



Structured Practical Training **Intern's Manual**

March 2019

Table of Contents

Program overview	3
Welcome	3
Roadmap to licensure for international pharmacy graduates (IPGs)	4
Philosophy of the structured practical training program	5
Your responsibilities	6
Preceptor's responsibilities	6
Professional competencies for Canadian pharmacists at entry-to-practice	7
Program levels and goals	8
Program levels	9
What type of supervision is required for interns completing SPT?	12
Assessment and development	13
Intern assessment	13
General characteristics for each performance level:	14
Developing learning plans	16
After the final assessment	17
Performance and assessment difficulties	18
Program structure and activities	19
Competency modules	19
Level 1 and 2 learning activities	20
Level 3 learning activities	22
Completing learning activities	23
Adjusting the program activities	23
Preceptor's role regarding program activities	24
Further resources	24

Program overview

Welcome

Welcome to the Alberta College of Pharmacy's (ACP) Structured Practical Training (SPT) program. The college's primary responsibility is to ensure safe, effective, and responsible pharmacy care for Albertans.

ACP's vision

Healthy Albertans through excellence in pharmacy practice

ACP's mission

The Alberta College of Pharmacy governs pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacies in Alberta to serve, support, and protect the public's health and well-being.

In order to practise as a pharmacist in Alberta, you must meet entry-to-practice requirements and maintain your competence throughout your career. These requirements are determined by ACP to ensure pharmacy practitioners are competent to perform their authorized roles.

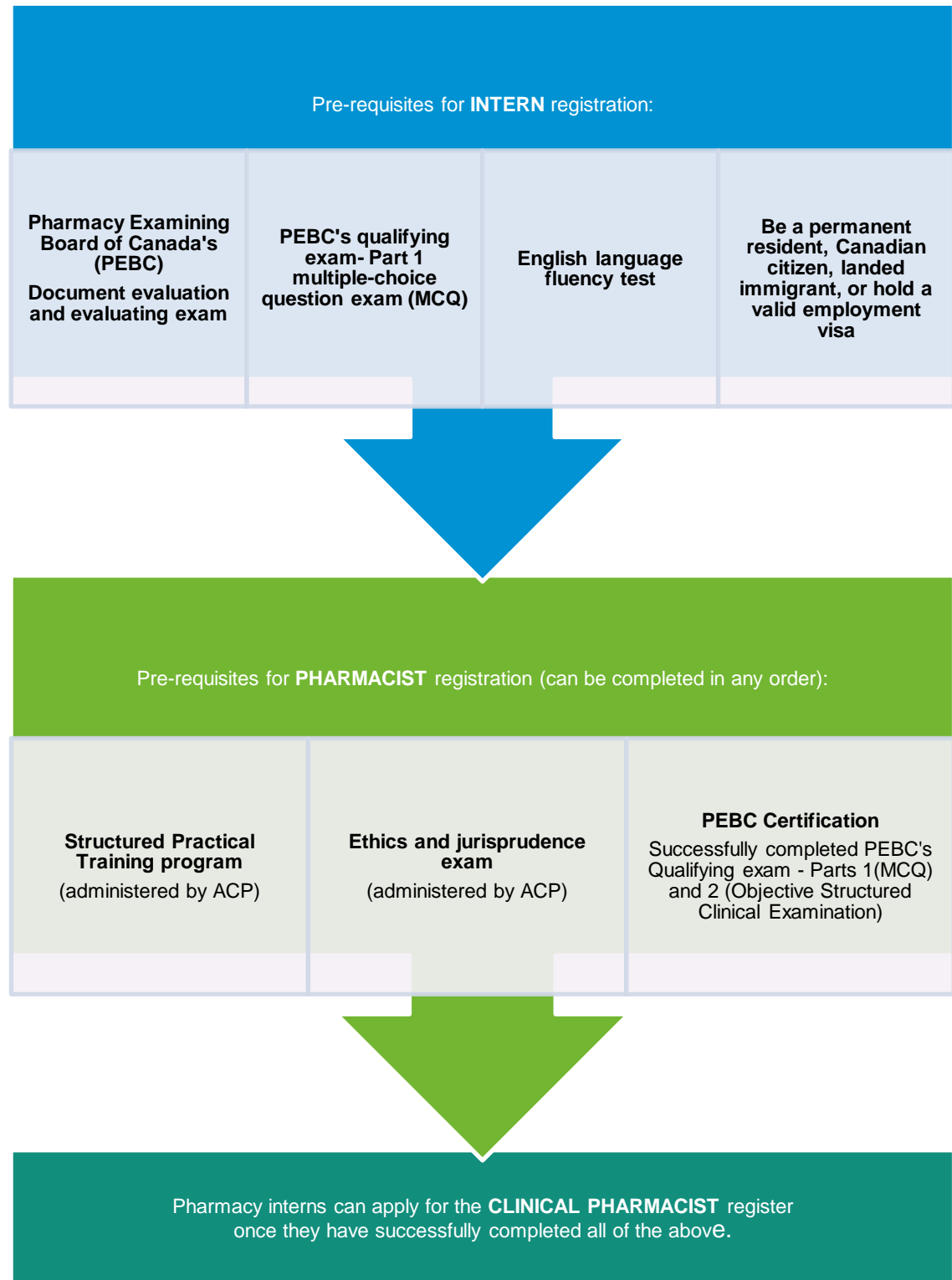
ACP is committed to pharmacy practice excellence in Alberta and to your professional development through a structured practical training program. This program is based on the [Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacists at Entry-to-Practice](#) determined by the [National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities \(NAPRA\)](#).

