



# ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency is an essential skill required of all pharmacy professionals in the day-to-day practice of pharmacy in Canada. Although language proficiency does not guarantee that effective communication will take place, it is the foundation for all communication skills components: reading, speaking, listening, and writing. A pharmacist and a pharmacy technician's ability to communicate is crucial to safe and effective patient care.

To ensure registrants and licence holders of the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) possess the necessary competencies to deliver safe, effective and ethical care, applicants for registration and licensing as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician must meet the requirements set out in the Regulations, including satisfactory English language proficiency.

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The *Registration, Licensing and Professional Accountability Regulations* (RLPA) set out the qualifications for registration and licensing as a pharmacist (s.7) and as a pharmacy technician (s.8), as well as registration as an intern (s.10). Included in these qualifications is the requirement for satisfactory language proficiency.

The RLPA sets out the definition of 'satisfactory language proficiency' as follows:

"Satisfactory language proficiency" for purposes of an application for a licence means the successful completion of an English language proficiency assessment at a level consistent with language fluency requirements for licensure as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician, as the case may be, in Canada, as approved by the Council.

# PURPOSE

To set out the English language proficiency requirements for registration and licensure with the NSCP, incorporating the provisions set out in the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) *Language Proficiency Requirement Policy*.

# POLICY

All pharmacy and pharmacy technician graduates applying for registration and licensure with the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists (NSCP) must meet the English language proficiency requirements as set out in this policy.

## 1. Graduates of CCAPP-accredited Pharmacy and Pharmacy Technician Education Programs or Program Approved by NSCP Council

### 1.1. Applicants who have graduated from an English-language

- pharmacy education program located in Canada and accredited by the Canadian Council for the Accreditation of Pharmacy programs (CCAPP),
- pharmacy technician program located in Canada and accredited by CCAPP, and if the program was less than three years' duration, whose language proficiency admission criteria match those outlined in section 4,
- or a pharmacy technician education program approved by the NSCP Council\*,

will not be required to demonstrate English language proficiency unless a concern is raised regarding the potential for the applicant's English language proficiency to compromise patient care.

### 1.2 Applicants who have graduated from a CCAPP-accredited pharmacy or pharmacy technician education program where the language of instruction was French, regardless of whether they are applying directly from the program or applying through the terms of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, must provide evidence of meeting English language proficiency through one of the accepted methods listed in section 4.

\*Approved pursuant to subparagraph 8(2)(a) of the *Registration, Licensing and Professional Accountability Regulations*.

## 2. International Pharmacy and Pharmacy Technician Graduates

### A. Graduates of ACPE-accredited Pharmacy Education Programs

#### 2.1. Applicants who have graduated from an English-language pharmacy education program located in the United States and accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) will not be required to demonstrate English language proficiency unless a concern is raised regarding potential for the applicant's English language proficiency to compromise patient care.

## **B. Graduates of international pharmacy and pharmacy technician programs**

- 2.2. International pharmacy graduates (outside of Canada and the US) and international pharmacy technician graduates (outside of Canada) can demonstrate English language proficiency by achieving test scores on one of the three approved tests as set out in the NAPRA *Language Proficiency Requirement Policy* (Appendix A).
- 2.3. Alternatively, international graduates can demonstrate English language proficiency by providing evidence of meeting one of the following criteria:
  - Successful completion of a professional pharmacy or pharmacy technician education program in a majority English-speaking country with English as the language of instruction;
  - Pharmacy work employment in a majority English-speaking country in a similar role or scope of practice as the application for registration or licensure with NSCP; or
  - Fulfillment of one of the criteria listed in section 4.
- 2.4. International graduates who demonstrate meeting the criteria of section 2.3 will not be asked to complete English language testing unless a concern is raised regarding the potential for the applicant's English language proficiency to compromise patient care.

## **3. Triggers for Assessment**

The NSCP may require a pharmacist or pharmacy technician applicant to undertake a separate assessment if concerns are raised that the applicant's English language proficiency may compromise patient care. These concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- A member of the teaching staff at a CCAPP-accredited pharmacy technician or pharmacist program, a program approved by the NSCP Council, or a bridging program, has reported a concern to the NSCP.
- A regulated pharmacy professional assessing the applicant during structured practice experience has reported a concern to the NSCP.
- Patients, customers/clients, family members, caregivers or other health professionals have expressed a concern as part of a complaint made to the NSCP.
- The NSCP has become aware of a concern through its interactions with the applicant.

