

# Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association

## 2024 Fair Registration Practices Report

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**Prepared for the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC)**



**FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER**  
COMMISSAIRE À L'ÉQUITÉ

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# 1. Background

Under section 20 of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006 (FARPACTA), which is substantially similar to section 22.7(1) of Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA),

“A regulated profession shall prepare a fair registration practices report annually or at such other times as the Fairness Commissioner may specify or at such times as may be specified in the regulations”.

Section 23 of FARPACTA and Section 22.9 of Schedule 2 of the RHPA then go on to indicate that the Fairness Commissioner shall specify the form in which these reports shall be prepared, along with the required filing dates. This section also stipulates that a regulator must make these reports public.

It is pursuant to these authorities that the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) has required that each regulator complete its annual Fair Registration Practices Report (FRP).

Please note that this report covers the time-period from January 1 to December 31, 2024.

The FRP:

- Collects information about the organization, applicants to the profession and current membership.
- Provides information to the public about how the organization has implemented fair registration practices during the reporting period.
- Helps the OFC to successfully undertake the education and compliance activities which include monitoring, applying a risk-informed compliance framework, assessing performance, and sharing best practices.
- Determines whether the regulator is complying with recently enacted legislative and regulatory provisions designed to reduce barriers for domestic labour mobility and internationally trained applicants.
- Identifies trends across regulated professions and regulated health colleges.

## 2. Organization information

<b>Organization name</b>	Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association
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## 3. Registration requirements

Applicants to the regulated professions and compulsory trades must fulfil registration requirements to practice their profession or use a professional title. This section summarizes registration requirements for each profession or trade regulated by Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association

Licensing requirements (brief description for each requirement listed):

<b>Profession/ Trade Name</b>	Forester
<b>Academic requirement</b>	4-Year science-based degree or equivalent of post-secondary education and relevant progressive experience to achieve Full Membership (R.P.F.) Associate Membership (Associate R.P.F.) is available for applicants who have relevant post-secondary education but do not meet the academic requirements for Full Membership. The minimum academic requirements for this membership category is a relevant diploma.
<b>Experience requirement</b>	18 months of mentored forestry experience. May request credit for relevant prior experience within the last 5 years that was mentored by a registered forestry professional in another province or country, who is in good standing with their regulatory body.
<b>Language requirement</b>	None.
<b>Additional information on licensing requirements (may include links to appropriate page on regulator website):</b>	

## 4. Third party assessments

Third party organizations that assess qualifications on behalf of the regulator.

<b>Organization name</b>	<b>Function</b>
Forest Professional Regulators of Canada	Prior learning and recognition
World Education Services	Academic credential evaluation

Fair access legislation requires regulators to take reasonable measures to ensure that any third parties undertake assessment of qualifications in a way that is transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association takes the following measure(s) to ensure fair and timely assessments:

World Education Services: Applicants order course-by-course evaluations directly from WES. If they encounter issues or delays OPFA will follow up with WES directly to resolve the issue, however, this is extremely rare. Please note that to ensure compliance with labour mobility laws the OPFA collaborates with the other regulators of professional foresters to develop national professional academic standards and deliver them so that they meet the requirements of labour mobility laws. The national professional academic standards are approved by each of the regulator's Councils whenever a change is made to them. The Forest Professional Regulators of Canada is the national body of forestry regulators, of which OPFA is a member organization and the Registrar is a voting member. The FPRC owns the Credential Assessment Process (CAP) which provides academic and experiential assessments against the national Certification Standards. The CAP is managed by the Central Assessment Authority, a committee of the FPRC, on which the OPFA Registrar sits. The assessments are completed by a team of national assessors, appointed by each of the provincial regulators. CAP results are provided to the regulator, whose Registration Committee (or equivalent) has the authority to review, amend if necessary, and approve. The regulator follows up with the applicant and guides them through the CAP process and next steps; there is no direct contact with the CAP assessors. Due to its involvement and oversight of the CAP, the OPFA does not consider the CAP a true third party service, but understands that it may be considered so for the purpose of this report. As such, it is included in this report as advised by the OFC representative.

## 5. Accomplishments, risks and mitigations

Key accomplishments and risks pertaining to fair registration practices during the reporting period are summarized below.