To successfully complete the SPT program, a pharmacy intern must

- demonstrate competence,
- meet or exceed the acceptable performance levels for all entry-to-practice competencies, and
- complete a minimum of 1000 internship hours.
 - a. Additional hours are often required to demonstrate all competencies. The preceptor(s) will determine when the requirements have been met.

Completion of the SPT program is only one step in the entire licensing process.

Roadmap to licensure for international pharmacy graduates (IPGs)



Philosophy of the structured practical training program

The Alberta College of Pharmacy's SPT program is designed to support you in your journey to become a proficient, patient-centred, and outcomes-focused pharmacist in Canadian pharmacy practice through structured practical learning experiences.

The overall objective of the SPT program is to provide you with the opportunity, resources, and support to

1. understand the scope of practice of Alberta pharmacists and the [Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians](#);
2. apply your professional knowledge and skills to a practical setting, and develop and demonstrate entry-to-practice competencies; and
3. identify your areas of strength, areas for improvement, and implement learning plans to improve your practice accordingly.

Activities within the program guide you through practical experiences to accomplish internship goals, and meet entry-to-practice competencies. The activities within each of the nine competency modules provide a basic framework to help you understand and demonstrate competencies required at the point of licensure.

The time spent on a particular competency module depends on your background, knowledge, and experience. Your preceptor can help you determine areas of development in order to meet or exceed acceptable performance levels.

Your responsibilities

According to the [Code of Ethics \(COE\)](#), pharmacy professionals must act as stewards of their professions by

- ensuring that they are competent,
- acting with honesty and integrity,
- demonstrating responsibility for self and other health professionals, and
- nurturing the profession.

To uphold these principles, you must

- continuously improve your level of professional knowledge and skill,
- take responsibility for maintaining a high standard of professional competence,
- evaluate your individual practice and assume responsibility for improvement,
- respond constructively to the outcomes of competence assessments and reviews of your professional performance and undertake further training when necessary,
- restrict your practice within the limitations of your personal competence, and
- practice only when fit and competent to do so.

While the program provides you with suggested activities and resources, the obligation to successfully complete the SPT program and become a competent licensed pharmacist rests with you. You are responsible for understanding the program's goals and objectives, identifying and acknowledging your learning needs, and completing the requirements of the SPT program.

It is critical to maximize this learning experience and accept and appreciate all the opportunities available during your internship. In doing so, you will gain valuable experiences to meet the program's goals and objectives and become a competent pharmacist.

Preceptor's responsibilities

Your preceptor has the ultimate responsibility of assessing your knowledge, skills, and abilities. **They will sign off on a level of training only when you have met/exceeded the acceptable performance levels for all the entry-to-practice competencies.** During your training, you must be directly supervised by your preceptor and/or another clinical pharmacist when performing restricted activities.

The relationship between you and your preceptor should be a partnership in learning. In order for your internship experience to be successful, it is important to review your individual learning needs and goals with your preceptor at the start of your training. The preceptor must be aware of your needs so that they can best help you to succeed.

