



SASKATCHEWAN
COLLEGE OF
PHARMACISTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED
Questions

MAY 2015



**PHARMACY TECHNICIAN
REGULATION**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN REGULATION

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN REGULATION

General

- 1. Can I still use the title “Pharmacy Technician” if I don’t register with the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists (SCP)?**

Pharmacy Technician will be a restricted title. This restriction will be stated in Section 22(2) of *The Pharmacy and Pharmacy Disciplines Act*. There may be a transition period when a “conditional” licence may be granted and those individuals would also be allowed to use the title Pharmacy Technician.

From The Pharmacy and Pharmacy Disciplines Act:

Protection of Title

22(2) *No person other than a licensed pharmacy technician shall use the title ‘pharmacy technician’ or any word of designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply that the person is a licensed pharmacy technician.*

23(1) *No person other than a licensed pharmacist, licensed pharmacy technician, or intern practising under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist or licensed pharmacy technician, may prepare, compound, dispense or sell drugs in Saskatchewan.*

- 2. What will my responsibilities be (Scope of Practice) as a regulated pharmacy technician?**

The Scope of Practice for regulated pharmacy technicians in Saskatchewan can be found in Appendix A of the SCP Concept Paper for Regulatory Framework available at:

<http://www.saskpharm.ca/document/619/ConceptPaper-PharmacyTechnicianRegulationinSaskatchewanSept14.pdf>

- 3. If I am working in a pharmacy as a licensed pharmacy technician and I make an error, will I be held responsible?**

Yes. Licensed pharmacy technicians will be recognized as healthcare professionals under *The Pharmacy and Pharmacy Disciplines Act* and as such will be granted a scope of practice which allows them to have independent authority and responsibility. Along with that comes liability for their actions in the preparation, processing and compounding of prescriptions.

- 4. What is “malpractice insurance”?**

Acceptable malpractice insurance insures a practising member against liability claims relating to the performance, or alleged performance, of professional services.

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5. Is malpractice insurance required?

Yes. In accordance with legislation, all licensed pharmacy technicians of the College are required to carry personal professional malpractice insurance that meets the requirements and specifications in the bylaws: such as an “occurrence type” or “claims made type” with an extended reporting period of not less than two years after the licensed member ceases to be a licensed member, as stated in the Regulatory Bylaws. Those are:

- (4) Malpractice Insurance
 - (a) in this subsection:
 - (i) **'acceptable malpractice insurance'** means personal insurance that:
 - (1) insures a practising member against liability claims relating to the performance, or alleged performance, of professional services.
 - (2) provides a limit for each claim of a minimum of two million dollars **for licensed pharmacists or one million dollars for licensed pharmacy technicians;**

6. Will it be possible for a prescription (new or refill) to be released to a patient without a pharmacist involved in the process?

No. The pharmacist must assess the appropriateness of the therapy (new or refill), provide education and counselling for each prescription and then initial every prescription, on the prescription or on the patient profile, before a pharmacy technician can fill and release it to a patient.

7. Will pharmacy technicians be required to complete continuing education?

Yes. Similar to pharmacists, licensed pharmacy technicians will be required to complete continuing education or continuing professional development as determined by Council from time to time. The proposed requirements are the completion of a minimum of 15 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) per membership year with documentation maintained in a learning portfolio, which is the current requirement for pharmacists.

