboratory Technologists</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Association of Architects</li> <li>• Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists</li> <li>• Nova Scotia Society of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists of Nova Scotia</li> </ul>
FRPA Review Schedule	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The FRPA Review Schedule was updated and made available to regulatory bodies.</li> </ul>
Annual Data	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 51 questionnaires submitted</li> <li>• 2 in progress</li> <li>• 28 have not been submitted</li> </ul>
Complete phase 4 of the online data collection tool development (data export and manipulation)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procured external IT expertise</li> <li>• Initiation and planning stages complete</li> </ul>
Compliance Order Policy and Procedures	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Department of Justice and Senior Corporate Policy Analyst</li> </ul>
FRPA Policies and Procedural Manual	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual includes role of Review Officer, regulatory body contacts, process guides, reporting requirements and kick-off meeting package</li> </ul>
Develop Statement of work for Phase I FRPA legislative review and program evaluation to be implemented in 2017–2018	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scoping document developed</li> </ul>
Organize regulator training and workshops	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRPA Breakfast meeting held Wednesday, 9 March</li> <li>• Professional development opportunities booked for fall/winter/spring.</li> </ul>

### ***FRPA Reviews***

Although the FRPA Review Office aimed to complete 11 FRPA Reviews in 2015–2016, the process was delayed until the appointment of a new FRPA Review Officer in January, 2016. In early spring 2016, 5 FRPA Reviews were launched. Due to technical issues encountered with the FRPA data tool, the review process was again delayed and is on track to be completed by spring 2017.

### ***FRPA Review Schedule***

The FRPA Review schedule is updated annually and communicated to Nova Scotia regulatory bodies to inform planning and budgetary decisions and ensure full transparency. The upcoming 2016–2017 FRPA Review schedule will reflect delays encountered in the previous fiscal year.

### ***Annual Data***

In 2015–2016, 51 regulatory bodies submitted Annual Data Questionnaires to the FRPA Review Office. Because 30 questionnaires have yet to be submitted, data collection for 2015–2016 is ongoing. The FRPA Review Office has followed up with Nova Scotia regulators on their responsibility to review and report on registration practices as per Sections 7 and 16 of the Act.

### ***FRPA Data Collection Tool***

In 2016, an evaluation of the interface and usability of the FRPA Data Collection Tool was conducted by the FRPA Review Office. Nova Scotia regulatory bodies were asked for input on design improvements that should be made. External IT expertise was procured in 2016 to update and provide support for the database and improve user experience. Work on FRPA database is ongoing.

### ***FRPA Policies and Procedures Manual***

The development of the FRPA Policies and Procedures Manual is ongoing. The FRPA workplan for 2016–2017 will continue this work.

### ***FRPA Legislative Review and Program Evaluation***

Production of a Statement of Work for a legislative review of the FRPA and the processes, policies and programs that support its implementation began, in consultation with the Business Expertise Unit at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, in 2016. Legislative review of the Act will be conducted, with support from the Department of Justice, Senior Corporate Policy Analysts and the FRPA Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to inform decision-making and ensure stakeholder buy-in.

The goal of the evaluation is to examine program implementation, measure outcomes and impacts and craft findings and recommendations that are credible, supportable and can be incorporated into LAE's application for Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP) funding in 2017–2018. FCRP funding is provided by the Government of Canada to governments and organizations to support foreign credential recognition in Canada and helps implement the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications. Evaluation data will be collected on the following program elements:

- procedural effectiveness of the Act (i.e. as a tool for improving the transparency, objectivity, impartiality, fairness and timeliness of review processes);
- departmental capacity to meet requirements under the Act;
- FRPA review policies and processes;
- compliance policies and procedures;
- quantitative and qualitative data collection;
- capacity-building work across government and with key stakeholders;
- outreach and professional development activities; and
- IQR program design and implementation.

### **Regulator Training and Workshops**

Planning for Regulator Training and Workshops is ongoing. Training for regulators is also provided during FRPA Breakfast Meetings (see below).

## **Engaging and Supporting Nova Scotia Regulatory Bodies**

### **Ad Hoc Advisory Work Group**

In 2008, a working group was established to oversee the drafting of the FRPA. The FRPA Ad Hoc Advisory Group consists of members from various regulatory bodies (small and large) and government departments, including the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration and the Department of Health and Wellness.

