

Application

TO THE ORDRE DES ACUPUNCTEURS DU QUÉBEC

General Information

I



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1. Introduction

This document contains, in accordance with the "Admission Policy of the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec," all the information related to the process of becoming a member of the profession. The first part discusses the legislative framework for the practice of the acupuncturist profession in Québec. A brief description of the Québec professional system and the role of the Ordre des acupuncteurs will then introduce each step of the process in obtaining a permit to practise acupuncture in Québec.

1.1 Health legislation in Canada and Québec

It is first important to understand that in Canada there are two levels of government and that each level has a distinct and exclusive jurisdiction over various aspects of the health care system.

The federal government, which exercises authority that applies to all the provinces and territories making up Canada, has jurisdiction over everything related to medical devices and health products, both pharmaceuticals and natural products. The respective governments of the various provinces or territories have authority over all matters relating to the practice of the health professions.

1.2 The Québec professional system

In Québec, health professionals are subject to various rules, enacted by the province's National Assembly, to ensure that citizens' rights to quality services are respected. To apply these rules, the health system is governed by different authorities to which the National Assembly delegates various complementary mandates. The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux is responsible for organizing the entire public and private health network. Responsibility for protecting the public is assumed by the Ministère de la Justice through the Office des professions du Québec and the Professional Orders. Thus the [Professional Code of Québec](#) is the framework legislation of the Québec professional system. This Code specifies the conditions for professional practice. In the Québec professional system, the Professional Orders have been mandated to ensure that persons wishing to practise a profession have the competencies required to do so and comply with the laws and regulations specific to their profession.

A Professional Order is the only competent authority permitted to issue permits in its field. The Order has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that professionals with a permit have the competencies needed to ensure the public is protected throughout their careers. To fulfill this important statutory mandate, each Professional Order has the necessary powers to ensure the quality of professional services. Each Professional Order must assess the competencies of its members, oversee the practice of the profession and ensure that competencies are maintained and updated.

1.3 The Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec, representative of provincial authority

The Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec (OAQ) is therefore a regulatory body mandated by the Government of Québec to protect the public by applying and enforcing the laws and regulations governing the practice of acupuncture in Québec.

The [Professional Code of Québec](#) stipulates that anyone wishing to practise acupuncture in Québec must hold a permit issued by the OAQ and must be entered on the Roll of the Order.

Section 32 of the Professional Code

"No person shall claim in any manner to be an [acupuncturist], or use any of these titles or use one of the above titles or any other title or abbreviation which may lead to the belief that he is one, or initials which may lead to the belief that he is one, or engage in a professional activity reserved to the members of a [Professional Order], claim to have the right to do so or act in such a way as to lead to the belief that he is authorized to do so, unless he holds a valid, appropriate permit and is entered on the roll of the order empowered to issue the permit, unless it is allowed by law."

Section of the 15 Act respecting acupuncture

"Every person who contravenes section 14 is liable, for each offence, to the penalties prescribed in section 188 of the Professional Code." "

Under the rules set out in the [Professional Code of Québec](#), the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec (OAQ) issues permits to practise acupuncture and oversees the practice of permit holders. This authority, which is delegated by the State, stipulates that, pursuant to its mandate to protect the public and in accordance with section 40 of the Professional Code,¹ the OAQ must ensure that an applicant possesses the minimum qualifications required before it issues a permit to practise acupuncture. To obtain a permit, applicants must demonstrate that they have mastered the minimum entry-level competencies. The current regulations stipulate that the following competencies may be recognized:

- a) Persons with a DEC in acupuncture issued by the Collège de Rosemont
- b) Under certain conditions, acupuncturists entered on the Roll of a Canadian regulatory body applying for a "Permit on Permit" under [labour mobility](#) regulations
- c) Persons who have obtained a diploma or training equivalence.

All applicants who do not hold a DEC in acupuncture from the Collège de Rosemont awarded within the 3 years preceding their application to the OAQ must apply for diploma or training equivalence. However, it is important to note that, in practice, no diploma has yet been recognized as equivalent. Applications from applicants trained outside Québec are, until further notice, therefore basically processed as an application for training equivalence.

¹ The Board of Directors of an order shall issue a permit [...] to any person who meets the conditions prescribed by this code, the act constituting this order and the regulations adopted under this code or said act. 1973, c. 43, s. 40; 1994, c. 40, s. 36; 2008, c. 11, s. 1, a. 9.

