



**CPHR NOVA SCOTIA
VALIDATION OF EXPERIENCE (VOE)
HANDBOOK**

November 2025

CPHR NOVA SCOTIA VALIDATION OF EXPERIENCE HANDBOOK

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1. CPHR CANDIDATE MEMBER POLICIES

CPHR Candidate Members must submit and pass the Validation of Experience (VOE) Assessment within ten (10) years of passing the National Knowledge Exam (NKE) or receiving approval for the NKE Waiver. Any CPHR Candidate Member who does not submit their VOE before the ten (10) year period may have their Candidate status revoked.

CPHR Candidates must maintain membership with CPHR Nova Scotia or another Provincial HR Association in order to maintain their Candidate status. Failure to meet the membership requirements as per the Regulatory Bylaws which include renewing and paying annual membership dues will result in the loss of the Candidate status. To regain Candidate status, individuals must once again write and pass the National Knowledge Exam (NKE) or re-apply for the NKE Waiver.

2. VALIDATION OF EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of CPHR Nova Scotia's certification process is to ensure its members, employers, and the public that HR professionals who obtain the Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) designation possess the knowledge and skills required to practice competently and ethically.

The overarching objective of someone who has achieved a professional designation is an affirmation that the individual possesses the academic knowledge and has demonstrated the required experience based on relevant competencies to work in their chosen field, in this case, Human Resources. The designation process for the Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) is to ensure individuals possess knowledge, skills, and early-career experience to competently perform occupational activities in the human resources field. The CPHR experience requirement is established in compliance with the national guidelines of CPHR Canada. An important distinction between an academic credential and a professional designation is that an academic credential attests to your knowledge of theory, whereas a professional designation attests to both your knowledge of theory and experience and competence. Not only do you know your subject matter, you have demonstrated experience and competence within the discipline. Many professional designations require a level of early career experience in the profession prior to obtaining the designation. Candidates are required to have early career experience and not to have mature competence in the profession. That mature competence comes after one has achieved the designation and continues to work in the profession, and meets the requirements of the profession i.e. Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The purpose of CPHR Nova Scotia's certification process is to ensure its members, employers, and the public that HR professionals who obtain the Chartered Professional in Human Resources (CPHR) designation possess the knowledge and

skills required to practice competently and ethically.

Completion of the designation process confers the right to use the title 'Chartered Professional in Human Resources' and the right to use the initials CPHR after one's name.

The regulated granting body is the third party that confirms the required level of experience of a practitioner. An academic institution may confirm an individual holds a certain degree or other program completion status with them but does not warrant the work experience conducted by the individual.

It is for this reasoning that the CPHR designation requires both knowledge and theory-based components (i.e. the NKE and post-secondary education), as well as a practical experience, competency-based component (i.e. the VOE).

The Validation of Experience Assessment process is the final step in achieving the CPHR designation and requires applicants to prove they have obtained a minimum of three (3) or eight (8) years of work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in Human Resources of Advisory HR and Administrative HR levels. The number of years required is based on the level of education obtained.

3. REQUIREMENTS TO PASS THE VOE

Requirements to pass the VOE:

- Three (3) to eight (8) years of work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR at the Advisory and Administrative levels in HR.
- Experience must be obtained within the past 10 years from the VOE submission deadline. The number of years required is based on the level of education, as listed below:

Education	HR Experience Required
Degree/Master's	3 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: • a minimum of 2 years Advisory HR experience, • a maximum of 1 year Administrative HR experience

Diploma	4 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: • a minimum of 3 years Advisory HR experience • a maximum of 1 year Administrative HR experience
Certificate	5 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: • a minimum of 4 years Advisory HR experience • a maximum of 1 year Administrative HR experience
High School	8 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: • a minimum of 5 years Advisory HR experience • a maximum of 3 years Administrative HR experience

- Applicants must demonstrate a minimum of 8 examples aligned to the HR competencies of work experience at the **Advisory HR**
- Membership in good standing with CPHR Nova Scotia
- Agree to abide by the CPHR Nova Scotia's Code of Ethics & Standards of Professional Conduct