Professional competencies for Canadian pharmacists at entry-to-practice

The SPT program's activities and assessments are based on nine nationally accepted entry-to-practice competencies developed through the NAPRA. Upon successfully completing this program, you should demonstrate the following behaviours described within each competency category.

Competency category	Behaviour
Communication and education	Pharmacists communicate effectively with patients, the pharmacy team, other health professionals, and the public; and educate, where appropriate, in order to promote and support optimal patient care and wellness.
Ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities	Pharmacists practice within legal requirements, demonstrate professionalism, and uphold professional standards of practice, codes of ethics, and policies.
Product distribution	Pharmacists ensure accurate drug and product distribution that is safe and appropriate for the patient.
Knowledge and research application	Pharmacists access, retrieve, critically analyze and apply relevant information to practice with the goal of ensuring safe and effective patient care.
Patient care	Pharmacists, in partnership with the patient and in collaboration with other health professionals, use their knowledge and skills to meet the patient's drug-related and other health needs to achieve optimal outcomes.
Intra and inter-professional collaboration	Pharmacists work in collaboration with the pharmacy team and other health professionals to deliver comprehensive services, make best use of resources, and ensure continuity of care in order to optimize the patient's health outcomes.
Quality and safety	Pharmacists collaborate in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, procedures, and activities that promote the quality and safety of pharmacy practice.
Health promotion	Pharmacists use their expertise to advance the health and wellness of patients, communities and populations.
Practice setting	Pharmacists oversee the practice setting with the goal of ensuring safe and efficient patient care.

Program levels and goals

To successfully complete the SPT program, a pharmacy intern must demonstrate competence and meet or exceed the acceptable performance levels for all entry-to-practice competencies, and complete a minimum of 1000 internship hours.

The main objective of the SPT program is to help you demonstrate and master the entry-to-practice competencies. The length of time in the SPT program is secondary, and additional hours are often required to demonstrate all competencies. Your preceptor may only sign off on the completion of a SPT level when you have demonstrated all the required competencies at the acceptable performance levels.

The SPT program consists of three levels. Activities are grouped according to entry-to-practice competencies. Throughout each level of the program, you will complete a preliminary, midpoint and final self-assessment. All program materials are managed through the online SPT portal.

Program levels

Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	Preliminary self-assessment		
	Communication and education	Patient care	Activities for all competency categories
	Ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities		
	Product distribution	Intra and inter-professional collaboration	
		Midpoint assessment	
	Midpoint assessment	Quality and safety	
	Knowledge and research application	Health promotion, communication and education	
	Patient care	Practice setting	
	Final assessment		
Hours	450 +	450 +	100 +
Additional hours are often required to demonstrate all competencies. The preceptor will determine when requirements have been met.			

Level 1

Level 1 is intended to provide you with a foundation to Canadian pharmacy practice and includes relatively simple activities. As you progress through the program and build on each competency, the suggested learning activities will become more advanced.

In Level 1, you will focus on the following competency categories:

- 1. Communication and education**
- 2. Ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities**
- 3. Product distribution**
- 4. Knowledge and research application**
- 5. Patient care**

Upon completing Level 1, you must demonstrate the ability to

- communicate with patients and other health care providers,
- develop a rapport with patients and assess their health care needs,
- accept and process prescriptions,
- research drug information questions, and
- adhere to the legislative framework for pharmacy practice.

Level 2

In Level 2, you will further enhance your skills and focus on providing safe and effective patient care. You are expected to demonstrate an increased ability to use your professional judgment to make clinical decisions and are expected to become involved in the supervision of other staff members in the dispensary.

In Level 2, you will focus on the following competency categories:

- 1. Patient care**
- 2. Intra and inter-professional collaboration**
- 3. Quality and safety**
- 4. Health promotion/Communication and education**
- 5. Practice setting**

Upon completing Level 2, you must demonstrate the ability to

- assess patients and the appropriateness of their drug therapies,
- identify actual and potential drug-therapy problems,
- make clinical decisions,
- develop and implement care plans,
- collaborate with other health care providers,
- document patient care,
- promote health and wellness, and
- ensure safe and efficient pharmacy practice.

Level 3

Level 3 is intended to confirm proficiency in all entry-to-practice competencies and assess readiness to practice. In Level 3, you are expected to work independently, supervise other staff members, and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the relevant pharmacy legislations, Code of Ethics, and the Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians.

