

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

An applicant for registration and licensing as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician must have all of the qualifications as set out in the Regulations, including satisfactory language proficiency<sup>1</sup>. Language proficiency is an essential skill required of all pharmacy professionals in the day-to-day practice of pharmacy in Canada. Although language proficiency does not guarantee that effective communication will take place, it is the foundation for all communication skills components: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. A pharmacist and a pharmacy technician's ability to communicate is crucial to safe and effective patient care.

## POLICY

### 1. Graduates of CCAPP or ACPE-accredited Pharmacy Degree Programs

- 1.1. All pharmacy graduates applying for registration with the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) must meet the English language proficiency requirements as set out in the current NAPRA document, *Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacist in Canada*. (Appendix A).
- 1.2. Applicants who have graduated from a pharmacy degree program accredited by the Canadian Council for the Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) in Canada or the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) in the United States will not be required to demonstrate language proficiency unless a concern is raised regarding the potential for the applicant's language proficiency to compromise patient care.
- 1.3. Applicants who have graduated from a CCAPP-accredited pharmacy program where the language of instruction was French and are applying through the terms of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) must provide test results that meet NAPRA language proficiency requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of an application for a licence means the successful completion of an English-language proficiency assessment at a level consistent with language fluency requirements for licensure as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician, as the case may be, in Canada, as approved by the Council. (Registration, Licensing, and Professional Accountability Regulations)

## **2. Graduates of a CCAPP-accredited Pharmacy Technician Diploma Program and Transition Pathway Pharmacy Technician Candidates**

- 2.1. All pharmacy technician candidates applying for registration with the NSCP must meet the English language proficiency requirements as set out in the current NAPRA document, *Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacy Technician in Canada*. (Appendix B).
- 2.2. Acceptable evidence of meeting language proficiency requirements include:
  - Language proficiency test results that meet the NAPRA *Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacy Technician in Canada*;
  - Graduation from a high school in Canada with three consecutive, first language English courses / credits;
  - Graduation from a Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) in Quebec with three consecutive, first language English courses / credits; OR
  - An undergraduate degree from a university in Canada, whose instruction was provided in English.
- 2.3. Applicants who have graduated from a pharmacy technician diploma program accredited by the Canadian Council for the Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) whose admission criteria are in alignment with 2.2 will not be required to demonstrate language proficiency unless a concern is raised regarding the potential for the applicant's language proficiency to compromise patient care.
- 2.4. Applicants who have graduated from a CCAPP-accredited pharmacy technician program where the language of instruction was French and are applying through the terms of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) must provide test results that meet NAPRA language proficiency requirements.

## **3. International Pharmacy and Pharmacy Technician Graduates**

- 3.1. International pharmacy graduates and international pharmacy technician graduates (outside of Canada and the US) can demonstrate English language proficiency by achieving test scores as set out in the current NAPRA documents, *Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacist in Canada*. (Appendix A) or *Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacy Technician in Canada* (Appendix B), respectively.
- 3.2. Alternatively, international graduates can demonstrate English language proficiency by providing evidence of meeting any TWO of the following criteria:
  - Successful completion of professional pharmacy or pharmacy technician education in a majority-English country with English as the language of instruction;
  - Pharmacy work employment in a majority English country in a similar role or scope of practice as application;
  - Graduation from a high school in Canada with three consecutive, first language English courses / credits; or
  - Successful completion of an undergraduate university degree in Canada where English was the language of instruction.
- 3.3. International graduate candidates who can demonstrate meeting two of the above four criteria will not be asked to complete language testing unless a concern is raised regarding the potential for the applicant's language proficiency to compromise patient care.

#### **4. Structured Practice Experience**

Language proficiency standards are to be applied prior to commencing a structured practice experience program or pharmacy technician assessment. Application of the language requirements at this time (rather than at the point of licensure) supports public safety and enables the candidate to derive the expected educational benefit from the program.

#### **5. Submitting Test Scores**

- 5.1. Language proficiency test results are considered valid for two years from the date of the test.
- 5.2. The NSCP accepts the most current English language proficiency assessment results which override previous results.
- 5.3. Test scores must either be (a) sent directly from the testing agency to the NSCP or (b) be verifiable through the testing agency's online verification system, if available.

#### **6. Triggers for Testing**

The NSCP may require a pharmacist or pharmacy technician candidate to undertake a separate assessment if concerns are raised that the applicant's English language proficiency may compromise patient care.

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## Appendix A

### Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacist in Canada

Test	Details		Minimum Score	SEM** + / -
1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	Internet-based test (iBT)	Speaking	27	2
		Writing	25	3
		Reading	*	
		Listening	*	
		Total	97	5
	Paper-based test (PBT)	Test of Written English (TWE)	5	0.3
		Test of Spoken English (TSE)	50	
		Total	580	14
	Computer-based test (CBT) <sup>†</sup>	-	-	-
2. Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)	Speaking		3+	
	Writing		82	3
	Reading		*	
	Listening		*	
	Total		85	3
3. International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	Academic format	Speaking	6	0.5
		Writing	6	0.5
		Reading	6	
		Listening	6	
		Overall Band	7	0.5
4. The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)		Speaking	4.5	X***
		Writing	4.5	X***
		Reading	4.5	X***
		Listening	4.5	X***
		Total	X***	X***

<sup>†</sup> TOEFL Computer-based Test is no longer administered. CBT scores more than two years old are not current/accepted.

\* Standard setting procedures only focused on the Writing and Speaking components. The minimum total scores implicitly account for the scores for Reading and Listening.

\*\* SEM = Standard Error of Measurement.

\*\*\* All final band scores on the CanTEST account already for the SEM. CanTEST does not report total scores.

## Appendix B

### Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacy Technician in Canada

Test	Details		Minimum Score	SEM* + / -
1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	Internet-based test (iBT)	Speaking	23	2
		Writing	25	3
		Reading	22	2
		Listening	21	2
		Total	91	5
2. Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)	Speaking		3+	X**
	Writing		80	X**
	Reading		83	4
	Listening		80	3
	Total		81	3
3. International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	Academic format	Speaking	6	X**
		Writing	6	X**
		Reading	6	X**
		Listening	6	X**
		Overall Band	6.5	0.5
4. The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)		Speaking	4.5	X**
		Writing	4.0	X**
		Reading	4.5	X**
		Listening	4.5	X**
		Total	X**	X**

\* SEM = Standard Error of Measurement.

\*\* For IELTS, no section scores less than 6.0, accounting already for the SEM. Likewise scores for Writing and Speaking on the MELAB, and all final band scores on the CanTEST, account already for the SEM. CanTEST does not report total scores.