

POLICY ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESCRIBED EXAMS LEADING TO CERTIFICATION IN PESTICIDE MATTERS

September 2025

Purpose

This policy sets out the terms and conditions governing the prescribed exams administered by the Minister of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks (hereinafter “the Minister”) for the issuance of a certificate related to the sale or performance of work involving the use of pesticides. It outlines the terms for writing an exam, retaking it in the event of failure, and the measures taken in cases of cheating.

Prescribed exams

Prescribed exams enable the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP) to assess whether a pesticide vendor or user has acquired the required knowledge to engage in the activities governed by the desired certificate class or subclass. These exams are specifically developed at the request of the MELCCFP and are administered by the Société de formation à distance des centres de services scolaires et des commissions scolaires du Québec (SOFAD).

Passing the prescribed exams is one of the requirements for obtaining a certificate related to the sale or performance of work involving the use of pesticides. It may also be required in the following situations:

- the certificate holder wishes to modify certain classes or subclasses of their certificate;
- the certificate holder wishes to renew a certificate that includes a class or subclass subject to continuing education requirements;
- the certificate has been suspended;
- the certificate holder has sold pesticides or performed work involving the use of pesticides in violation of the Pesticides Act or its regulations;
- the Minister considers it necessary in view of evolving knowledge about pesticides.

Prescribed exams cover the fundamental knowledge required for pesticide education in Canada. They must also partially reflect the core knowledge requirements related to pesticides in Canada, which primarily concern the protection of health and the environment. These requirements are grouped into the following ten concepts:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. General information | 6. Environment |
| 2. Regulations | 7. Pest management |
| 3. Labeling | 8. Application technology |
| 4. Human health | 9. Emergency response |
| 5. Pesticide safety | 10. Professionalism |

The exams are based on the [Standard for Pesticide Education, Training and Certification in Canada](#), which sets out guidelines for:

- the method used to determine the level of difficulty of a question;
- the proportion of each question type for determining difficulty;
- the proportion of questions allocated to each concept related to fundamental knowledge;
- the passing grade;
- the policy on exam failure and retakes.

Depending on the desired class or subclass, one or two exams must be passed. Certain exams (e.g., the Common core for pesticides users) must be passed before the sector-specific exam can be taken. The dataset entitled [Prescribed or recognized exams for certification related to the sale or use of pesticides](#) (in French) lists the exams required for each certificate class or subclass.

The exam is available in French and English. It lasts a maximum of three hours and generally contains between 30 and 50 multiple-choice questions written in plain language.

Different versions of the exam questions exist and are randomly assigned. To ensure fairness for all candidates, all randomized exams are of equivalent difficulty and assess the same knowledge.

Exam preparation

Although training is not mandatory to obtain a certificate, the MELCCFP considers that it helps candidates acquire the knowledge needed to pass these exams. The following training formats are offered by SOFAD:

- Online: certain training programs are offered [online](#) and include interactive content, numerous automatically corrected exercises, and an exam preparation activity;
- Print: candidates may also prepare for the exams independently by obtaining the [learning guides](#) associated with the prescribed exams.

The MELCCFP makes [available learning guides and reference documents](#) to help candidates prepare for the exams leading to certification in certain subclasses.

Classroom training may also be offered by public or private educational institutions or by private trainers, including within companies.

Farmers may contact the representatives of the Regional Agricultural Training Collectives. Their contact information is available on the [Skills development](#) page of the Union des producteurs agricoles website.

[Online practice tests](#) allow candidates to assess whether they are ready to take an exam. These practice tests include 25 questions and have a maximum duration of one hour. They are automatically corrected, and the candidate can view the result for each question. Practice tests serve as indicators to help evaluate a candidate's level of preparedness. They in no way guarantee a passing result.

Writing an exam

Prescribed exams are written online via the [Moodle](#) or [Nexam](#) platforms. Depending on the exam selected, the candidate is automatically directed to one or the other platform.

Registration and applicable fees

The registration procedure is outlined in the "[Online Exams](#)" section of the Pesticides page on the SOFAD website.

Fees are required for each exam attempt. These fees apply to a single attempt and are payable by Visa or Mastercard credit card or, in some cases, upon receipt of an invoice.

Technical requirements

Moodle platform	Nexam platform
The candidate connects using a laptop, desktop computer or tablet (Mac or PC environment), from the location of their choice.	The candidate connects using a laptop or desktop computer (Mac or PC environment), from the location of their choice. Chromebooks and Microsoft Surface devices are supported, but tablets (iPads) are not. The computer used must be equipped with a functioning webcam. Only one screen may be used. The computer must meet the minimum technical requirements and be configured according to the specifications provided on the Minimum and Recommended Technical Requirements page.

