



# **Structured Practical Training**

## **Program rules Pharmacy technicians**



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## Introduction

ACP governs pharmacy technicians, pharmacists and licensed pharmacies in Alberta to serve, support, and protect the public's health and well-being. As part of fulfilling this responsibility, ACP establishes program rules that set expectations for regulated members participating in the Structured Practical Training (SPT) program in Alberta. In addition to the program rules, regulated members are required to comply with the letter and the intent of the legislative framework.

## Legislative framework

The legislative framework that governs regulated members is comprised of several distinct pieces that work together to support and outline the related practices of pharmacy technicians and pharmacists and the environments in which they practise. The legislative framework establishes requirements that all regulated members must adhere to, regardless of where they practise.

The [Health Professions Act](#) is the foundational piece of legislation that enables pharmacy technician and pharmacist practices in Alberta. The *Health Professions Act* establishes the role of each profession and authorizes the development of regulations, standards and a code of ethics that set out the responsibilities and accountabilities of regulated members performing their roles. Each profession is, as part of its practice, authorized to perform certain professional services, including restricted activities authorized through regulation.

In every circumstance, a regulated member's authority to engage in the practice of their profession must be interpreted and applied in the context of the roles established by the *Health Professions Act*, the [Health Information Act](#), and the directions provided through [regulations](#), [standards of practice](#), ACP's [Code of Ethics](#), relevant [guidelines](#), and acceptable conduct.<sup>1</sup>

The Code of Ethics reflects the ethical commitment of pharmacy technicians and pharmacists to patients, society, and the pharmacy professions. The Code of Ethics provides regulated members with guiding principles for professional behaviour, attitudes, and actions, and is foundational to the practice of pharmacy and the standards of practice.

## Program overview

ACP's Structured Practical Training (SPT) program enables candidates to apply their knowledge and skills in different practice sites for the purposes of learning and completing assessments of readiness for independent practice. To complete SPT, a candidate must demonstrate the competencies described in the [Professional Competencies for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice in Canada](#) developed by the [National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities](#) (NAPRA) and readiness to practise in a manner consistent with the expectations in the legislative framework that governs regulated members.

The SPT program consists of online learning activities and a minimum of two practical experiences and must be successfully completed by a candidate for entry to practice. The online learning activities, number of practical experiences, and required hours may vary for

- a candidate who is applying to reinstate, or be reissued their practice permit, and will be based on reinstatement and reissuance policies; and
- a candidate who has been directed by a Hearing Tribunal, the Competence Committee, or the registrar to complete the SPT program.

<sup>1</sup> Regulated members must be aware of and comply with all standards of practice and guidelines approved by Council. These [standards](#) and [guidelines](#) are available on ACP's website.

A pharmacy technician who is registered in another province or territory in Canada may not be required to complete the SPT program, per the *Labour Mobility Act*, when applying for registration to the pharmacy technician register.

## Definitions

Throughout the rules

1. **Candidate** means a regulated member enrolled in the SPT program.
2. **Co-precepting** means when two preceptors share responsibilities as the preceptor for the candidate.<sup>2</sup>
3. **Institution pharmacy** has the same meaning given to the term “institution pharmacy” in the [Pharmacy and Drug Act](#).
4. **Licensed community pharmacy** has the same meaning given to the term “community pharmacy” in the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.
5. **Licensee** has the same meaning given to the term “licensee” in the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.
6. **Online learning activities** means online learning required by the registrar to be completed by a candidate as part of the SPT program. These activities are separate from the activities to be completed during a practical experience.
7. **Preceptor** means a pharmacy technician or clinical pharmacist approved by ACP to be responsible for teaching, coaching, and facilitating learning, and assessing a candidate’s overall readiness to practise. In the SPT program, the use of preceptor refers to both a preceptor and co-preceptors. If co-precepting, both regulated members are required to be approved by ACP.
8. **Proprietor** has the same meaning given to the term “proprietor” in the *Pharmacy and Drug Act*.
9. **Readiness to practise** means that an individual is ready to use their technical and clinical skills confidently in the provision of person-centred care, embodies the [characteristics of a pharmacy professional](#), and is trusted to practise within the healthcare system and their communities.

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<sup>2</sup> University of Alberta Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. [Co-Precepting Model](#).

