

The practice of a profession governed by a professional order

in a nutshell

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The legal and regulatory framework in Québec

To practise a profession in Québec or to hold a professional title governed by the Professional Code a person must hold a permit and be a member in good standing of the professional order responsible for that profession.

The Professional Code defines Québec's professional system. In order to ensure the protection of the public, this law regulates the practice of several professions and specifies the conditions of professional practice. It gives the Office des professions du Québec (Québec professions bureau) a general coordinative and supervisory mandate. In addition, it delegates to each professional order the task of surveilling the practice of its particular profession. This control is particularly exercised when a permit is to be delivered or when entry on the order's role is to be made.

The 45 professional orders have real autonomy in fulfilling their mandate of protecting the public. Each has its own administrative practices. However, the Professional Code provides a framework within which these orders must operate. Before key regulations are adopted by the different orders, they must be approved by the Québec government or by the *Office des professions du Québec*, depending on the particular case. The regulations hence promulgated have force of law.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

There are several laws and regulations governing the Québec professional system. You would be well advised to familiarize yourself with all legal documentation pertaining to the professional order you wish to join.

Exclusive professions and professions with reserved titles

The Professional Code defines two types of professions: those with an exclusive right to practise and those with a reserved title.

All members of professional orders have a reserved title. Additionally, however, some have the exclusive right to perform certain acts or engage in reserved activities.

Practice of an exclusive profession

In the case of an exclusive profession, only members of the order can engage in the profession's activities and make use of the title allowed them by law. The 25 exclusive professions are each the object of a particular law that defines, among other things, the professional activities strictly reserved for the members of the order.

Exclusive professions

For more information, consult the information sheets on these professions on the Web site of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles.

Acupuncturist, advocate, agrologist, architect, bailiff, chartered accountant, chemist, chiropractor, dentist, denturologist, dispensing optician, engineer, forest engineer, geologist, hearing-aid acoustician, land-surveyor, midwife, notary, nurse, optometrist, pharmacist, physician, podiatrist, radiology technologist, veterinary surgeon.

Reserved titles

With the exception of certain professions in the health sector, order members of a profession with a reserved title are not exclusively entitled to engage in their professional activities. However, the obligation of being a member of the concerned order – which confers the right to use a particular professional title – is often one of the hiring conditions for individuals who are expected to carry out the duties relative to a profession with a reserved title. There are 27 professions with reserved titles.

Reserved activities

In June 2002, the National Assembly of Québec made substantial amendments to the Professional Code and certain specific laws in order to modernize the professional organization of health care in the public sector. Thirteen health professions – four exclusive professions and nine with reserved titles – were given a new description of their field of practice. A field of practice now lists the principal activities of the profession and its purpose. These professions were attributed with exclusive status in the form of reserved activities.

Professions with reserved titles

For more information, consult the information sheets on these professions on the Web site of the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles.

Audiologist*, certified general accountant, certified human resources professional, certified industrial relations counsellor, certified interpreter, certified management accountant, certified terminologist, certified translator, chartered administrator, chartered appraiser, dental hygienist, dental technician, dietician*, guidance counsellor, marital and family therapist, medical technologist*, nursing assistant*, occupational therapist*, physical rehabilitation therapist*, physiotherapist*, professional technologist, psychoeducator, psychologist, respiratory therapist*, social worker, speech therapist*, town planner.

* Some activities are reserved for professions marked with an asterisk.

The right to practice a profession

In order to obtain the right to practise a profession or to use a professional title, an individual must meet two specific conditions. First, the candidate must obtain a permit from the concerned order. Once in possession of said permit, the candidate must be entered on the roll of the order – in other words, the candidate must become a member of the order.

Conditions for obtaining a permit

To obtain a permit, the candidate must :

- meet the educational requirements (hold a Québec diploma, as provided for by regulation, or have a diploma or training recognized as being equivalent to the Québec diploma);
- meet other conditions, which vary according to the order in question (training period, exam, additional training or experience);
- have sufficient knowledge of the French language.

Generally speaking, it is not necessary to be a Canadian citizen or to reside permanently in Canada in order to secure a permit. Furthermore, an order cannot refuse to issue a permit for reasons of race, colour, sex, religion, national extraction, culture or social origin. However, an order is entitled to refuse a permit to a candidate with a disciplinary or criminal record.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

If you anticipate exercising a governed profession, you would be well advised to contact the concerned professional order before your departure. You will thus find out about the admission requirements and be able to evaluate the steps you will need to take in order to obtain your permit and become a member of the order. In some cases, you may even be able to begin the admission process. Certain immigration procedures may even require that you contact the professional order in question. Should this be the case, you will be notified by your immigration counsellor.

