



Writing Your
**Certificate of
Qualification**
Exam

A Guide for Applicants



Printed on recycled paper

10-116

ISBN 978-1-4435-4039-1 (PDF)

ISBN 978-1-4435-4040-7 (TXT)

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010

Contents

Introduction.....	1
How the Certificate of Qualification Can Benefit You.....	2
What’s Your Situation?	3
Applying to Write the Exam	6
Required Documentation	8
What Next?	13
Preparing to Write the Certificate of Qualification Exam	14
Writing the Exam.....	16
Getting Your Exam Results.....	17
Additional Documents	18
Contact Information.....	19
For More Information	19
Your Personal Information	20

The Certificate of Qualification Exam

How do I get an Ontario Certificate of Qualification in my skilled trade?

- 1 Get an application package** from an apprenticeship office or Employment Ontario.
- 2 Review the requirements** for the Certificate of Qualification in your trade.
- 3** If you want to take the exam, contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to **arrange a meeting.**

What's the meeting for?

- a** To confirm that you are applying in the correct trade
- b** To confirm the requirements and number of hours you need for your trade
- c** To learn more about completing the application and preparing for the exam

To arrange a meeting, contact the Employment Ontario Hotline
1-800-387-5656

What happens next?

- 4 Compile the documentation** you need for your application.
- 5 Complete the application** form.
- 6 Submit your application.**

When will I hear back?

Within 15 business days by phone or mail. If your application is:

- a approved**, you will get an appointment to write the exam.
- b not approved**, you will get an explanation as to why it wasn't.

When do I hear if I passed?

Within 10 business days of writing the exam. If you failed, you must wait at least 15 days from your original exam date to write it again.

Introduction

This guide will help you **apply** to write a Certificate of Qualification exam in your skilled trade. It also offers advice geared to your situation and tells you what to expect on the exam. **Read it carefully.**

In Ontario, you must either be a registered apprentice or hold a valid Certificate of Qualification (also known as a “licence,” “ticket” or “C of Q”) to work in certain skilled trades. There are 21 trades in this category, known as “compulsory” or “restricted”. Examples include plumber, hairstylist, construction electrician and automotive service technician.



For a complete list of trades, go to

www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/employmentontario/training/certification.html

Ontario’s Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities issues the Certificate of Qualification, which confirms that you meet the industry standard for a journeyperson in Ontario. To earn the certificate, you must write the exam for your trade in Ontario or in another Canadian province or territory. Once you have your certificate in a compulsory or restricted trade, it remains valid as long as you pay a renewal fee every three years.

How the Certificate of Qualification Can Benefit You

While the certificate is **necessary** to work in 21 trades, over 100 other trades, known as “voluntary” or “unrestricted”, do not require one.

Examples of these include chef, general carpenter, machinist and industrial millwright. You may still choose to apply for a certificate if you work in voluntary or unrestricted trades, since being certified can mean:

- **a better chance of getting a job in your field.** It proves you have the skills to do the job. In fact, some employers looking for workers in those trades only interview people with a Certificate of Qualification.
- **better chances of promotion or a better job.** Certified journeypersons in voluntary or unrestricted trades are generally in higher demand and better paid than uncertified workers.

What's Your Situation?

You Are Already Certified in Another Canadian Province or Territory

If you have a Red Seal Certificate of Qualification issued by another Canadian province or territory in a compulsory or restricted trade, you may be able to work in Ontario with no further certification. You must keep your certification up to date where it was issued and be able to prove it's valid when you're on a job site.

For compulsory Red Seal construction trades, you'll need an Ontario Certificate of Qualification before you can work in Ontario (known as a "reciprocal" certificate). To get a reciprocal certificate, submit an *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form with a copy of your Red Seal Certificate of Qualification and the \$60 certificate fee to any apprenticeship office. (You don't need any further training, testing or examination.)



For a list of Red Seal trades, go to www.red-seal.ca. To find the apprenticeship office nearest you, see the "**Contact Information**" section at the end of this guide.

If you have a non-Red Seal Certificate of Qualification issued by another Canadian province or territory for a trade listed in the *Ontario Labour Mobility Act*, you may need an Ontario Certificate of Qualification. You can get this matched certificate with no further training, testing or examination by filling out an *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form and submitting it with a copy of your non-Red Seal Certificate of Qualification and the \$60 fee to any ministry apprenticeship office.

