



Certification Examinations

Candidate Guide

**Examination Instructions | Examination Administration and Policy
Preparation for Sonography Canada Examinations | General Examination Rules &
Regulations**

Sonography Canada

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1. Defining SONOGRAPHY CANADA Credentials:

In establishing a registry of Canadian credentialed sonographers, SONOGRAPHY CANADA has set into place certain requirements that must be met by potential registrants who wish to acquire their Canadian credentials. These requirements include:

- Documented proof of successful completion of an accredited¹ diagnostic sonography education program or an equivalent sonography education program as recognized by SONOGRAPHY CANADA.
- Successful completion of the SONOGRAPHY CANADA Clinical Skills Assessment (CCSA).
- Successful completion of SONOGRAPHY CANADA approved written examination(s).
- Payment of all required certification and registry fees.

Sonographers applying for SONOGRAPHY CANADA registration may receive their credentials in the following specialties:

- CRGS® Canadian Registered Generalist Sonographer
(Core and Generalist)
- CRCS® Canadian Registered Cardiac Sonographer
(Core and Cardiac)
- CRVS® Canadian Registered Vascular Sonographer
(Core and Vascular)

In support of these requirements, SONOGRAPHY CANADA has established sonography certification examinations that will ensure that SONOGRAPHY CANADA registrants meet the technical, ethical, and professional standards that are expected of a professional sonographer. SONOGRAPHY CANADA credentials are highly respected and required by many employers in Canada.

¹ An educational program that is accredited by Accreditation Canada, in effect at the time of graduation.

2. Introduction to the SONOGRAPHY CANADA Certification Examinations

The SONOGRAPHY CANADA certification examinations were created with the goals of being responsive to the needs of the Canadian medical community from coast to coast and the establishment of bilingual written and practical exams that reflect Canadian standards in healthcare.

The Canadian Clinical Skills Assessment (CCSA) was established by SONOGRAPHY CANADA to ensure that Canadian credentialed sonographers have the knowledge and clinical skills necessary for entry level practice. This process, which has been in use since 2006, provides an assurance to both employers and the public that sonographers registered with SONOGRAPHY CANADA are competent upon entry into their profession in Canada.

To supplement the SONOGRAPHY CANADA Clinical Skills Assessment, written examinations were introduced in 2010 as a requirement for certification. SONOGRAPHY CANADA written examinations have a Canadian focus and are based on the National Competency Profiles (NCPs), which ensures that the exam is relevant to Canadian practice. Accredited Diagnostic Medical Sonography programs are based on the content of these NCPs.

Specific competencies from within the NCP are identified as “examinable”, as determined by importance, frequency-of-use and the format in which they will be tested; and are included in the examination blueprints. Blueprints for Core, Generalist, Cardiac, and Vascular examinations are established and each written examination is based on the respective blueprint of examinable competencies. For further details on the structure of the SONOGRAPHY CANADA examinations and the NCP, please refer to the SONOGRAPHY CANADA website.

Using standardized test-development methods, a bank of exam questions has been developed to assess the examinable competencies as identified in the blueprint. Each time an exam takes place, questions will be pulled from the bank, and psychometric analysis will be applied to ensure that the exam is valid, reliable and free from bias.

Once a candidate has successfully become credentialed with Sonography Canada, it will be necessary to maintain active registration by completing and submitting a required minimum number of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits on a triennium basis. See the section in the Guide entitled *SONOGRAPHY CANADA Registration and Renewal* for further information.

3. Code of Ethics

Sonography Canada’s Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct and Scope of Practice are available on the Sonography Canada website, www.sonographycanada.ca.

By registrants:

- acquiring the necessary education and clinical experience to successfully challenge and fulfill the requirements of SONOGRAPHY CANADA registration, and
- maintaining currency with new developments in the credentialed specialty of Sonography, and
- respecting the Code of Ethics for the profession of Diagnostic Medical Sonography and provincial regulatory bodies, as required;

Sonographers registered with SONOGRAPHY CANADA can function effectively and ethically in the Canadian medical community.

4. Description of the Examinations and Scoring

All Sonography Canada examinations will be conducted in a computerized format in secure, proctored facilities or via remote online proctoring services contracted by Sonography Canada.

