

STEP Canada Qualified Practitioner Rules & Regulations

Rules & Regulation Areas:

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2. **Administrative Matters**
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Grandfathered Rules and Regulations:

1. Students who registered for the Qualified Practitioner Program (hereafter “Grandfathered Students”) before October 1, 2016 are subject to the grandfathered Rules and Regulations. If Grandfathering Students do not successfully complete the Qualified Practitioner Program by September 30, 2019, the updated Rules and Regulations will apply to any incomplete courses.
2. Students who register for the Qualified Practitioner Program after September 30, 2016 are subject to this version of the Qualified Practitioner Program Rules and Regulations.
3. Extension rules to the Qualified Practitioner program (see section 1.3) are effective upon approval by the STEP Canada Board of Directors. These extension rules apply to both sets of Qualified Practitioner students (i.e. Grandfathered Students and individuals who register on or after the date this version of the Qualified Practitioner Rules and Regulations was released September 30, 2016).

1. Qualified Practitioner Route

- 1.1 Qualified Practitioner format** – The Qualified Practitioner route to eventual full membership entails achieving a minimum of 60% on each of three essays within three years of becoming a STEP Canada Affiliate. Essays are graded separately. If a student achieves less than 60% on any submitted essay, the student’s ability to continue pursuit of the Qualified Practitioner Route will cease and the student’s Affiliate status with STEP Canada will be suspended. Any student whose Affiliate status has been suspended for failure to successfully complete the Qualified Practitioner program will have Affiliate status reinstated with STEP Canada if the student successfully enrolls in the STEP Canada Diploma Program.
- 1.2 Entry eligibility** – The Qualified Practitioner route is open to individuals who have a [recognized professional qualification](#) and a minimum of **three** years of post-qualification practical experience in trusts and/or estate planning. After retaining STEP Canada Affiliate/ Technician status as a student in the Qualified Practitioner program, then satisfying the Qualified Practitioner criteria and verifying five years of post-qualification

practical experiences in trusts and/or estate planning, individuals may apply for upgrade to full membership with STEP Canada. Recognized qualifications for entry into the Qualified Practitioner Program are subject to modification as required by STEP Canada without prior notice to the public, and, any such changes are effective as of the date of publication on the STEP Canada website.

- 1.3 Extensions-** An extension of one year may be granted, on a case-by-case basis, to individuals who require more time to complete their essays, up to a maximum of two additional years past the standard three-year timeline. Extensions are valid for a one-year period and a new extension request must be submitted for consideration for each extension year being requested. Extensions will not be automatically approved, but subject to the approval of STEP Canada. Should an extension request be granted, the fee is \$200 (plus applicable tax) per year. Should a student require an extension due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. parental leave, medical reason etc.) the extension fee may be waived at the sole discretion of STEP Canada given sufficient and appropriate documentation.

Students who are granted an extension must submit an essay, written to a current topic, on the next submission date (May 1 or October 1 of each year) or within three months from the first day of the student's extension- whichever timeframe is greater. For example, a student who is granted an extension on April 1 must submit an essay, written to a current topic, by July 1 (not October 1).

- 1.4 Suspensions-** If a student fails to complete the Qualified Practitioner program within the established three-year time frame, and has not been granted an extension, or the student has failed to achieve a minimum of 60% on any of the three required essays, that student is suspended from the Qualified Practitioner program and his/her Affiliate or Technician status with STEP Canada will no longer be valid. All fees will be forfeited upon suspension. Any student suspended from the Qualified Practitioner program will be reinstated with Affiliate status in STEP Canada by successfully enrolling in the STEP Canada Diploma Program.

2. Administrative Matters

- 2.1 Essay submission procedure** – In order to submit an essay, a student must complete a Qualified Practitioner submission form, accompanied by payment, and a declaration form. Fees will not be refunded for essays that do not receive a passing mark.
- 2.2 Essay topics** – Essay submissions must be between 2,500 to 3,000 words in length. Students must submit three essays from three of the four subject headings on the approved list of essay topics. Essay topics may be subject to change. Please note that it is the student's responsibility to ensure the essay submitted deals with one of the essay topics from the current year in accordance with the list found on the STEP Canada website.
- 2.3 Essay intake and marking-** Essay intakes occur twice each year, on May 1 and October 1. When an essay is submitted, it will be processed and held by STEP Canada until the next official intake date. Processed essays are sent to a senior TEP with expertise in the topic

area within one week of the official intake date for anonymous marking. Essays must be received and timestamped (if submitted electronically) no later than 11:59pm (of the student's local time, as indicated on his/her STEP profile) on the intake date. More than one essay may be submitted for each intake date.