You Have Completed Training as a Registered Apprentice in Ontario

If you registered as an apprentice and completed the Ontario apprenticeship training program, you are automatically eligible to write the Certificate of Qualification exam.



For more information, contact your nearest ministry apprenticeship office. See the "**Contact Information**" section at the end of this guide.



You Have Worked in a Skilled Trade but not as a Registered Apprentice

If you did not complete Ontario apprenticeship training but have worked in a skilled trade for a number of years, you may be able to write your trade’s certification exam if you can provide:

- proof that your experience as a skilled worker in your trade is similar to the training an Ontario apprentice receives;
- proof that the length of time you have worked in your trade meets the minimum trade standards set by industry in Ontario.



For information on the requirements of your specific trade, see the “**Contact Information**” section at the end of this guide.



You Are Internationally Trained

If you earned a trade certificate or worked in the trade outside Canada and the trade exists in Ontario, you can follow the same application process described in this guide to see if you qualify to write the exam. You must submit the three documents listed in the “Required Documentation” section that follows and any additional documentation that may help demonstrate your qualifications in the trade.



You Are Self-Employed

If you are self-employed, you must complete and sign the *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form and the *Affirmation of Skills* form to apply to write the certification exam. You should collect documents that will prove you are experienced in your trade. See the “Required Documentation” section.



You Hold a Department of National Defence (DND) Certificate of Military Achievement at the QL5 Level in Certain Trades

If you hold a DND Certificate of Military Achievement at the QL5 level and the rank of Corporal in the certification programs listed below, you can write the Red Seal Certificate of Qualification exam that corresponds to your military certification with no further training:

- Marine Engineering Technician
- Marine Electrician
- Vehicle Technician
- Material Technician
- Refrigeration and Mechanical Technician
- Electrical Distribution Technician
- Plumbing and Heating Technician
- Construction Technician, and
- Cook

To be able to write the certification exam, you must submit the three documents listed in the “Required Documentation” section and include a copy of your Member’s Personnel Record Résumé (MPRR) as evidence of your work experience in place of a letter from your employer.



For further information, contact your nearest ministry apprenticeship office. See the “**Contact Information**” section at the end of this guide.

The “Required Documentation” section explains the different types of documents you must include with your application.

Applying to Write the Exam

1 Get Your Application Package

You can get this package from your nearest apprenticeship office or have one mailed to you through the Employment Ontario Hotline. See the “Contact Information” section at the end of this guide.

The package includes:

- an *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form
- this guide
- an *Affirmation of Skills* form for your trade, and
- the Ontario Apprenticeship Training Standard for your trade.

2 Meet with Ministry Staff

Arrange to meet with ministry staff either in person at one of the ministry's 25 apprenticeship offices or over the phone. At this meeting, staff will:

- confirm that you are applying for certification in the correct trade and have the number of hours needed for your trade, and
- offer guidance on filling out the application form, collecting supporting documents and studying for the exam.

Please note, ministry staff will ensure compliance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

3 Read the Apprenticeship Training Standard for Your Trade

As part of your application to write the exam, you must prove that your experience as a skilled worker in your trade is substantially similar to the training that an Ontario apprentice receives. Review the skill sets described in the training standard to learn what this training is. These are the skills you will be tested on during the certification exam.



Apprenticeship Training Standards are available from your local apprenticeship office.

4 Get Your Documents Together

Your application must include the following three items (see “Required Documentation” section):

- a. a completed and signed *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form
- b. a signed *Affirmation of Skills* form, and
- c. evidence of the hours you worked in your trade and the skills you used.

You may also include as many additional documents as you wish (see the “Additional Documents” section).



Note that ministry staff may contact your references to confirm your work experience and skills. **If they cannot contact any of your references, your application may be rejected.**

5 Submit Your Application

Once you have filled out the *Application for Certificate of Qualification* and *Affirmation of Skills* forms and included all the supporting documentation you have, submit your application in person or by mail to your local apprenticeship office.

Required Documentation

There are three documents that every application must include:

1 **A Completed, Signed *Application for Certificate of Qualification Form***

Ministry staff will return incomplete or unreadable applications, so be sure to print your information very clearly in ink, using block letters.

