
2019 Annual Report

Fair Registration Practices Act

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Fair Registration Practices Act
2019 Annual Report
Department of Labour and Advanced Education
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Table of Contents

Letter to the Minister.....	3
Executive Summary	4
Fair Access to the Workforce in Nova Scotia	5
The Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA)	6
Labour Mobility.....	7
International Qualification Recognition	7
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).....	8
Data Findings, 2019	9
Nova Scotian Applicants.....	10
Inter-Provincial Applicants	11
Internationally Educated Applicants	12
Barriers to Licensure for International Applicants.....	13
Success Rates and Processing Times	14
Internal Reviews/Appeals	15
Costs	16
2019 Reviews	17
Supporting Continuous Improvement.....	19
Administration of the Act.....	20
Compliance Policies and Procedures.....	20
Template Policies	20
Data-Gathering Mechanisms	20
Legislative Review and Program Evaluation.....	21
Outreach and Capacity Building Activities	23
FRPA Advisory Committee	23
FRPA Breakfast Meetings.....	23
FRPA Newsletter	24
Registration Oversight Forum and CNAR.....	24
Looking Ahead.....	25
FRPA Review Reports	25
FRPA Process Review Project.....	25
Capacity-Building Events.....	26
Appendix A – Nova Scotia’s Regulating Bodies	27
Schedule A	27
Schedule B	28
Appendix B – Regulating Bodies that Submitted Annual Data	29
Schedule A	29
Schedule B	30
Appendix C - Nova Scotia’s Occupations by Sector	31

Letter to the Minister

The Honourable Labi Kousoulis
Minister of Labour and Advanced Education
3rd Floor, 1505 Barrington Street, Halifax, NS B3L 3K5

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 2019 from the Review Officer for submission to the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,

Patricia Mertins
Review Officer
Fair Registration Practices Act
Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Executive Summary

Regulated professions and trades have a direct impact on the health, safety and quality of life in Nova Scotia. Whether services relate to health, engineering, teaching, crane operation or other disciplines, it is in the public interest to ensure access to the occupation by practitioners who meet the entry-to-practice requirements in order to maintain occupational standards.

Nova Scotia's fair access law, the *Fair Registration Practices Act* (FRPA), outlines the broad general duty of regulating bodies to have transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair registration practices to facilitate equitable pathways for applicants seeking licensure in the regulated professions and trades. In Nova Scotia, fair access legislation is part of a larger system that is aligned with government's policy objectives with respect to self-regulating professions and trades, and interjurisdictional and international labour mobility and recognition. The FRPA contributes to a growing and diverse labour force and supports an inclusive economy where people of all backgrounds can engage in meaningful work opportunities.

The integrated approach to fair access to the workforce is showing some positive results as demonstrated by the 2019 FRPA data collected from Nova Scotia's regulating bodies. The data shows a higher distribution of international applicants than in previous years. This may be attributed to the broad goals of the FRPA as well as the Recognition of Prior Learning and International Qualification Recognition programs which focus on removing barriers and creating new pathways to licensure.

Fair access and learning recognition challenges are complex, particularly for the internationally educated applicant. The 2019 data shows that these applications took longer to process, and there were substantially more in progress at the end of the year, than domestic applications. Despite these on-going challenges there is evidence of an increase in the number of internationally educated registrants over 2018 with 15.2% more registered in regulated professions and trades in 2019.

A highlight of 2019 was the completion of the review of the FRPA legislation and program evaluation. The final report concluded that the FRPA has positively contributed to establishing structure, creating awareness and facilitating collaboration around fair access legislation, thereby supporting a consistent and fair approach to registration. Implementation efforts aim to continuously improve and adapt to facilitate a coordinated and collaborative regulatory environment in Nova Scotia. As such, the FRPA is expected to continue to contribute to provincial priorities linked to attracting and retaining skilled professionals to Nova Scotia as a means of supporting economic growth and social wellbeing.

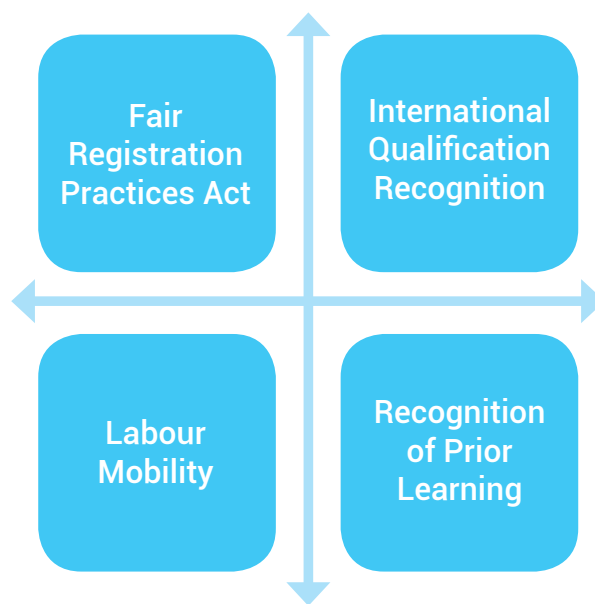
The following pages summarize the fair access approach, documents data findings and key activities of 2019, and concludes with a look ahead to 2020.

Fair Access to the Workforce in Nova Scotia

The FRPA supports fair access to the workforce in Nova Scotia. It 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.

Responsibility for the implementation of the FRPA lies within the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Labour Mobility Unit of the Adult Education Division (AED) of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE). Together the programs of the RPL and Labour Mobility Unit play an important role in helping to attract and retain a skilled workforce for Nova Scotia.

Figure 1 – An Integrated Approach to Building a Skilled Workforce



The Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA)

In its ten-year history, the FRPA has helped ensure that workers who apply for licensure in regulated professions are aware of the registration requirements they need to meet, and that applicants are treated consistently and fairly throughout the registration process. The FRPA applies to three streams of applicants: Nova Scotian, interprovincial, and international.

In Nova Scotia, regulatory authorities (also called regulating bodies or regulators) set the standards and regulate the activities for their 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). The Act applies to 49 regulating bodies in Nova Scotia, covering 58 regulated occupations and 21 compulsory trades. Under the Act, regulating bodies have a duty to carry out registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair. The FRPA describes a regulating body's requirements to:

- provide clear and understandable information about registration requirements and assessment criteria, the length of time the registration process takes, and fees;
- respond to inquiries from applicants in a reasonable time;
- provide written confirmation within a reasonable time whether registration is granted or not;
- provide a written decision when registration is not granted that includes 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 with information regarding the regulating body's internal review and access to information procedures;
- ensure that the internal review decision-makers are independent from the original decision and have received appropriate training on conducting an internal review; and
- report biennially on their registration practices.

The FRPA Review Officer has powers and duties under the FRPA to:

- provide information and advice to regulating bodies to assist them in meeting their obligations under the Act (Section 14(1)(a)(b));
- assess the registration practices of regulating bodies based on their obligations under the Act (Section 14(1)(c));
- provide information and advice to government agencies, community agencies, colleges and universities, departments of Government, and the Minister respecting matters under the Act (Section 14(1)(d) and related to its administration;
- establish guidelines to help regulating bodies prepare reports to meet their reporting requirements;
- make recommendations to regulating bodies regarding their legislation and regulations with respect to registration practices;
- make recommendations to a minister of the Crown responsible for the applicable regulating body where legislation or regulations need to be amended or revoked;
- issue compliance orders, where necessary (Section 17); and
- submit an annual report to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education on the implementation and effectiveness of the Act.

The FRPA review process was designed to carry out the obligations under the legislation. It fosters a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement, while ensuring regulating bodies adhere to their own standards with the objective of public protection and safety.

Labour Mobility

Nova Scotia is better able to compete in a global economy when the provincial workforce follows nationally harmonized practices and when professionals and tradespersons in regulated occupations can move freely across provincial boundaries. Section 3 of the FRPA recognizes the commitments the Nova Scotia Government made under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) between the Government of Canada and the governments of all provinces and territories of Canada to facilitate the free movement of persons, goods, services and investments throughout Canada.