To successfully complete Level 3, you must demonstrate competence to your preceptor and meet or exceed the acceptable performance levels for all entry-to-practice competencies.

What type of supervision is required for interns completing SPT?

All restricted activities completed by the intern during the SPT program (Levels 1-3) must be under the **direct supervision** of the preceptor and/or another clinical pharmacist. The supervising pharmacist is responsible and accountable for all restricted activities performed by the intern while under his/her supervision.

According to the Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Profession Regulation:

23(1) A regulated member who consents to provide direct supervision under this Regulation must

- be authorized to perform the restricted activity being supervised,
- **be present** when the supervised individual is performing the restricted activity, and
- **be able to observe and promptly intervene** and stop or change the actions of the individual who is under supervision.

Interns who have successfully completed Level 3 of the SPT program but are not yet ready or able to register on the clinical register (e.g., still need to complete the PEBC exam) may work under indirect supervision, at the discretion of the supervising pharmacist. The level of supervision must be agreed upon by both the intern and the preceptor.

Note: Direct supervision is still required for any intern administering drugs by injection.

Assessment and development

Intern assessment

To successfully complete SPT program, you must demonstrate competence, and meet or exceed the acceptable performance levels for all [Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacists at Entry-to-Practice \(NAPRA\)](#).

Assessment is a very important part of the learning process. Although your preceptor is ultimately responsible for assessing your performance, you are required to complete self-assessments throughout the SPT program in order to

- gain a better understanding of the entry-to-practice competencies and the acceptable performance levels;
- reflect on your own knowledge, skills, and abilities and identify areas of strength, and areas that may require improvements; and
- monitor your growth towards becoming a clinical pharmacist in Alberta.

There is a different assessment for each level. For each SPT level, you and your preceptor update the same assessment form located in the SPT portal. You will be able to view each other's results.

Assessments must be completed

- prior to starting the level (preliminary);
- at midpoint; and
- at the end of the level (final).

Assessment is based on key competencies related to the nine competency categories. To complete the assessment, you and your preceptor will rate (1-3) how you perform each of the key competencies according to specific performance level descriptors. The specific performance level descriptors for each key competency are defined in the assessment form.

General characteristics for each performance level:

1. **Needs improvement:** Improvement is needed and support is required to meet the acceptable standards. At the beginning of internship, this may be a typical performance level for an intern due to a lack of experience.
2. **Meets the acceptable performance level:** At this level, an intern would perform the relevant tasks independently; however, the intern may lack speed and flexibility when dealing with complex issues. **This is the typical performance level for an intern and the minimum performance level an intern must meet before completing the SPT level.**
3. **Exceeds the acceptable performance level:** At this level, an intern would perform the relevant tasks confidently, and manage complex issues efficiently and effectively. Interns should strive to achieve this performance level toward the end of internship.

As you complete the assessment and rate your performance, you should

- **provide examples** to support your ratings,
- **comment on areas of strength and areas for improvement**, and
- **determine learning actions plans** for areas that require improvement.

If you are having difficulties with the initial self-assessment, ask your preceptor to help clarify key competencies and acceptable performance levels.

Once you and your preceptor have completed the assessment, meet to review, discuss, and compare the completed assessments.

Assessment design

To help facilitate the assessment process, you and your preceptor will be working off of the same assessment form throughout a level of SPT. For example, when you click on the midpoint assessment, you will see the ratings you've selected for your preliminary self-assessment. This allows you to review your previously selected ratings and adjust the ratings for the competencies where you have improved your performance. Please note: any adjustments that you make will override the previously selected ratings.

Tip

If you wish to retain a specific version of your assessment (e.g., preliminary self-assessment) to keep track of your progress, you should either print or download a copy of the assessment.

Initially, you and your preceptor may be uncomfortable with the assessment process and be reluctant to identify the specific areas that need further improvements. However, by identifying areas you need to work on, it will help you to

- focus your performance improvement efforts,
- plan and prioritize your learning, and
- work towards meeting the acceptable performance levels for the entry-to-practice competencies.

Your preceptor should provide feedback on an ongoing basis. Be open to feedback and use it to improve your practice. Providing regular feedback will hopefully prevent any surprises during assessment and help you and your preceptor feel more comfortable with rating performance levels. Professionalism and teamwork are both fundamental concepts in your SPT program and in pharmacy practice. As such, your preceptor may be consulting with other members of your team when preparing your assessment (particularly for feedback on professionalism and teamwork).