4. DEFINING HR EXPERIENCE

4.1 DEFINING ADVISORY HR AND ADMINISTRATIVE HR EXPERIENCE

- The nature of the work at the **Advisory level in HR** involves the exercise of independent judgment to establish a diagnosis in human resources, making recommendations and influencing decisions, as well as program development and implementation of activities, policies or practices in human resources management. The role would allow for autonomy in decision-making, analyzing and interpreting information and being accountable to make decisions and take responsibility for decisions. Some administrative tasks are part of all jobs, but a role that consists strictly, that is the majority 51% of the time of administrative duties, even within an HR department, will not be considered as qualifying.

- The nature of work at the **Administrative level** involves work that is prescribed and transactional, and autonomy and execution with direction is clearly defined. Diagnosing problems and giving advice would not be the majority if any of the responsibilities of the role. It may include HR tasks that are routine in nature, lower in complexity and/or autonomy and executed with direction that is clearly defined.

The scope of HR practice is the creation and implementation of all policies, practices and processes to effectively organize and manage human capital resources in the workplace in service of the ultimate goal of enhancing business outcomes. Human Resources Management involves maintaining or changing relations between employees, between employers or between employers and employees.

The Practice of Human Resources includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Development and implementation of human resources policies and procedures;
- Consultation in the area of human resources management;
- Providing advice to clients, managers and employees in matters pertaining to management of human resources;
- Representation of clients and organizations in proceedings related to human resources management;
- Program development and evaluation in the area of human resources management;
- Supervision of other Human Resources professionals/practitioners;
- Coaching of employees, manager, and other individuals in matters relating to work and employment;
- Conduct of research in the area of human resources management and,
- Teaching in the area of human resources management.

In determining whether a candidate's experience is at the "Advisory HR" level, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- **Independence of actions** – the amount of planning, self-direction, decision- making and autonomy involved in the work.
- **Depth of work requirements** – the extent to which work requires analysis and interpretation.

- **Responsibility for work outcome** – the accuracy and extent to which the individual is held accountable for their work and decisions.

Advisory HR experience does not necessarily mean supervisory or managerial. It does not matter whether one is working as an independent contractor or as an employee of an organization.

The following chart will help you to determine if your HR experience is at the Administrative HR or Advisory HR level:

Specialized Area	Administrative HR Level	Advisory HR Level
Workforce Planning and Mobility	• Posting jobs • Attending career fairs • Tracking applicants • Screening resumes • Phone screening candidates • Assisting in interviews • Checking references and conducting background checks • Writing and sending the employment letter of offer • Conducting on-boarding and orientation preparations • Creating and updating organizational charts	• Creating workforce plans • Implementing policies and processes around talent management • Talent mapping • Analysis of talent needs and gaps • Implementing innovative strategies for recruitment or interviewing • Training and supervising recruiters • Conducting or leading interviews with prospective candidates • Making recommendations or final hiring decisions • Writing job descriptions • Creating interview questions

HR Technology and Analytics	• Collecting and organizing information in report format • Developing presentations based on information collected • Maintenance of HRIS systems, ensuring accuracy of data imports and manual inputs	• Managing technical, analytical, and audit functions of HR department • Responsible for quality control protocols related to HR • Ensuring the integrity of HR system infrastructure • Developing HR policy, analytics, job analysis, recruitment plans etc. based on information collected
Learning, Development & Succession Planning	• Tracking learning needs and training progress of employees • Making updates to document templates for pre-existing workshops or seminars • Coordinating training for colleagues or employees • Exporting and providing post-workshop data to identify gaps in learning • Assisting in the application of job grants or other funding applications for approved external learning	• Identifying organizational learning priorities in alignment with business strategy • Implementing learning and development programs • Evaluate existing learning and development programs • Evolving existing learning and development programs and priorities to meet business needs • Develop an organizational culture that enhances the learning of all employees • Creating workshops, learning assessment tools, and other training programs • Presenting pre-existing workshops or learning lunches to employees

