

DRAFT: The regulation of pharmacists in Canada: a summary

Who does what?

QA of higher education	Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programmes
Registration and licensure	Managed in provinces by the provincial regulatory authorities; in territories, by the territorial government health departments National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) advises on good practice
Standards	Provincial regulatory authorities produce codes of ethics based on model by NAPRA No codes of ethics in territories
Non-adherence to standards	Provincial regulatory authorities and territorial government health departments receive complaints

1. Introduction

Canada has two levels of government: the federal government and the ten provincial governments. The responsibility for the professional regulation of all health professionals is shared between provincial and federal government. Each of the ten provinces has the constitutional power to enact legislation authorising a health profession to self-regulate. Self-governing bodies have been established in the province responsible for regulating different professions. These are known as colleges, associations, societies, and boards. The ten organisations which regulate pharmacists in the provinces are listed at the end of this document, and the group is referred to as the ‘provincial regulatory authorities’ throughout.

In contrast to the provinces, the three Canadian territories are not sovereign entities, but their governments have nonetheless been granted the power by the federal government to regulate the health professions. Regulatory functions are managed by the territorial government health departments.

When referring to the provincial regulatory authorities and the territorial government health departments together as one group, this document refers to ‘regulatory authorities’.

Canadian provinces: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan

Canadian territories: Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon

2. Quality Assurance of Higher Education

The Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) evaluates the quality of pharmacy professional degree programmes in Canadian universities. 15 pharmacy academic programmes are accredited, at ten Canadian and two international universities. The CCAPP sets 23 accreditation standards under seven headings: mission, planning and evaluation; organisation and administration; academic programme; students; faculty and staff; facilities and learning resources; financial resources. Each school of pharmacy is free to develop its own curriculum and teaching philosophy as long as it is able to demonstrate that graduates meet specified levels of competency as outlined in the standards.

Universities wishing to obtain CCAPP accredited status for an academic programme for the first time must submit an official application to the CCAPP, specifying a clear set of outcomes, demonstrating the resources required to achieve these outcomes, and setting out the procedures in place to evaluate whether the outcomes have been achieved. The application must also include a strategic plan outlining the faculty's planning process for the subsequent five years.

The CCAPP grants accredited status for a maximum period of six years, after which the accreditation process must be undertaken again in full. In the meantime interim progress reports are required, as is an ongoing cycle of self-assessment, strategic planning and external review.

Continuing Professional Development

The CCAPP is also the national accrediting body for Continuing Competency Programmes in Canada. There is a range of different CPD requirements across the provinces, but most require applicants to complete a specified number of *continuing education units* (CEUs) over the course of a calendar year, with one CEU typically equivalent to one hour of learning. Some provinces require pharmacists to participate in a specific number of hours of either 'accredited' learning (formal educational programmes) or 'unaccredited learning' (for example, editing peer-reviewed journals). In most provinces pharmacists are required to maintain a learning portfolio. Monitoring of compliance with CPD requirements is undertaken by the provincial regulatory authority.

3. Registration and licensure

The National Association of Pharmacy Regulation Authorities (NAPRA) exists to provide 'national leadership in pharmacy regulatory practices that enhance patient care and public protection'. One of its aims is to identify and support the adoption of best practices with regard to pharmacy licensing. *Licensure* in this system means the fulfilment of the requirements of a regulatory authority to practise independently, of which *registration* with an authority is one stage. NAPRA has produced licensing guidelines to be used as a national model for regulatory authorities, which were issued as the National Model Licensing Program.

NAPRA guidelines set out that in order to achieve licensure as a pharmacist, applicants must be registered with a regulatory authority and demonstrate to it that they have (i) graduated from a CCAPP accredited programme (ii) undergone structured practical training in an appropriate form (iii) passed the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada's (PEBC) Qualifying Examination and (iv) have

passed the Jurisprudence Examination which is designed to test the applicant's knowledge of federal and provincial legislation relating to pharmacy practice.

In order to continue to be licensed to practise, pharmacists must submit an annual renewal, demonstrating that they have met continuing competency requirements.

The Mobility Agreement for Canadian Pharmacists

Under the mobility agreement for Canadian pharmacists, endorsed and signed by all provinces and territories except Nunavut, pharmacy regulatory authorities have agreed to register and/or license as pharmacists those applicants who are already licensed in the jurisdiction of another signatory.

Overseas professionals

Overseas professionals who wish to practise pharmacy in Canada must submit their qualifications and identity documents to the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada, the national certification body for pharmacy in Canada, for *document evaluation*, and successfully pass the PEBC evaluating examination and qualifying examination. Applicants must then also fulfil any specific requirements of the regulatory authority in the province or territory in which they wish to practise. The PEBC examination is not a requirement in Quebec.

Canada offers government-funded bridging programmes to assist foreign professionals in meeting national and provincial standards of practice. Bridging programmes typically consist of a combination of university-based content education coupled with 6-12 months of in-service training.

A unique accord

An innovative labour agreement was signed in 2008 between France and Quebec, the first of its kind between Europe and North America. The agreement seeks to accelerate labour mobility between the two jurisdictions by establishing a set of common guidelines and procedures through which professional competence is recognised. Pharmacy is one of roughly 100 professional orders to be part of the Agreement.

4. Standards of practice

Each provincial regulatory authority sets out a code of ethics for pharmacists. These draw on a model Code of Ethics produced by the NAPRA, but there is considerable variation in the specific provisions and the specificity of the codes among the provinces. There is no official code of ethics in the three territories.

5. Non-adherence to standards

In the provinces, there is considerable variation in the processes for handling allegations that a pharmacist has not adhered to professional standards. However, in general, complaints can be made to the regulatory authority who may either dismiss it, attempt to resolve it, or refer it to a complaints committee. The complaints committee will then conduct a preliminary investigation, and issue a report pending results of the investigation. After the investigation has been completed, the complaints committee may either refer the complaint to a disciplinary committee, issue a formal letter of caution to the pharmacist, suspend the pharmacist's licence pending further investigation, or recommend that no further action be taken. Once a complaint is referred to a disciplinary committee, a formal hearing process is begun. If the pharmacist is found guilty of misconduct, a wide range of sanctions may be issued, including counselling, undertaking of courses of study, reprimand, imposition of conditions or suspension. Pharmacists may appeal decisions of either committee to the regulatory authority's Council, and further to the Supreme Court in the province.

In the territories, the Health Minister appoints a Complaints Officer to receive complaints and conduct an initial review; and may also appoint an officer to conduct an investigation. Pending the results of the investigation, the complaints officer may then dismiss the complaint, appoint a person to conduct dispute resolution, or refer the complaint to a board of inquiry appointed by the territory's Health Minister.

Canadian regulatory authorities

Provinces:

Alberta College of Pharmacists
College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association
New Brunswick Pharmaceutical Society
Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board
Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists
Ontario College of Pharmacists
Ordre des pharmaciens du Quebec
Prince Edward Island Pharmacy Board
Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists

Territories:

Government of Nunavut
Government of the Northwest Territories
Yukon Government