



The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada

Le Bureau des examinateurs en pharmacie du Canada

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September 2022 OSPE Modified Examination Conditions due to COVID-19 (Update #1)

This communication is about the next Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination – Part II (OSPE) scheduled for September 11, 2022. For candidates taking the September 2022 OSPE, details about your assigned location are included in the *Admission Card* package which you will receive a few weeks prior to the exam date.

The purpose of this communication is to provide information about changes to standard exam policies and procedures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of our candidates and exam personnel, while maintaining the security, standardization and validity of the exam, are our top priorities.

All candidates are responsible for:

1. reviewing the information in this communication to prepare themselves for exam day; and
2. complying with the modified examination conditions on exam day

Aligned with public health recommendations, exam policies and procedures are being adjusted according to the following safety principles:

- minimize gatherings of large groups in a single space
- restrict entry of individuals who show signs of or are at risk of infection
- install and utilize personal protection equipment and measures
- conduct sanitization of common areas and materials regularly
- allow for and maintain physical distancing
- minimize the number of individuals on-site
- minimize the duration of individuals on-site
- limit transfer of materials and items between individuals

Accordingly, please note that the modified examination conditions will include the following:

A) COVID-19 Acknowledgement, Waiver, and Release

- In addition to standard content in the *Candidate's Agreement*, you will sign a *COVID-19 Acknowledgement, Waiver, and Release* agreeing that:
 - I. the exam is being held in a modified form during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that these modifications will not be accepted as grounds for candidate complaints or appeals;
 - II. you are required to complete and pass a health and risk screening before attending the examination and that PEBC reserves the right to remove you at any time during the examination if PEBC determines that you may be suffering from symptoms related to COVID-19 or pose a risk to other exam participants;
 - III. PEBC, the exam centre administrator, the exam venue provider, and their respective employees, representatives or agents will not be held responsible for any injuries or adverse health impacts you may suffer as a result of attending or attempting the examination;
 - IV. you will abide by all PEBC rules and directions.
- The *Candidate's Agreement with COVID-19 Acknowledgement, Waiver, and Release* will be posted on the PEBC website in advance of exam day for candidates to read before the required signing at their exam centre on exam day.

B) Exam centre venue vaccination policies

- Vaccination against COVID-19 for all those who are eligible is strongly encouraged as a public health and personal protective measure. For those not already vaccinated, PEBC encourages you, as future registered healthcare professionals, to do your part and get vaccinated to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect our healthcare system. You can read more information on the Public Health Agency of Canada website [here](#).
- Candidates must follow the vaccination policy of their assigned exam centre, if applicable. Exam centres, and not PEBC, determine their own vaccination policy, including the requirements for showing *Proof of Vaccination* in advance of or on exam day, COVID-19 testing and/or requesting exemptions from vaccination. Requests for exemptions (if available) based on human rights grounds must be made directly to the exam centre venue. The exam centre venue makes decisions whether to grant the exemption. PEBC does not make decisions about exemption requests.
- PEBC will share the vaccination policies of candidates' assigned exam centres closer to the date of the exam.
- If any candidate is unable to meet the requirements of the vaccination policy at their assigned exam centre venue, they are not permitted to enter the secure examination area or participate in the exam.

C) Health and Risk Screening

- On exam day, you are required to complete the *PEBC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Questionnaire* and must be considered low risk in order to enter the exam centre and attend the examination.
- The *PEBC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Questionnaire* will be posted on the PEBC website before exam day. PEBC will inform candidates when the questionnaire is available. Candidates are required to read the questionnaire in advance of exam day, and be prepared to answer the questions upon arrival to the exam centre venue and/or at the entrance to the secure examination area. **Do not attend the examination if you self-assess that you pose a health risk.**
- You are required to follow all Public Health and other organizational directions and advice about potential exposure to COVID-19, and not go to the exam centre if you have been at risk of exposure or have been advised to self-isolate.
- Some exam centres might have additional screening measures based on local requirements, such as vaccination requirements, additional screening tests (e.g. questionnaires, temperature) and other COVID-19 safety measures. You will need to comply and pass any of these screenings and be considered low risk in order to attend.
- All COVID-19 requirements are subject to change.
- PEBC exam personnel have the authority to deny entry to any participant who is determined to pose a health risk.

D) Exam Content:

- **No changes have been made to the examination blueprint during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the format (i.e. number / distribution of stations) will be altered for the September 2022 OSPE. There will be 5 scored interactive stations (with an SP), 4 scored non-interactive stations including one station where you demonstrate a technical procedure, and 1 scored video station. There will be no pre-test station(s) on this exam. There are also rest stations in the section of the exam that is a circuit of interactive and non-interactive stations.**
- Candidates will not be scored or assessed on their knowledge of COVID-19.
- Candidates should assume COVID-19 is not a factor in any station task or scenario. Do not consider or screen for COVID-19.

