

National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program – Not as Scary as You’d Think

By Lyndsay Ratzlaff

Some pharmacy assistants in Saskatchewan will need to access the National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program to become a licensed Pharmacy Technician. The online program is being offered through Selkirk College in British Columbia. Below is a personal account from one pharmacy assistant who is moving towards regulation and working on this requirement.

My name is Lyndsay Ratzlaff and I'm from Tisdale, Saskatchewan. I began the process to become a licensed/regulated Pharmacy Technician last fall when I wrote the PEBC Evaluating Exam. It's the first step in what seems like an endless process.

Step two after passing the PEBC Evaluating Exam is the bridging courses. There are four bridging courses offered to Saskatchewan residents. They are online courses based out of Selkirk College in British Columbia. Those courses are: Pharmacology, Product Preparation, Management of Drug Distribution Systems and Professional Practice. These courses are not designed to teach you everything you need to know on the subject. Rather, they are meant to bridge the gap in your education. They assist individuals in upgrading their skills to align with changes in the regulation and scope of practice of pharmacy technicians without returning to school to complete a full-time program.

I attended SIAST 16 years ago (before it was a CCAPP accredited program) and a lot of things have changed in the field of pharmacy since then. These courses are helping me to catch up and prepare for the PEBC Qualifying Exam: MCQ and OSPE. Each course is between 11 – 13 weeks long and requires a commitment of 5 – 12 hours per week. I chose to do Professional Practice first (13 weeks) and it seemed like a daunting task.

Working full-time and taking an online course was very intimidating. If you are working full-time, I wouldn't suggest taking more than one course at a time because of the time that it takes to go through the lesson each week and do the assignments.

I was quite nervous at first about navigating the “Moodle Environment” (I'm still not sure what a Moodle is) and not having an instructor available to answer my questions in person. But after the first week I found it easier to find my discussion forums, assignment links, and weekly lessons. And the instructor is available by email or in the discussion forums and always replies to our questions in less than 24 hours.

Also, the people in my class are from all across Canada and are very supportive of each other and always willing to help someone out who has a question: sometimes even before the instructor has a chance to jump in and answer. We're all in this together and you can feel the sense of community in the class even with the distance between us.

So as scary as this process is, just take it one step at a time and you'll reach your goal of becoming a regulated Pharmacy Technician.



Pharmacy Technician Newsletter Reminder

Last month, SCP released a special issue of our newsletter describing the proposed process of becoming a registered Pharmacy Technician in Saskatchewan once our new legislation is in effect. Please remember that the legislation that allows SCP to offer licences to Pharmacy Technicians is not yet passed. We anticipate this will happen in the summer of 2015.

If you haven't read the SCOPe Special Edition Pharmacy Technicians newsletter yet or want to refer to it again, [here is the link](#) for your convenience. It can also be found on our website under the Pharmacy Technician tab.

Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) Examination Dates

Wednesday, June 10 is the deadline for the next PEBC Qualifying Exam. See below for more Pharmacy Technician exam deadlines.

Examination Name	Examination Date	Application Deadline Date*
Summer Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination	MCQ: September 12, 2015 OSPE: September 13, 2015	June 10, 2015
Fall Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination	October 17, 2015	June 26, 2015
Winter Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination	OSPE: April 2, 2016 MCQ: April 3, 2016	December 11, 2015
Spring Pharmacy Technician Evaluating Examination	April 24, 2016	January 13, 2016**

*Applications must be RECEIVED by the PEBC office no later than the application deadline date

** Please note this sitting of the Evaluating Exam will be offered in both Saskatoon and Regina

The National Bridging Program

The bridging program applies only to individuals who have not completed their training through a CCAPP accredited school or they have graduated prior to 2009. Those wishing to complete the bridging program can register for the National Pharmacy Technician Bridging Education Program [online course through Selkirk College](#). The program consists of four modules each requiring class time and homework ranging from 3-10 hours per week.

Candidates have the option to take a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) challenge examination for three of the four bridging modules (Professional Practice is mandatory). Candidates would be exempt from completing a module if they pass the associated challenge examination. [Selkirk College offers PLAR](#) examinations on a monthly basis. For more information from NAPRA on PLAR, please click [here](#).