Developing learning plans

As you and your preceptor identify key competencies needing improvement, work together to determine corresponding learning plans to enhance your knowledge, skill, or ability to achieve acceptable performance levels. You may document your learning plans and their outcomes within your assessment form located in the SPT portal.

Consider the following steps when determining your learning plans:

Step 1: Determine your learning objective. State your learning objective in the SMART format. (*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based*). Ask yourself:

- *What do I want to learn?*
- *What do I want to implement into my practice?*
- *What area(s) do I need improvement/further development in?*
- *Which key competency or learning need is being addressed?*

Step 2: Identify your plan to achieve your learning objective. Ask yourself:

- *What learning activities will help me to achieve my objective?*
- *What steps will I take to achieve my objective?*

Step 3: Set a target date for achieving the learning objective.

- *When do I plan to achieve my objective?*

Step 4: Complete the learning activities and/or required steps.

Step 5: Reflect on your learning. Ask yourself:

- Did I meet my objective? What did I achieve?
- What feedback did I receive?
- What did I learn and how will I apply this learning to my practice?
- Do I need to learn more in this area?

After the final assessment

Once you and your preceptor have completed the final assessment, meet to review, discuss, and compare the assessment results. Based on the results, you and your preceptor should develop learning plans accordingly.

After reviewing the final assessment, your preceptor will inform you of whether:

- you are ready to advance to the next level of SPT, or
- you are **NOT** ready to advance to the next level because you have yet to demonstrate all the required competencies at the acceptable performance levels.

Although you may have already completed the minimum number of hours for the SPT level, you are required to continue working on a SPT level until you have demonstrated to your preceptor the required competencies at the acceptable performance levels. Your preceptor(s) will determine when you are eligible to advance to the next level of SPT and typically, additional hours are often required.

When your preceptor has indicated in the assessment form that you have met/exceeded the acceptable performance levels for all the applicable key competencies, then your preceptor may declare level completion through the SPT portal.

Performance and assessment difficulties

What if, despite all the planning and discussion, your preceptor feels you are not performing adequately? Or what if you and your preceptor strongly disagree on assessment ratings?

- If there are specific areas of practice you are struggling with, work together to identify learning needs and opportunities to improve your practice. Additional training beyond suggested activities within the program may be required. It is important for your preceptor to provide ongoing feedback to guide your learning.
- If the situation cannot be resolved at the site level, you and/or preceptor are invited to call the college. Initial contact should be with the registration department. A staff member will be selected to consult with you and/or your preceptor. The staff member will be determined by the situation.
- The college will strive to work with you and your preceptor to reach a mutually satisfactory understanding and agreement. Additionally, the college may appoint an individual reviewer to gather more information and make a recommendation to the college and/or arrange for you to be observed and assessed at another site.
- You or your preceptor may terminate the arrangement at any time. Prior consultation and discussion with the college is highly recommended as internship hours may not be transferred.

Concentrate your focus within SPT on developing the required competencies for Canadian pharmacists at entry-to-practice at the acceptable performance levels, rather than hours.

To ensure a continued high standard of pharmacy practice, your preceptor will only sign off on a SPT level if you have met or exceeded the acceptable performance levels for the key competencies. Regardless of all planning, training, and discussion, if you are unable to demonstrate these required competencies, then you should not be moving forward to becoming a licensed pharmacist. If you need additional support, please contact ACP.

Program structure and activities

Competency modules

Program activities are grouped into modules according to nine competency categories and can be found online in the SPT portal. **A suggested duration of time (hours) to spend within each competency module is offered;** however, time can vary at the discretion of the intern and preceptor.



Level 1 and 2 learning activities

Three different types of activities are required within each competency module:

1. Daily activities

- These activities form your main job description.
- Complete these activities daily for the duration spent on the competency module.

2. Discuss with your preceptor activities

- For these activities, identify best practices, research the answers, and discuss your findings with your preceptor.
- Complete these activities simultaneously with the daily activities.

3. Role-play as the pharmacist activities

- For these activities, role-play as the “pharmacist” and resolve the scenarios.
- As the “pharmacist”, you must ask the appropriate questions, assess the situation, make the appropriate recommendation(s), and/or communicate the response accordingly.
- Complete these activities simultaneously with the daily activities or towards the end of a module.



