

2016



Guide to the Validation of Experience

HRPA | OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

HRPA's Experience Requirement – Validation of Experience

October 2014

Executive summary

The Human Resources Professionals Association is the regulatory authority for human resources management professionals in Ontario. The experience requirement is established under the statutory authority conferred to the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) pursuant to the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*.

To be certified by HRP, and earn the right to use the Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL) designation, applicants must have accumulated at least three years of demonstrated experience in HR at a professional level. The other requirements for certification by HRP are a membership requirement, a coursework requirement, a degree requirement, and an exam requirement.

The experience requirement was established as an eligibility requirement to ensure that applicants have, at minimum, demonstrated the capability of operating at a professional level in an area of human resources for a sufficient length of time. The length of the experience requirement was set at three years; this length of time has been deemed sufficient to ensure that an individual is capable of operating at a professional level in HR.

The vast majority of regulated professions in Ontario incorporate some form of experience requirement.

Specific criteria have been established that define what is meant by 'HR experience' and 'professional level.' Determinations as to whether a given applicant's experience meets the established criteria are made by panels constituted from HRP's Experience Assessment Committee. It has been demonstrated that these judgments are made with a high degree of consistency.

HRPA's Experience Requirement

To be certified by HRPA, and earn the right to use the Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL) designation, applicants must have accumulated at least three years of demonstrated experience in HR at a professional level.

Statutory foundation for the experience requirement

The Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) is the regulatory authority for human resources management professionals in Ontario. One of the primary roles for regulatory authorities is to ensure the public interest is protected. As a regulatory authority, it is HRPA's duty to set the standards necessary to protect Ontarians. The experience requirement is established under the statutory authority conferred to HRPA pursuant to the *Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, 2013*.

The experience requirement

To be certified by HRPA, and earn the right to use the Certified Human Resources Leader (CHRL) designation, individuals must have had at least three years of demonstrated experience in HR at a professional level. There are four aspects to HRPA's experience requirement: experience must be (1) in HR, (2) at an appropriate level, (3) for a cumulative duration of three years, and (4) acquired within the previous 10 years with at least three months' experience in the previous two years.

What is professional experience?

In determining whether HR experience is at the professional level, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- **Independence of actions** — relates to the amount of planning, self-direction, decision-making and autonomy involved in the work experience;
- **Depth of work requirements** — relates to the extent to which work experience requires information analysis and interpretation of relevant information;
- **Level of interaction** — relates to the degree to which the individual interacts with a broad spectrum of contacts, including decision-makers; and
- **Responsibility for work outcome** — relates to the level of accountability for work and decisions.

To be clear, professional does not mean supervisory or managerial. Also, it does not matter whether one is working in a specialist position or a generalist position. It does not matter whether one is working as an independent practitioner or as an employee of a company. Professional does not require that one has overall responsibility for the HR function.

Junior levels in a human resources department performing administrative functions are not considered to be at the appropriate level; time spent in these positions will not be credited against the experience requirement.

You are also asked to submit job classification codes with your application if they are applicable. This would be in the case that you work for a government agency or equivalent. If you work for a government agency, please note that the job classification code for your position(s) needs to be at or above one of the following to be considered at the professional level:

- AS 05
- APL 17, or APL 16 if it is the highest HR person in a region
- PE 03
- MP 4

What is HR experience?

The definition of HR experience is any experience which falls within the scope of practice delineated in HRPAs Rules of Professional Conduct.

The *Scope of HR Practice* is the creation and implementation of all policies, practices and processes to effectively organize and manage all 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 Management* includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

1. The development and implementation of human resources policies and procedures;
2. Consultation in the area of human resources management;
3. Providing advice to clients, managers and employees in matters pertaining to management of human resources;
4. The representation of clients and organizations in proceedings related to human resources management;
5. Program development and evaluation in the area of human resources management;
6. The supervision of other human resources professionals whether registered or non-registered;
7. Coaching of employees, managers and other individuals in matters relating to work and employment;
8. The conduct of research in the area of human resources management;
9. Teaching in the area of human resources management.

To be credited toward the experience requirement, fifty-one percent (51%) or more of an applicant's activities must be in human resources as defined above. Beyond this, time will be credited proportionally. For instance, an applicant for whom seventy-five percent (75%) of their time is dedicated to human resources activities as defined above will have their time multiplied by .75. It would take four years of experience in such a position to be equivalent to three years of fulltime experience in human resources.

The experience must have occurred within the last 10 years to count towards the experience requirement and the individual must have worked in HR at the professional level for a minimum of three months within the last two years. If you have a significant absence from work (i.e. maternity/paternity leave), you must note this absence on your application as time spent away from the job; it does not count towards meeting the three years of experience.

General management work may be considered if the human resources work comprises at least fifty-one percent (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 co-ordination of one or more HR functional areas for the organization.

Small business owners/operators may gain suitable work experience towards the experience requirement provided that the business is established to provide HR advice. Time spent on business development and supervising staff for example, are not applicable towards the experience criteria. The remainder of the HR work will be prorated accordingly.