### A. Accomplishments

1	Introduction of the Ontario Forest Policy & Legislative Framework Challenge Test. This provides an online objective method for applicants who believe that they are already competent in this area and should not be required to take the training module(s) to attempt to demonstrate competency. It is available to take at any time and at no cost to the applicant. If they are successful, they are not required to complete the training module(s). If they are unsuccessful they are required to complete the training modules to ensure that they are competent in the relevant policy & legislation in Ontario.
2	Development of communication materials aimed at students and those in allied occupations to raise awareness of professional forestry as a diverse career choice & improve understanding of the pathways to becoming licensed.
3	Development of an OPFA delivered online Interim Forest Policy and Legislative Framework training module and interview process to meet the training gap left by the Ontario Forest Policy Bridge Training Modules being pulled by the university. This was a lot of work by staff and volunteers under a very constrained timeframe to ensure applicants could continue to meet their registration requirements to become licensed. The module has been successfully in place since November and has been used by 28 applicants so far, who otherwise would still be waiting for the updated Bridge Training modules to be developed by the university.

### B. Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation Measure
Lack of funding to update current and develop new Bridge Training modules means the OPFA is dependent on the university partners to do so within their	The OPFA submitted a funding application for the development and updating of Bridge Training modules which would allow for the full set of

<p>own limitations and timeframes. This has resulted in most modules still awaiting funds for updating, and some modules being pulled by a University partner while they sought contractors and funds to update them. The Ontario Forest Policy &amp; Legislative Framework Bridge Training modules are essential to the licensing process to ensure applicants who are not already competent in these areas have available training to fill that competency gap and ensure they understand the relevant policies and legislation. These modules were made unavailable and the timeframes for the development updated modules would cause significant delays (8+ months) in the registration process for those who need to complete this training.</p>	<p>modules to be updated in a more timely manner and with the OPFA having more control over the process. As of today, we have not received confirmation of any funding. A group of volunteers with expertise in forest policy &amp; legislation were formed to develop, along with OPFA staff, an in house interim online training module which could be provided until the university was able to update the official modules. This interim module has allowed applicants who were awaiting the updated modules to progress through the licensing process. The OPFA successfully asked the university to continue providing other Bridge Training modules where updating would be beneficial but the majority of the content has not drastically changed, as a stop gap until the modules can be updated.</p>
<p>Lack of awareness of professional forestry as a regulated profession, the role of the OPFA, what it means to be a regulated profession, and the types of work that professional foresters do. This means that many individuals, including internationally trained individuals, apply believing that if they have a degree they will automatically be qualified to become licensed and see the OPFA as a membership club rather than a regulatory body that exists to protect the public interest. This can result in them stalling out in the registration process when they realise they must demonstrate competence in</p>	<p>Website information is continuously adjusted to improve clarity. Communication materials have been developed and are being distributed to improve understanding of professional forestry as a regulated profession, the role of the OPFA, what it means to be a regulated profession, and the diversity of people and careers in professional forestry. Clarifications &amp; improvements to government websites relating to professional forestry were requested.</p>

<p>the Certification Standards and that there are added responsibilities of being a regulated professional.</p>	
<p>Declining enrollment in Canadian Forestry Accreditation Board (CFAB) accredited programs. The majority of applicants come from non-CFAB accredited programs, and the OPFA accepts applicants from a wide range of related programs. There is no universal forestry degree. The course content of these programs must be assessed against the National Certification Standards. The majority of applicants have some or many competency gaps and require additional training to fill these gaps before they are eligible to become licensed. This delays the process and increases costs for the applicant.</p>	<p>Over the past two years the OPFA has restructured the registration process to make better use of the Associate Membership (limited license) category. We have continued to improve communication about the Associate Membership option which enables individuals to become licensed in areas in which they are competent much sooner, and still allows them to work towards full licensure on their own time. This has reduced applicants stalling out in the registration process and we are seeing the Associate Membership category begin to grow, despite the original members retiring. Importantly, the OPFA is getting much higher numbers of requests to apply for Associate Membership and people now see it as a valuable stepping stone and achievable goal in their career journey. We will continue to push this messaging and expect to see Associate Membership grow as an achievable licensure pathway. We have also divided the competency assessment process for those who have not completed a CFAB accredited program into two phases: Phase 1 (academic) and Phase 2 (experiential). Phase 1 is mandatory and Phase 2 is optional. This has helped make the process more manageable and has resulted in more applicants progressing through the competency assessment process.</p>



Challenges faced by applicants, especially internationally trained applicants, in making connections and networking to find relevant employment, experience & competency gap filling (if required).	The OPFA has a limited ability to resolve this issue as much of the challenges are within the workplace environment. However the OPFA continues to offer the Shadow a Forester program to provide opportunities for applicants to connect with professional foresters across the province working in a variety of different areas. We also help connect them with mentors if they are unable to secure one themselves. We provide advice upon request for where they can search for jobs and invite them to introduce themselves to the profession through our social media and by getting involved in committees/working groups and attending events such as the OPFA Annual Conference.
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## 6. Changes to registration practices

During the January 1 to December 31, 2024 reporting period, Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association has introduced the following changes impacting its registration processes. Changes, anticipated impacts, and risk mitigation are summarized below.