All exam questions will be in multiple-choice format, and many will be based upon images or video clips that are displayed on-screen. Candidates will have the opportunity to move through the exam at their own pace (subject to the overall time limit), to answer questions, to skip questions, to flag questions for later review, and to change their responses until they exit the exam. Reference materials and aids will **not** be allowed while writing the exam. Please refer to the section in the Guide entitled *Examination Day Procedures, Rules and Regulations* for further information. The exam platform does allow for use of a built-in calculator during the exam. The Examination Day Schedule can be reviewed [here](#).

4.1 Core Sonographic Skills Examination

The Core Sonographic Skills Examination consists of 80 multiple-choice questions to be answered within an 80-minute timeframe. This examination will focus on knowledge of ultrasound physics principles, general ultrasound technique and equipment operation, patient management, environment and safety issues, compliance and professionalism, and analysis and reporting activities. Successful completion of the Core Sonographic Skills Examination is required for certification as a Generalist, Cardiac and/or a Vascular Sonographer.

4.2 Generalist Sonographer Examination

To qualify for certification as a Generalist Sonographer, candidates will be required to successfully complete two exams:

1. The Core Sonographic Examination
2. The Generalist Sonographer Examination will include all of the required content from Abdomen/Superficial Structures/Peripheral Venous and Obstetrics/Gynecology. The examination consists of 240 multiple-choice questions to be answered within a 240-minute timeframe. Candidates will be provided a scheduled 10-minute break during the exam.

4.3 Cardiac Sonographer Examination

To qualify for certification as a Cardiac Sonographer, candidates will be required to successfully complete two exams:

1. The Core Sonographic Examination
2. The Cardiac Sonographer Examination
(180 multiple-choice questions to be answered within a 180-minute timeframe)

4.4 Vascular Sonographer Examination

To qualify for certification as a Vascular Sonographer, candidates will be required to successfully complete two exams:

1. The Core Sonographic Examination
2. The Vascular Sonographer Examination
(180 multiple-choice questions to be answered within a 180-minute timeframe)

5. Prerequisites for Examinations

5.1 Accredited Sonography Program Graduates

To qualify for acceptance to write Sonography Canada examinations, the following prerequisites must be met:

1. The candidate must be a graduate (or about to graduate) from an accredited program in Diagnostic Medical Sonography.
2. The candidate must have successfully challenged the Canadian Clinical Skills Assessment for the same credential(s) as the examination(s) selected on the application.
 - Verification that the program representative has submitted the relevant CCSA Candidate Summary to Sonography Canada is required.

5.2 All other Candidates (External Candidates)

External candidates may be approved based upon Sonography Canada's assessment of education and clinical experience on a case by case basis. Please refer to the Sonography Canada website for details on "external candidates". Please note, exam applications will only be accepted from external candidates who have received approval to apply by the External Candidate review committee.

6. Examination Application Requirements and Deadlines

Exam applications must be received on or before the deadline published on the Sonography Canada website. The completed exam application must be submitted directly to Sonography Canada as indicated on the exam application form.

The *Application for Sonography Canada Examinations* form and all associated examination forms for various exam administrative requests are located on the Sonography Canada website.

The complete Examination Application consists of the following:

- A completed *Application for Sonography Canada Examinations* form which includes signature and the date of submission.
- Verification that the Canadian Clinical Skills Assessment has been completed for the exam specialty selected on the application and that the completed Candidate Clinical Skills Summary Form has been submitted (see the *Prerequisites for Sonography Canada Examinations* section for further details).
- Full payment of the examination fees.

Ensure that all contact information provided on the exam application is current. Should your contact information change between when you submit your application and when examination results are issued, please advise the Sonography Canada office of all such changes as important information will be sent to your email address on file and final results sent to your mailing address on file.

Please ensure that your application is complete and signed.

7. Examination Fee Schedule

Exam Fee Schedule	
Core	\$200.00
Generalist	\$500.00
Cardiac	\$500.00
Vascular	\$500.00
Mandatory Non-refundable Exam Application Processing Fee	\$125.00

8. Examination Sites

Examinations are held at various locations across Canada. Province and city locations are included on the *Application for Sonography Canada Examinations* form. Certain locations may be subject to availability. Detailed address location information (including building location and room number) for the examination site is provided with the *Authorization to Write Examination Notice*.