Employment lawyers are able to meet the experience requirement, however, work experience advising clients or conducting litigation is not eligible. Applied human resources work experience for the law firm or a client, such as conducting labour negotiations or conducting downsizing activities, would be considered. Such activity must comprise a significant part of the applicant's work experience and will be prorated accordingly.

Teaching experience alone can be used to accumulate all three years of required professional level HR experience. In order to meet the requirement of being at the professional level in HR, courses taught must be:

- HPRA-approved courses (Please refer to the 'School Search Tool' on our website, www.hrpa.ca for a list of current HRPA approved courses.), or
- HR courses taught at an accredited college or university.

If your course and corresponding academic institution are not currently pre-approved, you will need to [complete an application](#) through [Comparative Education Services](#) to determine if the college or university where you provided HR instruction was accredited at the time you were teaching. Once you have received the report from Comparative Education Services, you will need to send it in along with your application.

Teaching “full-time” means teaching a course load of at least three HR courses per semester. Faculty will need to send in a course outline so the committee can determine if the course is an HR course. HR instructors 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%
- Teaching two HR courses per semester – 2/3 of 100%

No applicant can earn more than full-time credit for their HR experience. An applicant who is employed full-time as an HR professional and has additional part-time HR work will not be given credit for more than a full-time job (overtime or extra hours do not allow an applicant to earn more than one year of experience in a one-year timeframe). This means that an HR professional who has full-time HR employment and who teaches in addition to that employment will not get credit for more than a full-time job. However, part-time work in HR and part-time teaching can be combined to equal full-time HR experience. A minimum of 30 hours per week is defined as full-time to equal one week of work.

Levels of work experience which are not considered to meet the requirement of being in HR at the professional level include the following:

- Junior levels within a human resources department performing administrative functions that are clerical in nature are not considered at the appropriate level. Time spent in these positions will not be credited towards the work experience component of the CHRL.
- Transactional work is not considered to meet the professional level. Transactional means work that is of an administrative or support function, meaning, there is no judgment, analysis or interpretation done to the data or information in the scope of your work.
- 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.
- Work experience in a line capacity will not be credited towards the experience requirement; for example, a position at a managerial level with human resources responsibilities but not a human resources management position, i.e. Manager of Engineering, would not be considered as HR experience.
- HR management work is not considered if all policies and procedures are developed at a corporate level and not by the on-site HR management. The individual is in effect administering the managerial decisions made elsewhere. This may be applicable in such situations as a branch plant, mine or mill location.

The experience requirement is a criterion-referenced decision

The decision as to whether one passes the experience requirement is entirely criterion-referenced. This means that the only factor that counts is where applicants stand with respect to the criteria elaborated above. The experience requirement criteria are never adjusted based on the number or proportion of applicants that pass the experience requirement—there are no quotas and there is no targeted pass rate. Indeed, because the criteria are made available to applicants, it is expected that the pass rate will be quite high. This does not mean that the experience requirement is ‘too easy,’ it means that most individuals who do not meet the requirements are aware of this and don’t apply for the Validation of Experience.

The Experience Assessment Committee

Determinations with respect to the experience requirement are made by panels constituted by the Chair of the Experience Assessment Committee from among the members of the Committee.

The Experience Assessment Committee is a standing committee of HRPAs Professional Regulation and Standards Committee (PRSC). The Committee is responsible for making determinations as to the appropriateness and adequacy of qualifications of individuals who have applied for accreditation by HRPAs in accordance with parameters developed by the PRSC and approved by the Board. Upon referral of the Registrar, the Experience Assessment Committee reviews and makes determinations pertaining to individual experience applications in accordance with the By-laws and Board approved policies.

The Experience Assessment Committee consists of volunteers with the CHRL designation with representation from the public and private sector. Members have included university instructors, consultants and HR managers.

It should be noted that the Validation of Experience in fulfillment of the three-year experience requirement is not the only activity of the Experience Assessment Committee. The Committee also evaluates Alternate Route applications for equivalency to meet the coursework requirement.

For the purpose of the Validation of Experience in fulfillment of the three-year experience requirement, the Chair of the Experience Assessment Committee appoints panels of three from among the members of the Committee.

Timing and sequence of the Validation of Experience

To qualify, experience must be acquired within 10 years of the date that the Validation of Experience is submitted for review, with at least three months of experience within the past two years.

The Validation of Experience may occur before or after other requirements with the exception that one must be a member of HRPAs to submit an application for the Validation of Experience. For many, the Validation of Experience will be the last requirement to be met. For many new entrants to the field, coursework requirements will be completed within the context of a degree program, which would be followed by writing the exam, and finally the experience requirement. For experienced applicants who

choose to pursue certification somewhat later in their career, the Validation of Experience could be the first requirement to be met (after membership).

