



## 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 50 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 practice 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 license, 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 New Brunswick College of Pharmacists; the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacy, the Prince Edward Island College of Pharmacists; L'Ordre des pharmaciens du Québec; the Ontario College of Pharmacists; the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba; the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals; the Alberta College of Pharmacy; 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 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 practice 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, 2014. 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:

### **Direct-entry Candidates**

These are candidates who have successfully completed any **ONE** of the following:

- Pharmacy technician program that, at the time of the applicant's graduation\*, was accredited by CCAPP (i.e., graduating 2008 or later from an **accredited program** that has achieved either provisional [the initial CCAPP step for existing programs] or full accreditation status);
- PEBC *Pharmacist* or *Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination*;
- Pharmacist degree program accredited in Canada or the United States.

## **International Candidates**

Candidates who completed their education outside of Canada are eligible to proceed through the new evaluation process. The process will incorporate a review of candidates' qualifications and require completion of a portfolio that will determine whether they completed an acceptable program and to assess their readiness to take the Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination.

To be eligible for this new evaluation process, candidates must have completed an educational program outside of Canada designed to prepare the candidate to become a pharmacy technician or pharmacist.

**Note that the new evaluation process is different than the transitional pathway for 'in-the-profession' candidates, which PEBC required candidates to demonstrate completion of 2000 hours of practice experience. The transitional pathway is now closed. Candidates who engaged in PEBC's certification process through the transitional pathway are not eligible to complete the new Evaluation Process.**

**IMPORTANT: Prospective candidates are strongly encouraged to confirm their eligibility to register with the Provincial Regulatory Authority prior to applying for any of PEBC's processes or examinations.**

### **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".

## **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 examination (Qualifying) is 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](http://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 an orientation video for the Qualifying Examination, 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](mailto: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.