		• Research methodologies and programs to keep up to date on organizational trends and help improve existing programming
Total Health & Wellness	• Maintaining safety records • Processing and tracking WCB claims	• Developing health, safety, and wellness policies and programs • Analyzing accident rates and trends • Giving guidance and making recommendations to operations for maintaining safe work environments • Reviewing compensation data and working with company representatives to resolve worker's compensation issues • Revising and rewriting existing health and safety and wellness programs, policies, and procedures. • Performing onsite safety checks and following up • Providing safety training • Coordinating, implementing, and monitoring safety programs
Labour Relations	• Tracking grievances • Understanding of collective agreement	• Interpreting collective agreement • Leading discussion in grievance meetings • Conducting investigations

		• Advice on employee relation issues • Negotiating and writing Memorandum of Agreements • Active participation in bargaining
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4.2 DEFINING WHAT IS NOT ADVISORY HR EXPERIENCE

- Performing functions within the human resources department that are clerical or administrative in nature, with limited judgement, analysis or interpretation done to data or information. Position(s) has limited influence, autonomy, and authority.
- Work experience gained while serving as a labour union representative or a union employee (such as a Grievance Officer) is not considered to meet the criteria towards the experience requirement unless these activities fall within a position clearly identified as an HR position.
- Supervisory work experience refers to the supervision of the strategy, design, implementation and coordination of one or more human resources functions. Supervisory work does not mean the supervision of staff including assigning work, conducting performance appraisals, approving vacations etc. This type of activity is a line management function and does not qualify towards the experience requirement. Line management experience of supervisors or managers working outside the human resources field such as in production, accounting, marketing, sales, or customer service does not qualify towards the experience requirement.

4.3 TIME WORKING IN HR

To be credited toward the experience requirement, **51% or more of an applicant's time in a position must involve work in human resources.** If a position is less than 51% HR, this experience will not be credited towards the years of experience required to pass the VOE.

The experience must have occurred **within the last 10 years** from the submission deadline to count towards the experience requirement.

If a leave of absence was approved, please indicate on the VOE Assessment Application.

Education	HR Experience Required
Degree/Master's	3 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: - a minimum of 2 years Advisory HR experience, - a maximum of 1 year Administrative HR experience
Diploma	4 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: - a minimum of 3 years Advisory HR experience - a maximum of 1 year Administrative HR experience
Certificate	5 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: - a minimum of 4 years Advisory HR experience - a maximum of 1 year Administrative HR experience
High School	8 years work experience with the majority, 51% or more being work in HR is required and includes: - a minimum of 5 years Advisory HR experience - a maximum of 3 years Administrative HR experience

Full Time vs Part Time Work

Full-time is considered 30 hours or more per week. Less than 30 hours per week will be pro-rated.

Education	Hrs per week	Timeframe	Calculation
Degree	25	3 years	25 hrs/30 hrs x 3 years = 2.5 years Requires another 6 months to meet 3 year time requirement
Non-Degree	20	10 years	20 hrs/30 hrs x 10 years = 6.67 years Requires another 1.33 years to meet 8 year time requirement

4.4 CONSIDERATION OF HR EXPERIENCE FOR NON-HR SPECIFIC ROLES:

General management work may be considered if the human resources work comprises at least 51% and there is no HR department or manager in the workplace where the general management work takes place. The general manager

must be the person who has direct responsibility and accountability for the strategy, design, implementation and coordination of one or more HR Functional Knowledge Areas for the organization.

Small business owners/operators may gain suitable work experience towards the experience requirement provided their business is established to provide HR advice. However, time spent on business development or supervising staff, for example, are not applicable towards the experience criteria.

Work experience gained while serving as a labour union representative or a union employee may not necessarily be considered to meet the criteria toward the experience requirement unless these activities fall within a position clearly identified as an HR position. An elected labour union position is excluded from qualifying for experience validation.