The OAQ Admissions Committee receives and assesses all applications for equivalence and training. Based on the results of this analysis, the Admissions Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors whether or not to grant training. This may be augmented, depending on the quality of the application, by additional training required for an equivalence to be granted.

2. Obtaining a permit to practise acupuncture in Québec

Depending on the status of the applicants, there are different ways of obtaining the permit that will grant the privilege of practising acupuncture in Québec.

2.1 Applicants trained in Québec

The *Regulation respecting the diplomas issued by designated educational institutions which give access to permits or specialist's certificates of professional orders* stipulates that:

"A diploma of college studies awarded by the Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology after January 1, 2003 following the completion of studies in traditional acupuncture or in acupuncture at Collège de Rosemont gives access to the permit issued by the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec."

Therefore, when you have an acupuncture diploma from Collège de Rosemont issued for less than three years, unless there are special circumstances, you can be admitted without any additional conditions.

On the other hand, if you have a diploma issued for more than three years, you may be subject to skills evaluation and updating, based on the status of your file.

2.2 Applicants from a regulated Canadian province

The *Regulation respecting the diplomas issued by designated educational institutions which give access to permits or specialist's certificates of professional orders* stipulates that:

2.2.1 Participating provinces

Under the rules regarding labour mobility, and subject to certain conditions, the holder of a permit issued by the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec may have a legal permit to practise as an acupuncturist in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario or Newfoundland and Labrador.

2.2.2 Obtaining a permit from the Order

To obtain a permit from the Order, an applicant who holds a legal permit to practise the

profession referred to in section 1 must apply in writing to the secretary of the Order to provide proof of such authorization and pay the costs of assessing their file as prescribed in accordance with paragraph 8 of section 86.0.1 of the Professional Code (chapter C-26).

2.2.3 Update required

The applicant must also follow and pass a course recognized by the Order, of a maximum duration of 2 days, on the legislation, regulations, ethical aspects, code of ethics and office keeping related to the practice of the acupuncture profession in Québec.

2.3 Physicians who are members of the Collège des médecins du Québec

On September 14, 2010, the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec (OAQ) and the Collège des médecins du Québec (CMQ) submitted a draft regulatory amendment aimed at integrating physicians-acupuncturists into the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec.

This new provision stipulates that a physician who carries out acupuncture activities in the course of their medical practice and who wishes to use the title "acupuncturist" must now be entered on the OAQ Roll of Members.

This new requirement will ensure that all acupuncturists in Québec have an identical level of competency. This new regulation will come into force when it is adopted by the Office des professions du Québec. We are still waiting for a decision on this matter.

This application is currently under consideration at the Office des professions du Québec. Pending adoption of the legislative amendments required for the application of said amendments, applications submitted by physician members of the Collège des médecins du Québec will be evaluated based on the same rules as any other application for equivalence of diploma.

2.4 Applicants trained outside Québec

All applicants who do not have an acupuncture diploma from the Collège de Rosemont, awarded within the 3 years preceding their application to the OAQ, as well as all applicants who do not hold a legal permit to practise the acupuncturist profession issued in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario or Newfoundland and Labrador, must apply for a diploma or training equivalence as stipulated in the [Regulation respecting the standards for equivalence of diplomas or training for the issue of a permit by the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec](#).

The documents you submit to us in support of your application for eligibility will be evaluated by our Admissions Committee in the context of these four potential statutes. The committee's mandate is to evaluate whether, in consideration of your previous experience, professional status and

jurisdiction of origin, studies and years of experience, you possess the level of competency required by the Government of Québec to be given the privilege of the right to practise.

3. Obtaining a diploma equivalence or training equivalence in acupuncture

It is important to note that, in practice, no diploma has yet been recognized as equivalent. Applications from applicants trained outside Québec are therefore basically processed as a request for training equivalence.

