



# Structured Practical Training (SPT) Program Rules: Provisional pharmacists

Approved by Council – June 2009; May 2016; December 2019, March 2021; August 2023  
Amended – October 2023; January 2025

Applicants for the **clinical pharmacist register** must successfully complete a structured practical training program<sup>1</sup>. The Structured Practical Training (SPT) Program of the Alberta College of Pharmacy (ACP) is a learning experience of at least 1000 hours that permits those enrolled in the program (learners) to apply previously acquired academic knowledge and skills to a practical setting through observation and participation resulting in the development and/or demonstration of the competencies outlined in the ***Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacists at Entry to Practice*** developed by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA).

The SPT program is divided into three levels:

- Level I - minimum 450 hours\*
  - In Level I the learner is required to acquire and/or demonstrate competencies at an acceptable level. The focus of this level is the provision of direct patient care.
- Level II – minimum 450 hours\*
  - In Level II the learner is required to demonstrate competencies proficiently. Expectations regarding the demonstration of judgment and professionalism are increased. In addition, candidates will be expected to become involved in the supervision of other staff members in the dispensary.
- Level III – minimum 100 hours\*
  - Level III is intended to confirm proficiency. Learners are expected to work independently, acting as the “charge pharmacist” while managing the activities of the dispensary and supervising other staff members.
  - Level III may only be completed by a learner on the provisional register.

\* **Note:** The hours listed are minimums. Successful completion of each level requires demonstration of the required competencies. Additional time may be required to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> S3(1)(b) Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Profession Regulation



## Program rules

1. Candidates who wish to enroll in the SPT program must be registered on the student register, the provisional register, or the clinical register.
2. Once enrolled a learner will remain in the SPT program until
  - a. they have successfully completed all three levels of the program **and** are registered on the clinical register; or
  - b. they cease to be registered on the student register, the provisional register, or the clinical register.

## Training sites

3. SPT hours must be completed at a licensed community pharmacy or institution pharmacy in Alberta.
  - a. Upon application, the registrar may approve completion of hours at alternate sites.
4. SPT hours may only be completed at sites that
  - a. operate a minimum of 20 hours per week,
  - b. have no outstanding deficiencies resulting from an on-site assessment that was more than 30 days ago,
  - c. have no restrictions on the pharmacy license that will impact ability to provide a good learning environment for a SPT learner, and
  - d. have no outstanding complaints that have been referred to a Hearing Tribunal.
5. The SPT learner may not complete SPT hours at a site where they have a close personal relationship with the licensee and/or proprietor of the pharmacy.
6. An SPT learner may not complete Levels II and III of the program at the same site.

## Preceptors

7. Each SPT internship must be supervised by an approved preceptor. A pharmacist registered on the clinical register may be approved to act as a preceptor if they
  - a. are a clinical pharmacist who have been registered on the Alberta College of Pharmacy's clinical register for the past two years or more;
  - b. take action to understand the principles of the SPT program and accept the role and responsibilities of a preceptor;
  - c. are in good standing including the following:
    - i. no conditions or restrictions on their practice permit that will impact ability to provide a good learning experience for an SPT learner;
    - ii. no outstanding complaints that have been referred to a hearing tribunal;
    - iii. not been the subject of a finding of OR not the subject of a current proceeding related to: professional misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity in Alberta or any other jurisdiction in relation to pharmacy or any other health profession; and
    - iv. not been found guilty of OR not the subject of a current proceeding related to: an offence under any Act regulating the practice of pharmacists or the sale of drugs; or any criminal offence; and
  - d. are not related to, or in a close personal relationship with, the SPT learner being precepted.



8. Upon application the registrar may approve a preceptor outside of these requirements.
9. An SPT learner must complete each level under one preceptor. An SPT learner may have a different preceptor for each level.
10. An SPT learner may not have the same preceptor for Levels II and III.
11. A preceptor may not have more than two interns under their preceptorship at the same time.

## **Completion of SPT hours**

12. SPT learners are required to find their own preceptor site and preceptor.
13. An SPT learner must submit preceptor and site information at the start of each level to confirm eligibility. SPT hours may only commence after an eligible preceptor has notified ACP of their acceptance of their role as the intern's preceptor.
14. SPT hours must be completed in a normal work week pattern which is not less than 20 hours and not more than 40 hours per week.
  - a. Upon application, the registrar may approve an alternate schedule of less than 20 hours per week.
    - i. While the SPT learner is attending a bridging program, SPT hours may be completed in a pattern which is not less than 10 hours per week without making application for approval.

## **Supervision**

15. Direct supervision by a clinical pharmacist or courtesy pharmacist is required for any student/intern who is administering drugs by injection.
  - a. The supervising pharmacist must have authorization to administer injections.
  - b. The student/intern must have completed an accredited training program and have valid and current CPR and first aid certification.

## **Progression through the program**

16. The preceptor is responsible for evaluating the SPT learner using the assessment and evaluation tools provided by ACP.
  - a. The preceptor must discuss each completed assessment/evaluation form with the learner.
  - b. A learner who disagrees with an assessment must discuss their concerns with the preceptor.
    - i. If the disagreement cannot be resolved it must be brought to the attention of the registrar within 30 days of the assessment
    - ii. The registrar may appoint an arbitrator to assist in resolution of the disagreement and, if necessary, may appoint an alternate preceptor to reassess the learner.
17. A level is complete when an eligible preceptor has determined that the intern has demonstrated all required competencies at an appropriate level and provided declaration of level completion to ACP.



18. Learners who are required to complete a bridging program approved by Council will not be permitted to begin SPT Level III until the learner has successfully completed the bridging program.
19. Learners who have successfully completed Level III but are not yet ready or able to register on the clinical register will remain enrolled in the SPT program in a post Level III status for the purposes of completing additional hours as an intern (provisional pharmacist).
  - a. If a practice permit expires and the candidate reinstates as a provisional pharmacist, the intern must start at Level I of the SPT program.

## Recent Canadian graduates

20. Experiential education completed by students enrolled in a Canadian pharmacy program approved by Council may be deemed to be equivalent to Level I and Level II of the SPT program if the student registers in the SPT program and completes Level III within 1 year of graduation.
  - a. Experiential education of at least 450 hours will be considered equivalent to Level I
  - b. Experiential education of at least 900 hours will be considered equivalent to Level I and Level II.

## Ethics and jurisprudence

21. Learners are required to complete the Jurisprudence Learning Module prior to starting the SPT program.
22. Learners are required to successfully complete the ACP Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam prior to starting Level II.
  - a. Learners who enter the SPT program at Level III must successfully complete the exam prior to the start of Level III.
23. Learners enrolled in the SPT program are eligible to challenge the ACP Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam.
  - a. Learners may attempt the Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam only 3 times.
    - i. A candidate who fails the exam 3 times may apply to the registrar for permission for one final attempt.
    - ii. Additional SPT hours and/or other training may be required prior to approval of a fourth attempt.
24. If more than **two years** have elapsed between the successful completion of the Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam and the application for registration on the clinical register, candidates will be required to rewrite and pass the exam again prior to registering on the clinical register.
25. If a practice permit expires and the candidate reinstates as a provisional pharmacist, the intern must successfully complete/rewrite the Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam.