

Exam Preparation Guide

In Ontario, most skilled trades require passing a final certification exam to earn a Certificate of Qualification (CofQ). This guide serves as a starting point as you prepare for your exam, introducing many of the important resources available.

Know the Basics

- Get started on scheduling your exam and accommodations through the STO website. [Exam scheduling - Skilled Trades Ontario](#) / [Réservation d'examen - Métiers spécialisés Ontario](#)
- Exam Format:
 - Multiple-choice
 - Paper based or electronic, as defined in your exam confirmation email
 - Ranging between 90 to 150 questions
 - Time Limit: 4-hours
 - Passing Grade: 70%
- Types of Exams:
 - Red Seal CofQ
 - Provincial CofQ

Key Resources to Prepare for the Red Seal Exam

- The Red Seal Occupational Standard (RSOS)
 - Your exam is based on the Tasks and Sub-Tasks outlined in the RSOS for your trade
- Use the Self-Assessment Tool for your trade
- Practice using the Sample Questions for your trade
- Review the Red Seal Exam Preparation Guide
- Use the Exam Preparation Checklist
- Know the formulas and when to use them

Key Resources to Prepare for the Provincial Exam

- The Apprenticeship Training Standard (ATS)
 - Your exam is based on the skills, tasks, and performance objectives in the ATS
 - Use the Competency Analysis Profile (CAP) Chart as a checklist to ensure you have reviewed every skill set
- Provincial Exam Counselling Sheets
 - Your exam topic weightings are defined for Provincial (Ontario-only) exams

Links to the Interprovincial (Red Seal) exam resources and Provincial (non-Red Seal) exam resources are available on the Skilled Trades Ontario website under: [Exam](#)

Prepare a Study Plan

Use the ATS or RSOS as your study map, break down each skill and identify:

- What you must do in each task
- The tools/materials involved
- The required standard or measurement
- Visualize the task, talk through it, or explain it to someone else
- Mark weak areas, revisit them with on-the-job training

Build a Balanced Study Plan

- Use exam breakdowns to prioritize high-weight topics
- Review glossaries, diagrams, and code books (where applicable)
- Connect theory to your real work experience

Exam Day Tips

- Review your exam confirmation notice for important information about exam day
- Bring your government issued photo identification
- Cellphones, watches, hats, wallets, smart technology (watches, glasses, headphones) will not be permitted into the exam room
- Expect a quiet testing environment
- Conduct rules for the exam will be shared at the start of the exam
- Use strategies during your exam, including but not limited to:
 - Reading every question carefully
 - Eliminating wrong answers
 - Flagging difficult questions to return to later
 - Managing your time, pacing yourself accordingly for the exam
 - Answering all questions on the exam

After the Exam

- Results are provided by Skilled Trades Ontario within 15 business days and will be published to your STO portal. You will review an email once the results are published, and a paper copy of your results will follow via regular mail.