



NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PHARMACY BOARD

The Pharmacy Technician Regulation & Registration Process

Frequently Asked Questions

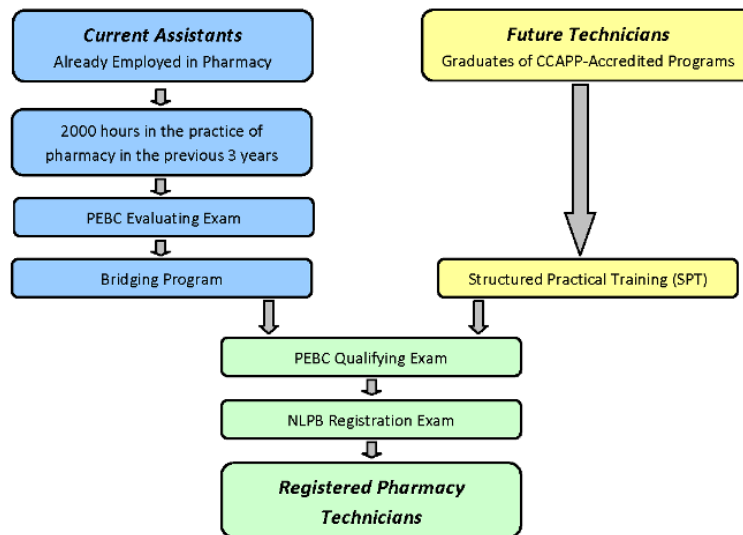
August 2010

Is Pharmacy Technician Regulation mandatory? Do all current pharmacy assistants have to participate?

No, from the Board's perspective, all eligible pharmacy assistants are welcome to become regulated by moving through the process, outlined below. However, this is not mandatory and it is expected that many pharmacies will continue to fully utilize pharmacy assistants in the future.

What about those current pharmacy assistants who graduated from a training program? Will they be "grandfathered"?

No, grand-fathering will not be part of this process. Since there was no system in place to ensure consistency across education programs until CCAPP accreditation in 2008, there is a high degree of diversity among those choosing to become regulated pharmacy technicians. This poses a significant challenge; as a regulatory body whose main objective is public protection, NLPB needs to be able to ensure that individuals applying for registration have demonstrated competencies and are able to practice safely and effectively within the scope of their profession.



Could you explain the process for current assistants to become regulated Pharmacy Technicians in more detail?

PEBC Evaluating Exam: The first step in this process for most pharmacy assistants is writing the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) **Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam**. This is a 3 hour, 150 multiple choice question exam that is designed to establish that applicants have knowledge and skills comparable to that of a graduate of a CCAPP-accredited program. The exam is offered by PEBC twice a year in key locations across Canada. More details on the Evaluating Exam, including the exam sitting schedule, are available on the PEBC website (www.pebc.ca).

In order to be qualified to write this exam, applicants must have been working in the practice of pharmacy (defined on the PEBC website) for a minimum of 2000 hours over the previous three years. This means that very recent graduates and assistants who have not been working in the field recently may not be eligible to write the exam at this time. If you are in this situation, you should contact PEBC for further advice and instruction.

Bridging Program: The next step in the process would be to complete a **Bridging Program**. This is an educational program that is intended to prepare individuals for their role as a regulated health professional, including the additional responsibilities described in the competencies for a pharmacy technician. It consists of four modules: Pharmacology, Professional Practice, Management of Drug Distribution Systems, and Product Preparation. It is not known at this time whether or not a Bridging Program will be offered in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, Bridging Program courses are currently being offered both in-class and on-line at a number of colleges in Ontario.

NOTE: Applicants who feel that they already have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities may challenge a particular bridging course by applying to write a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) exam. The PLAR option was incorporated so applicants who are confident in their skills can “fast track” bridging. All bridging courses, with the exception of the Professional Practice module which is mandatory for all applicants, are PLAR-eligible.

PEBC Qualifying Exam: PEBC has also developed and is administering a **Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Exam**. This exam, based on the *NAPRA Professional Competencies for Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice*, has two components: a written multiple choice question exam and a performance-based exam called an Objective Structured Performance Exam (ASPE). This exam will be critical as the applicant will have to pass both parts of the exam to be eligible for registration. PEBC is expected to offer the exam nationally at key locations twice a year.

NLPB Registration Exam: This exam would be developed and administered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board to test an individual's understanding of the provincial legislation and standards of practice as they relate to the practice of pharmacy.

How much will it cost for a person to proceed through the regulation process?

We cannot give a definite total cost for an individual moving through the full regulation process at this time since we do not have firm numbers for many of the expected expenses. As well, the cost will vary to some extent from person to person depending on what components are completed, in addition to when and where they are completed. Having said that, based on experiences in other provinces, we can estimate the cost of completing the above described components at anywhere from \$2,500 to \$3,500. This would not include costs related to annual renewal such as NLPB Registration Fee, liability insurance, etc.

Will Pharmacy Technicians be required to show evidence of continuing competency like pharmacists?

Yes, once registered with the NLPB, Pharmacy Technicians will be responsible for maintaining and improving their core competencies through professional development and be able to show evidence of such. The Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy (CCCEP) has partnered with the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians (CAPT) to accredit educational activities for these individuals.

Will Pharmacy Technicians be required to carry liability insurance?

Yes, once registered with the NLPB, Pharmacy Technicians will be responsible for carrying liability insurance.

Will pharmacists be responsible for the actions of Pharmacy Technicians?

Yes and no. The pharmacist-in-charge will remain responsible for all activities taking place in the pharmacy. In addition to this, individual pharmacists will remain responsible for assessing the appropriateness of drug therapy (both new and continuing) and providing patient consultation. A prescription cannot be released to the patient without a pharmacist having performed these functions. Pharmacy Technicians will be responsible for a distinct set of tasks within an established Scope of Practice that is still to be determined and developed.