PHARMACY TECHNICIAN ASSESSMENT (PTA)

PROGRAM INFORMATION FOR PHARMACY TECHNICIAN CANDIDATES AND PRECEPTORS

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the qualifications for registration and licensing as a pharmacy technician with the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) is the “successful completion of an assessment of the applicant’s basic competencies in a direct patient care practice setting approved by the Council” 1.

Pharmacy assistants pursuing licensure through the transition pathway are required to complete the NSCP Pharmacy Technician Assessment (PTA), which is a competency assessment of a technician candidate performed in the workplace by an approved licenced pharmacy technician or pharmacist preceptor. The assessment may be completed in a community or hospital practice setting approved by the NSCP. There is no fee associated with the PTA.

The PTA permits pharmacy technician candidates to apply previously acquired academic knowledge and skills in a practical setting through completion of various activities that fall within the pharmacy technician’s legislated scope of practice in Nova Scotia (Appendix A). The activities are designed to address specific competencies as set forth in the Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice2 developed by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA).

Graduates of an accredited program must also undergo a similar assessment based on these same competencies as part of the completion of the Structured Practice Experience (SPE) Program administered by educational institutions approved by the NSCP.

This document is intended to provide information on the program for pharmacy technician candidates who wish to become registered and licensed with the NSCP as well as for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who are interested in being a workplace preceptor.

2. GOALS

The goals of the PTA are to:

a. Ensure that pharmacy technician candidates have the ability to accurately and consistently perform a technical check of prescriptions/prepared products for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with the Act, regulations, and standards of practice.

b. Ensure that pharmacy technician candidates have the required competency to accurately and consistently perform communication-related tasks such as receiving verbal orders from a prescriber and transferring prescriptions to and from other pharmacies.

c. Encourage further development of effective communication skills.

d. Foster a professional relationship among pharmacy technician candidates, pharmacists, patients, and other health care professionals.

e. Help develop the pharmacy technician candidate’s professional awareness of pharmacy practice.

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1 Registration, Licensing & Professional Accountability Regulations s.8(1)(f)
2 http://napra.ca/Content_Files/Files/Comp_for_Cdn_PHARMTECHS_at_EntrytoPractice_March2014.pdf
3. PREREQUISITES

Prior to commencing the PTA, the pharmacy technician candidate will be required to do the following:

a. Successfully complete the PEBC Evaluating Exam
   (http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3100/la_id/1.htm).

b. Successfully complete the Pharmacy Technician Education Bridging Program


4. GETTING STARTED

   a. Select Eligible Preceptor and Site

   The pharmacy technician candidate must identify and select a preceptor and site where the assessment will be completed and that meets the requirements for the PTA.

   b. Submit Application Form

   Before beginning the PTA, the pharmacy technician candidate must complete the PTA Application form, have it signed by the chosen preceptor, and submit it to the NSCP no less than one week prior to commencing the program to allow for sufficient time for the application to be processed.

   c. Prepare to begin the PTA

   It is critically important that both the pharmacy technician candidate and the preceptor fully understand the required competencies of pharmacy technicians, their scope of practice as defined in pharmacy regulations, and how licensed pharmacy technicians can better support the pharmacist in expanding their patient-centered role. The pharmacy technician candidate and the preceptor should familiarize themselves with the following sources of relevant information:

      i. NSCP website:


         ➢ Legislation, Regulations and Agreements:
           http://nspharmacists.ca/legislation/index.html. The regulations contain relevant information such as requirements and qualifications for registration and licensure, criteria for preceptors, and the scope of practice of the pharmacy technician.

      ii. NAPRA Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice (2014):
           http://napra.ca/Content_Files/Files/Comp_for_Cdn_PHARMTECHS_at_EntrytoPractice_March2014.pdf
iii. NAPRA Pharmacy Technicians Model Standards of Practice (2011):
http://napra.ca/Content_Files/Files/Model_Standards_of_Prac_for_Cdn_PharmTechs_No v11.pdf

5. PRECEPTOR ELIGIBILITY

In accordance with section 5 of the Pharmacy Practice Regulations, a pharmacy technician candidate preceptor must:

a. Be a licensed pharmacist or pharmacy technician in good standing providing direct patient care in Nova Scotia.
b. Be licensed to practice in Canada for at least one year.
c. Have no limitations on practice.
d. Never have had the right to be a preceptor revoked or suspended.

Additionally, pharmacy technician candidate preceptors must:

e. Practice in a pharmacy that meets the PTA site criteria.
f. Not be in a position of an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the pharmacy technician candidate (see “Conflict of Interest” below).

6. PRECEPTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The preceptor must:

a. Prior to the start of the PTA Program, notify the College that he/she has agreed to act as a preceptor by signing the pharmacy technician’s PTA Application Form.
b. Provide the required oversight, instruction, and feedback to the pharmacy technician candidate engaged in the PTA and take overall responsibility for directly supervising and assessing the pharmacy technician candidate for the duration of the PTA. A portion of the supervision and assessment may be delegated to other pharmacists or licensed pharmacy technicians as appropriate.
c. Have a clear understanding of the expected competencies and the scope of practice of the licensed pharmacy technician and must review all relevant PTA program information to ensure understanding of the goals and requirements of the program.
d. Ensure that all required details of the pharmacy technician candidate’s performance are recorded in the PTA workbook before signing off on each activity.
e. Complete the following forms and submit them to the NSCP within ten days of completion of the PTA by the pharmacy technician candidate:
   i. PTA Declaration of Completion
   ii. PTA Preceptor Program Evaluation
f. If for any reason the PTA has been terminated by either party or the pharmacy technician candidate fails to successfully complete the program, the preceptor must assign a grade of “not successfully completed” on the PTA Declaration of Completion form.
7. PHARMACY TECHNICIAN CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The pharmacy technician candidate must:

a. Identify and select a suitable preceptor and site for completion of the PTA.

b. At least one week prior to starting the PTA, submit an application form to the NSCP.

c. Always work under the supervision of the preceptor or preceptor’s delegate.

d. Work collaboratively with the preceptor, be responsive to feedback, and seek opportunities to maximize the learning experience.

e. Fully document completion of all PTA program activities in the program workbook.

f. Submit the completed workbook, daily prescription tracking logs, and PTA Pharmacy Technician Candidate Program Evaluation to the NSCP within ten days of completion of the PTA.

8. SITE CRITERIA

The practice site shall:

a. Be a licensed community pharmacy or institutional (hospital) practice setting in Nova Scotia where dispensing, compounding, and product preparation occurs.

b. Be the pharmacy technician candidate’s current workplace or a temporary workplace for the purpose of completion of PTA.

c. Have an eligible licensed pharmacist or pharmacy technician willing to assume the role of preceptor.

d. Have the primary preceptor (or appropriate delegate) physically present at the workplace site when the pharmacy technician candidate is undertaking PTA activities.

e. Have a philosophy and an organizational structure (e.g. sufficient staffing and resources) that permits an appropriate degree of educational opportunities and interaction between preceptor and pharmacy technician candidate to allow for completion of required program activities.

f. Be a pharmacy wherein the pharmacy technician candidate is not in an actual or perceived conflict of interest relationship with the preceptor, manager, or owner (see “Conflict of Interest” below).

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Preceptors must not have or be perceived by the College to have a conflict of interest or bias in respect of the pharmacy technician. The existence of any factor (examples include family relationships, financial or business connections) that would be perceived as potentially compromising an objective, candid and fair assessment of the candidate’s competency must be disclosed on the initial application if known at that time, or as soon as the potential conflict or bias is identified. The disclosure requirement is applicable to both the applicant and the preceptor. Disclosure of the potential conflict of interest or bias will not necessarily preclude the ability of the pharmacy technician candidate to complete the PTA with that preceptor at that location. Failure to disclose a potential conflict of interest may result in a decision that the candidate will have to redo the PTA under another acceptable preceptor and could also result in a refusal to allow the pharmacist or licensed pharmacy technician to act as a preceptor in the future.
10. PRACTICE ACTIVITIES

The pharmacy technician candidate will complete activities that fall within the licensed pharmacy technician’s legislated scope of practice and are based on the following competencies from the NAPRA Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice (2014):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 1: Ethical, Legal, and Professional Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Document activities of practice in compliance with federal and provincial / territorial legislation, standards, and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5.1 Maintain complete, accurate and secure patient records.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 3: Product Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Receive, interpret and process a prescription.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Transcribe verbal orders and ensure their accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Transfer a prescription and receive a transferred prescription.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Verify the technical aspects of the prescription to ensure accuracy and quality of products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1 Identify when an independent double check should be performed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4.2 Check the product and its prescription label against the prescription using a systematic approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Collaborate with the pharmacist in the release of the product.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5.1 Determine whether the legal and professional requirements for a product to be released to the patient have been met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2 Identify when the patient requires further consultation from the pharmacist.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Competency 7: Communication and Education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Establish and maintain effective communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1 Demonstrate proficiency in written and verbal English or French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2 Demonstrate appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills, including listening skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.4 Select appropriate communication and education techniques for use with the patient and other health professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.5 Conduct interpersonal interactions, including conflict management, in a professional manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.6 Communicate with sensitivity, respect and empathy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Use safe, effective and consistent communication systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.1 Use communication techniques that maximize safety and understanding, including repeating back verbal orders, using recognized terminology and avoiding unnecessary or unsafe abbreviations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.2 Record and store information in a consistent manner for efficient access and retrieval by relevant personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2.3 Select appropriate technology to facilitate communication.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Competency 8: Intra and Inter-Professional Collaboration**

**8.1 Create and maintain collaborative professional relationships.**
- 8.1.1 Create and maintain collaborative professional relationships.
- 8.1.2 Contribute to the effectiveness of working relationships in collaborative teams.