Daily activities

The daily activities outlined in each competency module **form your “job description” and are to be completed daily (unless stated otherwise) for the duration spent on a competency module.**

Daily activities may reoccur in another competency category or level of internship to further develop your skills. As you practise these activities and progress through the program, you will strengthen your ability and confidence, and transition from observing/assisting the pharmacist to practising independently. **Please familiarize yourself with the daily activities at the start of each competency module.**

Discuss with your preceptor

Discussion activities are designed to enhance your knowledge and communication skills. To complete these activities, reflect on your own knowledge and skills, identify best practices, and research the answers as needed.

Complete the activities independently and then discuss your findings with your preceptor/pharmacy team. **These activities are to be completed simultaneously with the daily activities.**

Role-play as the pharmacist

Role-play activities are intended to reinforce your learning and prepare you for potential challenging scenarios in your practice. **You are required to play the role of the pharmacist** to resolve the issues presented in the scenarios. As the “pharmacist”, ask the appropriate questions, assess the situation, make the appropriate recommendation(s), and/or communicate the response accordingly.

As the scenario listed may not contain all the relevant details, your preceptor or another pharmacist, playing the role of the patient/prescriber, may need to supplement details and personalize the scenario. Role-play activities are intended **to be completed toward the end of a module and/or simultaneously with the daily activities.**

Level 3 learning activities

The objective of Level 3 is for a preceptor to confirm proficiency and your readiness to practice. In Level 3, you are expected to practise independently, supervise other staff members, and demonstrate your competence to your preceptor,

The Level 3 activities are grouped according to five overarching competency categories:

- **Patient care**
- **Communication and education**
- **Product distribution**
- **Practice setting and**
- **Ethical, legal, and professional responsibilities**

You are to continue practising the Level 3 activities until you have demonstrated competence at the acceptable performance levels.

Completing learning activities

All competency modules and program activities are managed in the SPT portal. Upon completion of an activity, you and/or your preceptor may leave comments, notes, or observations in the SPT portal. Once an activity has been completed to the satisfaction of your preceptor, you or your preceptor may check off the activity. All restricted activities must be completed under the direct supervision of your preceptor or another clinical pharmacist.

Program tips:

To complete the activities, refer to federal and provincial legislation governing pharmacy practice. The [Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians](#) and the [Code of Ethics](#) are mandatory references.

Complete the mandatory online [jurisprudence learning module](#) prior to starting your internship in preparation for practice.

There are multiple ways to sufficiently complete an activity. Always complete the activity using your professional judgement and acting in the best interest of your patient; while ensuring the overall legislative scheme for pharmacy practice is complied with to its letter and its spirit.

Adjusting the program activities

- The suggested timeframe noted in each competency module serves only a guideline. You and your preceptor may decide to alter timeframes based on your background and experience. You are still required to complete the minimum number of hours required for the level.
- The majority of internships are completed in community pharmacies and the activities listed are tailored for community practice. If you are completing an internship outside a community setting, work with your preceptor to adjust learning activities, and/or establish new activities more conducive to your practice site.

Any adjustments made to the program activities must be made at the discretion of both you and your preceptor. Any new/revised activities must support the program's overall objective. In other words, activities must provide the opportunity to apply professional knowledge and skills to a practical setting, and develop and demonstrate entry-to-practice competencies.

Lastly, all activities must be completed in accordance with the [Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians](#), [Code of Ethics](#), and other relevant legislations that govern pharmacy practice.

Preceptor's role regarding program activities

Regarding the program activities, the role of your preceptor is to:

- Provide opportunities for you to complete the SPT program activities; supervising as appropriate.
- Encourage critical thinking and problem solving by enabling you to formulate your own answers.
- Support you in providing patient care and answering patient questions; assist with health promotional and interdisciplinary activities as needed.
- Adjust activities as needed to be more conducive to the practice site and your learning needs.
- Play the role of the patient/prescriber in the role-play activities and supplement details as required.
- Be available for discussion and guidance; provide ongoing feedback and meet with you to review and discuss assessment results.
- Help you determine activities and learning plans to help you meet acceptable performance levels.
- Ensure other pharmacy team members are aware of your role and responsibilities and the level of supervision required.

Further resources

For more information on the Structured Practical Training program, please refer to the instructions, Q&A, and/or additional resources available in the SPT portal.