### A. Registration requirements and practices

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Registration requirements either	Yes	Bylaw changes: 1. The requirement for an applicant from non-CFAB accredited programs to successfully demonstrate competencies through the national Credential Assessment

through regulation, by-law or policy		<p>Process (CAP) to be eligible to apply for Full Membership was amended to state "or an academic competency assessment" which enables those who were not eligible to undergo the CAP at the time of their application (did not have a 4yr BSc or equivalent) and who underwent an academic assessment through the Registration Committee and applied for Associate Membership, to be eligible to work towards Full Membership in the future by filling competency gaps, without being required to undergo a duplicative academic assessment through the CAP.</p> <p>2. Clarification of the academic requirements to apply for Provisional Membership ("successful attainment of a degree or diploma in a field relevant to forestry").</p> <p>3. Adjustment of the requirement for labour mobility applicants to complete the local knowledge assessment , Personal Practice Focus and Learning Plan within 6 months of licensure to allow for this to be completed within 5 years prior to application instead.</p>
New or consolidated class of certificates or licenses	No	
Assessment of qualifications, including competency-based assessments and examinations	Yes	<p>1. Professionalism and Ethics Challenge Test was developed as an optional method to demonstrate competency in this Standard in 2023, but was made an application requirement in 2024. The challenge test provides a method of determining whether an applicant is competent in this area already, or will be required to complete the Bridge Training module as part of their registration requirements. Completing it as an application requirement means that applicants know right</p>

		<p>away whether they will need to complete the training, before they have applied to become a member. This clarifies the process for them and also provides an introduction to the role of the OPFA and what it means to be a regulated professional at the beginning of their registration journey. There is no cost to complete the online challenge test. 2. Ontario Forest Policy &amp; Legislative Framework Challenge Test. This challenge test was new to 2024 and provided a standardized and objective method for applicants who believe that they are competent in these areas and should not be required to complete the Bridge Training modules to do so. There is no cost to complete the online challenge test and it can be completed at any time during the registration process.</p>
Documentation requirements for registration	No	
Timelines for registration, decisions and/or responses	No	
Registration and/or assessment fees	No	
Changes to internal review or appeal process	No	
Access by applicants to their records	No	
Other	No	

## B. Training, policy and applicant supports

<b>Registration process</b>	<b>Changes Made (Yes / No)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Training and resources for staff who deal with registration issues	No	
Resources or training to support applicants to move through the licensing process	No	
Anti-racism and inclusion-based policies and practices	No	

### **C. System partners**

<b>Registration process</b>	<b>Changes Made (Yes / No)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Steps to increase accountability of third-party service provider(s)	Yes	A confidentiality agreement was developed for the Forest Professional Regulators of Canada, including all those involved in the Credential Assessment Process (CAP). All individuals involved were already bound by confidentiality agreements within the regulatory bodies in their own provinces already, but a national confidentiality agreement was developed in addition.
Accreditation of educational programs	No	

Mutual recognition agreements	No	
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## D. Responsiveness to changes in the regulatory environment

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Emergency registration plans	Yes	Emergency registration plan was developed and submitted to the OFC.
Technological or digital improvements	No	
Steps to address labour shortages in the profession or trade	Yes	Communication materials aimed at students and allied occupations developed to improve awareness of the profession and the licensing pathways. Distribution plan is ongoing. Associate Membership continues to be promoted by the OPFA to applicants who are not eligible for Full Membership at this time, to encourage them to become licensed in the areas in which they already have education and experience and so enter the workforce sooner.

## 7. Membership and application data

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner collects membership and application data from regulators through annual Fair Registration Practices Reports, which are also made available to the public. Information is collected for the purpose of discerning statistical changes and trends related to a regulator's membership, application volumes, licensure/certification results, and appeals year over year.

### A. Race-based data collected

	<b>Race-based data collected? (Yes or No)</b>
Members	No
Applicants	No

Additional description:

## **B. Other identity-based or demographic data collected**

	<b>Other identity-based or demographic data collected? (Yes or No)</b>
Members	No
Applicants	No

Additional description:

## **C. Languages of service provision**

Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association makes application materials and information available to applicants in the following languages.

