

BC Ministry of Health and BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry

Expedited Registration Pathway for Qualified Canadian Out of Province Health Care Assistants

Policy Implementation Questions and Answers (Q and A)

Background: This Q and A document has been developed to support Health Authorities and other publicly funded employers (e.g. long term care contracted providers, community, home support, acute care) that employ Health Care Assistants (HCAs) in BC to access and deliver the requirements of the Ministry of Health's (MoH) Policy: Expedited Registration Pathway for Qualified Canadian Out of Province HCAs.

There are a number of unique policy definitions that are initially (or for emphasis) underlined throughout the document, therefore it may be helpful to review Appendix A, prior to reviewing the Q and A. The term qualified Canadian HCA is used to denote Canadian Out of Province HCAs that trained in Canada, but outside of BC.

MoH Policy Context: To ensure an effective, efficient, expedited registration pathway for qualified Canadian HCAs/equivalent workers who have been trained within Canada, but outside of BC. The MoH's expedited registration pathway creates a shared employer and BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry (Registry) accountability to ensure the competency of qualified Canadian HCA before they provide direct or indirect care for patients, clients or residents.

The Registry confirms the qualified Canadian HCA applicants' credentials and experience meet the expedited pathway's minimum standards. Participating Employers ensure the qualified Canadian HCA employee completes the standardized orientation program requirements and is competent to deliver safe and effective care. Publicly funded employers who choose **to not** participate in the expedited registration pathway are permitted to only hire HCAs who are already on the Registry i.e. registered HCAs.

EMPLOYER ELIGIBILITY AND SUPPORTS TO ACCESS THE EXPEDITED REGISTRATION PATHWAY

1. Which BC employers can access the expedited registration pathway to hire qualified Canadian HCAs?

All BC Participating Employers who receive public funding and employ HCAs (classification requiring BC HCA registration) can access the pathway by meeting the policy's mandatory requirements i.e. delivering a standardized orientation program for qualified Canadian HCAs).

2. How do I sign up to become a Participating Employer?

The Registry will email a Participating Employer package to employers in February 2020 with details on how to become a Participating Employer. Employers will review the package and sign a Letter of Intent. If you did not receive the email, please contact the Registry at: Email: info@cachwr.bc.ca

3. What supports will be available to Participating Employer (s) to implement the policy?

The MoH is working with Island Health's Learning & Performance Support team and health authorities' learning teams to create an orientation shell to host four standardized orientation courses. This orientation shell will be located on the Provincial Health Services Authority's LearningHub, and will be available to support Participating Employers in delivering the content required to access the expedited pathway for HCAs. The orientation shell will support health authorities/affiliates that do not have an equivalent orientation program. Participating Employers are not required to use this specific HCA orientation shell curriculum; however their standardized orientation program must include education content that is equivalent to the shell's curriculum at a minimum. HAs/affiliates may augment the curriculum, as relevant for their organization.

BC CARE AIDE & COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER REGISTRY REQUIREMENTS

4. What are the Registry requirements for qualified Canadian HCA applicants wishing to access the expedited registration pathway?

There are two qualified Canadian HCA applicant categories that may qualify for the expedited registration pathway. For detailed eligibility requirements please visit the Registry's [website](#).

Category One: Canadian out of province HCA/equivalent with 450 practice hours in the preceding year or a minimum of 1125 practice hours over the last three years. The applicant **must meet** the requirements below and provide the following:

1. [English language proficiency equivalent](#) as defined by the Registry.
2. Certificate or official transcript, as proof of graduation from an approved Canadian (non BC) HCA Education Program (definition).
3. Official legal documentation confirming name/ identity (as applicable e.g. name change).
4. Chronological format resume (dates/employer/facility name/location of recent HCA or equivalent experience).
5. A completed Registry employer (s) form documenting actual practice hours.
6. A completed Registry employer competency confirmation letter from the HCA applicant's most recent clinical supervisor (for example: registered nurse or nurse practitioner and/or Registry approved regulated health professional) at a previous Canadian health employer confirming the following:
 - o The HCA has provided safe, effective, and competent practice and is able to perform competently in all areas identified in the competency confirmation letter.

Category Two: Canadian out of province HCA with **no** HCA/equivalent practice hours, but graduated from an approved Canadian HCA education program within the last two years.

- If a qualified Canadian HCA graduated within the past two years from an approved Canadian (non BC) HCA education program, however has no HCA or equivalent practice experience, then a letter of competency from their HCA program's Clinical Instructor must be provided.
- All other requirements found in category one apply, as applicable.