The FRPA Review Officer works closely with Nova Scotia's Labour Mobility Coordinator to develop coordinated outreach and learning development activities, to streamline data collection efforts, and to provide consistent messaging on transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair registration practices that are consistent with workers' mobility rights under Chapter 7 of the CFTA.

In late 2018, the Nova Scotia *Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act* (CFTAIA) came into force. The CFTAIA formalizes Nova Scotian regulating bodies' obligation to align their practices with the CFTA and provides new mechanisms for Government to facilitate compliance.

International Qualification Recognition

International Qualification Recognition (IQR) is the process of having credentials, competencies, and experience assessed for the purpose of employment. The IQR program, coordinated by the Labour Mobility Coordinator within the RPL and Labour Mobility Unit of LAE, ensures that our labour market is fair and competitive, and that internationally educated individuals can use their education, skills, and work experience to benefit themselves and contribute to the prosperity of Nova Scotia.

Despite their high levels of educational attainment, the proportion of employed individuals working in their field of study varies significantly between Canadian-born workers and internationally educated individuals when it comes to regulated professions. Internationally educated individuals face a variety of challenges gaining employment in their regulated occupation such as, not having prior international learning and experience recognized, not being able to access customized bridge or gap training including Canadian work placements, mentorships and internships, limited connections in the job market, and a lack of English and workplace specific language skills.

The IQR program helps to address barriers to licensure in Nova Scotia. Organizations can apply for funding through the IQR program to develop tools, programs, and services that help internationally educated individuals get their qualifications assessed and recognized so they can work in their chosen fields. Bridging Programs give candidates who are trained outside Canada the skills and knowledge they need to work and complement the competencies and qualifications they have already earned.

Another IQR initiative is the Multi-stakeholder Work Groups which takes a collaborative approach to making systematic change and developing innovative programming to improve the recognition and integration of internationally educated professionals. To date, 13 profession-specific work groups collaborate to identify and remove artificial barriers to help newcomers become qualified and integrated into the provincial labour market in their chosen fields. The FRPA Review Officer participates in these work groups to encourage continuous improvement and the removal of barriers in each profession's registration process.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learning credentials matter more than ever for people to obtain optimal employment in the fields in which they are trained and educated. When people have unrecognized learning, they are much more likely to be unemployed, or work in jobs beneath their skill level.¹

RPL recognizes life-long learning by acknowledging the unrecognized skills and competencies a person gains during their life. LAE has adopted the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy Framework within the RPL and Labour Mobility Unit. Under this Framework the RPL Program funds initiatives that develop RPL services, programs and tools in Nova Scotia, including competency-based assessments. Acknowledging this learning can allow a person to find work and move ahead in an occupation more quickly and fast-track training at post-secondary institutions. To foster RPL initiatives in Nova Scotia, workplaces, educational institutions, professional associations, and regulating bodies are encouraged to apply for funding to use and develop these tools, programs or services. Overall, RPL benefits employers, communities and the individual by attaching them to the workforce faster.

Together, FRPA, Labour Mobility, IQR and RPL are innovative programs that helps ensure that Nova Scotia's labour market is fair and competitive, assists individuals to become licensed and to practice in their chosen fields, provides opportunities for individuals to gain employment faster, and evaluates competencies for entry to practice. This multi-dimensional approach helps ensure fair access to the workforce in Nova Scotia.

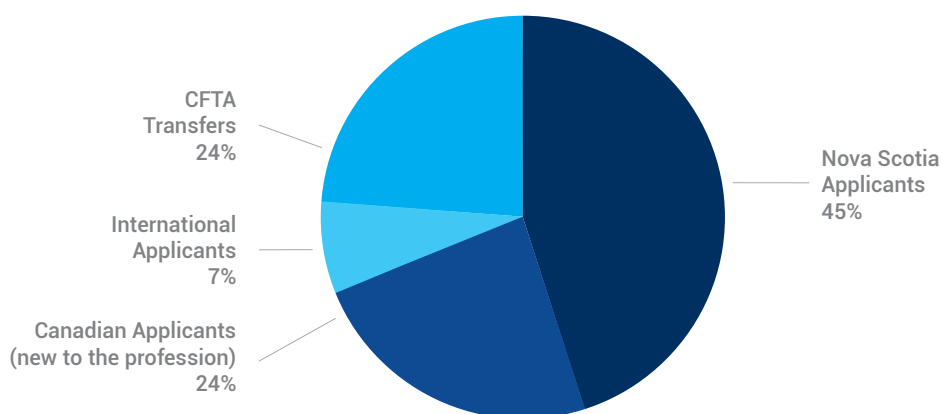
¹ Grant, Michael. Brain Gain 2015: *The State of Canada's Learning Recognition System*. Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 2016.

Data Findings, 2019

Each year, Nova Scotia regulating bodies submit quantitative data about their applicants and registration processes for the previous calendar year. With this data, the Review Officer can track regulating bodies' registration practices over time, follow trends, and identify areas for improvement. The data collected through the 2019 quantitative survey represents over 135,000 registered members across 77 regulated occupations and trades.²

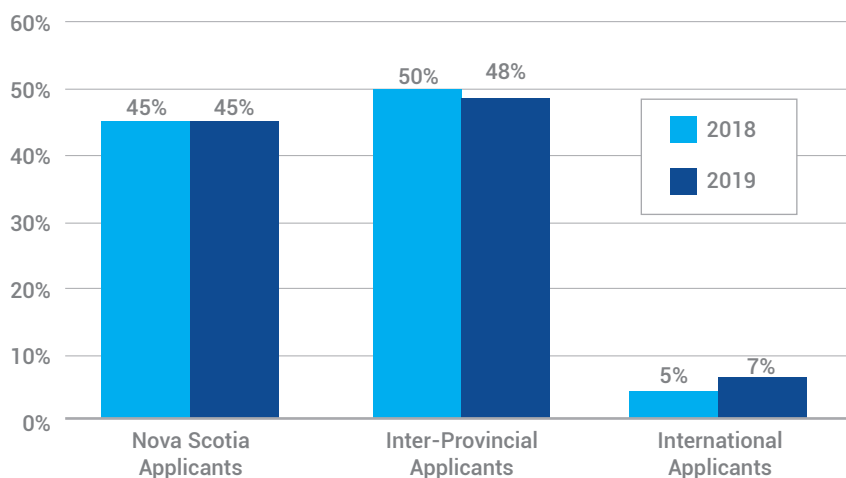
In 2019, regulating bodies reported almost 15,000 new applications to the regulated occupations and trades in Nova Scotia. Of the 2019 applicants, approximately 69% were new to the profession (educated in Nova Scotia and in Canada), 24% of applicants were already licensed in another Canadian jurisdiction and transferring under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), and 7% were Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs) (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Distribution of Applicants by Applicant Stream in 2019³



Compared to 2018 the distribution of NS applicants has decreased by 6% while the number of inter-provincial (Canadian applicants new to the profession and CFTA applicants) and international applicants has increased by 5% and 2% respectively. (Figure 3).

Figure 3 - Comparison of distribution of applicant streams in 2018 and 2019

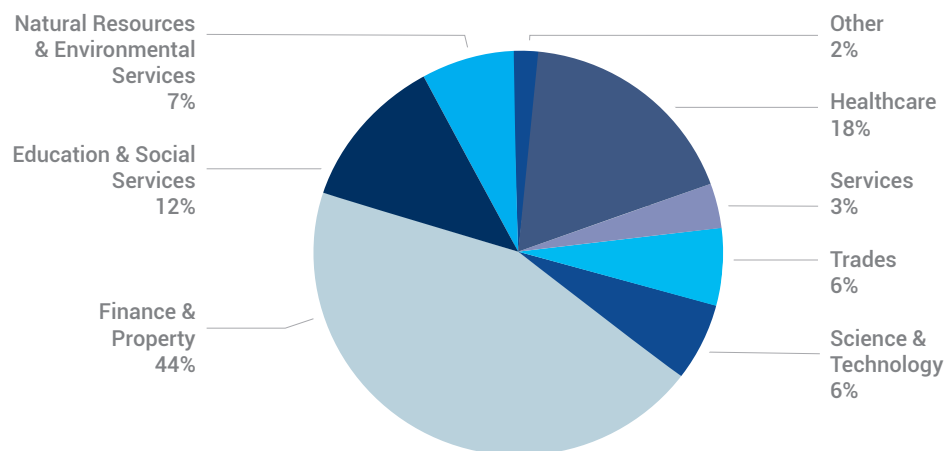


² For a list of the regulatory bodies that fulfilled annual data submission requirements per the FRPA for the 2019 calendar year, see Appendix B.