## **4. Accepted Methods of Demonstrating English Language Proficiency**

Acceptable evidence of meeting English language proficiency requirements includes:

- English language proficiency test results that meet the NAPRA *Language Proficiency Requirement Policy* (Appendix A);
- Graduation from a high school program in Canada of at least three years in length with successful completion of three consecutive, first language English courses / credits;
- Graduation from a Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) in Quebec of at least three years in length with successful completion of three consecutive, first language English courses / credits; OR
- Successful completion of a community college, private career college or university program located in Canada and
  - was of at least three years in length, and

- whose instruction was provided in English, with successful completion of three consecutive English language courses / credits.

## **5. Timing of Language Proficiency Assessment**

English language proficiency standards are applied prior to commencing a structured practice experience program or pharmacy technician assessment.

## **6. Validity of Test Scores**

- 6.1. English language proficiency test results are valid for two years from the date of the test.
- 6.2. The NSCP accepts the most current English language proficiency assessment results which override previous results. The results from all components tested (i.e subtests) must have been achieved through only one of the accepted tests set out in Appendix A. Results may not be combined from multiple tests.
- 6.3. Test results must either be (a) sent directly from the testing agency to the NSCP or (b) be verifiable through the testing agency's online verification system, if available.

## **7. Test Scores Obtained Prior to September 1, 2024**

- 7.1. Applicants who have met the English language proficiency requirements set out in Appendix B or Appendix C up to and including August 31, 2024, will be deemed to have satisfactory English language proficiency. Test results prior to this date will be considered valid for two years from the date of the test.

On or after September 1, 2024, any applicants seeking to demonstrate English language proficiency must conform to the requirements set out in this Policy.

Approved: June 2024

## Appendix A

### Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacist or Pharmacy Technician in Canada as set out in NAPRA *Language Proficiency Requirements Policy*

Test	Subtest	Pharmacist	Pharmacy Technician
IELTS Academic	Reading	7.0	7.0
	Listening	7.0	7.0
	Speaking	7.0	7.0
	Writing	6.5	6.5
OET	Reading	B	B
	Listening	B	B
	Speaking	B	B
	Writing	C+	C+
TEF Canada	Reading	B2	B2
	Listening	C1	C1
	Speaking	C1	C1
	Writing	B2	B2

## Appendix B

### English Language Proficiency Test Scores for Licensure as a Pharmacist in Canada Prior to September 1, 2024

Test	Details		Minimum Score	SEM** + / -
1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	Internet-based test (iBT)	Speaking	27	2
		Writing	25	3
		Reading	*	
		Listening	*	
		Total	97	5
	Paper-based test (PBT)	Test of Written English (TWE)	5	0.3
		Test of Spoken English (TSE)	50	
		Total	580	14
	Computer-based test (CBT) <sup>†</sup>	-	-	-
2. Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)	Speaking		3+	
	Writing		82	3
	Reading		*	
	Listening		*	
	Total		85	3
3. International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	Academic format	Speaking	6	0.5
		Writing	6	0.5
		Reading	6	
		Listening	6	
		Overall Band	7	0.5
4. The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)		Speaking	4.5	X***
		Writing	4.5	X***
		Reading	4.5	X***
		Listening	4.5	X***
		Total	X***	X***

<sup>†</sup> TOEFL Computer-based Test is no longer administered. CBT scores more than two years old are not current/accepted.

\* Standard setting procedures only focused on the Writing and Speaking components. The minimum total scores implicitly account for the scores for Reading and Listening.

\*\* SEM = Standard Error of Measurement.

\*\*\* All final band scores on the CanTEST account already for the SEM. CanTEST does not report total scores.

## Appendix C

### English Language Proficiency Test Scores for Licensure as a Pharmacy Technician in Canada Prior to September 1, 2024

Test	Details		Minimum Score	SEM* + / -
1. Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	Internet-based test (iBT)	Speaking	23	2
		Writing	25	3
		Reading	22	2
		Listening	21	2
		Total	91	5
2. Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)	Speaking		3+	X**
	Writing		80	X**
	Reading		83	4
	Listening		80	3
	Total		81	3
3. International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	Academic format	Speaking	6	X**
		Writing	6	X**
		Reading	6	X**
		Listening	6	X**
		Overall Band	6.5	0.5
4. The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)		Speaking	4.5	X**
		Writing	4.0	X**
		Reading	4.5	X**
		Listening	4.5	X**
		Total	X**	X**

\* SEM = Standard Error of Measurement.

\*\* For IELTS, no section scores less than 6.0, accounting already for the SEM. Likewise scores for Writing and Speaking on the MELAB, and all final band scores on the CanTEST, account already for the SEM. CanTEST does not report total scores.