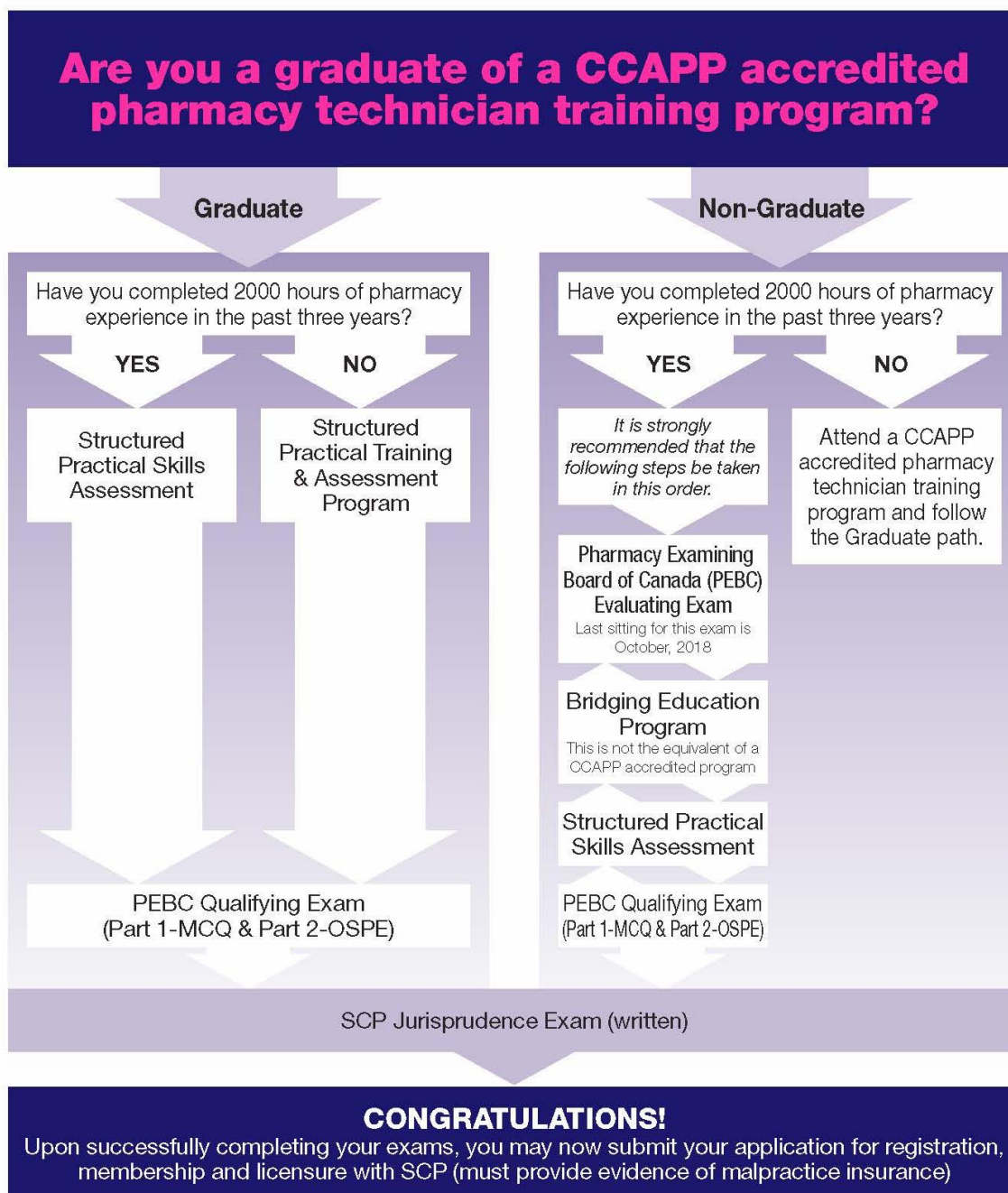
Both accredited and non-accredited learning activities will be considered for CEUs. For non-accredited learning activities, the rule of thumb is one CEU for each one hour of research/learning activity, up to a maximum of three CEUs for any one activity.

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8. What are the steps to regulation for current technicians and how long will it take?

To become a licensed pharmacy technician, current pharmacy assistants will need to successfully complete one of the two pathways and all of the steps within them as outlined here:



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9. Why was December of 2018 date picked as the end date for current technician transition?

This deadline was determined as PEBC will no longer offer the Evaluating Exam after October 2018. This timeframe allows sufficient time for individuals already working in the field to complete the transition without a great deal of pressure.

PEBC Evaluating Exam

10. What is the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) Evaluating Exam?

The Evaluating Examination is designed to determine if you have the knowledge and skills comparable to that of a graduate of a program accredited by The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP). It evaluates knowledge in all areas of current pharmacy technician education curricula that are accredited by CCAPP. Once you pass the Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination, you will then be eligible to apply for the Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination.