5. What are the requirements for employers wishing to access the expedited registration pathway?

In order to become a Participating Employer, employers must:

1. Receive public funding.
2. Employ HCAs (classification requiring BC HCA registration).
3. Meet the policy's mandatory requirements i.e. deliver a standardized orientation program for qualified Canadian HCAs (within one month of HCA employee hire).
4. Submit to the Registry a signed Letter of Intent.
5. Submit to the Registry a HCA Standardized Orientation Program Verification Form (within one week of the HCA employee's completion of the standardized orientation program).
6. Submit to the Registry an Introduction to HCA Practice in BC Course Completion Form (within six months of HCA employee hire).

6. What is the expedited registration pathway's process?

Expedited Registration Pathway Process

1. HCA/equivalent worker (qualified Canadian HCA applicants) submits an application to the Registry to qualify for the pathway.
2. Qualified Canadian HCA applicant is approved by the Registry to access the pathway and is provided with a Registry Letter of Eligibility signaling she/he is approved for the pathway.
3. Approved qualified Canadian HCA seeks/obtains employment with a Participating Employer. The HCA must provide the Participating Employer with the Letter of Eligibility as step one in the employment application process.
4. Participating Employer issues an employment letter (HEABC's recommended wording - question 11).
5. Participating Employer delivers the standardized orientation program within four weeks of the HCA employee's start date.
6. Participating Employer provides verification to the Registry that the qualified Canadian HCA employee has completed the standardized orientation program within **one week** of completion.
7. Registry finalizes the qualified Canadian HCA's registration and provides the HCA with a registration number.
8. Participating Employer must confirm the HCA employee is on the Registry. The registered HCA employee is then permitted to provide direct and indirect care.
9. Participating Employer confirms to the Registry that the qualified Canadian HCA employee has completed the Introduction to Practice content within six months of hire.

7. How will a Participating Employer know if the HCA is on this pathway?

Qualified Canadian HCAs who elect to access this expedited registration pathway must first be approved by the Registry to access the pathway. Those HCA applicants approved for the pathway will receive a Registry Letter of Eligibility. The qualified Canadian HCA must provide a Participating Employer with the Letter of Eligibility to confirm they are approved for the pathway. It is the Participating Employer's responsibility to develop a hiring process to manage this category of HCA.

8. How will the Qualified Canadian HCA know I am a Participating Employer?

The Registry will maintain an up to date list of Participating Employers on the Registry website:
<https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/Documents/Participating-Employers-List.aspx>

9. Will I know what area the qualified Canadian HCA was employed in before I hire them?

Participating Employers will continue to hire HCAs using standard processes, such as resumes, interviews, required criminal record checks and reference checks to ensure the HCA is suitable for the practice area, and is competent for practice.

10. Will I know if there are any issues with the qualified Canadian HCA's past performance?

The Registry will provide the qualified Canadian HCA with a Letter of Eligibility that confirms they are eligible and approved for the expedited registration pathway. The Registry has specific requirements the qualified Canadian HCA must meet, including verification of past work performance via a competency reference letter.

Participating Employers will continue to hire HCAs using standard processes, such as resumes, interviews, required criminal record checks and reference checks to ensure the HCA is suitable for the practice area, and is competent for practice.

11. Do I need to use a different type of employment offer letter for this HCA category?

The Health Employers Association of British Columbia (HEABC) has provided the suggested language below for inclusion in the HCA employment letter. If you are a member of HEABC, please contact your HEABC representative, if you have any questions.

As part of your hiring process, [Participating Employer] has confirmed that you qualify for the Expedited Registration Pathway for Qualified Canadian Out of Province HCAs through the "The Registry" Letter of Eligibility. As part of this expedited registration pathway, you and [Participating Employer] will complete the following:

- Within four weeks of your employment start date, you will complete a standardized orientation program provided by [Participating Employer] that meets the mandatory requirements of the Ministry of Health policy.
- Within one week of your completion of the standardized orientation program, [Participating Employer] will provide the Registry with a completed HCA Standardized Orientation Program Verification Form that you have completed the orientation requirements. The Registry will then finalize your registration and provide you with a Registration number.
- Only after [Participating Employer] has verified your registration number with the Registry will you be able to provide direct and indirect patient care.
- Within six (6) months of your employment start date, you will complete an approved Introduction to Practice Course.
- Failure to complete these requirements may jeopardize your continued employment with [Participating Employer].

12. Can I hire an HCA who I think qualifies for the expedited registration pathway to secure their employment before I send them to the Registry?

Participating Employers must **not** hire any HCA prior to the HCA applying to the Registry. The Registry will determine if the HCA applicant qualifies for any HCA registration pathways.

13. Can I refer a potential HCA who has many years of relevant experience, but has not completed a formal education program to the Registry to be screened for the new expedited registration pathway?

HCAs that **do not have** a formal education credential **do not** qualify for this pathway.