**8.2 Contribute to the effectiveness of working relationships in collaborative teams.**
- 8.2.1 Interact respectfully with other members of the team by accepting accountability for themselves and managing disagreements and conflict.

PTA participants cannot perform any of the activities alone since they are not yet licensed to do so. Pharmacy technician candidates must clearly identify themselves as such during all professional interactions and must always work under the direct supervision of a licensed registrant of the NSCP.

**11. LENGTH OF PROGRAM**

This program is to be completed over a minimum of 2 weeks and a maximum of 12 weeks. All competencies must be met to the preceptor’s satisfaction in order for the pharmacy technician to successfully complete this program.

Regardless of the number of hours completed in the program, the pharmacy technician candidate must demonstrate each required competency with confidence and a limited amount of support. If the preceptor does not feel the competencies have been demonstrated at an acceptable level, additional time and learning should be planned.

If the pharmacy technician candidate is unable to complete the PTA program within 12 weeks, a grade of “not successfully completed” will be assigned by the preceptor.

**12. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

For each exercise, the preceptor is required to confirm that the pharmacy technician candidate has completed the activities associated with that exercise and demonstrated the skill(s) to the preceptor’s satisfaction.

At the completion of the PTA, the preceptor will complete the *PTA Declaration of Completion* form and assign a grade of either “successfully completed” or “not successfully completed”. The pharmacy technician candidate must also sign this form.

**13. PROGRAM COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS**

The following completed PTA documents must be submitted to the NSCP within ten days of completion of the PTA (all documents are posted on the NSCP website under the Pharmacy Technician section.

- Completed Program Workbook
- Prescription Daily Tracking Logs
- Declaration of Completion
- Pharmacy Technician Candidate Program Evaluation
- Preceptor Program Evaluation
APPENDIX A: PHARMACY TECHNICIAN SCOPE OF PRACTICE IN NOVA SCOTIA

Pursuant to Section 33 of the Pharmacy Act, the scope of practice of a pharmacy technician is set forth in the Registration, Licensing, and Professional Accountability Regulations (s.13) and the Pharmacy Practice Regulations (s.10).

1. For the purpose of Section 33 of the Act, the practice of a pharmacy technician consists only of the technical aspects of the practice of pharmacy, including all of the following:
   a. preparing and compounding prescriptions;
   b. obtaining, entering and recording prescription information;
   c. receiving, transcribing and recording verbal prescriptions from practitioners;
   d. transferring prescriptions to and receiving prescriptions from other pharmacies, as permitted by law;
   e. providing copies of prescriptions to authorized recipients as required by the Act;
   f. providing technical information when a therapeutic assessment or clinical judgment by the pharmacist is not required.

2. A pharmacy technician must not counsel a patient, directly or indirectly, about a drug or a medical condition, and a pharmacist may not delegate the responsibility to counsel a patient to a pharmacy technician.

3. A pharmacy technician may assist in gathering information from a patient about a drug or a medical condition if necessary to assess the appropriateness of drug therapy, but the pharmacist remains responsible for obtaining sufficient information to assess the patient and the appropriateness of drug therapy.

4. A pharmacy technician must recognize when the professional expertise of a pharmacist is required and consult with a pharmacist in that case.

5. A pharmacy technician may not delegate to another person the authority to carry out an authorized act.

6. A pharmacist may delegate to a pharmacy technician the responsibility to check prescriptions prepared for release for technical accuracy and compliance with the Act, the regulations and the standards of practice and confirm the accuracy and completeness of compounds prepared for release, provided the pharmacist
   a. evaluates the prescription;
   b. assesses the patient and the patient’s health history and medication record;
   c. determines that the proposed therapy is appropriate for the patient;
   d. fulfills the pharmacist’s responsibilities to counsel the patient and to monitor the patient’s drug therapy;
   e. complies with any conditions prescribed by an enactment or the standards of practice; and
   f. is satisfied that the delegation is appropriate.
APPENDIX B: RESOURCES


4. NAPRA Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice: [http://napra.ca/pages/PharmacyTechnicians/pharmacytechnicianscompetencies.aspx](http://napra.ca/pages/PharmacyTechnicians/pharmacytechnicianscompetencies.aspx)

5. NAPRA Model Standards of Practice for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians: [http://napra.ca/pages/PharmacyTechnicians/pharmacytechniciansstandards.aspx](http://napra.ca/pages/PharmacyTechnicians/pharmacytechniciansstandards.aspx)


