

STEP Diploma for Canada Examination Rules & Regulations

Rules & Regulation Areas:

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1. Diploma Program

- 1.1 Diploma format** - The Diploma is awarded on passing each of the four three-hour open-book examinations within four years of becoming a STEP Canada student. Exams are graded separately and, for a diploma to be awarded, a passing mark of 60% must be achieved in each exam (see below).
- 1.2 Entry eligibility** - Admission to the Diploma program is open to those who are currently employed in the Canadian trust and estate industry or who have the intention of working in that industry in the future. No other professional qualification is required for enrollment in the Diploma program. A student who successfully completes the program will receive a Certificate of Completion for the STEP Canada Diploma.
- 1.3 Exemptions** – A student may be granted an exemption from an exam requirement if, in the past five years, the student can demonstrate that he or she has passed a course or earned a professional credential recognized by STEP Canada to be of comparable level and content to the applicable STEP course. The maximum number of exemptions allowed is two. These exemptions are subject to modification as required by STEP Canada without prior notice to the public and any such changes are effective as of the date of publication on the STEP Canada website.

2. Administrative Matters

- 2.1 Registration procedure** – In order to enrol in a Diploma course, a student must have either passed the previous course or have been granted an exemption for it. Upon completing and submitting the registration form to STEP with the requisite payment, the student will be enrolled and receive the corresponding study materials and access to online materials. Course fees will be refunded if for any reason the enrolment application is denied.

- 2.2 Examination availability** - Exams will be administered where a STEP Canada branch is located: Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. There are two exam sessions each year: October and May. When enrolling for a course, the student must identify the location to write the exam and select one of the two exam sessions (October or May). It is recommended that the date chosen be one that is at least four months after the date of registration
- 2.3 Exam booking confirmation** - The exact examination dates for any given year are posted on the www.step.ca website. You will be sent confirmation of the examination booking and venue by email at least three weeks prior to the exam.
- 2.4 Rescheduling exams** - STEP Canada reserves the right to alter, cancel or postpone the schedule of exam dates or modify the list of regular examination centres at anytime without notice and to vary or cancel an exam where it considers the occasion necessitates it. STEP Canada accepts no liability if, for whatever reason, an exam does not take place.
- 2.5 Challenging an exam** – A student who is granted the opportunity to challenge an exam may choose to write the exam at either of the next two exam sessions following the decision to allow the challenge. A challenge fee of \$375 to cover administration, sitting and marking costs is applicable and payable prior to the exam date.
- 2.6 Deferrals and non-Attendance**– Students must write the corresponding exam within a year of registering for a course and cannot defer beyond the third exam session from the date of the course registration.

To defer an exam, the student must notify STEP in writing at least **30 days** prior to the exam date, and will then be registered to sit the exam at the next exam session. If the next session is more than 15 months after the student had registered for the course, an administration charge of \$100 will be levied.

If the student has deferred beyond the 15-month mark and the course text has been updated, the student will need to purchase the updated materials from STEP Canada.

If STEP receives written notice of the student's intention to defer an exam **less than 30 calendar days but more than 15 calendar days** before the examination date, a deferral penalty of \$100 will be charged.

If STEP receives written notice of the student's intention to defer an exam **less than 15 calendar days** prior to the exam or if the student fails to attend an exam (without having deferred as outlined above) an administration fee of \$150 will be charged for the non-attendance.

Written notice may be sent in the form of an email sent to education @step.ca or by fax to STEP Canada at 416-491 9499.

2.7 Cancellations – If a student withdraws from a Diploma course within two weeks of registration, a refund of 50% of the course fee is payable on return of the course material in original condition (no markings or damage to the binder).

2.8 Summary of fees – The exam fee is included in the course fee. However, the following additional fees may become payable:

- A fee of \$150 for each exemption request.
- A separate examination fee of \$375 to challenge or re-write an examination.
- A deferral fee of \$100 to sit an exam more than 15 months after registering for a course.
- A 30-day deferral penalty of \$100 to notify STEP of an exam deferral less than 30 days but more than 15 days before the exam date.
- A 15-day deferral penalty of \$150 to notify STEP of an exam deferral less than 15 days before the exam date, or for failure to attend an exam (without first having deferred as outlined above).
- A re-mark fee of \$100, to have a failed exam re-marked, which would be refunded if a passing grade is later awarded.

Fees are set by STEP Canada. All fees are subject to change without notice. The applicable taxes are payable on all fees.

2.9 Good standing – A student must be a student member in good standing of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners to be permitted to write an exam or register for any further course(s). In the event that a student writes an examination and it transpires that there is an outstanding balance owing, the student's exam will not be released until such balances are paid in full.

3. Examination Standards and Expectations

3.1 Aim - The aim of the exams is to determine whether the student has acquired an appropriate level of knowledge to ultimately become a full member of STEP entitled to use the designation TEP.

3.2 Exam format - The exam format consists of a variety of multiple choice, short answer and essay type questions. The mix of question types is variable and each examination may include one, some or all of these types of questions.

3.3 Jurisdiction – Each student must identify a provincial jurisdiction for the purposes of writing the exam and applicability of legislation, as set out in 3.4 below, except in the case of the Taxation of Trusts and Estates course.