Employment lawyers may be able to meet the experience requirement depending on the type of work they do. Work experience advising clients or conducting litigation is not eligible. HR Advisory level work for a client, such as conducting labour negotiations, mediation, or conducting downsizing activities, would be considered. Negotiating the terms of a contract would be considered human resources work while writing out the contract at the direction of a client would not. Activities identified as practicing human resources must be a significant part of the applicant's work experience and will be prorated accordingly.

Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) may meet the experience requirement if the organization they are leading does not have an HR department or HR position and if they are spending at least 51% of their time performing Advisory HR level work. This means they are going beyond line management work of supervising staff, assigning work, setting pay, approving sick days or vacations, etc. This means they must be doing this work independently of an HR professional and not acting on the HR advice of others.

Teaching in the field of human resources is a practice of human resources. Teaching experience alone can be used to accumulate all three (3) years experience in Human Resources obtained within the past ten (10) years from the VOE submission deadline for those applicants who have a degree.

Please contact the office for to discuss your teaching experience and how to complete the VOE application.

HR courses must be taught at an accredited post-secondary institution. Teaching "full-time" means teaching a course load of at least three HR courses per semester. Applicant will need to submit a course outline and/or syllabus so that the committee can determine if the course is considered an HR course.

Those who are not teaching at least three HR courses per semester will have their time pro-rated as follows:

- Teaching one HR course per semester – 1/3 of 100% = 1.33 months
- Teaching two HR courses per semester – 2/3 of 100% = 2.68 months
- Teaching three HR courses per semester – 3/3 of 100% = 4 months

Refer to the [Teaching Experience Form](#).

Academic research conducted by professors in the field of human resources may be eligible for experience validation if it is a significant part of their work and/or replaces a course. Only primary research in the field of human resources is eligible for inclusion in the experience validation.

HR Co-op Student Terms – All co-op work done as part of a post-secondary HR program is not eligible for work experience.

HR Volunteer Positions – All volunteer work for which a Candidate Member is not receiving monetary compensation/financial reward is not eligible work experience.

5. HR COMPETENCIES

The HR Specific Competencies are capabilities that define an HR professional. They are categorized into 9 HR Competency Areas which in turn comprise 49 HR Specific Competencies.

Applications will be assessed by providing examples of their work aligned to the HR competencies. Examples provided by the Candidate must be described using the STAR method as outlined below:

The HR Competency Areas are:

Total Rewards	Organizational Change and Development
Learning and Development and Succession Planning	Employee and Labour Relations
Workforce Planning and Mobility	Total Health and Wellness
HR Technology and Analytics	Inclusion, Diversity and Human Connections
Innovation	

Provide examples using the STAR Method*.

GENERAL COMPETENCIES

The General Competencies include capabilities that an HR professional should possess to operate successfully in their professional practice and are not specific to the HR profession. They are categorized into 12 General Competency Areas which in turn comprise 48 General Competencies. The Validation of Experience does not require examples of a Candidate's work aligned to the General Competencies.

The 12 General Competency Areas:

Ethical practice	Leadership
Working Digitally	Guide, Coach and Advice
Personal Agility	Business Acumen
Relational Intelligence	Data and Sensemaking
Continuous Learning	Systems Thinking
Collaboration and Communication	Leading Projects

*STAR Method

For each competency selected with an "X" please provide your job title followed by **specific examples** in the boxes provided below of the work that **you** are responsible for and have completed including the impact that it has on the organization. You may provide more than one example linked to a specific competency. It is important for assessors to understand your role. For example, if you mark an "X" in every box under Strategy, you must provide an example for each one. (10100, 10200, 10300, 10400, 10600, 10700).

HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR EXAMPLE USING THE STAR METHOD	
Using the CPHR Competency Framework Classification System , review the KNOWLEDGE OF and SKILL IN sections of the specific COMPETENCY (i.e. Strategy, Professional Practice, Engagement, etc.) you are claiming. This will help you structure your example.	
For each COMPETENCY you have selected, structure your example using the STAR method below.	
Situation	Describe a specific situation that you were in (not a generalized one) or a task that you needed to accomplish. Provide context. Where? When? Keep this description short.