E) Exam-day procedures and exam format

- Modified examination conditions may include, but are not limited to: enhanced health and safety measures; changes to the number of interactive, non-interactive, pre-test and rest stations; Standardized Participant (SP) entry and exit procedures; sequestering; sign-in; security and sign-out procedures; candidate orientation; breaks; movement inside and to/from the exam track; exam materials; timing signal demonstration; and handling of paper and barcode labels.

F) Candidate Orientation

- **There will be no candidate orientation on exam day. Instead, you are required to watch an online *Candidate Orientation Video* before the exam.**
- The *Candidate Orientation Video* will be posted on the PEBC website and available for self-viewing starting Wednesday, August 31, 2022.

G) Registration

- Due to building capacity restrictions and the need for physical distancing, family members and others will not be permitted in the exam centre building. You are encouraged to arrive alone.
- Registration and security procedures will be altered to comply with physical distancing and other public health measures. You will be asked to remove your mask for candidate identity verification.
- As always, candidates must bring and wear a plain lab coat, dispensing jacket, uniform or scrubs with any logos or identifiers (e.g. school, employer, name) removed or covered in opaque (e.g. duct) tape. **Candidates who do not bring one of these may be denied entry to the secure examination area.**

H) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **All candidates and exam personnel are required to wear a PEBC-provided face mask at all times while in the secure examination area (except during a snack break).** This includes SPs during the interactions inside a station room.
- PEBC will provide one standard disposable medical 3-ply (Level 2) face mask (with ear loops) per candidate. One replacement mask will be provided if your first mask becomes damaged, wet or soiled. A more detailed description of the mask provided to candidates called [Candidate Face Masks \(OSCE/OSPE\)](#) is posted to the *Upcoming Exam – Candidate Information* section of the PEBC website for your information. PEBC will inform you if the type of mask changes.
- You must use the mask provided by PEBC.
- It is your responsibility to ensure you are comfortable wearing a mask like the one provided by PEBC for an extended period of time and that you can communicate effectively, ensuring you are understood.
- You must store any candidate-owned PPE, including your own face mask, that you bring to the exam centre building with your personal belongings during the examination.
- For the station where you demonstrate a technical procedure, you are required to wear the gloves that will be provided.

I) Sanitization

- While in the exam centre building, you are required to frequently use hand sanitizer that meets Public Health standards. **You are required to sanitize your hands before entering every interactive and non-interactive station.** Hand sanitizer will be provided for you. You are not permitted to bring your own hand sanitizer.
- Enhanced cleaning procedures will be followed for common areas and materials.
- You are encouraged to follow good hand hygiene principles and respiratory etiquette. There will be opportunities to wash your hands.

J) Physical distancing

- Procedures will be adjusted, wherever possible, to allow for adequate physical distancing. You should be equally mindful of your own movement and distance from other people while in the exam centre building.
- Do not shake hands with other candidates and exam personnel, including SPs.
- You are required to follow instructions provided by exam personnel at all times.

K) Water and Snacks

- **PEBC will not provide snacks or water to candidates unless required in a medical emergency.**
- You may bring your own snacks in a clear, plastic, re-sealable bag, e.g. *Ziploc*. You are required to carry your snacks yourself at all times.
- You may bring water in clear, plastic, disposable bottle(s) with all labels removed. You are required to carry your bottle(s) yourself at all times.
- You may have your snack only during the Mid-Session Break. You may have a drink from your water bottle during the Mid-Session Break and in rest stations. Eating or drinking while completing a station is strictly prohibited. There may be restrictions on when and where you may consume snacks and/or water.
- You must keep and carry any unconsumed snacks in your bag along with your water bottle. The bag with all contents and the bottle will be discarded at the end of the exam session before sign out and dismissal.

L) Refunds

- It is very important that you only attempt the exam if you are fit to do so. By choosing to attempt the examination during the COVID-19 pandemic, you are agreeing to the modified examination conditions outlined in this letter. If you feel you are unable to do your best due to any of these conditions, you are strongly encouraged to not take the exam at this time, even if it is a difficult decision to make, and to contact PEBC immediately.
- **In the days preceding the exam or on exam day, if you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, have possibly been exposed to COVID-19, or are waiting for COVID-19 test results, you must not attend the exam and must instead contact PEBC immediately.** PEBC's standard [Refund Policies](#) are in effect.

Additional Notes

- Examination conditions have been modified to prioritize the health and safety of all exam participants with input from Public Health officials.
- All modifications to exam format, content and procedures have been reviewed and approved by the PEBC Board of Directors and psychometric experts to ensure the exam remains fair, valid, and reliable.
- Candidates must submit a [Request for Exam Accommodations](#) including the necessary forms and supporting documentation for accommodations based on any of the modified examination conditions, including a request to bring any other PPE items into the secure examination area. All such requests must be received by July 27, 2022.
- PEBC acknowledges that this is a difficult time for candidates. As the situation continues to evolve, PEBC will do its best to keep candidates informed of relevant changes to the exam to help candidates prepare for exam day.