<b>Language</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
English	Yes
French	No
Other (please specify)	We have some national documents, such as the Certification Standards available in French. We very rarely receive requests for documents in French or any other language but have accommodated when we do, if we can. For

	example we had one applicant who could read English but struggled to keep up with oral English. He wished to attend the Orientation Session we provide as a live webinar, so we purchased a 1 month subscription to software that would provide automated translated captions for him.
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## D. Membership Profile

Profession Name	Total Number of Members
Forester	963

Class of License	Total Number of Members	Number of Internationally Educated Members
Full / General/ Independent Practice	545	19
Associate	42	1
Honourary	4	0
Inactive	33	2
Life	83	0
Non-Resident	10	0
Provisional	188	27
Student	58	25

Gender	Number of Members
Female	274
Male	680
Other / not collected	9

<b>Jurisdiction of Initial Training</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>
Ontario	731
Other provinces and territories	146
United States	6
Other International	74
Other/not collected	6

<b>Country of Initial Training</b>	<b>Number of Members</b>
Canada	877
United States of America	6
Albania	2
Bangladesh	3
Brazil	1
Bulgaria	1
Cameroon	1
China	9
Colombia	2
Croatia	1
Egypt	1
Ethiopia	1
France	1
Germany	1
Ghana	5
Guatemala	1
India	13
Iran	2
Nepal	8
Nigeria	4
Pakistan	3
Philippines	2
Sri Lanka	2
Sudan	1
Taiwan	1
United Kingdom	7



Uzbekistan	1
Other Countries	6

Official language of preference	Number of Members
English	963

Racial identity (optional)	Number of Members
Not collected	963

## E. Data Notes

We do not collect data on official language of preference.
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## F. Applicant Profile

Profession Name	Total Number of Applicants
Forester	<b>97</b>

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	60
Female	35
Other / not collected	2

<b>Jurisdiction of Initial Training</b>	<b>Applications received in 2024</b>	<b>Applications with decisions pending (in progress at end of reporting year)</b>
Ontario	49	11
Other provinces and territories	11	2
United States	2	2
Other International	35	8

<b>Country of Initial Training</b>	<b>Number of Applicants</b>
Bangladesh	1
Cameroon	1
China	2
Egypt	1
Ghana	2
India	12
Iran	1
Nepal	7
Nigeria	5
Pakistan	1
Sri Lanka	2
Canada	60
United States of America	2

<b>Official language of preference</b>	<b>Number of Applicants</b>
English	97

<b>Racial identity (optional)</b>	<b>Number of Applicants</b>
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Not collected	97
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## G. Data Notes

We do not collect official language of preference data, however, as that was not an option in section B.4., English was answered.

## H. Application Decisions

The table below summarizes the outcome of registration decisions finalized in 2024. Some applications may have been received in the previous year.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn
Ontario	38	0	0
Other provinces and territories	9	0	0
United States	0	0	0
Other International	27	0	0

## I. New Registrants

For the 2024 reporting year, the breakdown of new registrants by class of registration is provided below:

Class of registration	Total new registrants	Number of internationally educated registrants
Full / General/ Independent Practice	9	0
Associate	1	0
Provisional	29	6
Student	35	21

## J. Data Notes

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## K. Reviews and Appeals

Applicants for registration may appeal a registration decision. An **internal review or appeal** involves formal reconsideration of a registration decision further to an application and submissions by the applicant.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Number of internal reviews and appeals processed	Number of decisions changed following internal review or appeal

An **external review or appeal** involves review of a registration decision by an external appeal tribunal or court, such as the Health Professions Review and Appeal Board or Divisional Court.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Number of applicants who sought external review or appeal	Number of decisions changed following external review or appeal

**Issues raised in reviews and appeals** can point to challenges in the registration process. The table below summarizes top issues or reasons that applicants raised during these appeal proceedings.

Issue or reason raised	Number of appeals

**Internationally trained applicants** face additional challenges in the registration process. The table below summarizes top reasons for not registering internationally trained individuals.

Reason for not registering	Number of internationally trained applicants

## L. Data Notes

There were no reviews or appeals in the calendar year.

## 8. Registration Timelines

### Profession: Forester

#### i. Domestic Labour Mobility Applicants

9.1 (4) of FARPACTA prescribes that regulators must make a registration decision within 30 business days from the time that they receive a complete application “and everything required by the regulated profession in respect of the application.”

Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association requires the following documentation before beginning to count the 30-day registration time-period. This would be the starting point of the registration process for the purpose the data summarized below.