# Program rules

## Enrolment

1. To enrol in the SPT program, a candidate must
  - 1.1 be registered on ACP's provisional pharmacy technician register or pharmacy technician register,
  - 1.2 complete the [Jurisprudence Learning Module](#),
  - 1.3 successfully pass the [Ethics and Jurisprudence Exam](#), and
  - 1.4 complete the SPT orientation.

## Practice sites

2. Practical experiences must be completed at a licensed community pharmacy or an institution pharmacy in Alberta.
3. A candidate must complete each practical experience at a different practice site.
4. A candidate must complete a practical experience at a site that
  - 4.1 operates more than 20 hours per week;
  - 4.2 has no inspection findings resulting from an ACP inspection, that are concerning to the registrar;
  - 4.3 has no restrictions or conditions on the pharmacy licence that prohibit the pharmacy from being a training site, negatively impact the learning environment, or prohibit preceptors from supervising candidates; and
  - 4.4 is managed and operated by a licensee, proprietor, or regulated member who
    - 4.4.1 has no conditions or restrictions on their practice permit;
    - 4.4.2 is not the subject of an outstanding complaint that has been referred to a Hearing Tribunal;
    - 4.4.3 is not the subject of a current proceeding or has not previously been the subject of a finding of misconduct in Alberta or any other jurisdiction in relation to pharmacy or any other health profession; and
    - 4.4.4 is not the subject of a current proceeding or has not previously been found guilty of
      - 4.4.4.1 an offence under any statute or regulation regulating the practice of pharmacy technicians or pharmacists or the sale of drugs, or
      - 4.4.4.2 any criminal offence.
5. A candidate must complete a practical experience at a site where they are not related to or do not have a close personal relationship with the licensee or proprietor of the pharmacy or the manager of the pharmacy team.
6. Upon application by a candidate, the registrar may approve a practice site outside of these requirements, if the registrar is of the opinion that it is appropriate to do so.

## Preceptors

7. A candidate must complete each practical experience under one preceptor or two preceptors who are co-precepting.
8. For at least one of their practical experiences, the candidate must have a preceptor or co-preceptor who is registered on the pharmacy technician register.
9. A candidate must have different preceptors for each practical experience.
10. A pharmacy technician or pharmacist may be approved to act as a preceptor if they
  - 10.1 have been registered on ACP's pharmacy technician register or clinical pharmacist register for at least one year;
  - 10.2 have completed the preceptor training required by the registrar;
  - 10.3 have completed a declaration that they understand the principles of the SPT program and accept the role and responsibilities of a preceptor;
  - 10.4 are in good standing including the following:
    - 10.4.1 have no conditions or restrictions on their practice permit that will impact the preceptor's ability to provide a good learning experience for the candidate as determined by the registrar;
    - 10.4.2 are not the subject of an outstanding complaint that has been referred to a Hearing Tribunal;
    - 10.4.3 are not the subject of a current proceeding or have not previously been the subject of a finding of unprofessional conduct or misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity in Alberta or any other jurisdiction in relation to pharmacy or any other health profession; and
    - 10.4.4 are not the subject of a current proceeding or have not previously been found guilty of
      - 10.4.4.1 an offence under any statute or regulation regulating the practice of pharmacy technicians or pharmacists or the sale of drugs, or
      - 10.4.4.2 any criminal offence; and
  - 10.5 are not related to, or in a close personal relationship with, the candidate.
11. A pharmacy technician or pharmacist may only act as a preceptor for up to two candidates at any given time.
12. Upon application by a candidate, the registrar may approve a preceptor outside of these requirements, if the registrar is of the opinion that it is appropriate to do so.

