



Nova Scotia
College of
Pharmacists

NSCP Pharmacy Technician Assessment
(NSCP-PTA)

ASSESSOR GUIDE

The NSCP Pharmacy Technician Assessment (NSCP-PTA) Assessor Guide. important information about being an NSCP-PTA Assessor. Further information can be found on the [NSCP Pharmacy Technician Assessment \(NSCP-PTA\) webpage](#).

WHAT IS THE NSCP-PTA?

The NSCP-PTA is the NSCP's competency-based practice assessment. A competency-based assessment provides assurance to the pharmacy regulator that a pharmacy technician candidate possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to practice pharmacy safely, effectively, and ethically within their legislated scope of practice. The NSCP-PTA focuses on demonstrated performance.

WHO MUST COMPLETE THE NSCP-PTA?

Pharmacy technician candidates who have completed an approved bridging program or who have been internationally trained are required to successfully complete the NSCP-PTA. The assessment is conducted by an approved NSCP-PTA Assessor in an approved NSCP-PTA Assessment Site.

BECOMING AN NSCP-PTA ASSESSOR

☒ You must meet assessor eligibility criteria, including:

- You are a pharmacy technician or pharmacist, licensed with the NSCP, and practising within their respective scope of practice for at least one (1) year.
- You have no conditions or limitations on your licence.
- You have no open cases undergoing a professional accountability process in Nova Scotia or another jurisdiction.
- You have no findings of professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming, professional incompetence or incapacity made against you in Nova Scotia or other jurisdiction.
- You have completed the assessor training as required by the NSCP.

☒ You work in a pharmacy that meets eligibility criteria, including:

- It is a pharmacy located in Nova Scotia
- It has an organizational structure (e.g., staffing and resources) that supports your role as an NSCP-PTA Assessor.
- It has a physical structure that permits an appropriate degree of side-by-side interaction between the candidate and assessor
- It provides sufficient practice opportunities for the candidate to engage in the scope of practice of a pharmacy technician and demonstrate the relevant entry to practice competencies

Submit a completed [NSCP-PTA Assessor Application](#) to the NSCP.

ASSESSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☒ Ensure candidate has been properly orientated to various aspects of the assessment site (pharmacy) so that they are sufficiently prepared to engage in practice.
- ☒ Directly supervise and observe the candidate at all times during the assessment and assess the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities to safely and independently practice as a pharmacy technician within their scope of practice.
- ☒ Rate the candidate's ability to demonstrate entry-to-practice competencies as set out in the [NSCP-PTA Assessment Tool](#).
- ☒ Do not provide training to the candidate on how to practise pharmacy or provide feedback on their performance during the assessment and do not share any assessment ratings with the candidate.
- ☒ Submit final assessment to the NSCP.

CO-ASSESSORS

Two approved NSCP-PTA Assessors working at the same assessment site are permitted to share assessor responsibilities under the following conditions:

- ☒ The names of both assessors are provided in the Candidate's Application.
- ☒ Co-assessors work collaboratively to ensure all program requirements are met.
- ☒ Candidate is observed and always supervised by one of the co-assessors.
- ☒ All competencies are assessed.
- ☒ Co-assessors jointly determine assessment ratings, with the final submission being considered a mutually agreed upon assessment.

ORIENTATION

Before commencing the assessment, it is important that candidates are properly orientated to various aspects of the assessment site (pharmacy) to ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to engage in practice at that site. Providing for a period of orientation before the candidate starts the assessment allows for you and pharmacy staff to teach the candidate the basics (e.g., how to use software, pharmacy-specific processes and procedures). The amount of time required for orientation to the assessment site may vary among candidates and will be influenced by the candidate's prior practice experiences.

During the Orientation

- ☒ Answer the candidate's site-specific questions.
- ☒ Do not provide training on how to practise as a pharmacy technician.

- ☒ At the end of the orientation, confirm that the candidate is ready to proceed to the assessment.
- ☒ You may delegate parts of the orientation to other pharmacy staff members.