11. Is the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam mandatory?

Yes. The Evaluating Exam is mandatory for people who have NOT graduated from a CCAPP accredited program. However, as per PEBC policy, those who hold certification from either the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board-Alberta (PTCB-AB) (up to 2008) or the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) (up to 2008), or have successfully completed an accredited pharmacist degree program in Canada or in the continental United States, or have successfully complete the PEBC Pharmacist Evaluating Exam, are exempt from completing the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam, but are still required to complete the rest of the steps in the regulation process.

12. How do I know what to study for the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam?

For information on how to prepare for the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam, please refer to the PEBC website at: http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3101/la_id/1.htm.

13. What is the cost of the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam?

Exam fees are set by PEBC. A schedule of fees can be found on the PEBC website: http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/4800/la_id/1.htm.

14. When is the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam offered?

The PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam is offered by PEBC nationally two times per year in key locations across Canada. More details about the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam, including the exam sitting schedule, are available at: http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3094/la_id/1.htm.

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15. How many opportunities do I have to pass the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam?

Candidates are permitted a maximum of three (3) attempts for the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination, with one, final (fourth) attempt available upon successful completion of remediation as specified by the PEBC Board. For more information, please visit the PEBC FAQs page at: http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/4811/la_id/1.htm.

Bridging Program

16. Is the Bridging Program mandatory?

Yes, the Bridging Program is a mandatory component of the pharmacy technician regulation for those who have not graduated from a CCAPP accredited program.

17. What is the purpose of the Bridging Program?

The purpose of the Bridging Program is to prepare for independent practice as a licensed pharmacy technician. A pharmacy technician licence means you can work in any environment and is not specific to community, hospital or research. It is a general licence therefore competency in all aspects of the profession is required.

It may also assist with passing the PEBC Qualifying Exam by filling in some educational gaps for pharmacy assistants with on the job practice experience.

18. How long will the Bridging Program take?

It will take a total of 144 hours to complete all four modules.

For more information, please see: <http://selkirk.ca/program/pharmacy-technician-bridging-national-education-program/pharmacy-technician-bridging-national-education-program>

19. Do I need to complete all four modules of the Bridging Program (for example, I do not do sterile preps and never will in my workplace)?

Yes. All four modules of the Bridging Program are mandatory. However, three of the four modules can be challenged through writing the PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) Challenge Exams.

20. Can I receive Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for all of the Bridging Program modules?

No. The Pharmacology, Product Preparation, and Management of Drug Distribution Systems modules can be challenged through writing the PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition) Exams, but the Professional Practice module is not eligible for PLAR.

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21. Why is the Professional Practice module in the Bridging Program mandatory and not eligible for PLAR?

The Professional Practice module is mandatory for all participants and is not eligible for PLAR because it provides an essential foundation for the pharmacy technician's accountability for this newly regulated and expanded role. The module focuses on four key areas of practice: ethics and professionalism, legal requirements, scope of practice, and communication skills.

22. Can I take the Bridging Program modules from Selkirk College before writing the PEBC Evaluating Exam?

The PEBC Evaluating Exam is only offered twice annually and is **only going to be offered until the fall sitting in 2018**, so we recommend beginning with the Evaluating Exam.

If you complete the Bridging Program first, you may not be able to complete the Evaluating Exam before the deadline:

- a. If unsuccessful at the first sitting of the Evaluating Exam, you will need extra time to register and write the exam again
- b. If everyone delays writing the Evaluating Exam until the last few sittings, capacity for the number of seats available may be full
- c. If you successfully pass the Bridging Program but are unsuccessful at passing the Evaluating Exam before the fall sitting in 2018, you will be unable to become regulated without returning to a CCAPP accredited pharmacy technician program

If you register for the Evaluating Exam and choose to begin the Bridging Program, we recommend completing the first Bridging Program module on Professional Practice.

23. I have previously completed the PEBC Evaluating Exam and Bridging Program modules/PLAR exams in a different province. Will these be transferrable to Saskatchewan?