However, employers can refer the potential HCA to the Registry to find out if she/he is eligible to apply under the HCA equivalent category. If confirmed eligible for this category, she/he will need to also provide a resume in lieu of education credentials, and if approved, the Registry will refer them to the Nursing Community Assessment Services (NCAS) for a competency assessment.

To support this category of applicant, currently, there is a Health Match BC (MoH funded) bursary program to support a HCA in the HCA equivalency category to complete NCAS and any required remedial education. For more information about this bursary program email info@choose2care.ca

Registry applicants that are internationally educated health care providers **do not** qualify for the expedited registration pathway.

14. I have hired an HCA in a lower or different job classification who I think may qualify for the expedited registration pathway. What do I do?

Employers should refer these types of workers to the Registry, who will determine if they are eligible for any of the HCA/equivalent applicant categories, including the expedited registration pathway.

15. Will I be able to see on the Registry if the HCA went through NCAS or this new pathway?

No, employers will not have access to the type of pathway HCAs are registered.

16. How do I remove my name from the Participating Employer list if I choose to no longer participate?

Email the Registry at info@cachwr.bc.ca and inform them you do not wish to continue as a Participating Employer. The Registry will provide you with a form to complete, scan and email back to them. Once the Registry receives your form, you will be removed from the Participating Employer list.

17. How many HCAs can I expect to hire if I implement this expedited registration pathway?

The Registry and MoH do not guarantee any HCA employees from this pathway. Health Match BC will be implementing a targeted marketing strategy to promote the expedited registration pathway. It is the employer's responsibility to continue to manage their recruitment efforts for HCAs.

STANDARDIZED ORIENTATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Policy states BC Participating Employers (who receive public funding) must develop and maintain the required policy, procedures and processes to implement the standardized orientation program to meet Registry process and MoH policy requirements.

18. What is MoH's requirement for Participating Employers in delivering a standardized orientation program?

The topics for orientation below are the **minimum requirements** for qualified Canadian HCA employees to complete. The Participating Employer must ensure the HCA employee receives the appropriate theory and practice components to support all of the **competencies** below **within four weeks** of hiring the HCA.

- a) **Violence prevention**
 - 1.1 Promotes and recognizes safety risks and implements appropriate safety measures.
- b) **Recognizing and reporting adult abuse**
 - 2.1 Recognizes, prevents and responds to potential or suspected abuse, neglect and self-neglect.
- c) **Safe Patient Handling**
 - 3.1 Adheres to health and safety standards.
 - 3.2 Demonstrates correct use of body mechanics at all times.
 - 3.3 Demonstrates the ability to operate equipment safely.
 - 3.4 Responds appropriately to client behaviors to prevent injury to client, self and others.
 - 3.5 Recognizes the importance and demonstrates the ability to care for themselves using health and wellness strategies and musculoskeletal skeletal injury prevention.
- d) **Infection prevention**
 - 4.1 Demonstrates effective infection control practices.

19. The Ministry of Health requires that the expedited registration pathway be evaluated. The policy states: Participating Employers that choose to enact the expedited registration pathway policy will provide data to support the Registry and the MoH in evaluating the outcomes of the policy. What data will the MoH or Registry require and by when?

The MoH is working with the Registry to determine the data Participating Employers will need to provide so the Registry and the MoH can evaluate the pathway.

20. What will Participating Employers need to do to get ready to enact the expedited pathway policy? For example, do we need training on how to implement the standardized orientation program?

It is expected that Participating Employers will build on their existing orientation programs. It is anticipated that Participating Employers will have the right education/training expertise and documentation systems to support them in meeting policy requirements for HCAs using this pathway.

21. How do HCAs complete the practice or demonstration component for infection control and safe patient handling of the standardized orientation program, if they cannot provide any direct or indirect care?

It is expected that the Participating Employer will provide practical application and skill demonstration opportunities for the HCA to evaluate competency in these critical areas during the standardized orientation program.

HCAs are not permitted to provide any direct or indirect patient care prior to receiving a registration number from the Registry.

22. What happens if an HCA does not successfully complete the standardized orientation program?

The MoH's policy requires that a qualified Canadian HCA applicant who elects to access this pathway must complete the Participating Employer's standardized orientation program as a prerequisite for registration in BC within four weeks of employment. If a HCA employee does not complete the orientation, they will not be permitted to register with the Registry.

Should a situation arise in which an HCA does not successfully complete a requirement of the expedited registration pathway, employers should carefully manage all employment issues on a case-by-case basis and in line with legal standards, policies and collective agreement (s) requirements. If you are a member of HEABC and have any questions regarding the employment status of an employee accessing this expedited registration pathway, please contact your HEABC representative.

