

Helpful information for applicants

Thank you for your interest in a career in the funeral sector. Arranging to meet with a funeral director to discuss a career in funeral services is a great first step when considering a career in this sector.

A funeral home observation period, although not a requirement for application, helps potential applicants to make an informed decision about funeral directing and/or embalming. An up-to-date criminal record check and proof of a valid driver's license may be requested by the funeral home that is willing to provide work observation opportunities.

Not all funeral homes you contact will be able to meet with you or accommodate you for an observation period.

A funeral home observation period provides an opportunity for potential applicants to explore a career in funeral services through workplace observation and engagement, helping them to make an informed decision about one of two NSCC funeral service apprenticeship model programs.

A funeral home observation period may extend over a period of a week or set hours over a period of weeks so that the applicant can fully appreciate the roles, responsibilities and expectations of professional practices for funeral directors/embalmers.

What is the difference between a funeral home observation period and an apprenticeship?

- A funeral home observation period happens before the **application process**.
- An apprenticeship is ongoing **during the 2-year program**.

Enrolled students are registered funeral director and/or embalmer apprentices by provincial funeral service licensing boards in Atlantic Canada. NSCC students complete program courses and apprenticeship requirements simultaneously during the 2-year program. Most apprentices are employed by funeral homes where they are receiving apprenticeship training.

Potential applicants should be aware that although there is a shortage of trained personnel in funeral services, there may not be position vacancies for apprenticeship training in your local community. Mobility is an important consideration as you may need to relocate for work.

Eligibility for program enrolment requires providing confirmation of apprenticeship arrangements such as a letter from a funeral home employer confirming employment and eligibility for apprenticeship registration.

For more information about apprenticeship requirements and eligibility in your province, contact the provincial licensing board for embalmers and funeral directors. Although licensing boards register apprentices and oversee apprenticeship training for enrolled students, it is not the role of the board to arrange for funeral observation periods.

Links for the licensing boards

- Newfoundland and Labrador: <https://www.nlfuneralboard.ca/>
- Nova Scotia: <https://www.nsbrefd.com/>
- Prince Edward Island: <http://peifuneralboard.com/>
- New Brunswick: <http://nbfuneralboard.com/>

Funeral Home Observation Information (Not an NSCC Admissions Requirement)

The funeral home observation period is recommended for potential applicants to learn about all aspects of funeral service and expectations of funeral sector professional practice.

The following list outlines key funeral professional practices, services and tasks that the potential applicant will discuss with a licensed mentor, observe and/or practice during the funeral home observation period. Some funeral home policies and insurance may preclude opportunities for direct observation and/or participation.

- Funeral home ethical and confidentiality standards (e.g., maintain dignity of deceased patient, privacy and confidentiality of patient and families)
- Workplace safety standards
 - Personal protective equipment
 - Proper lifting techniques
 - Equipment use and maintenance
- Company policies and handbook (e.g. proper communication and dress code)
- Expectations for communication (e.g., first call, directing families, pallbearers, leading services, religious terminology, use culturally appropriate and inclusive language)
- Final disposition options (eg., burial, green burial, cremation)
- Funeral merchandise options
- Setting-up for services at the funeral home, church or other location
- Religious and cultural considerations

- Funeral sector laws, policies, and procedures pertaining to chain of custody of deceased patients
- Nature of services and expectations for work hours, in general for the sector
- Grief resources and supports
- Supports for funeral professionals (eg., Funeral professionals peer support, professional associations)
- Policies and procedures for first calls, transfers (home and institutions), service arrangements, preparation of human remains for identification or viewing, set-up for funeral and related services, (eg. funerals, memorial services and tribute services), cremation services, committal services, post service follow-up and aftercare.
- Service arrangements and disposition documentation (eg., first call sheet, service contracts, legal authorization forms, funeral director statements of death, chain of custody and personal effects, death benefits)
- Cremation services and crematoria operations

Confidentiality Agreement (Not an NSCC Admissions Requirement)

It is a privilege for you to share in the experiences of the client families served by participating funeral homes and to observe or assist in the transfer and custody of deceased persons in their care. Maintaining confidentiality in the employment of funeral and related services is essential.

It is expected that you will demonstrate respectful, appropriate, ethical, and professional behaviour and effective interpersonal interactions with client families, members of the public, funeral home staff, licensed funeral directors and the funeral home manager.

By signing your name below, you are confirming your commitment to maintain the confidentiality of the funeral home and families in their care.

Signature of Applicant	Date
Name of Applicant	Name of Funeral Home