9. Travel and Lodging

Once your examination application has been approved, and you receive your *Authorization to Write Examination Notice*, you are responsible for your own arrangements for travel and lodging. Sonography Canada does not provide assistance with your travel and accommodation arrangements.

10. Language Options for the Examinations

The SONOGRAPHY CANADA Core and Generalist examinations are offered in English and French. The Cardiac and Vascular examinations are offered in English only at this time.

For candidates who wish to write the Sonography Canada exams in English but are non-native English speakers, Sonography Canada recommends a minimum Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 80 within the last two years.

11. Examination Application Processing and Approval

Sonography Canada will review the submitted examination applications as they are received. If the candidate meets all the prerequisites and has submitted a complete application with payment of fees, then the candidate will be approved to write the requested examination(s).

Approved candidates will receive an *Authorization to Write Examination Notice* by email at least two weeks prior to the examination date. This Notice will confirm the exam(s) for which the candidate has received approval to write, and will confirm the date, timing, and location of the exam(s). **All candidates must provide a copy (either printed or digital) of the *Authorization to Write Examination Notice* to the Exam Registrar/Proctor on the day of the exam.** In addition to the *Authorization to Write Examination Notice*, approved candidates will receive an *Examination Day General Information* document.

If the applicant does not qualify to write the Sonography Canada examinations or has provided an incomplete application, a *Refusal to Write SONOGRAPHY CANADA Examination Notice* will be sent explaining why the application was refused.

If an *Authorization to Write* or *Refusal to Write Notice* has not been received by two weeks before the scheduled exam, please contact Sonography Canada immediately. Full contact information is located at the end of this document.

12. Preparing to Write a Sonography Canada Examination

Prior to your exam date, you will be provided with a link to a 'Tutorial' which is designed to allow candidates to navigate through the computer-based platform that is used for the Sonography Canada exams. Please note that this is NOT a sample exam and is intended solely to provide familiarity with the computer-based exam platform prior to the exam day.

These questions are written in the Sonography Canada exam question style and will demonstrate either a 'stand-alone' question layout or a question layout referencing an associated image or video clip. Candidates are required to review the tutorial to familiarize themselves with the tools of the exam interface.

Candidates should be prepared to read and answer an exam question within a one (1) minute time frame.

Examination candidates can further prepare for Sonography Canada examinations by reviewing the National Competency Profiles along with the Core, Generalist, Vascular and Cardiac Exam Blueprints available [here](#) on the Sonography Canada website.

13. Examination Day Procedures, Rules and Regulations

You should arrive at the registration station of your Sonography Canada examination location at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. **At the registration station, you must provide a copy, either printed or digital, of your *Authorization to Write Examination Notice* and a current, non-expired government-issued photo ID.**

- A candidate arriving **up to 30 minutes** after the scheduled start time will be admitted with no allowance made for lost time.

- *A candidate who arrives **more than thirty (30) minutes** after the scheduled exam start time, will be considered a "no-show"; they will forfeit their entire exam fee and lose one (1) exam attempt.*
- You will be provided with a computer workstation on which you will write the exam. The Proctor will tell you when and how to log on and access the exam.
- You will not be allowed to bring any outside clothing, bags, backpacks, books, paper, writing materials, resource materials, notes, cell phones, calculators, cameras, watches or other electronic devices. Secure storage will be available to you at the exam location.
- Wearing of scented products (eg: perfumes, hair spray, after shave) when attending the examination is not permitted. Anyone wearing scented products may be required to leave the examination room.
- You will not be allowed to access the Internet on the computer workstation.
- You will not be permitted to communicate with any other person while you write the exam.
- You will be allowed to bring water/juice/coffee/drink in a spill-proof container with no label (Only if approved by the Test Centre).
- Disposable ear plugs are allowed.
- You will be provided with two (2) sheets of blank paper and a pencil, which must be returned to the Proctor when you leave the room.
- During your exam, you may **not leave the room for any reason** (this includes washroom breaks).
- No candidate may leave the room until at least 30 minutes has elapsed. Once they leave, they will not be allowed back into the room unless they have applied for, and received in advance of the exam date, special accommodations for medical reasons.
- Proctors are required to document instances of candidates leaving the exam room prior to completion of the exam period.
- The Proctor's role is to ensure the integrity of the exam and the writing process, to handle any technical or logistical problems that may arise, and to assist you as appropriate. You should direct any questions or requests to the Proctor. You should follow the direction of the Proctor at all times.
- In establishing the location for the exam, Sonography Canada has tried to provide every candidate with a comfortable and uninterrupted setting. Please do your part by behaving in a manner that respects the needs of your fellow candidates.
- In the event that the exam is unexpectedly interrupted by a technical problem or any external event, the Proctor will inform you of how to proceed.
- *Please note that in order to reset authorizations between exams, there may be a slight delay in start times.*

- In the event that the Proctor suspects a candidate of academic dishonesty, the Proctor will note the details and send an incident report to Sonography Canada. If the academic dishonesty is clearly apparent, the Proctor is authorized to require the responsible candidate(s) to leave the examination room immediately. When academic dishonesty has taken place, Sonography Canada will take appropriate action relative to the individual(s) responsible. For further information please see the section in the Guide entitled *Confidentiality and Security of Exam Material & Policy Regarding Dishonest Actions*.
- Sonography Canada is committed to ensuring a safe and respectful environment for exam candidates, volunteers and staff. Physically or verbally abusive, aggressive or intimidating behaviour, harassment or coarse language towards the Registrar, Proctor, staff, volunteers or other candidates will not be tolerated. Any disruptive behaviour will be noted by the Proctors and an incident report will be sent to Sonography Canada. If the disruptive behaviour creates a continuing distraction by sound, movement or odour, which disrupts the concentration of other candidates writing the exam, or threatens staff, the Proctor is authorized to require the responsible candidate(s) to leave the examination room immediately. Such individuals will not be permitted to take the exam, or if the exam was in process, may have their exam results declared null and void. The examination sitting fee will be forfeited and Sonography Canada reserves the right to permanently refuse entry to all Sonography Canada examinations. Candidates will comply with requests or instructions made by a Proctor, including, but not limited to a request to leave the examination room.

14. Examination Withdrawal and Refund Policy

Candidates who wish to completely withdraw their *Application for Sonography Canada Examinations* or who wish to completely withdraw from SONOGRAPHY CANADA examination(s) for which they have received an *Authorization to Write Notice* must notify Sonography Canada **by the dated specified on the Examination Withdrawal and Refund Request Form** (about four weeks before the scheduled exam). The candidate will receive a refund of fees paid (less the mandatory non-refundable Application Processing Fee).

The *Examination Withdrawal and Refund Request* form is available on the Sonography Canada website. The completed *Withdrawal and Refund Request* must be emailed to examinfo@sonographycanada.ca or mailed to Sonography Canada Head Office such that it is received by the deadline (see section in the Guide entitled *Sonography Canada Contact Information* for the address).

15. Scoring

As Sonography Canada examinations are offered in a computer format, the scores will be electronically generated. Exam questions will either be marked as correct or incorrect. There will be no penalty applied for incorrect answers.

The passing score is derived for the Sonography Canada Examination using a modified Angoff Standard Setting method. In this method a panel of subject matter experts review each item and estimate the expected candidate's level of performance for each item. The sum of these estimates results in the passing score for that specific exam.

As every examination has a different selection of items, the passing score will vary from exam to exam. The level of difficulty of each exam varies based on the selected items and therefore easier exams have higher passing score than the more difficult forms of the exams. In this way no candidate will suffer any unintentional penalty due to writing the more difficult format and likewise no candidate will gain any advantage from having taken the less difficult form of the exam.

Sonography Canada uses this standard setting method in order to provide a valid and reliable testing mechanism that is fair to candidates and appropriate for a national credentialing process. Once the electronic scoring of the written examinations is completed, the exams and results undergo a review and evaluation. Should any significant discrepancies occur regarding any examination questions, appropriate adjustments of the scores may occur before the exam results are released to the candidates to ensure exam validity, reliability and fairness.