Diploma and training equivalence

An immigrant must obtain recognition of diplomas and training received abroad. In keeping with regulatory criteria approved by the government, each order has the power to recognize or deny the equivalence of diplomas or training obtained abroad.

To be recognized as equivalent, diplomas or training received abroad must correspond to the educational requirements imposed on individuals who have studied in Québec. This equivalence relates to the subject matters of the actual courses taken, the hours of study per subject, the total hours of study and relevant work experience. In Québec, course value translates into "units" at the collegial level and "credits" at the university level. For example, a bachelor's degree is generally made up of 90 credits, obtained after three years of full-time university study.

In order for their diplomas or training to be recognized, candidates may be asked by the order to successfully complete a curriculum, an internship or an exam. These are generally considered as part of the normal training required for the concerned profession.

Note: For certain disciplines, access to a curriculum or an internship can be difficult. Since the educational network is mainly designed with full-time students in mind, institutions are sometimes hesitant to accept part-time students. This is especially true in disciplines where a limited number of students are accepted.

The standards of equivalence, as well as the administrative steps required for obtaining equivalence are among the regulations provided for in the Professional Code. The candidate is provided with all regulations pertaining to the standards of equivalence upon submitting an application for equivalence to the targeted professional order. These regulations are also available on the Web site of the *Publications du Québec* (publishing house of the government of Québec).

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

All applications submitted to a professional order to obtain recognition of equivalence must be accompanied by the following documents:

- diplomas, certificates of study or any other academic certification;
- course transcripts;
- a description of courses and internships completed;
- employment certification;
- work experience certification;
- internship or continued training certification;
- permit to practise a profession, where applicable.

The documents provided must be the original documents or certified true copies. Candidates must provide a translation of documents written in a language other than French or English. In some cases, the order may request a sworn statement from the translator.

Other particular conditions for obtaining a permit

Besides the diplomas and training required to obtain the permit, a professional order may set other requisites: internship, additional training or a professional exam. The candidate must meet these additional requirements in order to obtain a permit.

It should be noted that these additional requirements are the same for all candidates, whether they received their training in Québec or abroad. By regulation, some orders provide standards of equivalence for these additional admission requirements.

Knowledge of the French language

The Charter of the French Language deems adequate knowledge of the French language a condition for obtaining a permit. Individuals having completed three years of secondary or post-secondary education in French are recognized as having sufficient knowledge of the French language.

If the candidate's records do not show appropriate knowledge of the French language, the candidate must obtain certification from the *Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF - Québec French language bureau)*. To do so, the candidate must pass an OQLF exam which serves to evaluate knowledge of the French language, on the basis of four specific criteria: written comprehension, oral comprehension, written expression and oral expression. In order to receive certification, the candidate must obtain a passing grade for each of the four criteria. The exam, held in Montréal, is free of charge.

A professional order cannot issue a regular permit to a candidate who does not meet the legal requirements bearing on the knowledge of the French language. However, in certain cases, the candidate may be awarded a temporary permit, if he or she is qualified to practise a given profession. This temporary permit may be renewed up to three times with the authorization of the OQLF. For each renewal, the candidate must take the OQLF exams in compliance with OQLF regulations. At the end of this period, the candidate must successfully pass the OQLF exam in order to receive a regular permit and be allowed to hold the title or practise the profession.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Presenting a file that meets the regulatory requirements is essential for having diplomas and training recognized. Prior to departure, make sure you have all of the required documents (original or certified true copies of the original documents). If you do not provide the appropriate documents, this may delay or even prevent your file from being processed.

USEFUL INFORMATION

The *Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles* provides an information service on regulated trades and professions. For more information, consult our Immigration-Québec services.

Review mechanisms

Regulations pertaining to the recognition of equivalence specify that in the case of a refusal or a disagreement, a candidate may request to be heard by the professional order. Following this, the order may review its decision. Once rendered the final decision may not be appealed. Some orders also provide for review mechanisms that can be applied at various stages of the admission process (internship, exam, etc.).

Becoming a member of a professional order

Once the permit is obtained, the candidate must be admitted to the order to be granted the right to use a professional title and practice the activities related to it. The Professional Code refers to this as "entry on the order's roll".

To be entered on the roll of the order, the applicant must:

- follow the required procedures and pay the related fees;
- pay the annual dues and other amounts owed to the order;
- provide liability insurance coverage, if applicable;
- meet other prescribed conditions: have no disciplinary or criminal record, undergo a medical examination (required in exceptional cases), etc.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Costs for obtaining a permit and be entered on the roll of a particular order are sometimes quite substantial. They vary from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, depending on the circumstances and the specific order. These costs include fees for processing the applicant's file for equivalence, examinations, issuing of the permit, order membership, etc. If applicable, costs for any required training or internship will also apply.