Recognition of training equivalence by the OAQ is granted subject to an evaluation of professional competencies. This enables the OAQ to ensure that applicants for the permit to practise have the required qualifications as determined by the Professional Code, as well as by the Act respecting acupuncture and its regulations. The "competency-based²approach" provides an explanation of the obligations of professional practice in terms of the results expected, which require competent acupuncturists to be able to combine their knowledge, skills and judgment in analyzing and providing effective treatment in the various complex situations they may confront in this field. The process of recognition of a training equivalence comprises the following four steps:

- Self-evaluation by the applicant of their own competencies
- Application for admission
- Assessment of the applicant's application for recognition of their functional competency
- Evaluation of professional competencies

3.1 Self-evaluation by the applicant of their own competencies

Self-evaluation is the first step in the process of integration into the profession set up by the OAQ. This is mandatory for all applicants trained outside Québec who apply for training equivalence, with the exception of applicants who have a right to practise as an acupuncturist in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario or Newfoundland and Labrador, and who are eligible for the "Permit on Permit" under the terms of [section 7](#) of [the Agreement on Internal Trade](#).

This self-evaluation process is free of charge and must be carried out prior to filing a formal application for recognition of equivalence. This step is a necessary part of the process of the OAQ's recognition of acquired competencies (RAC) required for a permit to practise. It allows

² Tremblay (1994) states that "a competency is the result of a process of integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to adequately respond to the demands of a real situation."

applicants to verify, before incurring the expenses required for the preparation and assessment of their application, whether they have the level of knowledge and skills required by the OAQ for recognition of equivalence training.

The self-evaluation refers to the seven components of the functional dimension of the "[Polygram of Competencies for the Practice of Acupuncture in Québec](#),"³ as well as to the laws, regulations and policies in force to ensure excellence in the practice of acupuncture in Québec. Functional competencies, as described in the "Polygram of Competencies of the OAQ," include competencies defined according to the knowledge relevant to the practice of acupuncture in Québec. These comprise: knowledge, derived from an understanding of both the conceptual fields of TCM and from Western science; skills (expertise), related to the ability to act in a safe, effective way; and attitudes (soft skills) that define the aptitude to intervene appropriately, while complying with the ethical dimensions and code of ethics.

In order to ensure an enlightened approach, the applicant must respond personally, and as honestly and objectively as possible, to all questions in the "Self-evaluation of Functional Competencies Form."

3.2 Application for admission

After conducting a self-evaluation, applicants who believe they have the qualifications required for training equivalence recognition must make a formal application and pay the fees required by the OAQ to open a file.

To apply for admission, the following must be completed and **sent to the OAQ electronically**:

- I. The "**Admission Application**" form of the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec
- II. The "**Checklist for original documents**" required for assessment of the application
 - *Note that the original documents must be sent by mail or deposited at the office of the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec.*
- III. The "**Self-evaluation of Functional Competencies Form**"

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE WILL ONLY BEGIN ITS EVALUATION WHEN ALL ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS INDICATED IN THE CHECKLIST HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE APPLICATION FILE.

³Polygram of Competencies for the Practice of Acupuncture in Québec

3.3 Assessment of the applicant's application for recognition of their functional competencies

The Admissions Committee that receives the application will assess it to determine whether the applicant has the minimum entry-level competencies required to practise acupuncture. The committee may, in accordance with the "[Regulation respecting the standards for equivalence of diplomas or training for the issue of a permit by the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec](#)," ask the applicant to come to an interview, take an exam, do an internship, or all three.

The ultimate purpose of this process is to allow applicants to demonstrate that they are able to perform, in accordance with TCM principles, the following:

- i. Evaluate various clinical situations
- ii. Provide planned, appropriate treatment
- iii. Follow up with relevant treatment

These three components, which pertain to the professional dimension of the "OAQ Polygram of Competencies," require that applicants be able to combine the various aspects of functional competencies set out in the [Case Report Form on Clinical Conduct](#).⁴ The applicant's competencies can be recognized through a clinical exam, the final step in the training equivalence recognition process.

Before taking a clinical exam, applicants must first demonstrate that they have a sufficient level of proficiency in the various types of knowledge required, identified as functional competencies in the competencies framework. The recognition of functional competencies is a preliminary step for the OAQ that allows the Admissions Committee to determine whether an applicant has sufficiently grasped the various types of knowledge that can potentially be incorporated into a clinical examination. Functional competencies are recognized in a succession of phases that varies based on the content of the files.