NOTE: The candidate should not engage in practice as a pharmacy technician during orientation but may assist with the dispensing/drug distribution process (assistant activities) to ensure they are prepared to engage in practice at that site.

Assessment Site Pharmacy Staff Orientation

- ☒ Explain that the NSCP-PTA is a high stakes assessment to determine if the candidate is ready to safely practise as a pharmacy technician.
- ☒ Clarify the roles of the candidate and assessor.
- ☒ Outline the NSCP-PTA process and ensure staff understand that they cannot teach, provide feedback, or be involved in the final assessment.

You can use this [NSCP-PTA Orientation Checklist](#) as a guide for the orientation.

ASSESSMENT

Length of Assessment

- The length of the assessment is a minimum of 35 hours completed over a 1-week period.
- If necessary to accommodate working schedules and to allow for sufficient time for the candidate to adequately demonstrate competence in all key competency areas, the assessment period can be extended to a maximum of 70 hours completed over a 2-week period.
- Pharmacy technician candidates are expected to match the assessor's schedule throughout the assessment period.

NSCP-PTA Assessment Tool

It is critical that you familiarize yourself with the [NSCP-PTA Assessment Tool](#), including the competencies to be assessed, the behavioral indicators that could reflect that competency, and the assessment ratings.

Format

- Fourteen (14) key competencies, captured under four (4) competency domains.
- Behavioral Indicators represent examples of observable activities or actions that relate to the key competency and are intended to assist the assessor in evaluating the candidate.
- Not all behavioural indicators will need to be observed, and they may differ depending on the assessment site (e.g., community/LTC vs hospital).
- Assessors may use their judgment to identify other activities at their assessment site that would demonstrate competence.

Assessment Ratings

- 4-point rating scale – same for all but one competency.
- Criteria take into consideration an assessment of the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours, and the level of guidance required by the candidate versus more independent practice.
- Rating scale criteria for Competency 3.1 (Communication and Collaboration) directly reference the related behavioural indicators and a progression of competence for each.
- Final assessment ratings for each key competency considers the candidate's practice through the entire assessment period.
- You are to provide comments and observations to support your rating for each competency.

Decision Making

The candidate will be making decisions during the assessment, but these may differ from your own or not be in alignment with policies and processes at your assessment site. Before stepping in with a different decision, be sure to allow your candidate to share their thought process with you. You may prompt them with open ended questions to understand how they came to the decision that they did. Candidates should not be penalized for making a different 'customer service' decision that did not compromise patient safety.

At the End of the Assessment

- Submit the final assessment of the candidate to the NSCP within three (3) business days, using the online submission form.
- Be sure to include comments to support ratings for all competencies.
- Do not share the assessment ratings with your candidate.

Assessor Honorarium

You will receive a \$300 honorarium for each candidate you assess. If co-assessors share the assessment responsibilities, the honorarium will be split equally between the two assessors. You are required to submit a completed [Honorarium Claim Form](#) to the NSCP once the candidate's final assessment has been submitted to the NSCP.

OUTCOME

Results

The submitted final assessment will be reviewed by the NSCP, and a decision will be made on the outcome of the assessment. Once the NSCP processes the assessment results, the assessor-candidate relationship will end. If the NSCP has any questions about the assessment, they will contact you.

There are two possible outcomes for the candidate:

1. Competence Demonstrated

The candidate has successfully demonstrated entry-to-practice competency through the completion of the NSCP-PTA and has met the registration requirement.

2. Development Required

The candidate has not successfully demonstrated entry-to-practice competency through completion of the NSCP-PTA and further development is required before re-attempting the NSCP-PTA.

Unsuccessful NSCP-PTA

If the candidate is unsuccessful, they will be required to undergo further development before attempting the NSCP-PTA again. They are encouraged to seek out a coach to help guide their self-directed training and help them prepare for their next NSCP-PTA attempt.

Confidentiality Reminder

Be sure not to share your candidate's name / details of your experience as their assessor with anyone other than NSCP staff. Doing so contravenes the confidentiality requirements for NSCP-PTA Assessors and could bias other assessors if the candidate is required to re-attempt the NSCP-PTA.