By signing the *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form, you confirm that:

- you will notify ministry staff of any changes in the information you provide
- you have read and agreed to the terms of the “Notice of Collection of Personal Information and Consent” section of the form, and
- you have read and agreed to the terms of the “Declaration of Truth and Accuracy” section of the form.

2 **A Completed, Signed *Affirmation of Skills Form***

To complete this form:

- Read each skill for each skill set in the Apprenticeship Training Standard to compare what is described against your experience.
- Once you have read through all the skills listed in a skill set, check off that skill set on the *Affirmation of Skills* form to confirm that you have read that section of the training standard.
- When you have read through and checked off all the skill sets in the Apprenticeship Training Standard, sign the form.

3 Evidence of Hours Worked and Skills Used in Your Trade

You must provide evidence (e.g., letters from employer[s] or from unions you belong or belonged to whose membership includes workers in your trade) that your experience in the trade is substantially similar to the training an Ontario apprentice receives. You must also prove that you have been a skilled worker in the trade long enough to meet the industry-approved minimum time requirements indicated on the *Affirmation of Skills* form for your trade.

! Letters of documentation for workers with current or past employers must:

- be dated original documents, in English or French or translated by a professional translator (see “Language of Your Documents” section)
- be signed by a company representative who can confirm the information in the letter and include:
 - the company representative’s name and job title and contact information of a company representative who can confirm the information in the letter
 - the company’s name, address and telephone number
 - the name of each position you held that supports your application
 - the start and end dates for each position
 - the number of hours you worked in each position
 - a detailed description of your job duties for each position, and
 - references for hands-on experience only (i.e., not work as a supervisor or foreman).

Documentation for the self-employed must include:

- a detailed résumé of completed jobs, including names of customers and their contact information, descriptions and locations of the jobs and how long each took to complete
- documents that show the type of work you performed for customers (e.g., contracts, formal quotations for jobs, invoices to customers, invoices from suppliers), and
- your GST/HST account number and/or your Business Number (BN) from the Canada Revenue Agency.

Language of Your Documents

All documents you include must be in either English or French. If any of them is in another language, you must have them translated into one of these two languages and include both the translation and the document in the original language with your application.

Translations must be done by a professional translator (in your home country or in Canada) who is a member of a recognized association of professional translators (e.g., the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario). Translations by anyone else are not acceptable.

Additional documents can help ministry staff better understand your work experience and training as they assess your application. See the “Additional Documents” section at the end of this guide for a list of acceptable documents.



Because the documents you submit as part of your application package will not be returned to you, **do not include any original documents** other than employer letters and other documents written specifically for your application.

If you are self-employed, your additional documentation can include:

- letters of reference from satisfied customers and/or contractors and the names and phone numbers for each reference
- a signed statement from your accountant or lawyer certifying the name of your business, the type of business it is, its location, the date you became self-employed and your role in the business
- documents showing the volume of your business (e.g., income tax returns, financial statements)
- your Workplace Safety and Insurance Board account number, and/or
- evidence of your membership in a business or industry association.

For refugees, refugee claimants and immigrants from war-torn countries:

If you cannot obtain documents that provide evidence of work or experience in your trade, for reasons beyond your control, such as being a refugee, a refugee claimant or having immigrated to Canada from a war-torn country, your application must include:

- a signed and completed *Application for Certificate of Qualification* form
- a signed *Affirmation of Skills* form
- confirmation of your status from Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board or Citizenship and Immigration Canada (whichever applies), and
- a written explanation of why you have no documentation of your trade skills and work experience.

If You Have no Work-related Documentation

Without any documentation to prove your work experience and knowledge of the skills of your trade, ministry staff cannot approve you to write the Certificate of Qualification exam.

If that is your situation, you might be able to find an employer or sponsor who is willing to hire you as an apprentice in your trade. Your previous, undocumented experience and/or training may help you to complete your apprenticeship in much less time than it would take someone with no experience.

If your trade is a compulsory or restricted trade in Ontario, registering as an apprentice allows you to work legally in the trade. When you complete your apprenticeship program, you will be eligible to write the certification exam for your trade.

When to Expect Your Application Results

If your application contains all the required documents and contact information, you will hear by phone or by mail within **15 business days** of the ministry receiving it.