³ Some regulatory bodies were not able to report on all applicant streams. Those regulatory bodies were excluded from this chart to maintain accuracy of data.

As seen below, the finance and property sector accounts for nearly half of the overall applications received in 2019 (Figure 4).

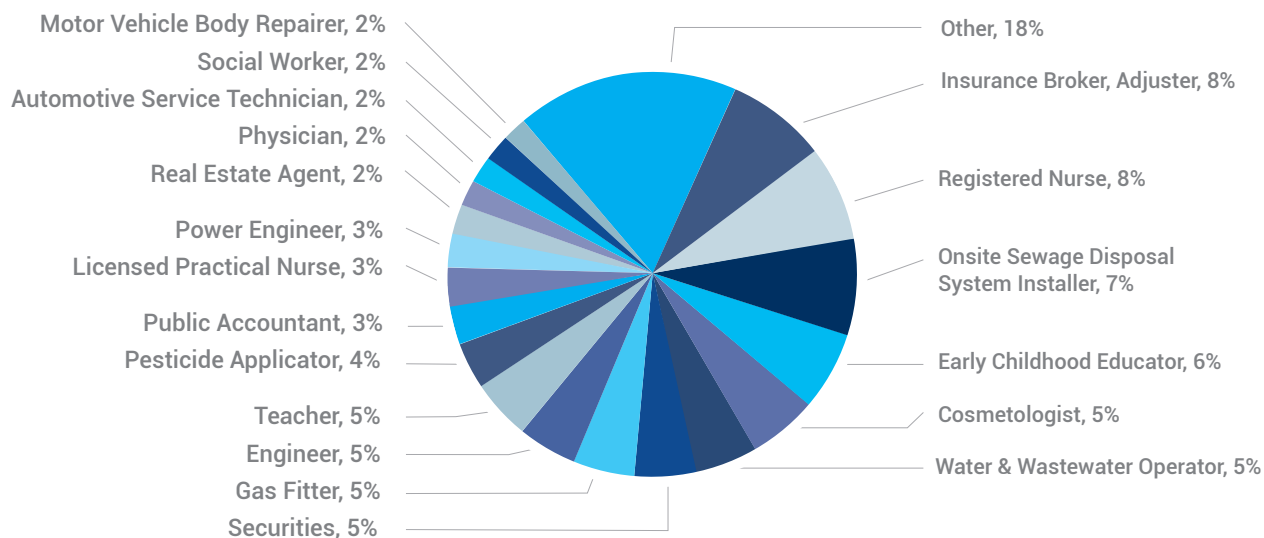
Figure 4 – Distribution of All Applicants by Sector 2019⁴



Nova Scotian Applicants

Regulating bodies reported 6,662 successful applicants educated in Nova Scotia in 2019. Of these registrants, Insurance Broker Adjusters and Registered Nurses represented the largest proportion with 8% each, followed closely by Onsite Sewage Disposal System Installers with 7%. (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Occupation distribution for Nova Scotia registrants in 2019⁵



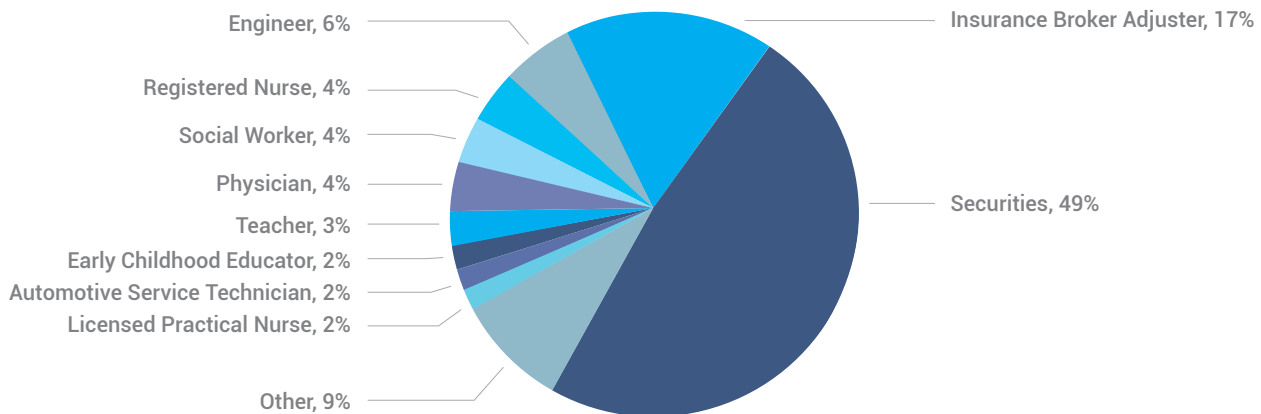
⁴ For a list of the occupations that comprise these sectors, see Appendix C.

⁵ There are 49 occupations in the 'Other' category, each representing less than 2% of the distribution of Nova Scotia registrants. 'Other' includes occupations from all sectors, for example: Chartered Professional Accountants; Pharmacists; Plumbers; Interior Designers; Geoscientists; Music Teachers; and Land Surveyors.

Inter-Provincial Applicants

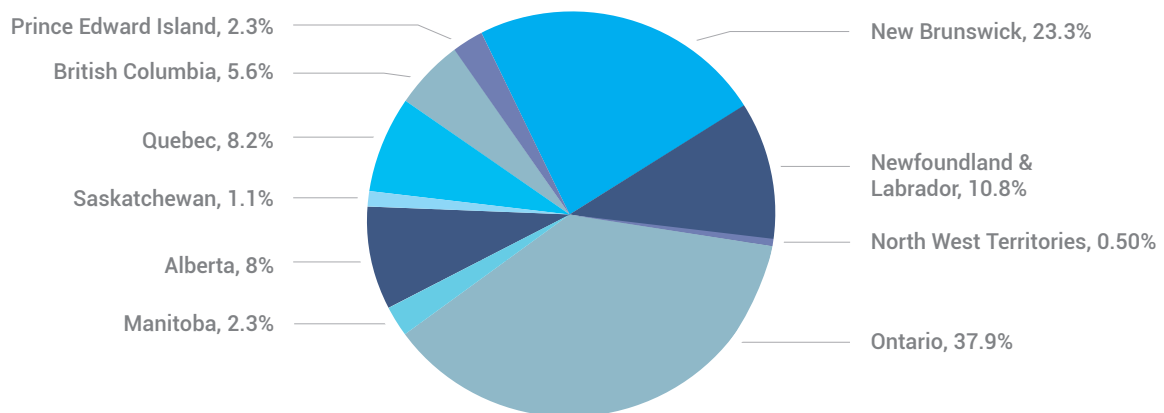
Regulating bodies reported 7,742 successful applicants educated in provinces and territories outside of Nova Scotia (including both new applicants and individuals who were already registered in other Canadian jurisdictions). Of these registrants the largest proportion became registered in Securities and as Insurance Broker Adjusters with 49% and 17% of registrations respectively (Figure 6).

Figure 6 – Occupation distribution for inter-provincial registrants in 2019⁶



Inter-provincial applicants came primarily from Ontario, Quebec and other Atlantic provinces (Figure 7). Historically the percentages can vary quite significantly from year to year, but the primary source regions remain consistent.

