



# **Standards of Practice for Continuing Competence**

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## Acknowledgements

The Alberta College of Pharmacy acknowledges that these standards govern pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practise on Treaty 6, Treaty 7, and Treaty 8 territory—the traditional lands of First Nations people—and six Métis regions. The roots of many modern medications come from the Indigenous peoples' traditional use of plants from these lands.

## Introduction

These standards are made under section 3(1)(c) and 50(1) the [Health Professions Act](#) and establish the continuing competence program of the Alberta College of Pharmacy. They set out the expectations for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Regulated members are expected to comply with the letter and the intent of the remaining pieces 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 pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and the environments in which they practise. The legislative framework establishes expectations that all regulated members must adhere to, regardless of where they practise.

The *Health Professions Act* is the foundational piece of legislation that enables pharmacist and pharmacy technician practices in Alberta. The Act establishes the role of each profession and authorizes the development of regulations and standards 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 and acceptable conduct established by the *Health Professions Act*, the *Health Information Act*, and the directions provided through regulations, [standards of practice](#), [Code of Ethics](#), and [relevant guidelines](#).<sup>1</sup>

The Code of Ethics reflects the ethical commitment of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians 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 these standards.

## Context

These standards set out the expectations that regulated members must meet to comply with the continuing competence program, including

- who must participate, and
- what activities must be undertaken.

The continuing competence program includes

- professional development and learning,
- competence assessment, and
- the Practice Improvement 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 the Alberta College of Pharmacy website.

These standards outline which competence assessments will be used in the program and what actions can be taken when a regulated member has failed to meet these standards.

These standards are supported by the continuing competence program manual, which details how the continuing competence program works. The continuing competence program manual must be read in conjunction with these standards so that a regulated member knows what they must do to comply with each standard.

## Definitions

Throughout the standards

1. **Additional prescribing authorization** means authorization to prescribe under the Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation.
2. **Competence** means the combined knowledge, skills, attitudes and judgment required to provide professional services.
3. **Competence assessment** means the assessments directed by the Competence Committee to assess for possible competence deficiencies.
4. **Continuing competence program cycle** means the dates that mark the beginning and the end of the annual program cycle as established in the Alberta College of Pharmacy Bylaws.
5. **Practice Improvement Program** means the program that supports practice improvement of regulated members who demonstrate competence deficiencies.
6. **Professional development and learning** means the activities a regulated member actively participates in to learn, develop, and enhance their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment in relation to pharmacy practice.
7. **Professional service** has the same meaning as in the *Health Professions Act*.
8. **Regulated members** means those registered on the clinical pharmacist or pharmacy technician registers.

## Standards

### Maintain professional competence

1. A regulated member must
  - (a) maintain professional competence to continuously enhance provision of professional services, and
  - (b) participate in the continuing competence program.

### Professional development and learning

2. A regulated member must
  - (a) complete activities directed by the Competence Committee,
  - (b) complete and document self-directed activities, and
  - (c) make a submission of the directed and self-directed activities under Standard 2(a) and 2(b) to the college within each Continuing Competence Program cycle and in accordance with the direction provided in the continuing competence program manual.

### Competence assessment

3. A regulated member must undertake a competence assessment as directed by the Competence Committee or registrar.
4. For the purpose of these standards, a competence assessment includes a direction to complete one or more of
  - (a) examinations,
  - (b) a review of the records described in Standard 12,
  - (c) evaluation of a professional portfolio,
  - (d) practice visits,
  - (e) interviews,
  - (f) any other type of assessment directed by the Competence Committee for the purpose of assessing the regulated member's competence.
5. Notwithstanding Standard 3, if a regulated member is unable to complete a competence assessment due to unforeseen or urgent circumstances unrelated to competence issues, the regulated member may make a request to the Competence Committee to suspend a competence assessment until the unforeseen or urgent circumstances are resolved.
6. A regulated member who voluntarily engages in a competence assessment must comply with the directions of the Competence Committee as though the competence assessment was directed under Standard 3.

## Practice Improvement Program

7. A regulated member must comply with any direction of the Competence Committee that requires participation in the Practice Improvement Program.
8. A regulated member directed to participate in the Practice Improvement Program must comply in accordance with the continuing competence program manual.

## Actions to be taken

9. A direction of the Competence Committee may include
  - (a) professional development and learning,
  - (b) competence assessment,
  - (c) participation in the Practice Improvement Program, and
  - (d) conditions on a practice permit under section 40.1(1) of the *Health Professions Act*.
10. A regulated member must comply with the direction of the Competence Committee as a result of the committee's assessment of the regulated member's submission under Standard 2, competence assessment, or findings that the regulated member failed to maintain or produce proper records under Standard 12.
11. For pharmacists only, an assessment for additional prescribing authorization is a type of assessment equivalent to a competence assessment and the results may be referred to the Competence Committee for its review and assessment as though it was a competence assessment directed under Standard 3.

## Records

12. A regulated member must keep, and be prepared when requested by the Competence Committee, to provide, in a form and time period satisfactory to the committee, records of the professional development and learning and competence assessments that the regulated member has undertaken for the current Continuing Competence Program cycle and three previous Continuing Competence Program cycles.

## Regulated members responsible for costs

13. Any action that a regulated member or group of regulated members is required to complete in response to a direction of the Competence Committee must be undertaken at the cost of the regulated member(s).
14. If the college provides services to facilitate compliance with any direction by the Competence Committee, the regulated member must reimburse the college for the costs as required by the committee.