If your application is missing anything needed to conduct a proper assessment, or cannot be assessed within 15 days (for example, your reference is away on vacation), staff will still contact you within 15 business days to let you know what is missing and how to provide it as quickly as possible.

What Next?

Your Application Is Approved

When ministry staff contact you to say your application has been approved, you should:

- pay the \$100 exam fee and make an appointment to write the exam (unless you plan to write the exam in Toronto, where you do not need an appointment)
- ask about accommodation for physical, psychological, learning or language barriers
- be directed to resources to help you prepare for the exam, and
- ask about your eligibility for a Letter of Permission or a Provisional Certificate of Qualification, if your trade has compulsory or restricted certification in Ontario. If you qualify, you can work in your trade for three months while you prepare to write the certification exam.

Your Application Is not Approved

If your application is not approved, you will receive a letter explaining why.

Preparing to Write the Certificate of Qualification Exam

About the Exam

There are 90 to 150 questions; each question has four possible answers and only one is correct.

The certification exam is based on the Apprenticeship Training Standard for the trade, and, for Red Seal trades, on the National Occupational Analysis (NOA). These documents describe what a competent journeyperson is expected to do on the job.

The exam questions test your knowledge and competency related to the tasks in the training standard and NOA:

- ✓ trade terminology and concepts
- ✓ why a task is done, and
- ✓ how a task is done.

Recommended Reading

- **The Apprenticeship Training Standard for your trade**, which you received in your application package, describes the trade's on-the-job performance objectives.
- **Exam counselling sheets for Red Seal trades** (available at www.red-seal.ca; click "Red Seal Examinations" and the name of your trade) and exam plans for non-Red Seal trades (available from your local apprenticeship office) give you an idea of the main subject areas on the certification exam. Beside each main subject area is the percentage of questions on the exam for that subject area.
- **The National Occupation Analysis for each Red Seal trade** is available at www.red-seal.ca

- **Community colleges and other agencies** that deliver the in-school part of apprenticeship training programs often offer trade examination preparation courses. Contact your nearest ministry apprenticeship training office for more information. See the “Contact Information” section at the end of this guide.

If You Need Special Accommodations for Writing the Exam

Translators, Interpreters and Readers

If you have a physical, psychological, learning or language barrier that may make it difficult to read or understand the questions on the exam, you can have a translator, an interpreter or a reader with you during the exam. You must request this assistance with the ministry in advance and will need to find your own translator, interpreter or reader. The ministry must also approve of this person before the exam. Check with the apprenticeship office nearest you to find out how far in advance you must submit this application, as lead times vary from site to site.

Practical Exams

A practical exam can accommodate applicants with physical or other barriers. It allows you to demonstrate that you understand the objectives in the Apprenticeship Training Standard by answering questions orally and performing the tasks in the objectives in front of an examiner rather than answering written questions about them. Requests for practical exams must be made with the ministry and supported by evidence of the barrier.

If you request a practical exam and your request is granted, you are responsible for all costs associated with administering the exam.

Writing the Exam

- There is a \$100 fee to write the certification exam, payable at the time you make an appointment to write the exam.
- There are 25 examination centres across Ontario; these are located in apprenticeship offices.
- You must have an appointment to write the exam in all examination centres except Toronto.
 - Only Toronto offers exams twice a day, Monday to Friday, without appointment. Go to 625 Church St., 1st floor, on the day you wish to write the exam IF YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN APPROVED TO WRITE THE EXAM.
 - If space is available, you can pay the \$100 exam fee and write the exam.
 - To write the morning exam, you must arrive by 8:30 a.m.
 - To write the afternoon exam, you must arrive by 12:30 p.m.
 - If you have made an appointment to write the exam, arrive 30 minutes before the exam time to allow staff to register you for the exam (and process your fee if you have not already paid).
 - You must present one piece of government-issued photo identification (e.g., a valid driver's licence or passport). Health cards are not accepted.
 - Latecomers will not be admitted.
 - You will have four hours to write the exam, unless you have been advised otherwise.
 - Everything you need, including pencils, calculators and code books, will be provided at the exam site. Dictionaries are available for a number of languages. Contact the examination centre before your exam day to confirm that there is a dictionary in the language you need.