- 2.4 Language-** Essays may be submitted in English or French.
- 2.5 Copyright -** Students will retain copyright of their essay however, STEP Canada reserves the right to publish the essay on the Members Only section of the STEP Canada website.
- 2.6 Completion deadline –** All three essays must be submitted within three years of successfully enrolling in the Qualified Practitioner program. To complete the Qualified Practitioner program, students must achieve a minimum of a 60% on each of three required essays.

Students must demonstrate a level of knowledge acceptable to STEP Canada and one that reflects serious consideration and in-depth understanding of essay topics.

- 2.7 Summary of fees –** The following fees are payable:

- A fee of \$375 for each essay submission.
- A re-mark fee of \$150, to have a failed essay re-marked, which would be refunded if a passing grade is later awarded.
- An extension fee of \$200 per year, for a program extension valid for one year. Fees are set by STEP Canada.

All fees are subject to change without notice. Applicable taxes are payable on all fees.

- 2.8 Good standing –** A student must be an Affiliate or Technician of STEP Canada good standing to be permitted to submit an essay. In the event that a student writes an essay and it transpires that there is an outstanding balance owing, the student's mark will not be released until such balances are paid in full.

3. Standards and Expectations

- 3.1 Aim -** The aim of the essays is to determine whether the student has acquired an appropriate level of knowledge to ultimately become a Full Member of STEP entitled to use the TEP designation.
- 3.2 Plagiarism & misconduct -** All acts by an individual that result in a false academic evaluation such as misconduct, which includes but is not limited to: plagiarism; submitting an essay that has been written by someone else; falsification or misrepresentation of an academic evaluation; and forgery of academic records or supporting documents are prohibited and subject to sanctions by STEP. These sanctions consist of one or more of the following actions that can be imposed by the STEP Canada Education Committee: written reprimand and/or conduct probation, a grade of zero on the essay and suspension of a

fixed or unlimited duration, as well as any other or additional sanction that may be imposed by the Board of Directors of STEP Canada.

4. Grading

- 4.1 Passing grade** - The passing grade for an essay is 60%. To complete the Qualified Practitioner program, students must achieve a minimum of a 60% on each of three required essays.

If a student achieves less than 60% on any submitted essay, the student will no longer continue in the Qualified Practitioner route and the student is suspended from the Qualified Practitioner program. Any student suspended from the Qualified Practitioner program will be reinstated with Affiliate status in STEP Canada by successfully enrolling in the STEP Canada Diploma Program.

- 4.2 Examination mark/grade achievement level**

85 +	A
75 - 84	B
68 - 74	C
60 - 68	D
Below 60	Not eligible to continue in the Qualified Practitioner program

- 4.3 Results** - Essay results are released as soon as reasonably possible and students will be sent individual emails with their results. STEP Canada makes every effort to complete the marking process and advise students of their marks within six to eight weeks following the essay submission date. However, STEP does not assume any liability in the event that circumstances beyond its control prevent this from occurring.
- 4.4 Academic appeal** -To appeal an essay result, a student may apply to STEP Canada to have his or her essay re-marked. A re-marking fee of \$150 (plus applicable taxes) must accompany the application. The application and fee must arrive at the STEP Canada office not more than 21 days after notification to the student of his or her essay result. The essay will be re-marked by a different adjudicator and the result communicated as soon as possible. If the result of the re-mark is to alter the essay mark from a fail to a pass then the re-marking fee will be refunded. The ruling of STEP Canada is final.
- 4.5 Re-write policy** -Students are not permitted to rewrite essays that achieved less than 60% as the student would no longer be eligible for the Qualified Practitioner program.

5. Student Award

5.1 STEP Canada presents an **award to the student who earned the highest mark on a Qualified Practitioner essay**, annually. **This award will be presented** during the Annual STEP Canada National Conference.