3.4 Legislation – The students are responsible for all legislation referenced in the text applicable in the province chosen for the student's exam jurisdiction. This

includes all federal legislation and the applicable provincial legislation whether such province is specifically referred to or not.

- 3.5 Case law** - Students are responsible for knowing the cases included in the course materials that establish a principle of law. Specifically, the student should be familiar with the case name, able to summarize the facts and decisions that the case is known for, and apply the case to the facts in the exam question. Students are not responsible for the other incidental cases discussed in the course materials, the cases discussed in shaded boxes or those in the footnotes, although they may be useful for understanding an issue and can be used to support a position in an answer.
- 3.6 Referring to legislation and cases** - When referring to legislation and cases that support an answer, such references should be accurate. Full citations are not necessary; the name of the statute (and section number if appropriate) or the case name is sufficient. Marks will not be awarded on an exam for citing a case or legislation and its facts, unless the relevance to the question is also explained.
- 3.7 Changes in law and practice** - Students should be familiar with recent changes in law and practice. However, unless such changes in law and practice have been communicated to students in written materials or online course materials, they will not constitute examinable material for the purposes of the exam.
- 3.8 Plagiarism & exam misconduct** - All acts by an individual that result in a false academic evaluation such as exam misconduct, which includes but is not limited to: consulting with a neighbour during an exam; use of illegal aids; stealing or being in possession of exam-related material; impersonating someone at an exam; falsification or misrepresentation of an academic evaluation; and forgery of academic records or supporting documents are prohibited and subject to sanctions by STEP. These sanctions consist of one or more of the following actions that can be imposed by the STEP Canada Education Committee: written reprimand and/or conduct probation, a grade of zero on the exam and suspension of a fixed or unlimited duration, as well as any other or additional sanction that may be imposed by the Board of Directors of STEP Canada.
- 3.9 Equity and Accommodation** – STEP Canada will make every effort to accommodate any special needs that a student may have and will endeavour to find solutions that will allow equitable participation in the examination process including, possibly, the awarding of extra time in which to write the exam. However, depending on the nature of your request, the time frame to take the necessary action may vary. Written requests for examination accommodations and supporting documentation are required at least six weeks prior to the date of the examination.
- 3.10 Illness, etc.** - If, as a result of illness, injury or other exceptional circumstances, a student considers that his or her performance in the exam has been adversely

affected, an application for consideration may be made. This application should be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation, e.g. medical certificate, and sent to STEP as soon as possible after the exam.

4. Examination Grading

4.1 Passing grade - The passing grade for examinations is 60%.

4.2 Examination mark/grade achievement level

85 +	A
75 – 84	B
68 – 74	C
60 – 68	D
Below 60	E

The Diploma can be awarded at Distinction level. In order to achieve a distinction overall, you must achieve an average of 80% or more across the four papers.

3.11 Results - Exam results are released as soon as reasonably possible and students will be sent individual emails with their results. STEP Canada makes every effort to complete the marking process and advise students of their marks within the 30 days following the exam date. However, STEP does not assume any liability in the event that circumstances beyond its control prevent this from occurring.

4.3 Academic appeal – If you wish to appeal an examination result you may apply to STEP Canada to have your exam re-marked. A re-marking fee of \$100 must accompany your application. Your application and fee must arrive at the STEP Canada office not more than 21 days after notification to you of the examination result. The paper will be re-marked and the result communicated to you as soon as possible. If the result of the re-mark is to upgrade you from a fail to a pass then the re-marking fee will be refunded. The ruling of STEP Canada is final.

4.4 Re-write policy – If you fail an exam, you will be permitted a one-time re-write per course at STEP’s sole discretion. The cost for re-writing an exam is \$375 and you will write it at the next stated exam date. If the text has been updated, you will need to purchase the updated materials.

5. Examination Protocol

5.1 Photo I.D. – Students must bring a government-issued photo ID to the exam. The proctor will check it before the exam begins.

- 5.2 Open book exam materials allowance** – Paper copies of the text, study guide, personal notes and statutes are permitted, as well as a calculator provided it is non-printing, non-communicating, silent and self-powered. The proctor’s decision regarding the acceptability of any material in the examination room shall be final. All your materials must be confined to your writing space.
- 5.3 Admittance to examination room** – If you are late you may be admitted to the examination room at any time within the first 30 minutes of the exam, and thereafter no admittance will be allowed.
- 5.4 Leaving the examination room** - Other than to visit the washroom, once you leave the examination room, you will be ineligible to return during that exam. In fairness to others, you may not leave the examination room during the first 30 minutes and the last 15 minutes of the exam.
- 5.5 Behaviour in the examination room** - During the period of the exam and the administration periods both before and after the exam, you may not pass information nor talk to other exam delegates. Watch alarms must be switched off during the exam. If students have brought cellular phones, they must be turned off and given to the exam proctor for the duration of the exam.
- 5.6 Student number** – You will be asked to verify and/or enter your student number on your exam. All marking is anonymous and the student’s name should not appear anywhere on the exam booklet.
- 5.7 Starting and finishing the exam** - During the exam you may only turn the exam paper over and look at the questions once the proctor has signified the start of the exam. The call to stop writing means no further writing may be carried out whatsoever.
- 5.8 Examination paper** - You are not permitted to remove the examination paper or any papers used to jot down notes during the exam from the room. Both the examination booklet and exam must be turned in at the end of the exam.