



The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada Questions & Answers for Pharmacy Technicians

Overview

Q1 What is the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada?

The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) is the national certification body for the pharmacy profession in Canada. PEBC is a non-profit organization with more than 45 years of experience in assessing the qualifications and competence of candidates for licensing by pharmacy provincial regulatory authorities. Established by a Special Act of Parliament on December 21, 1963, PEBC functions as an arms-length national examining board for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians seeking entry-to-practice licensure in Canada.

Q2 What is the purpose of the PEBC?

The purpose of the Board is to assess qualifications for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians on behalf of participating provincial regulatory authorities. To that end, the Board awards Certificates of Qualification to those applicants who pass a Qualifying Examination. A major responsibility of the Board is to assure the achievement of a minimal level of competence to practise at an entry-level. PEBC assesses the qualifications of both Canadian and international pharmacy graduates. The rigorous certification process administered by PEBC ensures the quality of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians entering practice and is a vital component in the delivery of safe and effective health care to Canadians.

Q3 How does the PEBC relate to provincial regulatory authorities?

Provincial legislation restricts the practice of pharmacy to qualified persons. The PEBC Certificate of Qualification for pharmacists is a licensing requirement for entry-to-practice applicants (whether trained in Canada or outside Canada) in all provinces, except Quebec. The PEBC Certificate of Qualification for pharmacy technicians is an entry-to-practice licensing requirement in all provinces that have regulated pharmacy technicians. This certificate is one important requirement for licensure, but each province also has other requirements before granting of a licence, such as practical experience, language proficiency and jurisprudence assessment.

Q4 How is PEBC Governed?

The PEBC is governed by a national Board of Directors, comprised of representatives of the participating provincial regulatory authorities, the Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada, the Canadian Pharmacists Association, the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists, the Canadian Pharmacy Technician Educators Association and the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians. The five-member Executive

Committee is headed by the President, who is elected annually. Dr. John Pugsley serves as Registrar-Treasurer, based in PEBC's Toronto office.

Q5 What organizations are represented on the PEBC Board of Directors?

The following organizations are represented on the PEBC Board: The Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board; the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists; the New Brunswick Pharmaceutical Society; the Prince Edward Island Pharmacy Board; L'Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec; the Ontario College of Pharmacists; the Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association; the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists; the Alberta College of Pharmacists; the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia; the Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada; the Canadian Pharmacists Association; the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists; the Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians, and the Canadian Pharmacy Technician Educators Association.

Q6 Are there any language proficiency requirements related to licensure or the Qualifying Examination?

Although PEBC has no language fluency requirements, candidates are advised that language proficiency will affect performance in the Evaluating Examination and the two parts of the Qualifying Examination, since written and oral communication skills are essential competencies for practice and for success in taking the examinations.

Qualifying Examination for Pharmacy Technicians

Q7 What is the purpose of the Qualifying Examination?

The Qualifying Examination is an important assessment of an applicant's competence (knowledge, skills and abilities) to practise pharmacy safely and effectively in an entry level position. This assessment is based on the practice competencies defined in "Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice" by NAPRA, 2007. The Qualifying Examination ensures that successful candidates have met the required standard of competence.

Q8 Who is eligible to take the Qualifying Examination?

Current eligibility for the Qualifying Examination is any one of the following:

1. Successful completion of a pharmacy technician education program accredited by The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy programs (CCAPP).
2. Successful standing and status on: the Ontario College of Pharmacists Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (up to and including December 31, 2008); **OR** the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board of Alberta Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (up to and including June 30, 2008).
3. Successful completion of the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination*.
4. Successful completion of the PEBC Pharmacist Evaluating Examination.
5. Successful completion of a pharmacist degree program in Canada or the United States.

N.B. *All Canadian pharmacy technicians currently in the profession must pass the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination by **December 31, 2015** in order to be eligible to apply for the qualifying Examination (please note that the timelines may be earlier for an individual Provincial Regulatory Authority). After this time, only Canadian graduates of a CCAPP accredited program will be eligible to apply for the qualifying Examination.