## Supervision

13. A candidate must be supervised by the preceptor practising at the site. While a preceptor is supervising a candidate, the preceptor
  - 13.1 must be authorized to perform any restricted activity<sup>3</sup> that the candidate performs,
  - 13.2 must always be on site and accessible, and
  - 13.3 remains responsible for the delivery of all components of any professional service that requires the professional skills and training of the preceptor.
14. The preceptor must begin with direct supervision of a candidate until the preceptor is satisfied that the candidate can perform the restricted activity safely and effectively. When direct supervision is required, the preceptor must be directly present to observe, guide, monitor, and promptly intervene as the candidate performs the restricted activity.
15. At the preceptor's discretion, based on the
  - 15.1 restricted activity,
  - 15.2 candidate's performance, and
  - 15.3 preceptor's confidence that the candidate can perform the restricted activity safely and effectively,the preceptor may decrease the level of supervision, allowing the candidate to practise with less oversight and guidance. However, the preceptor must always be present, on site, and available to monitor and support the actions of the candidate.
16. The preceptor must be supervising the candidate for the majority of the candidate's time (four days per week or 75 per cent of scheduled hours).
  - 16.1 When the preceptor is not available to supervise, the candidate must be supervised by a pharmacy technician on the pharmacy technician register or a pharmacist on the clinical pharmacist register. The supervising pharmacy technician or pharmacist
    - 16.1.1 must be present, on site, and accessible,
    - 16.1.2 must supervise the candidate in accordance with the Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians and these SPT rules, and
    - 16.1.3 may vary the level of supervision of the candidate based on their assessment of the candidate and consultation with the preceptor about the candidate's performance.

<sup>3</sup> s45(1) of the [Health Professions Restricted Activities Regulation](#)

## Completing the SPT program

17. A candidate must complete online activities and practical experiences as required in the SPT program.
18. A candidate must find their own practice sites and preceptors.
19. Any instances that could call into question the objectivity of a preceptor's assessment of a candidate must be disclosed to the ACP by the candidate and the preceptor before the start of any practical experience. The registrar will consider if the actual or perceived conflict of interest can be resolved or mitigated prior to approving the preceptor and practice site for the practical experience.
20. A candidate must submit preceptor and site information for each practical experience to confirm eligibility.
21. A candidate may only start a practical experience after ACP has approved the preceptor(s) and practice site.
22. A candidate must complete a minimum of two practical experiences, each a minimum of 240 hours.
  - 22.1 240 hours are the minimum practice hours required by the candidate for each practical experience. Additional time may be required.
  - 22.2 The minimum hours do not include the time it takes a candidate to complete any online learning activities.
23. A candidate must complete practical experiences by practising in person at the pharmacy at least 20 hours per week, to a maximum of 40 hours per week.
  - 23.1 If a candidate applies to the registrar, the registrar may approve a practical experience less than 20 hours per week.
24. The preceptor is responsible for assessing the candidate using the assessment tools provided by ACP. The preceptor must complete and discuss each assessment with the candidate.
25. A practical experience is complete when
  - 25.1 the candidate has
    - 25.1.1 completed all required activities identified for the practical experience,
    - 25.1.2 completed the minimum practice hours required for the practical experience, and
    - 25.1.3 demonstrated technical and clinical skills necessary for readiness to practise at the level and consistency specified in the assessment, and
  - 25.2 the preceptor
    - 25.2.1 is satisfied the candidate has demonstrated readiness to practise in accordance with the SPT program assessment;
    - 25.2.2 has documented the assessment according to the program expectations; and
    - 25.2.3 has declared, based on their observation and assessment of the candidate, that the candidate is ready to practise, and
  - 25.3 ACP has approved the documentation provided by the candidate and preceptor.
26. If a candidate's practice permit expires and the candidate reinstates to the provisional pharmacy technician register, the candidate must restart the SPT program during the term of their new practice permit.

## Concerns or incomplete practical experiences

27. If a candidate does not complete a practical experience with the approved preceptor, the preceptor must notify ACP within 10 days of when the candidate's practical experience ended with that preceptor, including the reason for the incomplete practical experience.
28. When a candidate disagrees with a preceptor's assessment
  - 28.1 The candidate is encouraged to resolve the disagreement directly with their preceptor.
  - 28.2 If the disagreement cannot be resolved directly with the preceptor, then the candidate must notify ACP within 10 days of the preceptor's assessment.
  - 28.3 The registrar may appoint a mediator to assist in the resolution of the disagreement.
  - 28.4 The registrar may direct an alternative preceptor to reassess the candidate.
29. If a candidate or preceptor has concerns about a practical experience, a practice site, a preceptor, or a candidate
  - 29.1 The candidate and preceptor are encouraged to attempt to resolve the concern directly at the practice site.
  - 29.2 If the concern cannot be resolved directly at the practice site, or between the candidate and the preceptor, then the concern should be brought to the attention of ACP.
  - 29.3 The registrar may appoint a mediator to assist in the resolution of the concern.