Procedures for admission to a professional order are sometimes long and complex. Over and above the order's file processing times, you should also take into consideration, as the case may be, the availability and duration of the courses or internships you are required to follow, as well as the frequency with which exams are administered by the order and the *Office québécois de la langue française*. Other administrative steps, such as, for example, securing additional required supporting documents, may also result in delays.

How to reach the various professional orders of Québec

For more information on how to obtain a permit, how to join a particular order, the administrative steps to follow, and standards of equivalence for diplomas and training, contact your profession's particular order. The list of professional orders is regularly updated on the *Office des professions du Québec's* Web site: www.opq.gouv.qc.ca.

EXCLUSIVE PROFESSIONS

Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec

(Québec order of acupuncturists)
1001, boul. De Maisonneuve Est, bureau 585
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4P9
Telephone: 514 523-2882
Toll free: 1 800 474-5914
www.ordredesacupuncteurs.qc.ca

Ordre des agronomes du Québec

(Québec order of agronomists)
1001, rue Sherbrooke Est, bureau 810
Montréal (Québec) H2L 1L3
Telephone: 514 596-3833
Toll free: 1 800 361-3833
www.oaq.qc.ca

Ordre des architectes du Québec

(Québec order of architects)
1825, boul. René-Lévesque Ouest
Montréal (Québec) H3H 1R4
Telephone: 514 937-6168
Toll free: 1 800 599-6168
www.oaq.com

Ordre des arpenteurs-géomètres du Québec

(Québec order of land-surveyors)
Iberville Quatre
2954, boul. Laurier, bureau 350
Sainte-Foy (Québec) G1V 4T2
Telephone: (418) 656-0730
www.oagq.qc.ca

Ordre des audioprothésistes du Québec

(Québec order of hearing-aid acousticians)
11305, rue Notre-Dame Est
Montréal (Québec) H1B 2W4
Telephone: 514 640-5117
Toll free: 1 866 676-5117
www.ordreaudio.qc.ca

Barreau du Québec (Québec Bar)

445, boul. Saint-Laurent
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 3T8
Telephone: 514 954-3400
Toll free: 1 800 361-8495
www.barreau.qc.ca

Ordre des chimistes du Québec

(Québec order of chemists)
Place du Parc
300, rue Léo-Pariseau, bureau 2199
Montréal (Québec) H2X 4B3
Telephone: 514 844-3644
www.ocq.qc.ca

Ordre des chiropraticiens du Québec

(Québec order of chiropractors)
7950, boul. Métropolitain Est
Anjou (Québec) H1K 1A1
Telephone: 514 355-8540
www.chiropratique.com

Ordre des comptables agréés du Québec

(Québec order of chartered accountants)
680, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, 18^e étage
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2S3
Telephone: 514 288-3256
Toll free: 1 800 363-4688
www.ocaq.qc.ca

Ordre des dentistes du Québec

(Québec order of dentists)
625, boul. René-Lévesque Ouest, 15^e étage
Montréal (Québec) H3B 1R2
Telephone: 514 875-8511
Toll free: 1 800 361-4887
www.odq.qc.ca

Ordre des denturologistes du Québec

(Québec order of denturologists)
45, Place Charles-LeMoine, bureau 106
Longueuil (Québec) J4K 5G5
Telephone: (450) 646-7922
Toll free: 1 800 567-2251
www.odq.com

Ordre des géologues du Québec

(Québec order of geologists)
1117, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, bureau 912
Montréal (Québec) H3B 1H9
Telephone: 514 278-6220
Toll free: 1 888 377-7708
www.ogq.qc.ca

Chambre des huissiers de justice du Québec

(Québec order of bailiffs)
390, boulevard Henri-Bourassa Ouest
Montréal (Québec) H3L 3T5
Telephone: 514 721-1100
www.huissiersquebec.qc.ca

Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec

(Québec order of nurses)
4200, boul. Dorchester Ouest
Montréal (Québec) H3Z 1V4
Telephone: 514 935-2501
Toll free: 1 800 363-6048
www.oiiq.org

Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec

(Québec order of engineers)
Gare Windsor,
1100, rue de la Gauchetière Ouest, bureau 350
Montréal (Québec) H3B 2S2
Telephone: 514 845-6141
Toll free: 1 800 461-6141
www.oiq.qc.ca

Ordre des ingénieurs forestiers du Québec

(Québec order of forest engineers)
2750, rue Einstein, bureau 110
Québec (Québec) G1P 4R1
Telephone: (418) 650-2411
www.oifq.com