Yes. These will be transferrable to Saskatchewan.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN REGULATION

Structured Practical Training & Assessment Program (SPTA) and Structured Practical Skills Assessment (SPSA) Programs

Question	CCAPP Accredited Pathway	Non-CCAPP Accredited Pathway
24. What is the purpose of the Structured Practical Training and Assessment program (SPTA) or Structured Practical Skills Assessment program (SPSA)?	SPTA/SPSA is a learning experience that allows the pharmacy technician candidate to demonstrate his/her skills in a practical setting through the completion of specific activities under the direct supervision of a preceptor.	
25. How long does it take to complete the practical SPTA/SPSA?	The length of the SPTA will range from 280 to 560 hours (with a maximum completion time of six months from commencement) to complete approximately 34 activities (one of which is the 100% accurate filling of 500 consecutive prescriptions). This time could be lengthened if the preceptor and/or pharmacy technician candidate feel more time is needed to complete the program and demonstrate the competencies in all areas.	The length of the SPSA will range from a minimum of 2 weeks to a maximum of 12 weeks. The pharmacy technician candidate must demonstrate competency in the completion of the activities (one of which is the 100% accurate filling of 500 consecutive prescriptions) with a limited amount of support. If the preceptor does not feel the competencies have been demonstrated at an acceptable level, additional time and learning should be planned.
26. Are there part-time options available for the SPTA/SPSA?	The SPTA must be completed in a normal work week pattern which is not less than 10 hours and not more than 40 hours per week.	All competencies and activities must be completed within the timeframe of 2 weeks to 12 weeks.
27. How do I find a preceptor?	Pharmacy technician candidates are required to find their own experience site and preceptor to complete the program. Each rotation must be supervised by an approved preceptor approved by Saskatchewan Polytechnic.	
28. What requirements does the preceptor have to fulfill?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He/She must be a licensed pharmacist or licensed pharmacy technician with a minimum of one year experience, is in good standing, and has provided direct patient care in Saskatchewan 2. He/She must be licensed to practice in Saskatchewan 3. He/She has no limitations on his/her practice to supervise students or interns 4. He/She has not had his/her right to be a preceptor revoked or suspended 5. He/She practices in a pharmacy that meets the SPTA/SPSA site criteria 	

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	6. He/She is not in a position of an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the pharmacy technician candidate	
29. I have found my preceptor; how do I apply for the SPTA/SPSA?	Both the pharmacy technician candidate and the preceptor must sign and submit a completed Pharmacy Technician SPTA Notification Form along with the applicable fee to Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Please ensure this arrives no less than one week prior to starting the program to allow for processing time and approvals. Candidates will then receive approval from Saskatchewan Polytechnic to begin the program.	The pharmacy technician candidate must complete the SPSA Application Form, have it signed by the chosen preceptor, and submit it with the applicable fee to Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Please ensure this arrives no less than one week prior to starting the program to allow for processing time. Candidates will then receive approval from Saskatchewan Polytechnic to begin the program.
30. Where are all the training materials for the SPTA/SPSA?	Program activities are outlined in the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Pharmacy Technician SPTA Logbook (provided by Saskatchewan Polytechnic). Pharmacy technician candidates must complete all activities.	Program activities are outlined in the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Pharmacy Technician SPSA Workbook (provided by Saskatchewan Polytechnic). Pharmacy technician candidates must complete all activities.
31. Who assesses me?	The preceptor must complete an assessment at midpoint and an endpoint evaluation. The preceptor must also complete a Pharmacy Technician SPTA Assessment Form and discuss it with the pharmacy technician candidate.	For each exercise, the preceptor is required to confirm the pharmacy technician candidate has completed the activities associated with that exercise and has demonstrated the skill(s) to the preceptor's satisfaction.
32. What if I make an error before I reach 500 accurately filled prescriptions/orders?	No errors are permitted in the process of filling any of the 500 prescriptions. If you make an error, you will be informed by your preceptor, who will review and discuss the error with you. You will then have to restart the process of filling 500 consecutive prescriptions without error again from zero.	
33. What is the passing grade?	At the completion of the practical component, the preceptor will complete a Declaration of Completion Form and assign a grade of either "successfully completed" or "not successfully completed." The pharmacy technician candidate must also sign this form.	