Task	What needed to be done and why? Avoid using acronyms. Briefly explain what it is that you had to do and what the success criterion was. If you were working as a group, explain what the overall task of the group was, but be clear about YOUR own role. Keep this explanation brief.
Action	Describe the actions you took to address the situation, including an appropriate amount of detail, and keep the focus on YOU . What did YOU do and how did YOU do it? What tools did YOU use? Be direct and specific. Make this the most substantial part of your example.
Result	What was the outcome? What did you accomplish? If you can quantify the results, do so. Explain the results (i.e. accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc.).

6. SUBMITTING YOUR VALIDATION OF EXPERIENCE (VOE) ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

6.1 DOCUMENTS REQUIRED

A) TRANSCRIPTS/INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS

Prior to starting your VOE Application, ensure you have requested original transcripts be sent directly to CPHR Nova Scotia from your educational institution. This can be done after passing the NKE or well in advance of starting the Application.

Education received outside Canada needs to be assessed through one of three organizations:

- World Education Services (WES) at <https://applications.wes.org/createaccount/>
- International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) at <https://www.bcit.ca/ices/>
- Captus Press Inc. at <http://www.captus.com/>

Reports need to be sent directly to CPHR Nova Scotia from the organizations listed above.

Email (preferred method): hello@cphrns.ca

Mail: CPHR Nova Scotia
#103 – 84 Chain Lake Drive, Halifax, NS B3S 1A3

Transcripts and/or international assessment reports must be received prior to the VOE being assessed

B) VOE APPLICATION PACKAGE

Applicants are required to submit the following documents for assessment:

1. Completed VOE Application.
2. Current chronological resume.
3. Job description(s).
4. Organizational chart(s).

Your application for a professional designation should represent the professional standard that is upheld by the profession that you are applying to be certified by. As such, applicants are encouraged to carefully and fully review their application and to provide information and examples for each and all sections using the STAR Method.

6.2 EMPLOYER VERIFICATION

In the VOE Assessment Application, under Part F, Employer Verification, the Member's current Employer must review and attest to the accuracy of information provided related to the current experience even though past experience may also be included. If not currently in a HR role than past Employer(s) can attest to the experience required. If only submitting information from a previous position and not the current position, the previous Employer must review and attest to the accuracy of information provided.

If needed, the Committee may request additional information from current and previous employers.

Unemployed Candidates – Candidates are requested to submit an Employer Verification from their most recent employer. If that is not possible, then a previous employer would be suitable.

7. ASSESSING YOUR VALIDATION OF EXPERIENCE (VOE) ASSESSMENT APPLICATION

A Validation of Experience Assessment application is decided on the merits of the written application and supporting documentation. Accordingly, an applicant must submit all requested information, explanations and materials supporting the Advisory HR or Administrative HR level experience requirements. The Assessors assigned to assess an applicant's experience can only judge the merit of an application based on its contents and the quality of the presented documentation within the guidelines defined and approved by CPHR Nova Scotia.

Candidates should be aware that they may be contacted for further information by the CPHR Registrar, if required and that they may be asked to provide a reference to verify information about their experience. Assessors may refer to publicly available information to validate certain information contained in an application. In addition, Employers may be contacted to verify information in the document.

7.1 SUBMISSION DEADLINES

There are 2 submission deadlines annually:

- February 28
- September 30

Submit the completed VOE Assessment Application with required documents to CPHR Nova Scotia by:

Email (preferred method): hello@cphrns.ca

Mail: CPHR Nova Scotia
#103 – 84 Chain Lake Drive, Halifax, NS B3S 1A2

Applicants must complete the application in full as per the outlined instructions and format. Applications are reviewed by the Registrar for completeness before being forwarded to the Assessors for review. If the Application is considered incomplete on the day of the submission deadline, the Application may not be considered until it is complete with the required information. The Application may be moved to the next submission period once completed. **It is recommended to have the Application submitted a few weeks prior to the deadline in case the Application requires additional information.** Please note that applications will not be presented to the Assessors for review if not completed in full in the required format.

