

The Pharmacy
Examining Board of
Canada



Le Bureau des
examineurs en
pharmacie du Canada

Celebrating 60 years

1963-2023

Célébrons les 60 ans

NEWS RELEASE

THE PHARMACY EXAMINING BOARD OF CANADA EMBARKS ON ITS 60TH YEAR DELIVERING LEADERSHIP AND EXCELLENCE IN COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT OF PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS

PEBC's national mandate takes on increasing importance as pharmacist and pharmacy technician roles expand to meet Canadians' growing health care needs

December 21, 2023 — Toronto, ON. The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) proudly commemorates its 60th year delivering leadership and excellence in competency assessment for the pharmacy profession. Its mandate is to assess the qualifications and competence of candidates for licensing by provincial pharmacy regulatory authorities.

Today, PEBC's mandate is more important than ever with expanded scopes of practice by pharmacy professionals to take on additional health care responsibilities — as both the demands for health services and Canada's population continue to grow. PEBC serves as the national certification body that ensures that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to practice safely and effectively. It administers the standards for excellence that instill confidence and trust by Canadians in our pharmacy profession.

"On this day in 1963, Canada's Parliament granted Royal Assent for legislation that created the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada," commented John Pugsley, who has served in the distinguished Registrar-Treasurer role for close to three decades. "From the introduction of our very first examinations to today's more complex assessment of communication, ethical, professional and decision-making skills for candidates from all parts of Canada and internationally, PEBC's unwavering commitment to leadership, innovation and excellence is anchored in our proud history — and continues to shape our future."

Comprehensive Certification Requirements

PEBC achieves its national mandate by administering a rigorous certification process. The need to fill critical pharmacy profession labour shortages must be balanced by high standards for qualifications and competency assessment.

- PEBC evaluates credential documents and candidate qualifications, develops and administers examinations for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, and issues Certificates of Qualification.
- Examination formats include computer-based multiple-choice question exams, as well as a performance-based exam to assess candidates' practice skills and ability to interact effectively with patients, including clinical problem-solving, communication and patient education skills (OSCE for pharmacist candidates, OSPE for pharmacy technician candidates).

PEBC 60th Anniversary — Leadership and Excellence

Canadians are well served by these safeguards, which stand as a vital component in the delivery of safe and effective health care for communities nationwide.

Best Practices in Innovation

A number of “firsts” have solidified PEBC’s performance record for innovation. From the launch of its first written exam in 1964, one year into its newly minted mandate — to the implementation, in 2001, of a performance-based component (Objective Structured Clinical Examination – OSCE) to complement the written component of the Qualifying Examination — to the development and implementation in 2009 of the Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination to provide certification of pharmacy technicians for the purposes of licensure and regulation — to initiating the new virtual performance examination pilot and introducing new exam security enhancements by delivering unique exam forms to each candidate (Linear-on-the-fly testing / LOFT). PEBC is dedicated to leading best practices in excellence and innovation for examination assessment.

On The Horizon — Looking Ahead

Canada continues to see year-over-year record breaking population increases, with continued vaccination demands and the rising number of patients without family doctors. Our healthcare system is seeking new delivery solutions for Canadians’ health care needs. Expanded roles for the pharmacy profession are providing essential services to meet urgent care requirements in cities and communities Canada-wide.

PEBC’s longstanding commitment — from the last century to tomorrow’s horizons — is to provide leadership and excellence in competency assessment for the pharmacy profession. Our vision looks to the future, and how best to contribute to the health and wellness of Canadians by leading the national certification process — ensuring that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to practice safely and effectively to deliver excellence in care for Canadians.

THE PHARMACY EXAMINING BOARD OF CANADA (PEBC) PERFORMANCE MILESTONES

1960's

- December 21, 1963: Royal Assent is granted to the Canadian Act of Parliament incorporating the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC).
- 1964: The inaugural meeting of the PEBC Board is held; Written exam with Compounding and Dispensing is introduced.
- 1969: The Cameron Committee is established to review all matters pertaining to PEBC exams; Proposed move from short answer to multiple choice-type questions; PEBC certification becomes a main instrument in determining provincial eligibility for licensure.

1970's

- 1970: The centralized credential evaluation service is established to determine equivalence of pharmacists whose qualifications were obtained outside Canada.
- 1974: A computer grading system is instituted; First computer marked exam is completed.
- 1975: All PEBC participating provinces require out-of-province candidates to have a PEBC Certificate of Qualification; Ontario College of Pharmacists requires all applicants for licensure to have the PEBC Certificate of Qualification.

1980's

- 1980: A new examination format incorporates case studies.
- 1987: The first Evaluating Exam is held at six Canadian locations; PEBC establishes an overseas location in London, UK.
- 1988: The Klein Report recommends development of practice statements on which to base the qualifying exam questions; New Brunswick becomes the second province to require its applicants for licensure to have PEBC Certification for licensure.

1990's

- 1996: The PEBC Task Force on Practice-Based Exams recommends the implementation of an OSCE performance exam as part of the Pharmacist Qualifying Exam.
- 1997: PEBC and the College of Pharmacists of BC jointly establish a pilot project to develop and research an OSCE to complement the written component of the Qualifying Examination.
- 1998-1999: An OSCE pilot is conducted in Vancouver; Research conducted on the OSCE pilot confirmed the reliability and validity of its use for the Qualifying Exam; PEBC initiates planning for the establishment of OSCE Examination Centres and the implementation of the Qualifying Examination-Part II (OSCE).

2000's

- 2001: The first administration of the Qualifying Examination-Part II (OSCE) at nine examination centres Canada-wide.
- 2006: The Pharmacy Technician Steering Committee for the National Pilot Entry-to-Practice Examination for the Assessment and Certification of the Competence of Pharmacy Technicians is formed to oversee the development and research of a certification process for pharmacy technicians.
- 2009: The pilot and first administration of the Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination (Part I & II) is initiated for the purposes of licensure.

2010's

- 2010: The Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination (Part I & II) is administered in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia; Three positions to represent pharmacy technicians are added to the PEBC Board.
- 2012: PEBC establishes an AFPC and CPTEA award for research and innovation in assessment; PEBC creates a Steering Committee to oversee a Feasibility Study on Computerized Testing; Citizenship and Immigration Federal Skilled Worker Program names PEBC as the designated credential assessment agency for the profession of pharmacy.
- 2017, PEBC launched its first Computer-based Test (CBT), with the Pharmacist Qualifying Examination - Part I (MCQ), fulfilling a key objective of a long- established strategic goal of incorporating technology into PEBC's certification processes.

2020's

- 2022: A pilot project is initiated to explore automatic item generation (AIG) to generate high volume/high quality multiple-choice exam content, including hundreds of unique questions.
- 2023: The first Virtual Performance Examination (VPE) Pilot is conducted (with Canadian reference group and international first-time test takers); PEBC administers its first-time use of Linear-on-the-Fly (LOFT) to enhance exam security by delivering unique exam forms to each candidate.