



The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada

Le Bureau des examinateurs en pharmacie du Canada

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May 2024 OSCE Modified Examination Conditions due to COVID-19 (Update #1)

This communication is about the next Pharmacist Qualifying Examination – Part II (OSCE) scheduled for May 26, 2024. Details about your assigned location are included in the *Admission Card* 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. Since the pandemic started in 2020, PEBC has been monitoring the situation closely and adjusting protocols as needed. 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

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. 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.
- To read the *Candidate's Agreement with COVID-19 Acknowledgement, Waiver, and Release* click [here](#).

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. PEBC encourages you, as future registered healthcare professionals, to do your part and keep your vaccinations up to date to help reduce the spread of infections and to protect our healthcare system.

- 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.
- 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.
- Candidates should be ready with proof of vaccination if it becomes necessary for entry. PEBC will share any information about vaccination policies with affected candidates, if, and as required.

C) Health and Risk Screening

- On exam day, you are required to independently self-assess your own health and wellness, as you would before joining any other social or professional gathering or event. **Do not attend the examination if you are unwell or if you pose a health risk to others.**
- You may use your local Public Health screening questionnaire as a guide to check your own health and wellness.
- Some exam centres might have additional screening measures. You will need to comply and pass any of these screenings to attend. PEBC will share any new information with affected candidates if and as required.
- 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 May 2024 OSCE. **There will be 9 interactive stations (with a Standardized Participant (SP)), 2 non-interactive stations and some rest stations. There is no pre-test station(s) on this exam.**
- Starting with the May 2024 OSCE candidates will no longer be asked to disregard COVID-19 in all stations. With respect to any COVID-19 related considerations or assessments, proceed as you would in practice.

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; 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, May 15, 2024. Notification will be sent to candidates with the link, once available.

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.
- 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.

I) Sanitization

- While in the exam centre building, you are encouraged to frequently use hand sanitizer throughout the day, especially after periods of non-masking. Hand sanitizer will be provided for you. You are not permitted to bring your own hand sanitizer.

J) Snacks and Water

- **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 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.

K) 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 believe that your attendance may pose a health risk or may otherwise negatively affect others around you, you should not attend the exam and should 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 April 10, 2024.
- 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.

April 3, 2024