Figure 7 – Source provinces for inter-provincial applicants in 2019

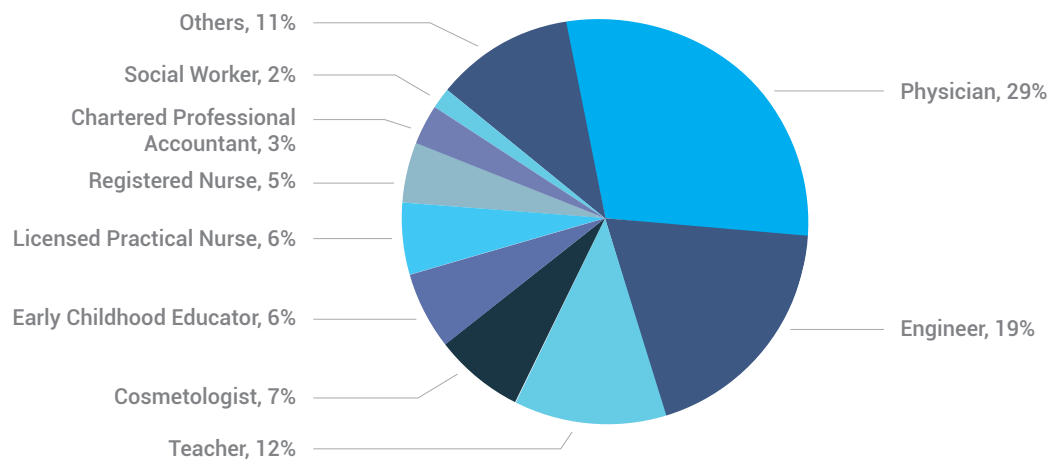


⁶ There are 68 occupations in the 'Other' category, each representing less than 2% of the distribution for inter-provincial registrants. 'Other' includes occupations from all sectors, for example: Paramedics; Cosmetologists; Tower Crane Operators; Agrologists; Real Estate Appraisers; Music Teachers; and Foresters.

Internationally Educated Applicants

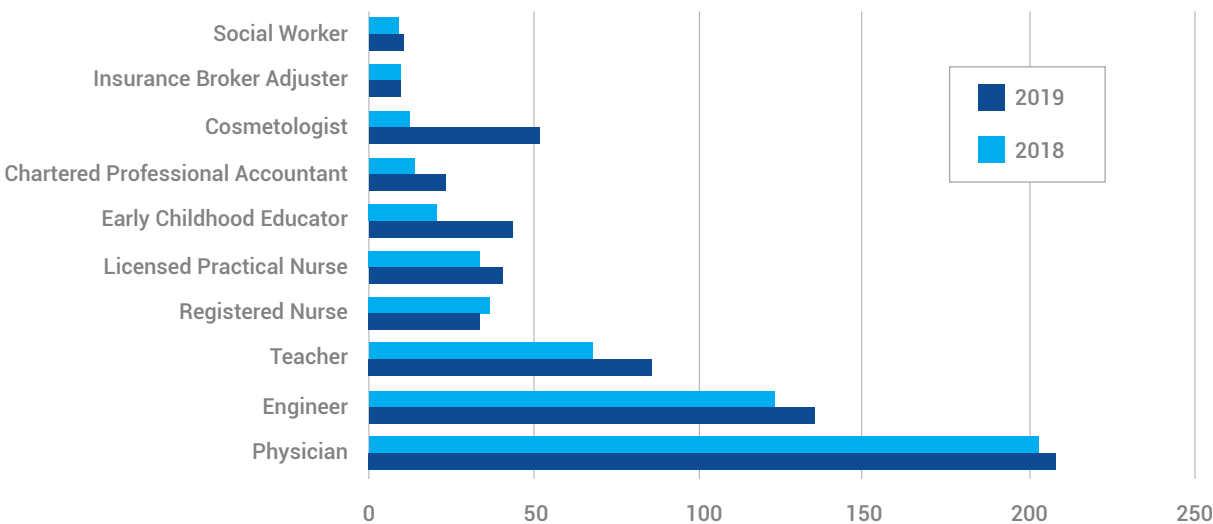
Regulating bodies reported 711 successful applicants educated internationally. Of these registrants, the majority were registered as physicians and engineers with 29% and 19% of registrations respectively (Figure 8).

Figure 8 – Occupation distribution for internationally educated registrants in 2019



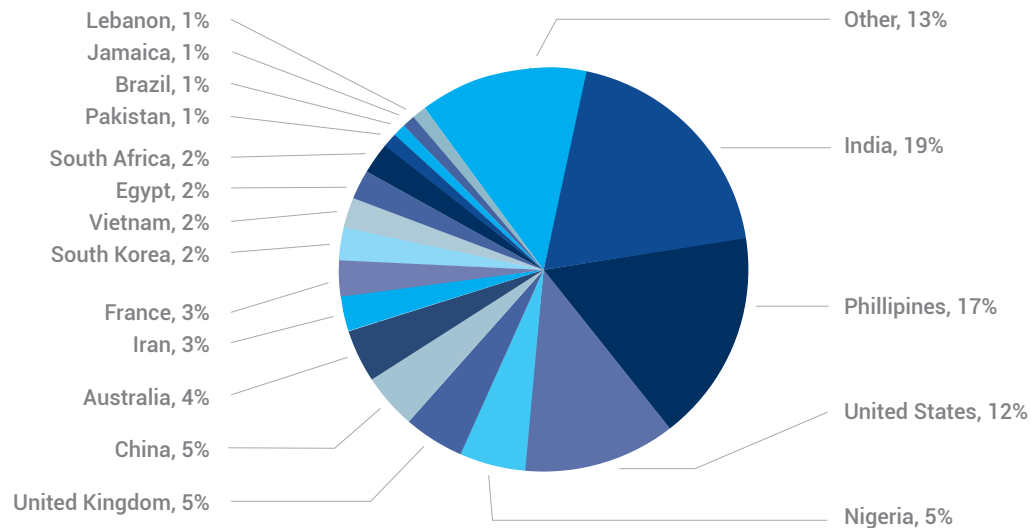
The most common professions for internationally educated applicants were largely consistent between 2018 and 2019 while Cosmetologists and Early Childhood Educators experienced the most significant increases (Figure 9).

Figure 9 – Occupation distribution for internationally educated registrants in 2018 and 2019



International applicants came from 57 different countries; almost 50% of international applicants came from the Philippines, India, and the United States (Figure 10).

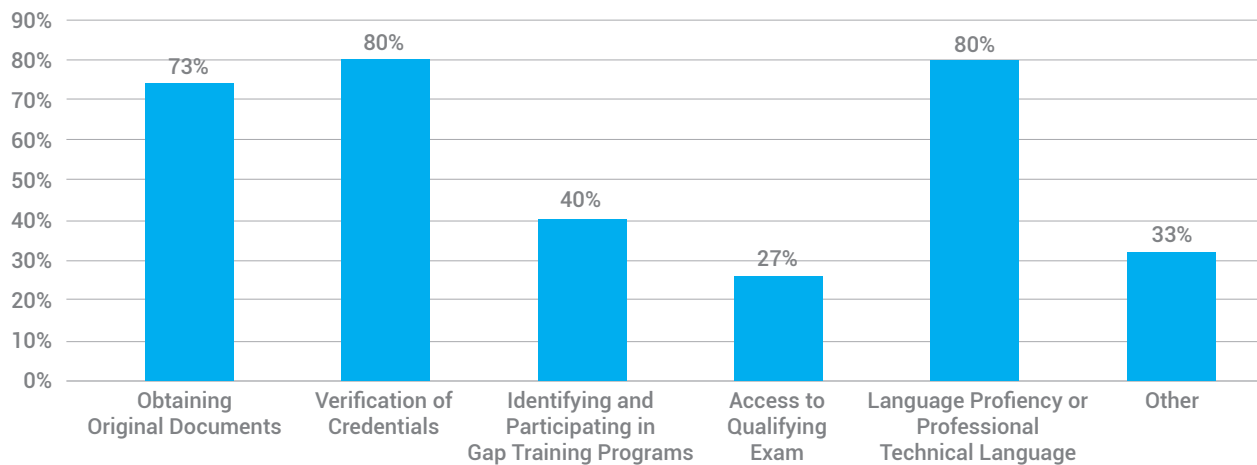
Figure 10 – Source countries for internationally educated applicants in 2019



Barriers to Licensure for International Applicants

As part of the FRPA review process, Nova Scotia regulators submit a qualitative survey which includes provision of information about the barriers commonly faced by each organization's internationally educated applicants. Of the 15 regulating bodies whose registration practices were reviewed in 2019, the majority reported verification of credentials and language proficiency as the most common barriers to licensure for internationally educated applicants, followed closely by challenges associated with obtaining original documents (Figure 11). The top barriers remain consistent over time. In 2018 language proficiency was the top barrier, followed by challenges associated with obtaining original documents and verification of credentials.