The advisory group is a vehicle for communication, advice and support between Nova Scotia regulatory bodies and government. The advisory group meets on a regular basis to review and discuss material related to the implementation of FRPA and discuss decisions and policies that directly impact regulatory bodies. Upon consultation with stakeholders at the FRPA Breakfast Meeting held on March 9, 2016, the advisory group membership list was updated. A meeting of the advisory group is planned for to discuss the Statement of Work for the FRPA/IQR program evaluation and legislative review, the development of Compliance Order Policies and Procedures and the provision of professional development opportunities to regulatory bodies.

### **FRPA Breakfast Meetings**

FRPA Breakfast Meetings provide a forum for keeping regulators up-to-date on developments in the field of IQR, showcasing best practices and workshops and training opportunities. The meetings also offer regulatory bodies a space for networking and sharing experiences and expertise.

In 2015–2016, three FRPA Breakfast Meetings were organized for Nova Scotia regulators. Topics of discussion and presentations included:

- promising practices and issues faced by regulatory bodies;
- IQR Funding Program guidelines;
- FRPA Ad Hoc Advisory Group, membership renewal;
- professional development activities for regulators;
- progress on the implementation of Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade and the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications; and
- current and potential uses of competency-based systems and recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the registration process.

### **FRPA Newsletter**

The purpose of the FRPA Newsletter is to provide general FRPA updates, as well as reminders of upcoming FRPA Breakfast Meetings, current issues, training and conferences. In 2015–2016, five issues (Issues 17–21) of the FRPA Newsletter were distributed. The newsletter is sent to regulatory bodies via e-mail and is available online at the following web address:

[novascotia.ca/lae/RplLabourMobility/FRPResourceslinks.asp](http://novascotia.ca/lae/RplLabourMobility/FRPResourceslinks.asp)

## National Collaboration

### *Registration Oversight Forum*

December 2013 marked the inaugural meeting of the FRPA Review Officer and Fairness Commissioners of Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. The purpose of the meeting was to share experiences, identify key common issues and collaborate on the development of strategies to influence the policies and practices of regulatory bodies and maximize access to resources and expertise. The Registration Oversight Forum now meets annually to evaluate impact across jurisdictions, pinpoint areas for improvement and discuss strategies to achieve transparent, objective, impartial and fair registration practices.

In spring 2015, the FRPA Review Officer submitted a proposal on behalf of the Registration Oversight Forum to deliver a plenary address at the CNAR Conference in Toronto in 2016, entitled 'The Champions of Fairness Ride Again.' The session will provide the unique perspectives of each jurisdiction and engage the audience in a lively discussion about fair-access to the regulated professions and trades. Session participants will learn the different approaches and mandates of the commissioners and review officer in promoting fairness in qualifications assessments and registration, how the four provinces share information and further recommendations for action in each jurisdiction and at the national level.

## Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade

Nova Scotia has worked in collaboration with Nova Scotia regulatory bodies to implement Chapter 7 (the labour mobility chapter) of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT). Nova Scotia is also part of the Labour Mobility Coordinating Group (LMCG) which represents federal, provincial and territorial governments and is a working group of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) that implements Chapter 7. The AIT provides mechanisms for both parties of the agreement (i.e. provincial, federal and territorial governments) and individuals to launch complaints when it is felt the obligations of Chapter 7 are not being met. In 2015–2016, there were no Dispute Resolution Panel decisions needed related to Chapter 7 of the AIT. Regulatory bodies and workers can find more information on Chapter 7 on the Labour Mobility Coordinating Group website: [flmm-lmcg.org](http://flmm-lmcg.org).

### *Exceptions to Labour Mobility*

Chapter 7 of the AIT allows governments to approve exceptions to labour mobility where material differences in skill, knowledge and abilities exist between jurisdictions. Each exception goes through a rigorous assessment process prior to being approved by the Province of Nova Scotia through Cabinet. While exceptions are limited, the posting of an exception is a key function of Chapter 7, promoting transparency about where additional training/examination may be required.

Exceptions to labour mobility must be based on one of the following legitimate objectives:

- public security and safety;
- public order;
- protection of human, animal or plant life, or health;
- protection of the environment;
- consumer protection;
- protection of the health, safety, and well-being of workers;
- provision of adequate social and health services to all its geographic regions; and
- programs for disadvantaged groups.

Exceptions are not permanent. Each jurisdiction's list of exceptions may increase or decrease as changes to occupational standards occur and is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant. Copies of Nova Scotia's exceptions can be found on the websites of both the Nova Scotia government and the LMCG.

## International Qualifications Recognition (IQR)

Nova Scotia has an integrated approach to IQR involves the close alignment of the goals of the FRPA Review Office with the IQR Funding Program and the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment & Recognition of International Credentials* (Framework). In 2009, Nova Scotia joined the federal government and other provinces and territories in endorsing the Framework.