3.4 Recognition of functional competencies in three phases

The first phase of the procedure for recognizing functional competencies requires that applicants prepare a file and submit it to the OAQ Admissions Committee. The file must be sufficiently substantiated to demonstrate that the applicant possesses a level of knowledge and skills equivalent to that of someone holding a diploma recognized by the Government of Québec's regulations. In reviewing the file for functional competency validation, the Admissions Committee considers the following factors in particular:

- Official academic diplomas in acupuncture
- Certifications issued by an official body

⁴ The "Case Report Form on Clinical Conduct for Internship Supervisors" duly accredited by the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec.

- Official programs of acupuncture schools, detailing the nature and content of each course taken
- Official transcripts (cumulative and detailed)
- Request for a comparative evaluation of studies undertaken outside Québec
- Documents attesting to active practice
- Document under two years old attesting to successful completion of CPR/First Aid for Health Professionals course
- Where applicable, documentation attesting that you have passed the exams of the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF)
- Completed Self-evaluation of Functional Competencies Form

The second phase of the functional competencies recognition process applies, when necessary, to any applicant who:

- Submits a file describing training they have successfully completed that is not equivalent to the 2,640 hours of the Québec diploma (DEC) in acupuncture training
- Obtained a diploma 3 years or more before the application date, and has not practised since
- Is not in a position to submit official documents attesting to their training

This phase consists of a structured oral interview (SOI) with an acupuncturist recognized as a content specialist by the OAQ, whose mandate is to:

- Develop a personalized profile of the applicant's level of proficiency in the functional competencies
- Prepare a personalized SOI to validate the applicant's functional skills
- Meet the applicant, in an SOI, to validate their proficiency in the functional competencies
- Clarify with the applicant the objectives and modalities of the clinical exam for evaluating professional competencies
- Make a recommendation* to the Admissions Committee whether or not to recognize that the level of proficiency in functional competencies is sufficient

*** It is important to note that this step generates additional fees for the preparation and administration of the Structured Oral Exam. (Pricing grid shown on the page 14)**

The final phase of the functional competencies recognition process applies, when necessary, to all applicants who have not been able to demonstrate during the validation interview that they are sufficiently proficient in the functional competencies. Such applicants will then have to take the Pan-Canadian written exam, which is given semi-annually across Canada.

***Considering that this recommendation does not offer any advantages whatsoever to the OAQ or the content specialists, it will therefore be final and will automatically require that the applicant take the Pan-Canadian exam.**

3.5 Evaluation of professional competencies

Professional competencies are assessed in a clinical exam during which 23 integrative tasks must be carried out successfully to an expected degree of efficiency, in order to confirm that the applicant possesses the minimum level of professional competency necessary for the recognition of training equivalence.

*** It is important to note that this step may result in additional fees depending on the pathway chosen for the clinical examination. (Pricing grid shown on the page 14)**

The professional dimension of the "OAQ Polygram of Competencies" covers three components of the practice competencies, enabling applicants to demonstrate their ability to:

- i. Evaluate various clinical situations
- ii. Plan appropriate treatments
- iii. Carry out relevant follow-up treatments

To demonstrate their ability to evaluate clinical situations, acupuncturists must be able to effectively gather data and interpret it in a relevant way.

To demonstrate their ability to perform treatments, acupuncturists must be able to plan and implement their treatment protocol.

To demonstrate their ability to perform appropriate follow-ups, acupuncturists must be able to evaluate the clinical situation.

The "[Case Report Form on Clinical Conduct](#)" details the 23 integrative tasks and includes the efficiency grid used to evaluate professional competencies.

4. Decision to recognize a diploma equivalence or training equivalence in acupuncture

Depending on the content of the file, the Admissions Committee may recommend that the Order's Board of Directors:

- A) Recognize the diploma, without any additional requirement
- B) Recognize, based on the applicant's professional status in a regulated province in Canada, a training equivalence with minimal updating
- C) Recognize a full training equivalence, without any additional conditions
- D) Recognize a partial training equivalence, specifying the additional training required to achieve full equivalence
- E) Not recognize a training equivalence

In situations **A), B), or C)**, the Board of Directors will issue a permit once the annual fee has been paid in the manner prescribed by the Order.

Note that an inspection by the Professional Inspection Committee will be carried out within one year of entering the Roll of the Order.

In situation **D)**, where a partial equivalence is recognized, it will be specified which competencies are missing and which elements of the professional integration process must be completed successfully to obtain a full training equivalence.