23. What happens if an HCA leaves the Participating Employer before they complete the standardized orientation program?

The HCA will not be permitted to register. The HCA will need to find a new Participating Employer to continue on the expedited registration pathway or initiate a new Registry application to register via the NCAS competency assessment pathway. The qualified Canadian HCA will be registered only after a Participating Employer provides verification to the Registry that the HCA has completed the standardized orientation program requirement.

24. How will the Registry manage qualified Canadian trained HCAs who are not registered, if they:

- a. Try to find employment with a non-Participating Employer?
 - **Answer:** Non-Participating Employers cannot hire this category of HCAs, as they must only hire HCAs that are actively registered on the Registry.
- b. Try to find employment with a private employer?
 - **Answer:** Employers who do not receive public funding are currently able to hire unregistered HCAs.

INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE CONTENT

25. How long does the HCA employee have to complete the Introduction to Practice Course?

The Participating Employer must ensure the HCA employee completes the Introduction to Practice content in the first six months of their hire. It is the Participating Employer's responsibility to notify the Registry via the Introduction to HCA Practice in BC Course Completion Form (see Participating Employer package) when the HCA employee has completed the course.

26. Is there a preferred or approved Introduction to Practice course for HCAs to take within the first six months of employment?

More information can be found on the [Continuing Education page](#) of the Registry website or via the direct course provider's link here: [HCA Introduction to Practice](#).

27. Who pays for the HCA employee's orientation hours related to completing the standardized orientation program and the Introduction to Practice course and education hours?

It is the Participating Employer's responsibility to pay the employee for all hours associated with the standardized orientation program's content and practice, and the hours and costs associated with the Introduction to Practice Content.

Participating Employers that hire qualified Canadian HCA employees and elect to pay for the HCA to complete the Introduction to Practice course before June 2020 may be eligible for financial support through Health Match BC's HCA Recruitment Initiative. For more information about this bursary program email info@choose2care.ca.

Note: The Registry, HEABC and the MoH are working on the development of a new streamlined HCA Practice in BC course that will be added to PHSA's LearningHub. It is anticipated that this module will be made available within the next six months. Once the course is completed, it will be accessible to Participating Employees' free of charge.

Appendix A – Definitions and Terms

Approved Canadian (non BC) HCA (equivalent) Education Program: Qualified Canadian HCAs must have graduated from a Canadian HCA education program in good standing with that province’s Ministry of Advanced Education or equivalent which is recognized by the BC MoH/BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry to be substantially equivalent in meeting BC’s HCA education program standards.

BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry: In 2010, the MoH created the Registry. The Registry mandate is: 1) To protect vulnerable patients, clients, and residents; 2) To establish and improve standards of care in the HCA occupations; and 3) To promote professional development for HCAs. To work for a BC employer who receives public funding, HCAs must be registered with the Registry.

Expedited Registration Pathway: A process for qualified Canadian HCAs to access and meet BC’s expedited registration pathway requirements, and become a registered HCA in BC.

Expedited Registration Pathway Qualification Requirements: The registration requirements set by the Registry and approved by the MoH for qualified Canadian HCA applicants to access the expedited pathway.

Letter of Eligibility: This is a Registry letter provided to qualified Canadian HCA applicants to confirm that the HCA is approved by the Registry for the expedited registration pathway. The qualified Canadian HCA must provide the Letter of Eligibility as a first step in the employment application process to any publicly funded Participating Employer.

Nursing Community Assessment Service: NCAS provides a competency assessment for internationally or Canadian out-of-province educated HCAs or nurses seeking to practice in British Columbia. Since 2018, all Canadian trained out-of-province HCAs wishing to work in BC were required to go through the NCAS and required remedial education as part of their registration process.

Nursing Community Assessment Service (NCAS) Registration Pathway: HCAs that do not qualify for (or choose to not access) the expedited registration pathway can become registered after they complete the NCAS assessment process, and any required remedial education.

Publicly Available Access: Participating Employers implementing the policy are publicly identified to enable qualified Canadian HCAs to locate these employers.

Participating Employers: These BC employers confirm to the Registry they will participate in the policy and that they have in place a standardized orientation program that meets the mandatory requirements of the policy.

Qualified Canadian (Out of Province) HCAs: Health Care Assistants (or equivalent workers) that meet the Registry’s credential requirements for the expedited registration pathway are approved by the Registry to access the expedited registration pathway.

Standardized Orientation Program: A formalized orientation program delivered by Participating Employers accessing the pathway that ensures qualified Canadian HCA employee(s) meet the minimum competency standards substantially equivalent to an HCA graduate from a BC recognized HCA education program. The standardized orientation program must meet the content and practice requirements, as per the MoH’s supportive policy directive.

Verification: The Registry process BC Participating Employers use to confirm the qualified Canadian HCA employee has completed a standardized orientation program in accordance with the MoH’s policy.