### ***IQR Funding Initiatives, 2015–2016***

Nova Scotia signed a contribution agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), from 2015–2018 inclusive, to facilitate the improvement of international qualification recognition processes in the province, the implementation of FRPA and provide support for the province's multi-stakeholder work groups (explained below). With the available federal funding, the province created the IQR Funding Program to support local projects and initiatives. Priority was given to projects that focus on concrete interventions to increase access among skilled immigrant workers to the Nova Scotian labour market and to projects related to FRPA and Framework obligations. Projects funded in the 2015–2016 fiscal year include:

- Multi-stakeholder Work Group Initiative;
- Internationally Educated Dental (IED) & Pharmacy Graduates (IPG) Bridging Program;
- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) & College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia (CLPNNS) Pre-arrival Project;
- Jurisprudence Handbook for Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs); and
- Internationally Educated Engineering (IEE) Competency Worksite-Based Performance Assessment.

### ***Multi-Stakeholder Work Groups***

The multi-stakeholder work group model is unique to Nova Scotia and has been recognized nationally as a best practice to address IQR issues. The model was developed by the Nova Scotia Government in collaboration with the Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) with the understanding that IQR challenges are not owned by regulatory bodies alone and sustainable change requires all key stakeholders at the table. The profession-specific work groups aim to ensure fair, transparent and equitable pathways to licensure and to develop sustainable programs to help newcomers become qualified and integrated into the provincial workforce in their chosen fields. The initiative supports the goals of the FRPA, as well as those of the Framework.

There are currently twelve multi-stakeholder work groups covering eighteen regulated occupations with two additional groups to launch in 2016–2017 (Respiratory Therapists and Accountants/Financial Professionals):

- Architects;
- Construction Electricians (Skilled Trade);
- Dentists, Dental Hygienists, Dental Assistants, Dental Technologists, and Denturists;
- Dieticians;
- Engineers and Engineering Technologists;
- Lawyers;
- Medical Laboratory Technologists;
- Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians;
- Physicians;
- Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses;
- Social Workers; and
- Teachers.

Meetings bring key stakeholders to the table on a quarterly basis and are held in occupation-specific locations whenever possible.

Stakeholders vary amongst professions but generally include:

- regulatory authorities;
- professional associations;
- educational institutions;
- immigrant-serving organizations;
- representatives of internationally educated professionals;
- employers and employer organizations;
- unions;
- sector councils;
- government departments (the FRPA Review Officer and Labour Mobility Coordinator sit at each table; Department of Health & Wellness and Nova Scotia Office of Immigration is represented at all the healthcare tables); and
- representatives from national regulatory or professional associations.

Members of each multi-stakeholder work group report back to their organizations, but the group itself is not responsible to one entity. Every member is there because they share some responsibility for addressing IQR and benefit from membership. As a group matures and trust increases, a collective vision develops and the resulting synergy leads to partnership initiatives and creative collaboration. The basic functions of each work group are to:

- provide a forum for information sharing;
- review and confirm pathways to licensure;
- develop new pathways or routes to licensure;
- identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers;
- make systemic and process changes;
- identify critical issues, engage in informed dialogue (problem-solve);
- identify and pursue opportunities for partnership;
- develop collaborative programs and supports;
- act in an advisory capacity for bridging and other profession-specific programs;
- liaise with national or regional IQR-related organizations; and
- sustain the momentum for change;



# APPENDIX A

## Regulators Subject to the Act

### *Schedule A*

Association of Interior Designers of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology
Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors	Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors
Association of Professional Engineers of the Province of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists
Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians
Board of Registration of Embalmers and Funeral Directors	Nova Scotia College of Medical Laboratory Technologists
Certified General Accountants Association of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Optometrists
College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists
College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Dental Hygienists' Association
Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Dental Technicians Association
Denturist Licensing Board	Nova Scotia Dietetic Association
Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists
Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission
Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Registered Barbers Association
Nova Scotia Association of Architects	Nova Scotia Registered Music Teachers Association
Nova Scotia Association of Medical Radiation Technologists	Nova Scotia Securities Commission
Nova Scotia Association of Real Estate Appraisers	Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association
Nova Scotia Association of Social Workers	Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Barristers' Society	Public Accountants Board of the Province of Nova Scotia

### *Schedule B*

Minister of Education	Minister of Health and Wellness
Minister of Environment	Minister of Natural Resources
Minister of Finance	Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations





