
Examinations: Credentialling Eligibility Policy – Alternate Pathway

 **Policy Level:** Certification
Approved: October 2024
Approved by: Board of Directors
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PURPOSE

Obtaining a Sonography Canada credential consists of two components; knowledge-based examinations and a clinical component called the Canadian Clinical Skills Assessment (CCSA™). Both components must be successfully completed to receive a credential.

This policy outlines requirements and timelines for individuals that are not eligible graduates of an accredited Canadian diagnostic medical sonography program¹.

SCOPE

Individuals who are not a graduate of an accredited Canadian diagnostic medical sonography program¹. This may include individuals that are:

- Internationally credentialed (includes ARDMS/CCI) or received education, training, and experience substantially similar to a Canadian accredited sonography program seeking additional Sonography Canada credential(s); and
- Approved through a provincial regulatory body (includes approved regulatory candidates and current members of the regulatory body licensed to practice sonography in that jurisdiction)
- Seeking an upgrade of limited Sonography Canada credential(s)

¹ *An accredited sonography program is a Canadian educational program accredited by a body authorized to do so by Sonography Canada (e.g., Accreditation Canada). “Graduate” is defined as a student who has successfully completed all program requirements.*

POLICY

Candidates must apply to be approved to enter the Alternate Pathway through one of the options listed below. Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis for eligibility to write the qualifying examinations and challenge the Canadian Clinical Skills Assessment™ (CCSA™).

The following options exist:

1. Pursuing an initial credential

Minimum requirements:

- Relevant education and training substantially similar to an accredited sonography program; and
- Must have engaged in clinical practice in one or more of the sonography specialties within the five years immediately preceding the date of the application.

2. Pursuing an additional Sonography Canada credential(s)

Minimum requirements:

- Relevant education and training substantially similar to an accredited sonography program; and

- A minimum of 500 hours in the last 12 months of clinical sonography experience specific to the relevant credential
- *Candidates who have not successfully completed the Core exam within 5 years of the date of approval will need to re-challenge the current version of Core.

3. Provincial regulatory approved candidate

- Candidates seeking employment in a provincially regulated jurisdiction may be deemed eligible to challenge the credentialing examinations and assessments by a recognized provincial regulatory college. Candidates must consult with the relevant provincial regulator to initiate this process.
- Candidates who are current members of a provincial regulatory body (i.e., licensed to practice sonography in that jurisdiction). Candidates must consult with Sonography Canada to initiate this process.

4. Upgrading a limited Sonography Canada credential (CRS)

Minimum requirements:

- relevant education and training substantially similar to an accredited sonography program; and
- a minimum of 500 hours in the last 12 months of clinical sonography experience in the required components.

Written Examination Eligibility

Alternate Pathway candidates applying for the Generalist (CRGS®), Cardiac (CRCS®) and/or Vascular (CRVS®) credential(s) must successfully complete the required credentialing examinations within five (5) years from the **date of their last clinical practice, or completion of their sonography education**, with a maximum of four (4) attempts.

Alternate Pathway candidates who do not successfully complete the credentialing process within their approved eligibility timeframe are not able to re-apply to pursue credentials through this pathway. The only way to requalify for Sonography Canada credentials is to attend and successfully complete an accredited sonography program. At that time, the candidate would fall under the policy for accredited sonography program graduates.

Clinical Component Eligibility

Alternate pathway candidates will be eligible to challenge the CCSA once they have successfully completed the relevant written credentialing exam. The CCSA must be completed within five (5) years from the **date of their last clinical practice, or completion of their sonography education**, with a maximum of four (4) attempts.

Withdrawal from the Alternate Pathway:

An approved Alternate Pathway candidate who does not attempt either credentialing component within their eligibility timeframe AND notifies Sonography Canada, in writing, to withdraw the application (the application fee is non-refundable) may be eligible to re-apply as an Alternate Pathway candidate at a later date. The candidate would be required to re-submit an Alternate Pathway candidate application, pay the associated fee, submit required documentation, and be assessed under the Alternate Pathway criteria at that time. Candidates approved by a provincial regulatory body **MUST** have the approval of the regulatory

body in order to be re-admitted to the Alternate Pathway. These decisions are at the discretion of the regulatory body.

RESPONSIBILITY

Policies and procedures relating to the development, maintenance and administration of Sonography Canada's credentialing examinations, including the CCSA are the responsibility of the Examinations Committee, subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Executive Director and staff.

CONSEQUENCE

This policy ensures that those who have not studied at an accredited Canadian sonography educational program possess the knowledge, skills and judgement to practice at the entry-level standard as outlined in the National Competency Profiles.
