

STEP Canada Qualified Practitioner Rules & Regulations

***for Grandfathered Students**

Rules & Regulation Areas:

- 1. Qualified Practitioner Route**
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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 this version of the Qualified Practitioner Program Rules and Regulations. If Grandfathered 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 the updated version of the Qualified Practitioner 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 passing each of three essays within four years of becoming a STEP Canada student. Essays are graded separately and a passing mark of 50% must be achieved in each essay (see below).
- 1.2 Entry eligibility** – The Qualified Practitioner route is open to individuals who have a recognized professional qualification and a minimum of **five** years of post-qualification practical experience in trusts and/or estate planning. 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. After retaining STEP Canada Affiliate/ Technician status as a student in the Qualified Practitioner program, then satisfying the Qualified Practitioner criteria, individuals may apply for upgrade to full membership with STEP Canada.

1.3 Extensions

Program 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 four-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).

6-Month Extensions - An extension of 6 months may be granted, on a case-by-case basis, to individuals who require more time to complete their first essay to be submitted in the first twelve calendar months of joining the Qualified Practitioner program. This extension does not extend the four-year timeline to complete the program. Extensions will not be automatically approved, but subject to the approval of STEP Canada. The fee for an approved extension is \$200 (plus applicable tax). The extension fee may be waived at the sole discretion of STEP Canada. If the extension is granted due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. parental leave, medical reason etc.) and sufficient and appropriate documentation is provided.

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 and receive a passing grade within four years of joining the Qualified Practitioner program. To complete the Qualified Practitioner program, students must achieve a minimum of a 60% on each of three required essays. Also, the first essay must be submitted within the first twelve calendar months of joining the Qualified Practitioner program.
- 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.
 - A program extension fee of \$200 per year, for a program extension valid for one year.
 - A 6-month extension fee of \$200
- Fees are set by STEP Canada. All fees are subject to change without notice. The applicable taxes are payable on all fees.
- 2.8 Good standing** – A student must be an Affiliate/ Technician of STEP Canada in 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 designation TEP.
- 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 50%.

4.2 Examination mark/grade achievement level

80 +	A
70 – 79	B
60 – 69	C
50 – 59	D
Below 50	F

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 must pass three essays on three separate topic areas. A student is permitted to submit a maximum of five essays in the Qualified Practitioner program, and, only two of these five essays may be resubmissions of failed essays.

For example, if a student fails a Law essay and a Tax essay, he or she may re-submit the Law essay (on the same topic) once and resubmit the Tax essay (on the same topic) once. After those two resubmissions, the student may no longer submit essays on those two topics.

For example, if a student fails a Law essay, he or she may re-submit the Law essay (on the same topic). If this student fails the Law essay a second time, he or she may resubmit the Law essay (on the same topic) again. After those two resubmissions, the student may no longer submit essays on that same topic.

5. Student Award

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