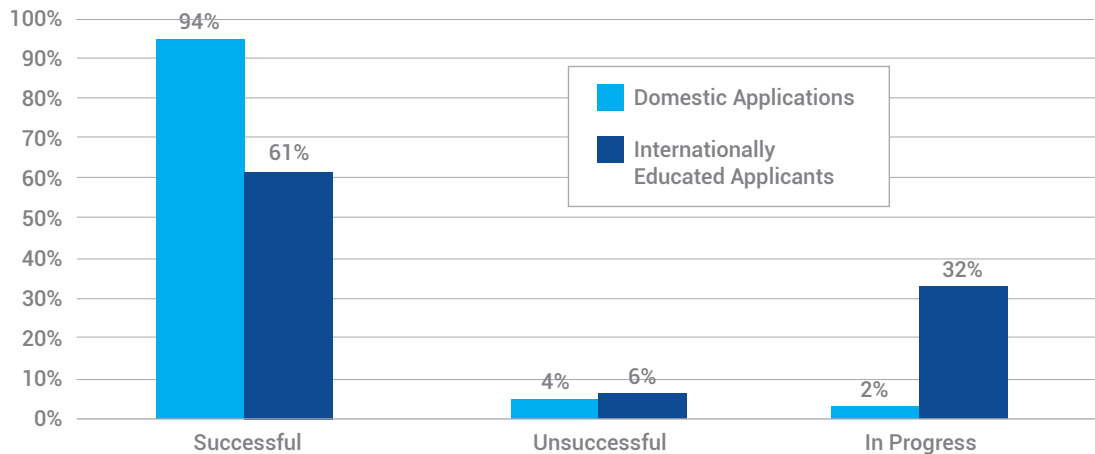
Figure 11 – Common barriers faced by internationally educated applicants, as reported by regulating bodies



Success rates and processing times

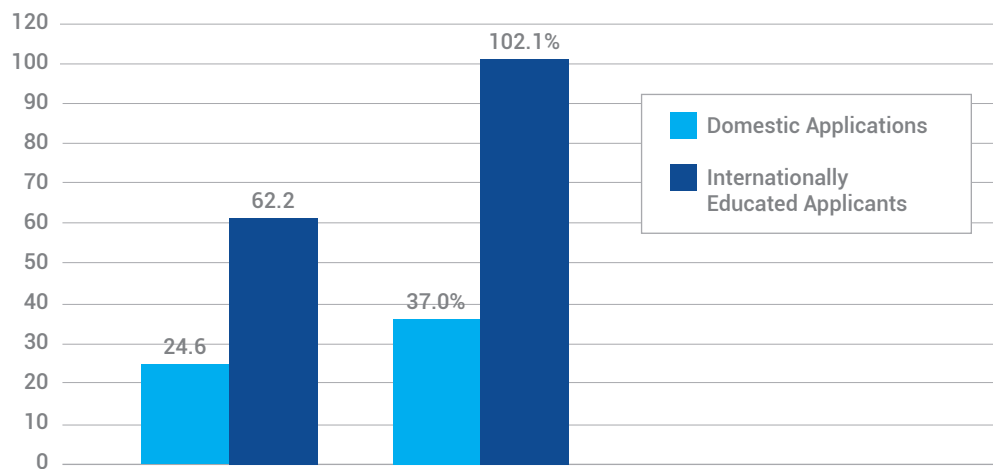
Assessing international credentials and registering internationally educated applicants is challenging for many regulating bodies. Data collected from 2019 shows that internationally educated applicants experience lower registration success rates than their domestic counterparts, with substantially more internationally educated applicants having applications still in progress at the end of 2019 (Figure 12).

Figure 12 – Registration success rates for domestic and international applicants in 2019



Application processing time is the total time from the initial application submission, including third-party assessment where applicable, up until the registration decision is issued. Data reported shows that internationally educated applicants faced longer application processing times, with an average application processing time almost three times that of any of the domestically educated applicant streams (Figure 13). This figure also shows that in 2019 both domestic and international applications, on average, took a longer time to process than in 2018. This finding could be due to a change in the way the data was collected in 2019.

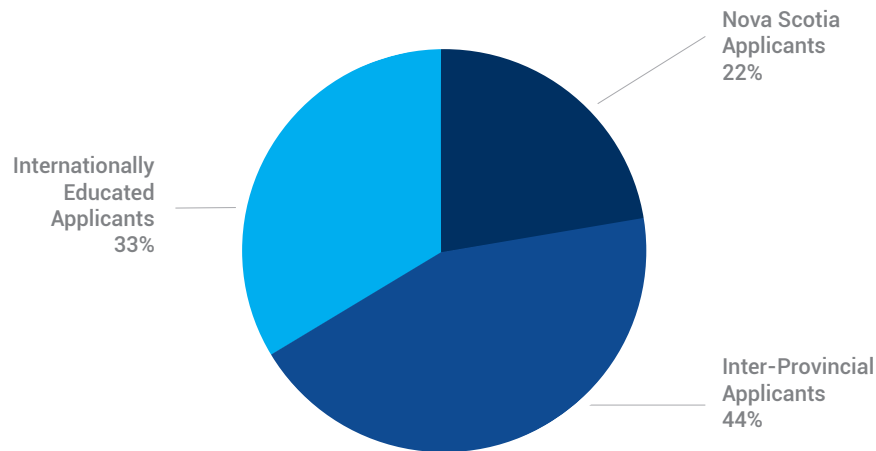
Figure 13 – Average Processing Time for Applications (in days)



Internal Reviews/Appeals

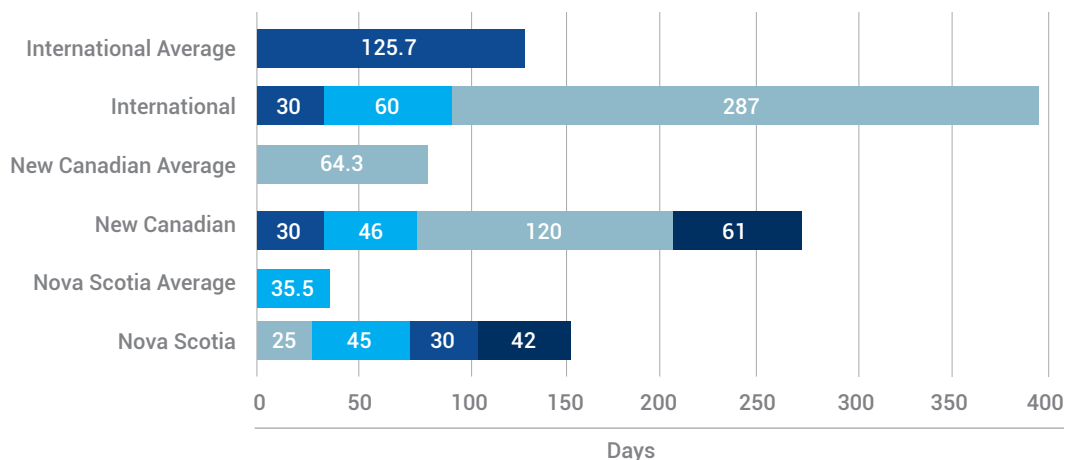
The FRPA requires that where an applicant is not granted registration with a regulating body, that the regulating body provide an opportunity for the applicant to appeal that decision. Only 18 appeals of registration decisions were performed by regulating bodies in 2019. Most of these appeals were raised by inter-provincial (new, not CFTA) applicants (Figure 14).

Figure 14 – Percentage of Internal Appeals by Type of Applicant



Processing time for an internal review refers to the total time for all stages of the internal review process, from the time the applicant makes a request for review of the decision until the time when the final decision is communicated to the applicant. Data reported regarding the 18 internal reviews shows that, on average, processing time for internationally educated applicants took almost twice as long as Canadian applicants new to the profession and more than three times as long as Nova Scotia applicants (Figure 15).