Documents received after the VOE submission deadline will not be reviewed within that submission period, unless otherwise approved by CPHR Nova Scotia.

7.2 VOE APPLICATION FEE

Applicants must pay the VOE Application fee of \$175.00 + HST by the submission deadline in order to have their VOE application submitted to the VOE Committee for review. The application fee is only payable the first time the application is submitted.

If the VOE application is successful applicants must pay the Completion Fee of \$375.00 + HST. CPHR Candidates are not granted CPHR status and will not receive their CPHR Designation Certificate until any outstanding fees are paid.

Certificates are ordered periodically. New CPHRs living in Canada will receive one complimentary hardcopy certificate. New International CPHR members can request a hardcopy certificate for an additional fee. All new CPHR members will be issued a digitally verified certificate.

7.3 NOTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF SUBMISSION & RESULTS

Applicants will be notified by CPHR Nova Scotia upon the receipt of their assessment via email.

Applicants will be notified within eight weeks of the submission deadline as to whether they were successful or unsuccessful. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of gaps in their experience assessment and options available to them. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may apply.

8. VOE COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

All VOE Applications are reviewed by trained Assessors who hold their CPHR designation, using Board approved guidelines. Assessors use their professional judgement to determine whether an applicant has the requisite type of experience to earn their CPHR.

- a) CPHR Nova Scotia receives the Candidate Member's application including the VOE Application, relevant job descriptions, organizational charts, and current resume.
- b) Assessor independently review a CPHR Candidate Member's application and provide a recommendation as to whether they meet certification standards.
- c) Assessors can only judge an application based on the contents of a Candidate Member's application and any supporting documentation to determine whether the application meets the minimum experience requirements and are an accurate reflection of the position, responsibilities and accountabilities described.
- d) Assessors determine if the experience documented is sufficient in length and responsibility to meet the three-year or eight-year requirement.
- e) Assessors do not communicate directly with the applicants. If necessary, the Assessors can require further information or clarification from the applicant through the Registrar before making a final recommendation. It may be determined that a telephone discussion is required, at that point, the Assessors communicate directly with the applicant, however, all arrangements are set up by CPHR Nova Scotia staff.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS TO REGISTRAR

- a) Each Assessor submits their recommendations separately to the Registrar. Each recommendation will result in one of the following outcomes:
- i. Determine that the applicant's experience meets the requirement and recommend to the Registrar that the applicant be granted the CPHR designation.
 - ii. Determine that the applicant's experience does not meet the requirement in some respect and recommend to the Registrar that the applicant not obtain the CPHR at this time.
 - iii. Determine that a recommendation could not be made as more detailed information is required by the applicant. This is not considered a reassessment.
 - iv. Determine that a further review is needed and request another assessor review the file in addition to their own review to confirm the finding.
 - v. The Registrar notifies all applicants of their outcome via email within 8 weeks of the submission deadline.

NOTE: The decision as to whether one fulfills the experience requirement is entirely based on the criteria outlined above. This means that the only factor that counts is where applicants stand with respect to these criteria. Assessors must make decisions based on the information provided by the applicant and cannot make assumptions about the applicant's experience outside of what is contained in the application documents. The experience requirement criteria are never adjusted based on the number or proportion of applicants that pass the experience requirement.

10. APPEALS

Appeals must be sent to the Office of the CPHR Registrar (registrar@cphrns.ca) within 30 days of receiving the decision of the committee. Appeals should not be construed as a second opinion. Appeals will be considered on the grounds of denial of natural justice or deficiencies in the decision. The fact that the VOE Assessment Committee's decision was not the one hoped for is not grounds for appeal. Registrar approved appeals will be reviewed by the CPHR Nova Scotia Board of Directors.