Getting Your Exam Results

The ministry will mail your results to you within **10 business days** of the date you wrote the exam.

You need at least 70 per cent on the exam to pass. To protect your privacy, ministry staff will not give out exam results over the phone or in person to you or anyone else.

If You Failed the Exam

You can write it again after waiting at least 15 days. Before you rewrite it, arrange a meeting with ministry staff to discuss your results and how to prepare to write the exam again.

If you fail your third attempt, you cannot write it again until you meet with ministry staff to identify what upgrading or retraining you must complete before writing the exam a fourth time.

Each time you write the exam, the \$100 exam fee applies.

Additional Documents

The following additional documents may be included in your application to write the Certificate of Qualification exam:

- an Apprenticeship Training Standard either fully or partially signed off by a certified journeyperson with whom you have worked (e.g., your current or former employer or a co-worker). The person who signs must clearly indicate:
 - his or her certificate number and the name of the certifying body
 - where the certification is valid and where the certifying body is located, and
 - his or her contact information.
- copies of certificates or other documents that prove successful completion of education, training or workshops related to your trade (original documents will not be returned)
- descriptions of community or volunteer work in which you practised your trade
- samples or photographs of your work (e.g., menus if your trade is chef) or newspaper clippings or magazine articles in which your work is referenced
- copies of published articles or brochures from events at which you spoke regarding your trade, and
- evidence of previous employment (e.g., pay stubs, Records of Employment [ROEs], T4 slips, income tax returns). If you have lost or misplaced these government documents, you can get additional copies through Service Canada (toll-free: 1-800-206-7218; TTY: 1-800-529-3742).

Contact Information

To find the apprenticeship office nearest you, go to www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/threeWays.html or call the Employment Ontario Hotline (toll-free: 1-800-387-5656; TTY: 1-866-768-1157; Toronto: 416-326-5656).

For details on the requirements of your specific trade, call the Employment Ontario Hotline (see above) or go to www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/employmentontario/training/certification.html

For service in a language other than English or French, call the Employment Ontario Hotline and stay on the line, without selecting any of the options. An information counsellor will add an interpreter to the call to help get you the information you need.

For More Information



If you need further information, call the Employment Ontario Hotline or go to the nearest apprenticeship office and talk to ministry staff.

For information about apprenticeship training programs in Ontario, go to www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/apprentices/faq.html or call the Employment Ontario Hotline.

To learn more about the *Ontario Labour Mobility Act*, go to

www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmobility/faq.html or
www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_09o24_e.htm

You can review any Ontario legislation and regulations on the government's e-laws site: www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/navigation?file=home&lang=en

Your Personal Information

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act) provides individuals with a right of access to records, subject to limited exemptions, and to personal information in the custody or control of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and its agencies. For more information please visit

www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/access.html

Please read the Notice of Collection of Personal Information and Consent on the application to understand:

- why your personal information is collected
- how it will be used
- other persons and organizations from whom the ministry may collect personal information about you
- other persons and organizations with whom the ministry may share your personal information, and
- the legal authority for the collection of your personal information.

If you have any questions about this, discuss them with ministry staff during your application process meeting or use the contact information found on the Notice.

Your personal information is collected under the authority of:

- ss. 9, 11, 12, 16, 17 and 18 of the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 22, as amended (ACA) and s. 7 of O. Reg. 573/99 and O. Reg. 565/99 made under the ACA;
- ss. 7, 18-24 of the *Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. T.17, as amended (TQAA) and ss. 15, 23 and 24-26 of Regulation 1055 made under the TQAA;
- the Labour Market Development Agreement between Canada and Ontario
www.news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2009/05/ontario-promotes-labour-mobility.html;
- s. 10.1 of the *Financial Administration Act*, R. S. O. 1990, c. F.12, as amended;
- ss. 54 and 63(4) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1, as amended (OHSA) , and O. Reg. 572/99, s. 20 of O. Reg. 278/05, ss. 104-106.2 of Regulation 851 and ss. 11-11.2.2 of Regulation 854 made under the OHSA;
- ss. 88-100 of the *Highway Traffic Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 8, as amended (HTA) and Regulations 601 and 611 made under the HTA; and
- the *Ontario Labour Mobility Act*, 2009, S.O. 2009, c. 24.