16. Notification of Results

Sonography Canada will provide results to the candidate within 3 to 4 weeks after the date of administration, in the form of a *Notice of Results* letter which will indicate a pass or a failure.

If the candidate is successful on the examination(s), the candidate will receive the appropriate credentials, which will also be outlined in the *Notice of Results* letter. Along with this letter the candidate will receive an official *Sonography Canada Certificate* indicating Registration and the Credentials. This *Notice* and *Certificate* will be followed by a permanent card displaying the candidate's credentials that will be sent by mail.

If the candidate is unsuccessful in passing the examination(s), then the candidate will receive their results in a *Notice of Results* letter, so that the candidate may take remedial action and apply to re-write the examination.

17. Sonography Canada Certification Exams Results Summary

Sonography Canada provides a statistical report on graduate success to accredited sonography programs.

Note: this report does NOT include individual student names or scores.

18. Appealing Examination Results

Computerized multiple-choice examinations are generally not subject to scoring errors. In the event that an item on the exam is poorly constructed or wrongly coded as to the correct answer, statistical analysis is used to identify the situation and take corrective action, which may include removing the question from the scoring of the exam. Consequently, there is no room for adjustment or discretion in determining a candidate's score.

Candidates whose fees have been forfeited for non-attendance, or who fail the exam, may initiate an appeal on the following grounds:

- Circumstances beyond the candidate’s control affecting attendance.
- Disruptive testing conditions on the day of the exam.
- A medical situation affecting the performance of the candidate.

Candidates who wish to appeal must complete the *Examination Results Appeal Request Form* (available on the website). The form must be fully completed and submitted with the fee of \$100 within ten (10) calendar days of email notification of results. The appeal review will be completed within 30 calendar days of the closing date for appeals. The candidate is notified of the decision within five business days of the appeal review.

Should the decision of the Committee result in an expunging of a written exam attempt, the appellant is to be reimbursed the examination fee and the appeals fee. Reimbursement is made to the credit card on the original application form unless otherwise directed by the appellant.

19. Sonography Canada Registration and Renewal

Once registered with Sonography Canada, the highest of Canadian standards will have been met by qualifying candidates, thereby ensuring employers across Canada that Sonography Canada registrants meet those standards for entry level practice.

The credential must be maintained by adhering to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program. The program requires registrants to complete 40 CPD credits every three years with each triennium starting January 1st of the first year and ending December 31st of the third year. New registrants officially enter the first triennium January 1st of the year following the successful completion of the credential(s). Details regarding the CPD Program can be found on the Sonography Canada website.

The annual Sonography Canada registration renewal and payment deadline is April 30th. At that time, a new Sonography Canada registry card will be issued. Professional Liability Insurance is also available to members. For details, please visit the following link: <https://sonographycanada.ca/members/professional-liability-insurance>

In provinces where sonography is regulated, credentialed sonographers will need to register with the provincial regulatory body in order to practice in that province.

20. Confidentiality and Security of Exam Material & Policy regarding Dishonest Actions

Sonography Canada is committed to maintaining strict confidentiality and security over its examination process and materials. This Policy and Agreement is intended to apply before, during and after the exams to eliminate the possibility of a candidate obtaining an unfair advantage and to avoid the expense of replacing examination materials in the event of a security breach.

All Sonography Canada examination materials are the property of Sonography Canada and are protected by copyright. Stringent security measures have been put in place to ensure that the integrity of the examination process and the examination materials is always maintained. These measures were created to ensure that examination materials are always

protected while being developed, reviewed, reproduced, transported, disposed of, presented on exam day, executed, and while undergoing evaluation for scoring purposes.

Sonography Canada strictly enforces its examination security policy as presented herein. Candidates who violate the policy as presented herein and in the section of the Guide entitled *Examination Day Procedures, Rules and Regulations* may be asked to leave the examination site, may not receive their results and/or may have those results declared null and void.

If a candidate knowingly presents fraudulent information or misrepresents the facts in his or her examination application or other related request forms, Sonography Canada will take the appropriate action, which may involve permanent refusal or withdrawal of authorization to write Sonography Canada examinations, exam results being declared null and void, and/or cancellation of their Sonography Canada registration.

Sonography Canada has monitoring and surveillance procedures in place to detect and document examination misconduct, which includes addressing candidates who complete the examination via fraudulent means.