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PEBC Qualifying Exam

34. What is the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) Qualifying Exam?

PEBC grants a certificate as evidence when you have successfully passed the Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination, thus meeting a national evaluation standard of entry-level competence (knowledge, skills and abilities needed to practise safely and effectively). This evaluation is based on the practice competencies defined in “*Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice*” (NAPRA, 2007).

35. When do graduates from a CCAPP accredited program write the PEBC Qualifying exam?

Following graduation from the Saskatchewan Polytechnic (formerly SIAST) pharmacy technician program the candidate should register for the next sitting of the Qualifying Exam and then begin the SPTA program once they have secured a preceptor site. This will provide an opportunity to gain experience in a practice setting prior to the next sitting of the PEBC Qualifying Exam.

36. If I am a non-CCAPP graduate applicant, do I have to complete the PEBC Evaluating Exam first, and then do a bridging program to help prepare for the PEBC Qualifying Exam?

Ideally, yes, but you are not required to complete the steps in this particular order. Completing the PEBC Evaluating Exam is a requirement to become regulated. It assesses your level of knowledge. If you are unable to pass this exam, you cannot become a registered technician without completing a CCAPP accredited pharmacy technician program.

The bridging program is designed to fill the gaps in your knowledge that may be present from not attending a CCAPP accredited pharmacy technician program. It is not designed simply to help you pass the PEBC Qualifying Exam.

The PEBC Qualifying Exam is designed to determine if you have the knowledge and skills to practice independently as a licensed pharmacy technician in any type of pharmacy practice (i.e. community, hospital, long-term care facility, etc.).

Completing these steps in the above order is the most logical manner to complete them, given that each one prepares the pharmacy assistant for the completion of the following step.

37. What is the format of the PEBC Qualifying Exam?

The PEBC Qualifying Exam consists of two parts, which is consistent with the pharmacists’ exam:

Part 1: Written multiple choice question (MCQ) exam

Part 2: Performance based exam called an Objective Structured Performance Exam (OSPE)

For more information on the PEBC Qualifying Exams, please visit:

Part 1 - http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/4809/la_id/1.htm

Part 2 - http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3083/la_id/1.htm

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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38. When is the PEBC Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Exam offered?

The PEBC Qualifying Exam is offered by PEBC nationally at key locations twice a year. For more information, including the Exam Schedule, please visit http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3094/la_id/1.htm.

39. Are there any exceptions for Pharmacy Assistants who have been on maternity leave and cannot fulfill the 2000 hour requirement for PEBC Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam in the past 36 months?

Information on PEBC requirements for the Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Exam can be found at http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3100/la_id/1.htm

40. How do I know if I meet the minimum requirement of 2000 hours of ‘pharmacy practice’ in the past three years?

The PEBC website http://www.pebc.ca/index.php/ci_id/3100/la_id/1.htm defines acceptable pharmacy practice activities. Prior to sitting in the PEBC Evaluating Exam or enrolling in the Bridging Program, technicians must provide documentation from their supervisor verifying they meet this minimum requirement.

Jurisprudence Exam (JP Exam)

41. Why do I need to take a Jurisprudence Exam?

The requirement to successfully complete a Jurisprudence Exam (JP Exam) is consistent with the registration process for pharmacists and is designed to test your knowledge of relevant provincial legislation and ethics, which is not included on the national PEBC Qualifying Exam. The JP Exam is a computer adapted examination administered by the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists.

42. How can I find out if I am registered for the JP Exam? How do I find out where the Exam is being written?

The JP Examination may be written at the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists office on available dates, Monday afternoon through to Thursday. Appointments to write the exam may be made by contacting the SCP by phone at 306-584-2292 or by email at info@saskpharm.ca.

To prepare for the exam, candidates should have a solid knowledge and understanding of the application of all legislation, practice standards, guidelines and joint statements relevant to the practice of pharmacy in the province of Saskatchewan. You are given two hours to complete the exam.

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43. How is the JP Exam scored?

The pass score for each exam is set using a criterion-referenced pass/fail standard that represents the minimum performance level for entry-to-practice. The pass score varies with each exam based on the questions that are selected and reflects the overall level of difficulty of that particular exam. This process helps standardize each sitting of the exam. A thorough review and statistical analysis is completed with each exam to ensure the results are fair and valid.