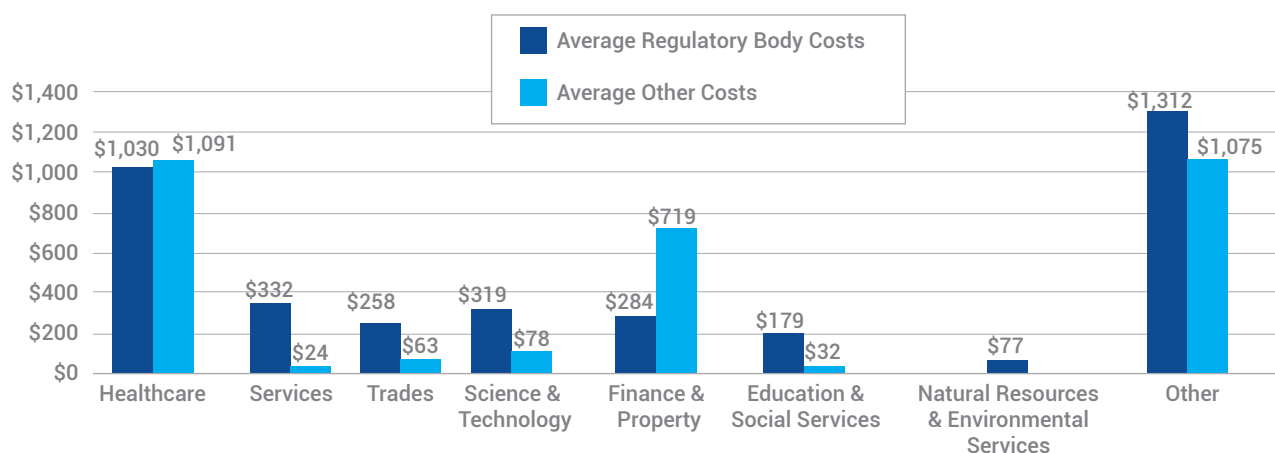
Figure 15 - Length of Internal Review Process (in Days)



Costs

The FRPA collects data on costs that applicants incur during the registration process. These include both costs paid to the regulating body as well as other costs that may be incurred as a part of the registration process (including third-party assessors, national regulating bodies, and bridging programs)⁷. Registration costs vary widely between individual occupations and occupational sectors. In 2019, the healthcare sector had the highest average registration costs. In both the healthcare and finance and property sectors, the majority of the total registration cost was paid to third-party organizations (Figure 16).

Figure 16 – Average costs associated with registration by occupational sector



⁷ Identified as average other costs in Figure 16

2019 Reviews

As per Section 16(2) of the FRPA, every regulating body is required to review their registration practices in accordance with criteria in Sub-Section (3) and file a report on the results of the review with the Review Officer.

Since the launch of the review report process in 2013, 42 regulating bodies have completed an initial review of their registration practices. The FRPA directs the Review Officer to determine the date for the first review report to be filed by a regulating body. The Review Officer is to take into consideration the particular circumstances of the regulating body, including the capacity of the regulating body to meet its obligations under the Act, as well as the degree of public risk involved and the registration year of the regulating body. To date, ten regulating bodies have yet to complete an initial review of their registration practices (Table 3).

In 2019 several smaller regulating bodies were reviewed. Some of these regulating bodies have limited financial and staff resources, and face challenges in fulfilling the requirements of the FRPA review process. As a result, these regulating bodies required more support and extended timelines to complete their FRPA reviews. In addition, two of these regulating bodies were challenged to the extent that an interim follow-up will take place in 2020. Despite these challenges, 13 initial review reports were completed in 2019. The following table provides a list of the regulating bodies whose registration practices have been reviewed in 2019.

Table 1 – Initial FRPA Reviews Complete

Year	Reviews Performed
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia• College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia• Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association• Nova Scotia Dental Technology Association• Nova Scotia Registered Barbers Association• Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists• Denturist Licensing Board of Nova Scotia• Nova Scotia Association of Medical Radiation Technologists• Nova Scotia Board of Registration of Embalmers and Funeral Directors• Office of the Superintendent of Insurance• Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists• Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors• Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia

In addition to the initial reviews, two progress reviews were completed in 2019. Progress review reports show progress on action items agreed to in the previous review, gather information on current registration practices as per Section 16(3) and, identify a new plan for continuous improvement. The following table lists progress reviews completed in 2019.

Table 2 – Progress Reviews Complete

Year	Progress Reviews Performed
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists • Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists

The Initial Review and Progress Reports are published online at <https://frpa.novascotia.ca/public-reports>

Table 3 – Initial FRPA Reviews Not Complete

Regulating Body	Occupation
Department of Labour & Advanced Education: Apprenticeship Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto Body & Collision Technician • Automotive Service Technician • Service Centre Technician • Boilermaker • Bricklayer • Construction Electrician • Oil Heat System Technician • Plumber • Refrigeration & A/C Mechanic • Sheet Metal Worker • Sprinkler Fitter • Steamfitter/Pipefitter • Truck & Transport Mechanic • Blaster
Department of Labour & Advanced Education: Technical Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas Fitters • Communications Technician • Crane Operators • Elevator Mechanic • Amusement Device Mechanic • Power Engineers • High Pressure Welder
Service Nova Scotia & Internal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing Aid Salesperson • Mortgage Broker
Department of Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water & Wastewater Operator • Onsite Sewage Disposal System Installer • Pesticide Applicator • Petroleum Storage Tank Installer • Pump Installer • Well digger/driller
Department of Lands & Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber Scalers • Hunting and Fishing Guides
Nova Scotia Association of Real Estate Appraisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Estate Appraiser

Nova Scotia Registered Music Teachers Association	• Music Teacher
Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia	• Professional Planners
College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia	• Paramedics
Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians	• Dispensing Opticians

Supporting Continuous Improvement

The continuous improvement approach to fair access enables Nova Scotia regulating 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, benchmarks are established based on the assessment of each registration practice and denote areas that are not in compliance with the FRPA and/or ways to improve registration practices. Following the review process, the benchmarks inform the regulator's action plan and highlight areas for improvement. 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 the 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 registration decisions, including reasons for unsuccessful applications; a formal process for applicants to access their registration records; information about the internal review process; and Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) provisions;
- document the 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 Officer provides information and advice to regulators to continuously improve their registration practices, monitors emerging issues, identifies improvements, and creates opportunities to share best practices. This continuous improvement philosophy enables regulating bodies to set meaningful and achievable goals for improving registration practices.

Administration of the Act

In 2019 administration of the FRPA focused on continuing to improve the efficiency and transparency of processes and tools used to administer the Act, thereby supporting regulating bodies to meet their obligations under the Act. Notable activities for 2019 included the following.

Compliance Policies and Procedures

A policy was developed and approved for Issuing FRPA Compliance Orders. The policy is intended to standardize a process and support the Review Officer with respect to issuing compliance orders under section 17(1) of the FRPA.

Template Policies

Template policies continue to be developed to assist regulating bodies with the development of procedures that support the delivery of fair registration practices. A template policy on Internal Reviews was added to the growing list of resources for regulators on the FRPA website. <https://frpa.novascotia.ca/resources-regulatory-bodies>

Data-Gathering Mechanisms

The FRPA website (<https://frpa.novascotia.ca/>) is home to two data collection tools, one to collect quantitative data on an annual basis and another to collect qualitative data when a full review of registration practices is initiated. The survey questions were developed based on reporting requirements in Section 16 of the Act. The questions were designed to encourage regulating bodies to reflect on aspects of their registration practices and to provide consistency in the way information is reported. Questions are answered using a password protected web application tool. The web application tool was first used in 2013. The website was developed and is maintained by a third-party provider and hosted on a government site.

The FRPA web application tool is instrumental to the collection of both quantitative and qualitative information on registration practices. It is crucial to have a well-functioning tool to gather the volume of data required on an annual basis. Each year the data is analyzed and ways to improve data collection are identified. The following enhancements to improve efficiency of the web application tool were completed in 2019 to:

- improve user experience for completing the annual data survey;
- add an automatic email notification to alert the regulating body when a survey is due; and
- increase security and accountability by converting to named users.