- Completed application form
- Examination results

- Letter of standing / good character
- Payment of fee
- Other (please specify)    Resume, Personal Practice Focus and Learning Plan, Examination is completion of the Professionalism and Ethics Challenge Test (not a true exam- does not affect application decision- only whether additional training module will be required prior to full licensing)

For domestic labour mobility applications received between January 1, 2024 and November 30, 2024 and decisions made to December 31 (one month later), registration timelines and outcomes are summarized below:

Registration decisions	30 days or less	More than 30 days
Full registration granted	2	0
Alternative registration granted	0	0
No registration granted	0	0

## ii. Internationally Trained Individuals

Sections 5 and 6 of Ontario Regulation 261/22 made under FARPACTA establish two-time standards for ITIs:

- **A six-month time limit** for a regulator to make a registration decision following receipt of everything that it requires in respect of an application for registration. (This time limit must be met in 90% of all cases.)
- **A 12-month standard** for the regulator to report on its ability to register ITIs, who are eligible for registration without condition, from the earlier of the date that:
  - (a) the regulated profession receives everything it requires in respect of the individual's application for registration, or
  - (b) any third-party that assesses the individual's qualification on behalf of the regulated profession, receives everything it requires for this purpose.

Section 6 of the regulation further stipulates that the regulator's annual Fair Registration Practices Report shall include data on a regulator's compliance with the six-month standard, and its ability to meet the 12-month standard and, where the regulator has been unable to meet this one-year standard, the steps that the regulator is taking to meet this target.

Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association requires the following documentation before beginning to count the six-month registration time-period for internationally educated individuals.

- Completed application form
- Credential assessment report
- Competency-based assessment results
- Examination results
- Payment of fee
- Other (please specify) Full membership from an unaccredited program: transcripts, Mentoring Agreement, resume, 18 months of mentored forestry experience (minimum of 6 months after 80% of competencies met), Professionalism and Ethics Bridge Training or challenge test, academic competency assessment, fill gaps in the required competencies, Local Knowledge Assessment (Ontario Forest Policy and Legislative Framework Bridge Training or challenge test), Work History Form, 2 Sponsorship Forms, 2 Character Witness Forms, Personal Practice Focus and Learning Plan.

For applications from internationally trained individuals received between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024 and decisions made to December 31 (six months later), registration timelines and outcomes are summarized below.

<b>Registration decisions</b>	<b>6 months or less</b>	<b>More than 6 months</b>
<b>Full registration granted</b>	0	0
<b>Alternative registration granted</b>	11	0
<b>No registration granted</b>	0	0

Average time in weeks to communicate a registration decision following receipt of everything required by the regulator in respect of an application for registration.

4 - Registration Committee meets approximately every 2 months to review applications. Formal written decisions are provided to applicants within 2 weeks of the meeting date.

**For regulators where a third-party service provider is the first point of contact for applicants:**

Ontario Professional FORESTERS Association addresses the twelve-month standard as follows:

n/a



## Glossary of terms

**Applicant:** An individual who has applied for membership in a regulated profession or compulsory trade, with the associated rights to practice their profession / trade or use a professional title.

**Domestic labour mobility:** Applications subject to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, which stipulates that a certificate issued by one province or territory should be recognized by all others unless there is an exception due to public health, safety and security reasons.

**Internationally educated / trained:** An individual whose initial professional education was not from a Canadian educational institution, or who is applying for trade certification based on experience gained outside Canada. This category includes individuals with education / training in the US and other countries. It also includes individuals who completed their initial professional education outside Canada and later addressed gaps with courses or a bridging program based in Canada.

**Jurisdiction of initial training:** For professions, the jurisdiction in which an applicant obtained their initial professional education used in full or partial fulfilment of registration requirements. For trades, the jurisdiction of initial trade experience listed on a Trades Equivalency Assessment (TEA) application.

**Member:** An individual who has satisfied the conditions for registration in their profession / trade and has been granted the right to practice and/or the right to use a professional designation or title. Members may hold a full license to engage in independent practice, or they may hold an alternate class of registration.

**Racial identity:** Voluntary self-report data of racial identity as a social description. Follows categories identified in the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate Data <<https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>> .

**Registration requirements:** the entry-to-practice requirements that that an applicant must meet to be granted full membership in a regulated profession or trade, with the associated right to practice or right to use a professional title.

- **Academic requirement:** The formal education, or equivalent, that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade.
- **Experience requirement:** The experiential training or work experience that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade.
- **Language requirement:** The level of language proficiency that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade, and the language proficiency tests accepted in fulfillment of this requirement.

**Third party service provider:** An external organization that assesses applicant qualifications on behalf of the regulator.