Required materials

Only a calculator and a dictionary are permitted. All other documents, notes, or memory aids are prohibited. It is also forbidden to possess any electronic device during the exam or to record or film anything.

Steps to take before beginning

Candidates are advised to position themselves alone in a location conducive to concentration. No interaction with another person, whether in person or by phone, is permitted.

On the Nexam platform only, the webcam must remain on. Screen and camera sharing must be enabled. All active applications must be closed. Notifications must also be disabled to prevent any confusion or suspicion of cheating. Instructions for doing so are provided on the [Turn off notifications on your computer](#) page.

Candidate identity verification

On the Nexam platform only, the candidate must identify themselves beforehand using a piece of photo identification (e.g., driver's license, health insurance card, or passport). This must be valid and not expired. The video [Identity validation](#) (in French only) explains the procedure.

Surveillance

The platform continuously records the candidate's screen and physical environment using the webcam. Algorithms automatically detect anomalies in the surveillance images. These events are then reviewed to ensure the integrity of the assessment process and fairness for all candidates.

Passing grade

In general, a minimum score of 75% is required to pass each prescribed exam. If a different minimum score is required, this will be specified prior to the start of the exam. Regardless of the results associated with the various concepts, it is the overall score that determines whether a candidate has passed or failed an exam and, consequently, whether a retake is required.

Notification of results

The result is emailed to the candidate within two business days following the exam (Monday to Friday). The email address used is the one provided by the candidate at the time of identification. Under no circumstances are results disclosed by telephone or by any other means.

If the candidate has passed the exam, they will be invited to download their certificate of achievement by following the instructions provided. This document must be submitted to the MELCCFP when [applying for a certificate](#).

In the event of a failure, the candidate is informed not only of their overall result, but also of their summary result for each concept covered in the exam (number of correct answers/number of questions). They are also notified of the retake waiting period.

Validity period of a passed exam

A passed prescribed exam is valid for a maximum period of five years from the date it was passed. Therefore, the candidate must apply for the certificate class or subclass associated with the passed exam within five years of the date on the certificate of achievement. However, this period may be shorter if the associated class or subclass is subject to a knowledge update required by the Minister.

Retaking the exam after a failure

The registration procedure and applicable fees for a retake are identical to those for an initial registration. The candidate receives a different version of the exam(s) previously taken. This version assesses the same knowledge with an equivalent level of difficulty.

Retake waiting period

Candidates may register for a retake after the prescribed waiting period, which begins on the date of the exam failure. For a first failure, the waiting period is 30 days. Two subsequent failures for the same exam result in a 60 day waiting period. This period is deemed sufficient for the candidate to prepare again. After four unsuccessful attempts, the candidate must wait one year before reapplying to take the same exam.

	Retake waiting period (days)
First failure	30
Second failure	60
Third failure	60
Fourth failure	365

Preparing for a retake

In the event of failure, the candidate is informed not only of their overall result but also of the summary result for each concept covered in the exam (number of correct answers/number of questions). This information can help the candidate focus their preparation on the module(s) where their performance was weaker. The candidate may also choose to improve their performance in a module they already perform well in.

The methods for preparing for a retake are the same as those described for the initial exam attempt.

Measures taken in cases of cheating

Preventive and deterrent measures are in place to discourage any act or attempt of cheating or any collaboration in such acts.

In cases where cheating is detected, the mention “failure due to cheating” will be recorded in the candidate’s file. The candidate will then be notified of the decision and provided with visual proof.

Acts of cheating

Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- using, manipulating, or possessing any unauthorized document or electronic device during the exam (memory aid, notes, cell phone, smart watch, etc.);
- communicating with another person during the exam, either in person or by phone;
- receiving any form of outside assistance during the exam;
- having another person take the exam in the candidate’s place or impersonating the candidate;
- accessing content, applications, or websites during the exam, except for the exam platform;
- taking screenshots or photos of the screen;
- concealing one’s face;
- moving out of the webcam’s field of view or turning off the webcam;
- intentionally disconnecting from the exam platform;
- attempting to bribe or bribing a SOFAD employee to influence the exam result.

Retake

The registration procedure and the fees required for a retake are the same as for an initial registration. The candidate receives a different version of the exam(s) previously taken. This version assesses the same knowledge and has an equivalent level of difficulty.

The candidate may register for a retake after the prescribed waiting period. This period begins on the date of the exam failure. In the case of a first failure due to cheating, the retake waiting period is 180 days. Any repeat offence for the same exam and the same reason results in a retake waiting period of 180 days.

	Retake waiting period (days)
First failure due to cheating	180
Repeat offence – cheating	180

Dissemination of the policy content

The MELCCFP informs candidates of the content of this policy by publishing it on the [Certificate for the sale and use of pesticides](#) page. It is the candidate’s responsibility to use the most up-to-date version, which is the one published online.