Additionally, data collection is impacted by the number of respondents to the survey and the interpretation of questions. Follow up with regulating bodies to confirm some of the 2019 data responses, as well as the addition of 'help text' to assist with the interpretation of questions, resulted in a higher level of participation from regulating bodies and more consistent interpretation of the questions than in previous years.

Legislative Review and Program Evaluation

In accordance with section 24 of the Act, the Adult Education Division of LAE initiated a review of the FRPA to determine whether it is fulfilling its intended purpose and being implemented in an efficient and effective manner. Phase II of the legislative review, conducted by Research Nova Scotia, was completed in December 2019.

The final report concluded that the FRPA is fulfilling its intended purpose to improve licensure and registration practices in Nova Scotia. Additionally, the FRPA helps support the achievement of broader government priorities such as attraction and retention of skilled professionals and a collaborative and coordinated system of self-regulation in several ways.

- The FRPA has contributed to an improved regulatory system and has brought procedural fairness, transparency, impartiality, and objectivity into focus for most regulating bodies.
- The FRPA has contributed to a collaborative and coordinated regulatory system by supporting a common approach for regulating bodies to provide fair access to licensure, and by providing opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate on common issues.
- The FRPA sets provincial standards for fairness in registration processes and supports implementation of standards across sectors and on a provincial scale.
- The FRPA has supported labour mobility outcomes and helped stakeholders understand their role and responsibilities regarding labour mobility.

The final report identified several strengths, challenges and recommendations to improve implementation of the FRPA.

Strengths

- The review process is reported to be helpful in identifying gaps in registration practices.
- Activities undertaken to encourage stakeholder engagement have created trust which enables productive working relationships.
- Regular engagement with regulating bodies has led to an informed approach to implementing the FRPA.

Challenges

- Efficiency of FRPA reporting is hampered by redundancy between initial reports and progress reports.
- There is an accumulative effect to meeting the demands of the 2-year review cycle which is not sustainable with the current resources.
- Variation in implementation and interpretation of the FRPA has posed challenges for some regulating bodies to effectively address recommendations in Action Plans.
- Tools available for enforcement are inadequate to address non-compliance.
- Policies, procedures and regulations to support implementation of the Act remain under development.
- Staff changeover requires time for new Review Officers to re-establish relationships with regulating bodies.

Recommendations

- Amend the review cycle to reduce frequency, and streamline reviews for regulating bodies with an established history of compliance.
- Improve efficiency of progress reporting.
- Develop formal definitions and interpretations of FRPA standards and requirements.
- Review data collection tools to improve clarity.
- Develop a comprehensive evaluation rubric.
- Identify and action mechanisms that will better enable enforcement.
- Prioritize development and finalization of policies, processes and regulations.
- Continue taking a continuous improvement approach that enables compliance.
- Prioritize increased engagement with government departments responsible for legislation relevant to regulating bodies.

Outreach and Capacity Building Activities

The Review Officer supports Nova Scotia regulators in meeting their obligations under the Act by engaging in one-on-one consultations and organizing outreach and capacity building activities. Regulating bodies seek the guidance of the Review Officer to provide them with information and advice, as well as to provide them with guidance on how to complete reports on their registration practices in a timely manner. Regulating bodies also appreciate opportunities for collaboration between the regulating body and the government department that holds their legislation, which are facilitated by the Review Officer.

Outreach and capacity building activities provide information and educational opportunities for regulating bodies and are organized by the FRPA Review Officer and AED staff. These more formal opportunities for collaboration and development include the FRPA Advisory Committee, breakfast meetings, newsletters and professional development opportunities as described in the following sections.

FRPA Advisory Committee

The FRPA Advisory Committee is a vehicle for communication, advice and support between Nova Scotia's regulating bodies and Government. The Advisory Committee consists of representatives from a broad spectrum of regulating bodies. Chaired by the Review Officer, the Advisory Committee meets on an 'as needed' basis to identify key issues, review and discuss material related to the implementation of the FRPA, and help inform decisions and/or policy that directly impacts regulating bodies.

In January of 2019 advisory committee members were consulted on the FRPA Legislative Review to get their input on the design and implementation of the evaluation framework for phase two of the project. Advisory committee members were also involved in providing feedback on the development of evaluation questions used to survey stakeholders and applicants as part of the information gathering for the FRPA Legislative Review.

FRPA Breakfast Meetings

FRPA Breakfast Meetings provide a forum for regulating bodies to network, share best practices, and get information on implementation of the FRPA. Additionally, the Breakfast Meetings are a venue through which the integrated approach to promoting fair access to regulated professions can be supported. At each meeting, the FRPA Review Officer provides updates on the review process and administrative matters. In addition, information could be provided from the Labour Mobility Coordinator on the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, the Multi-Stakeholder Work Group Consultant on initiatives arising from the multi-stakeholder work groups, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Coordinator on RPL activities and funding opportunities under the RPL and International Qualification Recognition (IQR) funding programs.

In 2019, four FRPA Breakfast Meetings were organized for Nova Scotia regulators, as follows:

February - Legislative Review of the *Fair Registration Practices Act*

- The Research Nova Scotia evaluation team conducted facilitated roundtable discussions focused on what regulators see as the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improving the FRPA and how it is implemented.

June – Legislative Review of the *Fair Registration Practices Act*

- *What We Heard* – Research Nova Scotia presented feedback from the previous Breakfast Meeting and facilitated small group discussion on the future of the FRPA.

September – Highlights included presentations on:

- Update on the FRPA Legislative Review
- Understanding the Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act
- *Defensible Decision-Making* and *Teach in Nova Scotia* online resource - best practices presented by two regulating bodies

December – Updates on Administration of the FRPA

- Procedural updates
- Changes to the Annual Data Survey

FRPA Newsletter

The purpose of the FRPA Newsletter is to provide general updates, as well as reminders of upcoming FRPA Breakfast Meetings, current issues, training, and conferences. In 2019, the FRPA Newsletter was distributed quarterly. The newsletter is sent to regulating bodies via e-mail and is available online at <https://frpa.novascotia.ca/newsletters>.

Registration Oversight Forum and CNAR

The Review Officer is part of the Registration Oversight Forum (ROF) which is comprised of representatives from other jurisdictions with fairness legislation. This includes Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. The ROF meet face-to-face once a year and by phone conference on an ad hoc basis.

The October 2019 meeting took place in Quebec City and welcomed new representatives from Alberta and British Columbia where fairness legislation had recently been proclaimed. The meeting included an update from each jurisdiction, a presentation on the assessment of competence, and discussion on topics of common concern such as registration data collection and joint position statements.

Nova Scotia's participation on this forum facilitates collaboration on a national level with key learnings that can be adapted regionally. One of the actions of the ROF has been to develop some joint position statements on identified issues that call for fair assessment and registration practice. To date joint position statements have been drafted on the topics of Alternative Documentation, Timely Registration, and Recognizing Work Experience. These statements represent a consensus position among Canada's provincial fairness offices which can be adapted and applied regionally.

The annual ROF takes place in conjunction with the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR) conference. Attendance at this conference is an opportunity for the Review Officer to: understand issues currently faced by regulating bodies; keep abreast of current trends that will impact the future state of self-regulation in NS and in Canada; and better disseminate information to regulating bodies regarding best practices in registration. Representatives from many of the regulating bodies in Nova Scotia attend the CNAR conference as a way to increase their professional knowledge and practice regarding fair registration practices.

Looking Ahead

There are a number of initiatives planned for 2020 which include FRPA initial reviews and progress reports, a FRPA process review, and several outreach and capacity-building events.

FRPA Review Reports

Completion of at least two FRPA Initial Reviews:

- Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
- Nova Scotia Technical Safety

Launch up to 9 FRPA Initial Reviews using revised data collection tools:

Refer to Table 3 for a list of the regulating bodies who have not participated in an initial review of registration practices.