You must review and agree to the terms of this *Candidate Statement of Understanding* before starting your exam. If you do not agree to the terms of this *Candidate Statement of Understanding*, you will not be permitted to take the exam and you will forfeit your sitting fee.

1. *I have read and fully understand the Sonography Canada Examination Day General Information document and the Candidate Guide and all sections therein. I agree to abide by the terms of the Sonography Canada Examination Day General Information document and any other requirements set forth in this registration.*
2. *The Sonography Canada Certification Examination is highly confidential. The examination questions are the property of Sonography Canada and unauthorized disclosure of the examination questions is strictly prohibited as is any recording or memorization of the exam questions, regardless of intent. By agreeing to this statement of understanding, you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the Sonography Canada Certification Examination questions. You must therefore keep the exam content confidential, even after the exam. This includes but is not limited to not discussing the content with anyone who wrote the exam before you, with you or who has not written the exam yet.*

Please note that Sonography Canada has monitoring and surveillance procedures in place to detect and document any cases of academic dishonesty.

21. Accommodation due to Special Needs, Religious Obligations or Other Barriers

Sonography Canada strives to make their examinations available to any person who has met the required prerequisites and is deemed qualified. Sonography Canada recognizes the diversity of candidates and strives to facilitate access to the Sonography Canada exams regardless of ability, religious obligation or other barriers. Exam accommodations may be an adjustment or modification of the standard testing conditions designed to allow for

candidate's participation without compromising the validity or integrity of Sonography Canada examination(s) or providing an unfair advantage to the candidate or imposing undue hardship for Sonography Canada.

The *Exam Accommodation Request Form* must be completed and accompanied by supporting documentation in order for Sonography Canada to evaluate and render a decision. Your submission will be reviewed in full, and Sonography Canada will collaborate with you and the test site to ensure that the accommodations can be made available.

Sonography Canada reserves the right to request additional documentation, if necessary, to complete its assessment of your request. A final decision regarding your special needs accommodation request will be forwarded to you in writing 2 weeks prior to the examination date. Your request will be handled on a confidential and individual basis.

Please note that incomplete forms and documentation will not be processed by Sonography Canada. Ensure that you have provided all the requested information and that your form is fully completed and legible. Candidates are responsible for making requests for accommodation at the same time as their application to challenge a Sonography Canada exam.

Accommodation for Special Needs:

Sonography Canada will provide, upon approved request, reasonable accommodations including auxiliary aids and services necessary to allow individuals with a documented physical or mental impairment an equal opportunity to challenge the Sonography Canada examinations.

The *Exam Accommodation Request Form* is available on the Sonography Canada website.

Along with this request form, one of the following must be provided as supporting documentation:

- A letter on official school letterhead and signed by your Program Representative describing similar special needs accommodations that were provided to you when writing examinations during your diagnostic ultrasound education program.

Or if you have not received similar special needs accommodation while attending your educational program, please submit the following:

- A letter on official office letterhead signed by a healthcare or counselling professional specializing in your disability which:
 - ❖ Indicates that this specialist completed an assessment of your disability within the last five years.
 - ❖ Describes in details the identity (diagnosis) and the extent of your disability.
 - ❖ Describes clearly your current functional limitation(s).
 - ❖ Both recommends and supports your request for the special needs accommodation as indicated in this form.

Accommodation for Religious Obligation or Other Barriers:

Sonography Canada will provide, upon approved request, reasonable accommodations to allow individuals with religious obligations or other barriers an equal opportunity to challenge the Sonography Canada examinations.

Please complete the *Exam Accommodation Request Form* and submit it with your Sonography Canada Examination Application. Please include a description of the accommodation required and suggestions for its achievement.

22. Contact Information

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the Sonography Canada Credentialing Examinations or the instructions in this Candidate Guide, please contact the Sonography Canada Exam Administrator by any one of the following methods:

By Email:

examinfo@sonographycanada.ca

By Telephone:

Local: 613-258-0855

Toll-free: 1-888-273-6746

Sonography Canada wishes you every success in writing the Sonography Canada Credentialing Examinations and hopes to welcome you to the ranks of Canadian Credentialed Sonographers.