Q9 What does the Qualifying Examination involve?

There are two parts to the Qualifying Examination - Part I (MCQ) or QE-I (MCQ) and Part II (OSPE) or QE-II (OSPE).

Part I of the Qualifying Examination is a multiple choice question (MCQ) examination. It is written in one four-hour sitting on one day.

Part II of the Qualifying Examination is a performance-based assessment called an “objective structured performance examination” (OSPE), and is taken on either a morning or afternoon on a different day than Part I. The QE-II (OSPE) consists of a series of tasks or “stations” simulating common and/or critical practical situations. Some of these simulations involve interactions with a “Standardized Patient” or “Standardized Client” (e.g., parent or caregiver) or a “Standardized Health Professional”.

Evaluating Examination for Pharmacy Technicians

Q10 What if applicants do not meet the eligibility requirements to directly take the Qualifying Examination?

Applicants who do not meet the eligibility requirements to directly take the Qualifying Examination (Part I and Part II), must first have their qualifications evaluated. The evaluation procedure is a two-step process.

The first step, known as Document Evaluation, is the evaluation of applications and accompanying documents to ensure that applicants possess the qualifications that are acceptable for admission to the Evaluating Examination. The minimum qualification is the provision of acceptable evidence of completion of at least 2,000 hours of work and/or teaching in the past 36 months in the field of pharmacy.

The second step is the successful completion of the Evaluating Examination. The Evaluating Examination is designed to determine if the applicant has the knowledge and skills comparable to that of a graduate of a program of study accredited by CCAPP. It will evaluate the applicant’s knowledge in all areas of current pharmacy technician education curricula that are accredited by CCAPP. The Evaluating Examination is a multiple choice question (MCQ) examination. It is written in a three hour sitting.

Once applicants pass the Evaluating Examination, they will then be eligible to apply for the Qualifying Examination (Part I and Part II).

General

Q11 Why is examination security important for the PEBC examinations and how is it protected?

PEBC maintains strict security of the content of its examinations. Examination material is protected by copyright and intellectual property rights. Rules and certification statements, which appear on the application forms and on the Candidate's Agreement for Part II (OSPE), prohibit any of the following:

- giving or receiving assistance in answering questions during the exam
- access to test items before or after exam
- reproduction of examination content in any manner
- disclosure of test items to others at any time, including discussion of examination content with other candidates or anyone else before, during or after an examination.

Candidates who do not adhere to these rules before, during and after taking part in the examination may lose their right to be certified for a period of time, may be required to compensate PEBC for losses incurred, may be reported to professional regulatory authorities or face possible legal prosecution. The reproduction of test content and disclosure of test items to others is unethical and unprofessional, and may result in a candidate receiving certification who does not have the necessary knowledge and skills. This is not in the best interest of the profession or of public safety.

Q 12 How is it determined where the PEBC Pharmacy Technician examinations will be offered?

The examinations (both Evaluating and Qualifying) are offered in the provinces that are moving forward with the regulation of pharmacy technicians.

Due to the nature of Part II (OSPE) of the Qualifying Examination, it can only be offered in locations that have a Standardized Patient Program (i.e., generally a university centre).

Q13 How can additional information about the PEBC examinations be obtained?

The PEBC website (www.pebc.ca) has detailed information about application procedures, examination locations, examination costs and what to expect when taking the examinations. As well, there is detailed information on the examination blueprints and resources that may be helpful in preparing for an examination, such as sample questions, sample OSPE stations, and listings of references and learning resources. For questions that are not answered by the information on the website, additional information may be obtained by emailing the PEBC office at pebcinfo@pebc.ca or by contacting the office by telephone at 416-979-2431 or by fax at 416-599-9244. PEBC office hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with the office closed for lunch between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. PEBC is not available for in-person candidate visits.