Completion of at least 11 FRPA Progress Reviews:

- Nova Scotia College of Medical Laboratory Technologists
- Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission
- Nova Scotia Dietetic Association
- Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia
- Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia College of Social Workers
- Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology
- Association of Professional Engineers of Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotia Barristers Society
- Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors
- Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists

FRPA Process Review Project

In 2019 the FRPA legislative review and program evaluation was completed. As a next step the Adult Education Division will: create a better process for reporting (i.e. identifying what needs to be reported, how and when); create decision-making rubrics for compliance; create templates that will gather information that can be mapped to legislation in a clear and understandable manner; and identify needs for changes to legislation that will facilitate procedural improvements. To achieve these next steps a FRPA Process Review Project is being conducted within the Skills and Learning Branch. While this project is being conducted internally, regulating bodies will be engaged in the testing and review of the new tools. Deliverables for the project will be provided by June 30, 2020, though the implementation of some pieces, such as the website and publishing of some updated tools may move beyond this timeline. The FRPA review schedule has been paused pending the development of revised processes and tools at which time new reviews will be launched as part of the new phase of implementation. FRPA reviews underway at the end of 2019 will continue to completion using the current tools and processes.

Capacity-Building Events

2020 is expected to be a year of change for the FRPA. New processes, tools and potential amendments to legislation mean that there will be new procedures for everyone to learn. With this in mind, capacity building activities for 2020 will focus on a new implementation phase for the FRPA. Breakfast Meetings topics are planned to include:

- FRPA Legislative Review – Presentation on the Findings;
- Implementation of the FRPA – Presentation on processes, review cycles and tools;
- FRPA Legislation changes (if approved) and Annual Data Collection – Presentation on changes to the legislation. Reviewing the new annual data collection tool, questions, timelines.

In addition, a full day of professional development is being planned with a focus on an in-depth exploration of fairness: What is fairness? An Exploration of the Fair Registration Practices Code – an in-depth look at the key elements.

Appendix A

Nova Scotia's Regulating Bodies

Schedule A⁸

Association of Interior Designers of Nova Scotia
Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors
Association of Professional Engineers
of the Province of Nova Scotia
Association of Professional
Geoscientists of Nova Scotia
Board of Registration of Embalmers
and Funeral Directors
Certified General Accountants
Association of Nova Scotia
College of Occupational
Therapists of Nova Scotia
College of Physicians and Surgeons
of Nova Scotia
Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia
Denturist Licensing Board
Institute of Chartered Accountants
of Nova Scotia
Licensed Professional Planners Association of
Nova Scotia
Midwifery Regulatory Council
of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Association of Architects
Nova Scotia Association
of Medical Radiation Technologists
Nova Scotia Association
of Real Estate Appraisers
Nova Scotia Association
of Social Workers
Nova Scotia Barristers' Society
Nova Scotia Board of
Examiners in Psychology

Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors
Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists
Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians
Nova Scotia College of
Medical Laboratory Technologists
Nova Scotia College of Nursing
Nova Scotia College of Optometrists
Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists
Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists
Nova Scotia Dental Hygienists' Association
Nova Scotia Dental Technicians Association
Nova Scotia Dietetic Association
Nova Scotia Institute of Agrologists
Nova Scotia Real Estate Commission
Nova Scotia Registered Barbers Association
Nova Scotia Registered Music
Teachers Association
Nova Scotia Securities Commission
Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association
Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia
Public Accountants Board
of the Province of Nova Scotia
Registered Professional Foresters
Association of Nova Scotia
Society of Certified Engineering Technicians
and Technologists of Nova Scotia
Society of Management Accountants
of Nova Scotia

⁸ On August 2, 2016, the Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia (CPA Nova Scotia) was officially established with the Chartered Professional Accountants Act and the Public Accountants Act by the Government of Nova Scotia. With the proclamation of the Chartered Professional Accountants Act, all legacy accounting bodies, such as the Certified Management Accountants, Chartered Accountants and Certified General Accountants, cease to exist.

On June 4, 2019, the Nova Scotia College of Nursing was officially established through the proclamation of the Nursing Act by the Government of Nova Scotia. With the proclamation of the Nursing Act, the legacy nursing colleges, the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia and the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia have been dissolved.

On September 1, 2019, the practice of Public Accounting became defined within the Chartered Professional Accountants Act and the Public Accountants Board of the Province of Nova Scotia was dissolved.

Schedule B

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Education Act (Office of Teacher Certification)

Day Care Act (Early Childhood Educator Classification)

Minister of Environment

Environment Act

On-site Sewage Disposal Systems Installer

Pesticide Applicator

Petroleum Storage Tank Installer

Water and Wastewater Operators

Well Digger/Driller

Well Pump Installer

Minister of Finance and Treasury Board

Insurance Act (Insurance Agent; Insurance Adjuster)

Minister of Health and Wellness⁹

Paramedics Act, SNS 2005, c 10 [Repealed]

Minister of Labour and Advanced Education

Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act

Technical Safety Act

Elevators and Lifts Act

Electrical Installation and Inspection Act

Amusement Devices Safety Act

Minister of Lands and Forestry

Wildlife Act (Registered Hunting/Fishing/Master Guides)

Scalers Act (Timber Scaler)

Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

Mortgage Brokers' and Lenders' Registration Act

Direct Sellers' Regulation Act (Hearing Aid Salesperson)

⁹ The College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia was established as a self-regulating body on April 1, 2017 and assumed responsibility for regulating the practice of paramedicine from the Department of Health and Wellness.

Appendix B

Regulating Bodies that Submitted Annual Data

List of Nova Scotia Regulating Bodies that fulfilled annual data submission requirements for the 2019 Calendar Year

Schedule A

Association of Interior Designers of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Counselling Therapists
Association of Nova Scotia Land Surveyors	Nova Scotia College of Dispensing Opticians
Association of Professional Engineers of the Province of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Medical Laboratory Technologists
Association of Professional Geoscientists of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Nursing
Board of Registration of Embalmers and Funeral Directors	Nova Scotia College of Optometrists
Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists
College of Occupational Therapists of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Respiratory Therapists
College of Paramedics of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia College of Social Workers
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Dental Technicians Association
Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Dietetic Association
Denturist Licensing Board 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 Barristers' Society	Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology	Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia College of Chiropractors	Society of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists of Nova Scotia

Schedule B

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development

Office of Teacher Certification
Early Childhood Educator Classification Services

Minister of Environment

Onsite Sewage Disposal System Installer
Pesticide Applicator
Petroleum Storage Tank Installer
Pump Installer
Water and Wastewater Operator
Well Digger/Driller

Minister of Finance and Treasury Board

Minister of Labour and Advanced Education

Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
Technical Safety

Minister of Lands and Forestry

Timber Scalers

Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

Hearing Aid Salesperson
Mortgage Brokers

Appendix C

Nova Scotia's Occupations by Sector

Healthcare

Chiropractors
Counselling Therapist
Dental Assistant
Dental Hygienist
Dental Specialist
Dental Technician or Technologist
Dentist
Denturist
Dietician Nutritionist
Hearing Aid Practitioner
Licensed Practical Nurse
Medical Laboratory Technologist
Medical Radiation Technologist
Midwife
Nurse Practitioner
Occupational Therapist
Optician
Optometrist
Paramedic
Pharmacist
Physician
Physiotherapist
Psychologist
Registered Nurse
Respiratory Therapist

Services

Cosmetologist
Embalmer or Funeral Director
Interior Designer
Registered Barbers

Trades

Automotive Service Technician
Blaster
Boilermaker
Bricklayer
Communications Technician
Construction Electrician
Elevator and Lift Mechanic
Gas Fitter
Mobile Crane Operator
Motor Vehicle Body Repairer
Oil Heat System Technician
Plumber
Power Engineer
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic
Service Station Mechanic
Sprinkler System Installer
Steamfitter Pipefitter
Tower Crane Operator
Truck and Transport Mechanic
Welder

Science & Technology

Agrologist
Engineer
Engineering Technician or Technologist
Geoscientist

Finance & Property

Chartered Professional Accountant
Insurance Broker Adjuster
Mortgage Broker
Public Accountant
Real Estate Agent
Real Estate Appraiser
Securities

Education & Social Services

Early Childhood Educator
Music Teacher
Social Worker
Teacher

**Natural Resources &
Environmental Services**

Land Surveyor
Forester
Timber Scaler
Pesticide Applicator
Petroleum Storage Tank Installer
Onsite Sewage Disposal System Installer
Pump Installer
Water and Wastewater Operator
Well Digger/Driller

Other

Architect
Lawyer
Licensed Professional Planner
Veterinarian