The experience requirement and Internationally Educated Professionals (IEPs)

Simply, it does not matter where the experience has occurred; if it meets the criteria elaborated above, it can be submitted towards the experience requirement. Experience in human resources at a professional level is also a component of the Alternate Route process.

Applying for the Validation of Experience

An application for Validation of Experience 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 contention that experience requirements have been met.

The application form was designed specifically to give panel members the information that is most relevant to the determinations they are tasked to make (that the experience is in HR, that it is at the appropriate level and the amount of time in that position).

Applicants for the Validation of Experience must attest that all information provided is accurate and complete. Applicants should also be aware that they may be contacted for further information if required by the Experience Assessment Committee Panel and that they may be asked to provide a reference to verify information about their experience. The Panel may also seek information available in the public realm to make their decision.

The member's application is reviewed by staff for completeness before it is forwarded to the Experience Assessment Committee for review.

The initiating step in the Validation of Experience process is for the applicant to fill out the application form including questionnaire. The Validation of Experience application form also requires supporting documentation of: (1) a chronological resume, (2) job descriptions detailing current and relevant jobs, (3) organizational charts for each position being submitted, and (4) job classification codes if applicable. Employer documents are preferred; however, if you cannot obtain up-to-date job descriptions and organizational charts, you must create your own. Applicants are also asked to relate how their position(s) compare to the criteria for professional level. Applicants must indicate the proportion of their activities that fall within the area of human resources.

The first step in the experience validation process is to determine whether the experience is at the standard of being jointly in HR and at the professional level. The second step is to add up the cumulative duration of appropriate experience.

Starting with the applicant's current or most recent position, the Validation of Experience starts by determining whether the experience is 'HR experience at a professional level.'

If the applicant is working full-time but their position is not one hundred percent (100%) HR, it is determined what proportion of this applicant's time is spent on HR activities. If this proportion is less than fifty-one percent (51%), this position will not count. For a position that is between fifty-one percent (51%) and one hundred percent (100%) professional level HR, time credited towards the experience requirement will be prorated accordingly. For instance, if a position is deemed to comprise seventy-five percent (75%) HR activities at a professional level, time in that position will be multiplied by .75.

Work experience can be full-time or part-time at the professional level in HR. Those who are working part-time at the professional level in HR can apply to have their experience evaluated using the following criteria:

- Part-time work must add up to a minimum of 36 months of professional level HR experience using the guide of a minimum of 30 hours per week = one week of work.
- Regardless of how many hours are worked each week above 30 hours, one week = one week. For example, if two part-time jobs add up to 50 hours per week, those 50 hours constitute one week and the applicant will be given credit for one week of experience.
- Part-time work will be pro-rated accordingly based on how many hours/days of work/week and how much time is spent doing HR. For example, at 2.5 days per week it takes two weeks to get one week of work experience.
- Whether full-time or part-time, the position must be at least fifty-one percent (51%) in HR to be submitted. For example, two days per week in a position that is sixty percent (60%) HR could be used, but a full-time position that is only thirty percent (30%) HR does not meet the requirement.

The experience must have occurred within the last 10 years to count towards the experience requirement and the individual must have worked in HR for at least three months within the past two years.

If the credited time for the current position is less than the required three years, the panel will consider the prior position, and so on, up to a maximum of 10 years back. The majority of panel members must be in agreement as to the decision.

	Experience is not in HR	Experience is in HR
Experience is at the professional level	Experience is at the professional level but not in HR	Experience is in HR and at the professional level
Experience is not at the professional level	Experience is neither in HR nor at the professional level	Experience is in HR but not at the professional level

Review by the Experience Assessment Committee will result in one of the following outcomes:

- (1) Defer making a decision pending additional information, or
- (2) Determine that the applicant’s experience meets the requirement, or
- (3) Determine that the applicant’s experience falls short of the requirement in some respect, in which case the Committee will provide feedback to the applicant.

For those applicants who do not meet the three year requirement, the panel will give the time credited in months (e.g. 18 months credit) if any time is granted. Should the applicant’s experience be found to fall short of the requirement, the application will be kept on file. In the future, applicants can re-submit their application for a fee.

All Validation of Experience application results are communicated to the applicant via email.

Training of panel members

New members of the Experience Assessment Committee sit in on panels with experienced committee members. The progress of new Experience Assessment Committee members is monitored by the Chair of the Committee. For training purposes, unusual cases are often brought up for discussion to the full Committee.

Consistency of panel decisions

Clearly, the consistency of panel decisions is of utmost importance. Indeed, a number of aspects of the process are designed to ensure a high degree of consistency in decision-making. One approach to evaluation of consistency is to consider the result of having two panels review the same case independently. It has been found that the consistency of panel decisions is in the range of ninety-five percent (95%). Thus, HRPA’s experience requirement handily meets all technical standards of reliability and consistency.

Appeals process

All decisions of the Experience Assessment Committee can be appealed. 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 Experience Assessment Committee's decision was not the one hoped for is not grounds for appeal.