In situation **E)**, where equivalence is denied, a new training program must be completed in order to achieve the level of competence necessary to have access to the permit issued by the OAQ.

5. Review Committee

Any applicants who dispute the decision of the Board of Directors regarding their application for equivalence may appeal within 30 days of the decision being announced. A Review Committee will then re-assess the applicant's file upon request.

6. Admission Commissioner

Applicants who consider that the OAQ has not treated their case in a fair and equitable manner may, if they so wish, apply to the Admission Commissioner at the Office des Professions du Québec.

By email Admission Commissioner
Office des professions du Québec
500 Boulevard René-Lévesque West
6th Floor, Suite 6500, P.O. 40
Montreal QC
H2Z 1W7

By phone Montreal: (514) 864-9744
Québec City: (418) 643-6912
Toll free: 1 (800) 643-6912

By email commissaire@opq.gouv.qc.ca

By fax (514) 864-9758

7. Language requirements

Canada has two official languages, French and English. However, since Québec society is largely Francophone, the Government of Québec has adopted the Charter of the French Language, which states in section 35 that professional orders may only issue permits to persons whose command of French, the official language of Québec, is appropriate to the practice of their profession.

All applicants for a permit to practise, both those from Québec and those who are foreign-trained, must therefore meet the French-language requirements of the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) if they wish to obtain a regular permit to practise.

Applicants who have obtained a diploma or training equivalence but who have not qualified with the OQLF may apply for a temporary permit valid for one year and renewable for three years with the authorization of the OQLF. However, since it is essential that acupuncturists be able to communicate adequately with their clients, if they are unable to do so in French, certain restrictions may be imposed on their right to practise with respect to the working language.

Persons who apply for and obtain a temporary permit must, during the period in which they hold such a permit, demonstrate that they are taking the required steps, specified by the OQLF, to pass the French exams. In addition, after the 3-year renewal period, applicants who have still not qualified will be unable to renew their temporary permit and must cease to practise.

For more information on the language requirements expected of professionals, please consult the website of the Office québécois de la langue française: oqlf.gouv.qc.ca

8. The OAQ's language of communication

Under the Official Languages Act, it is important to note that the OAQ's language of communication is French. We therefore communicate mainly in French with our members and with the applicants. Please note that, although we accept documents in English, all communications that we send to you will be in French.

9. Instructions for applications to join the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec

When an application for membership is made, it is important to ensure that all documents necessary for the assessment of the file have been sent to the Ordre des acupuncteurs du Québec. Some of these documents must be completed online and sent electronically. Other documents, such as originals, must be sent by mail or submitted directly to the office of the Order.

It is important to note that the application will be assessed by the Admissions Committee based on the documents available on file. Any document received after the initial assessment is made will require a new assessment that may generate additional costs.

If you do not submit all the documents required for your file to be assessed, you must explain why on the original documents checklist.

10. Illegal practice of acupuncture

Any persons who practise acupuncture, or claim to be an acupuncturist, without a permit to practise will be prosecuted for the illegal practice of acupuncture.

11. The pricing grid for the OAQ integration process

STEPS	FEES
Self-evaluation by the applicant	Free
Application for admission: opening of the file	574,87 \$ (500,00 \$ + 25,00 \$ TPS + 49,87 \$ TVQ)
Recognition of functional competencies: knowledge and skills	
PHASE 1: Assessment of applicant application file	Costs included in application fee
PHASE 2: Administration of the structured oral interview (SOI) — Only if necessary Ref. p.10	600,00 \$ (521,85 \$ + 26,10 \$ TPS + 52,05 \$ TVQ)
PHASE 3: Pan-Canadian exam — Only if necessary Ref. p.11	507,94 \$ (450,00 \$ + 22,50 \$ TPS + 35,44 TVQ)
Recognition of professional competencies: clinical exam	
OPTION A: Collège de Rosemont Acupuncture Department	Free
OPTION B: Master of clinic accredited by the OAQ	2 931,86 \$ (2 550,00 \$ + 127,50 \$ TPS + 254,36 \$ TVQ)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You may contact **Mrs. Nicole Ouellette**:

By phone **1 (514) 523-2882** or toll free **1 (800) 474-5914**

By email: info@o-a-q.org