UNBRANDED EDUCATION · FREE GUIDE

The Ontario Hairstylist Licensing Guide

How the 332A written exam works, how to register, and how to study for it properly.

How Licensing Works in Ontario

Hairstylist is a **compulsory trade** in Ontario — you must be certified (or registered as an apprentice) to legally practice. Certification runs through **Skilled Trades Ontario (STO)**: complete the pathway, pass the certifying exam, and STO issues your **Certificate of Qualification (C of Q)** in trade code 332A. Ontario recognizes Hairstylist as a Red Seal trade but currently issues the provincial C of Q only.

Am I Eligible to Write the Exam?

Two doors in:

- **The apprenticeship route** — complete the Ontario Hairstylist apprenticeship (about 3,500 hours: roughly 3,020 on the job + 480 in school) and receive your Certificate of Apprenticeship.
- **The experience route** — if you trained elsewhere or learned on the job, apply through STO's **Trade Equivalency Assessment** to have your experience recognized, which qualifies you to challenge the exam.

The Exam Itself

- **Format:** multiple choice, four options per question — typically between 90 and 150 questions.
- **Time:** up to four hours (extra time must be requested when you schedule, not on exam day).
- **Pass mark: 70%.**
- **Closed book.** The exam tests theory: why, not just what.

Registering and Results

Exams are scheduled through Skilled Trades Ontario (exam scheduling runs through their site and Portal, with exams administered at local apprenticeship offices). Results post to your STO Portal and are emailed if STO has your address on file.

If you don't pass: you can rebook **30 days after** your attempt and write from the 31st day onward. Rewrites are common and carry no penalty beyond the fee — treat a miss as a diagnostic, not a verdict.

The Study Plan That Actually Works

Re-reading a textbook feels like studying but tests nothing. Question practice does the opposite: every question you get wrong tells you exactly what to fix. The method:

- **Week 1 — Diagnose.** Do questions across every topic without studying first. Your wrong answers are your syllabus. Most people discover their gaps are narrower than their anxiety suggested.
- **Week 2–3 — Drill the why.** Work topic by topic, weakest first. Don't memorize which answer was right; make sure you can explain to another human WHY it's right. If you can't say why, you don't have it yet — that's the skill exam wording can't shake.

- **Final week — Simulate.** Timed, full-length runs. Train the clock, the fatigue, and the discipline of flagging hard questions and moving on. Review every miss the same day.
- **The night before — Nothing new.** Light review of your own error list, then sleep. Cramming new material trades away the recall you already own.

Practice the Way the Exam Thinks

The free 10 questions you tried are drawn from a bank of 601 exam-style questions across 21 topics — each with the full reasoning behind the answer, plus a timed exam mode for the simulation weeks. It exists because nobody should fail a written exam over wording. Find it where you found the free sample.

UNBRANDED Education · Miranda Furtado — licensed hairstylist, salon owner, educator · This guide summarizes official sources; always confirm current requirements, fees and formats with Skilled Trades Ontario before booking.