Collège des médecins du Québec

(Québec order of physicians)
2170, boul. René-Lévesque Ouest
Montréal (Québec) H3H 2T8
Telephone: 514 933-4441
Toll free: 1 888 633-3246
www.cmq.org

Ordre des médecins vétérinaires du Québec

(Québec order of veterinary surgeons)
800, av. Sainte-Anne, bureau 200
Saint-Hyacinthe (Québec) J2S 5G7
Telephone: (450) 774-1427
Toll free: 1 800 267-1427
www.omvq.qc.ca

Chambre des notaires du Québec

(Québec order of notaries)
800, Place Victoria, bureau 700
Tour de la Bourse, Case postale 162
Montréal (Québec) H4Z 1L8
Telephone: 514 879-1793
Toll free: 1 800 668-2473
www.cdnq.org

Ordre des opticiens d'ordonnances du Québec

(Québec order of dispensing opticians)
630, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, bureau 601
Montréal (Québec) H3A 1E4
Telephone: 514 288-7542
Toll free: 1 800 563-6345
www.oodq.qc.ca

Ordre des optométristes du Québec

(Québec order of optometrists)
1265, rue Berri, bureau 700
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4X4
Telephone: 514 499-0524
Toll free: 1 888 499-0524
www.ooq.org

Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec

(Québec order of pharmacists)
266, rue Notre-Dame Ouest, bureau 301
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 1T6
Telephone: 514 284-9588
Toll free: 1 800 363-0324
www.opq.org

Ordre des podiatres du Québec

(Québec order of podiatrists)
300, rue du Saint-Sacrement, bureau 324
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 1X4
Telephone: 514 288-0019
Toll free: 1 888 514-7433
www.ordredespodiatres.qc.ca

Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec

(Québec order of midwives)
430, rue Sainte-Hélène, bureau 405
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 2K7
Telephone: 514 286-1313
Toll free: 1 877 711-1313
www.osfq.org

Ordre des technologues en radiologie du Québec

(Québec order of radiology technologists)
6455, rue Jean-Talon Est, bureau 401
Saint-Léonard (Québec) H1S 3E8
Telephone: 514 351-0052
Toll free: 1 800 361-8759
www.otrq.qc.ca

PROFESSIONS WITH RESERVED TITLES

Ordre des administrateurs agréés du Québec

(Québec order of chartered administrators)
910, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, bureau 100
Montréal (Québec) H3A 1G3
Telephone: 514 499-0880
Toll free: 1 800 465-0880
www.adma.qc.ca

Ordre des comptables en management accrédités du Québec

(Québec order of certified management accountants)
715, rue du Square-Victoria, 3^e étage
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 2H7
Telephone: 514 849-1155
Toll free: 1 800 263-5390
www.cma-quebec.org

Ordre des comptables généraux licenciés du Québec

(Québec order of certified general accountants)
500, Place d'Armes, bureau 1800
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 2W2
Telephone: 514 861-1823
Toll free: 1 800 463-0163
www.cga-quebec.org

Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines et en relations industrielles agréés du Québec

(Québec order of certified human resources and industrial relations counsellors)
1200, av. McGill College, bureau 1400
Montréal (Québec) H3B 4G7
Telephone: 514 879-1636
www.orhri.org

Ordre des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation et des psychoéducateurs et psychoéducatrices du Québec

(Québec order of guidance counsellors and psychoeducators)
1600, boul. Henri-Bourassa Ouest, bureau 520
Montréal (Québec) H3M 3E2
Telephone: 514 737-4717
Toll free: 1 800 363-2643
www.occoppq.qc.ca

Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec

(Québec professional order of dietitians)
2155, rue Guy, bureau 1220
Montréal (Québec) H3H 2R9
Telephone: 514 393-3733
Toll free: 1 888 393-8528
www.opdq.org

Ordre des ergothérapeutes du Québec

(Québec order of occupational therapists)
2021, av. Union, bureau 920
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2S9
Telephone: 514 844-5778
Toll free: 1 800 265-5778
www.oeq.org

Ordre des évaluateurs agréés du Québec

(Québec order of chartered appraisers)
415, rue Saint-Antoine Ouest, bureau 450
Montréal (Québec) H2Z 2B9
Telephone: 514 281-9888
Toll free: 1 800 982-5387
www.oeaq.qc.ca

Ordre des hygiénistes dentaires du Québec

(Québec order of dental hygienists)
1290, rue Saint-Denis, 3^e étage
Montréal (Québec) H2X 3J7
Telephone: 514 284-7639
Toll free: 1 800 361-2996
www.ohdq.com

Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers auxiliaires du Québec

(Québec order of nursing assistants)
531, rue Sherbrooke Est
Montréal (Québec) H2L 1K2
Telephone: 514 282-9511
www.oiiq.org

Ordre professionnel des inhalothérapeutes du Québec

(Québec professional order of respiratory therapists)
1440, rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, bureau 320
Montréal (Québec) H3G 1R8
Telephone: 514 931-2900
Toll free: 1 800 561-0029
www.opiq.qc.ca

Ordre des orthophonistes et audiologistes du Québec

(Québec order of speech therapists and audiologists)
235, boul. René-Lévesque Est, bureau 601
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1N8
Telephone: 514 282-9123
www.ooaq.qc.ca

Ordre professionnel de la physiothérapie du Québec

(Québec professional order of physiotherapists)
7151, rue Jean-Talon Est, bureau 1000
Anjou (Québec) H1M 3N8
Telephone: 514 351-2770
Toll free: 1 800 361-2001
www.oppq.qc.ca

Ordre des psychologues du Québec

(Québec order of psychologists)
1100, av. Beaumont, bureau 510
Mont-Royal (Québec) H3P 3H5
Telephone: 514 738-1881
Toll free: 1 800 363-2644
www.ordrepsy.qc.ca

Ordre des techniciens et techniciennes dentaires du Québec

(Québec order of dental technicians)
500, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, bureau 900
Montréal (Québec) H3A 3C6
Telephone: 514 282-3837
www.ottdq.com

Ordre professionnel des technologistes médicaux du Québec

(Québec professional order of medical technologists)
1150, boul. Saint-Joseph Est, bureau 300
Montréal (Québec) H2J 1L5
Telephone: 514 527-9811
Toll free: 1 800 567-7763
www.optmq.org

Ordre des technologues professionnels du Québec

(Québec order of professional technologists)
1265, rue Berri, bureau 720
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4X4
Telephone: 514 845-3247
Toll free: 1 800 561-3459
www.otpq.qc.ca

Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec

(Québec order of certified translators, terminologists and interpreters)
2021, av. Union, bureau 1108
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2S9
Telephone: 514 845-4411
Toll free: 1 800 265-4815
www.ottiaq.org

Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux du Québec

(Québec professional order of social workers)
255, rue Crémazie Est, bureau 520
Montréal (Québec) H2M 1M2
Telephone: 514 731-3925
Toll free: 1 888 731-9420
www.optsq.org

Ordre des urbanistes du Québec

(Québec order of town planners)
85, rue Saint-Paul Ouest, bureau 410
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 3V4
Telephone: 514 849-1177
www.ouq.qc.ca



For further information

Information on how to obtain a permit, how to join a particular order, the administrative steps to follow and standards of equivalence for diplomas and training

- Contact the professional order responsible for your profession. The list of professional orders is regularly updated on the *Office des professions du Québec's* Web site: www.opq.gouv.qc.ca.
- Consult the information sheet on your profession on Web site: www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca.

Information on the Québec professional system and the Professional Code

- **Office des professions du Québec**
(Québec professions bureau)
www.opq.gouv.qc.ca
- **Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec**
(Québec interprofessional council)
www.professions-quebec.org

Information on certification and exams for evaluating knowledge of the French language

- **Office québécois de la langue française**
(Québec French language bureau)
www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca

Information and assistance with regard to procedures pertaining to a professional order

- **Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles**
(ministry of immigration and cultural communities)
www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca

In the Montréal area:

Contact the *Service d'information sur les professions et métiers réglementés* (information service on regulated trades and professions): 514 864-9191.

Elsewhere in Québec or abroad:

Contact the Immigration-Québec service in your settlement area.

Free access to laws and regulations on the Internet and sale of printed documents

- **Les Publications du Québec**
(Québec government publishing house)
www.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca

Information on the job market in Québec

- **Emploi-Québec**
(Employment Québec)
emploiquebec.net
- **Ministère du Développement économique, de l'Innovation et de l'Exportation**
(ministry of economic development, innovation and export trade)
www.mdeie.gouv.qc.ca

Information on programs and services offered by the government of Québec and on other services useful to the public

- **Portail Québec**
www.gouv.qc.ca
- **Services Québec**
Anywhere in Québec:
1 800 363-1363 (toll free)
Outside of Québec: 418 643-1344
Deaf or hearing-impaired persons
Montréal: 514 873-4626
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-9596 (toll-free)

Note

The information in this document was current as of **November 2006**. It was obtained from various sources and in no way replaces laws, political statements or official programs.