A pass or fail result is based only on the individual candidate's performance compared to the pass score. The performances of pharmacist and pharmacy technician candidates are not compared to one another. There is no built-in passing or failing rate (i.e. no "bell curving").

44. When are my JP Exam results released?

The results are released to the applicant immediately after completing the exam at the SCP office.

Language Proficiency

45. What do you mean by "language proficiency"?

Language proficiency is an essential skill required of all pharmacy technicians 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 reading, speaking, listening, and writing - all components of communication. A pharmacy technician's ability to communicate is critical in the delivery of safe and effective patient care. For more information on language proficiency requirements in Canada, please see: <http://napra.ca/pages/PharmacyTechnicians/pharmacytechnicianslanguage.aspx>.

46. What is the Standard Error of Measurement (SEM)?

The Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) is the range that accounts for differences in test scores by different assessors and different versions of the test.

47. How does the College apply the SEM?

If your test score is below the minimum cut score but within the range of the posted SEM, your scores will be considered acceptable. If your test score is below the minimum cut score and below the range of the posted SEM, you are not considered to have met the language proficiency requirement.

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48. Do I have to take the full language proficiency test in the same sitting?

Please contact the individual testing institution for more information.

- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Test of Spoken English (TSE): <http://www.ets.org/>
- Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB): <http://www.CambridgeMichigan.org/MELAB>
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS): <http://www.ielts.org/default.aspx>
- The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST): <http://www.cantest.uottawa.ca/>

49. How long are my test scores valid for?

Test scores are valid for two years and must remain valid for you to progress in the registration process.

50. What if my test scores have expired?

If your test scores expire prior to your Structured Practical Training & Assessment or Structured Practical Skills Assessment, re-testing of language proficiency is required.

51. How does the SCP receive my test scores?

Test scores must be sent directly to SCP by the testing institution.

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Fees and Timelines

52. What are the projected costs for a technician to become a Regulated Technician?

All fees listed below are as of January 2015.

	Pathway 1	Pathway 2
SK Polytechnic CCAPP Accredited Program	\$6,300	
PEBC Evaluating Exam		\$350
PEBC Qualifying Exam		
Part I MCQ	\$375	\$375
Part II OSPE	\$900	\$900
Bridging Program – Selkirk		
Pharmacology		\$405
Product Preparation		\$405
Management of Drug Distribution Systems		\$420
Professional Practice		\$420
OR PLAR exam		\$275 (per exam)
SCPP Fees		
Structured Practical Training & Assessment (SPTA) less than 2000 hours/3 years	\$565	N/A
Structured Practical Skills Assessment (SPSA) greater than 2000 hours/3 years	\$295	\$295
Jurisprudence Exam	\$290	\$290
Registration & Application Fees	\$250	\$250
Licence	\$500	\$500
Total	\$8,710 + SPAP or SPTA fee	\$4,410 + SPSA fee (assuming all bridging modules are taken and no PLAR is received)

*Malpractice insurance is mandatory but not provided by SCPP

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53. What are the timelines for each step in the Technician Regulation process?

All times listed below are as of January 2015.

	Pathway 1	Pathway 2
SK Polytechnic CCAPP Accredited Program	40 weeks	
PEBC Evaluating Exam	3 hours	3 hours
PEBC Qualifying Exam Part I MCQ Part II OSPE	4 hours 6 hours	4 hours 6 hours
Bridging Program – Selkirk Pharmacology Product Preparation Management of Drug Distribution Systems Professional Practice PLAR Exam Total		33 hours 33 hours 39 hours 39 hours <hr/> 144 hours
SCP Programs Structured Practical Training & Assessment (SPTA) (candidates with less than 2000 hours experience in the past three years)	Maximum 6 months	N/A
Structured Practical Skills Assessment (SPSA) (candidates with 2000 hours or more experience in the past three years)	2 – 12 weeks	2 – 12 weeks
Jurisprudence Exam	2 hours	2 hours

54. How long does it take to process an application?

Applications for registration and licensure to the College are generally processed within 5-10 business days. Processing time may be longer than 10 days during peak periods. The fees and timelines charts for each pathway (non-CCAPP accredited and CCAPP accredited) to registration list the processing time for various applications.