



National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities
Association nationale des organismes de réglementation de la pharmacie

Language Proficiency Requirements for Licensure as a Pharmacy Technician in Canada

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INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency is an essential skill required of all pharmacy technicians 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 reading, speaking, listening/comprehension, and writing skills – all components of communication. A pharmacy technician’s ability to communicate is critical in the delivery of safe and effective patient care.

The primary intent of this report is to publish model language proficiency standards for consideration by pharmacy regulators across Canada to use in the licensure of pharmacy technicians.

It must be noted that all provinces have regulations set by the provincial governments regarding language requirements for professions. As the regulations for pharmacy technicians are introduced and evolve throughout Canada, these requirements will apply to pharmacy technicians in order to practice in the province/territory for which they are licensed.

The current standards were approved by the NAPRA Board of Directors on November 1, 2009 based on the results of a standard setting workshop conducted in the summer of 2009. Workshop participants included a cross-section of representatives, notably: practicing pharmacy technicians (retail and hospital); administrators at pharmacy regulatory authorities; pharmacists working with or supervising technicians; and educators in programs for pharmacy technicians.

As the licensure of pharmacy technicians continues to develop across Canada, this document will be subject to future amendments. It is also hoped that this document may prove useful to pharmacy technician education programs as they continue to develop in support of this emerging regulated profession.

METHOD

The procedures used for standard setting are those recognized and well established, accessible throughout Canada and internationally, comprehensive (in the sense of assessing reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities together within the same test), and commonly used to certify credentials. This involves analytic judgments by appropriately qualified panelists on benchmark samples of examinees’ performances on tasks from each test under the guidance of a facilitator knowledgeable about language assessment.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

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.

FRENCH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS

The determination for French language proficiency requirements was not a part of the standard setting workshop held in 2009. It is suggested that candidates confirm with the provincial/territorial pharmacy regulatory authority for guidance on the requirements for proficiency in French (where applicable and when required).

Additional information about the tests can be accessed via the following weblinks:

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Test of Spoken English (TSE)
<http://www.ets.org/portal/site/ets/menuitem.3a88fea28f42ada7c6ce5a10c3921509/?vgnextoid=85b65784623f4010VgnVCM10000022f95190RCRD>

Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB)
<http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli/testing/melab/>

International English Language Testing System (IELTS)
<http://www.ielts.org/default.aspx>

The Canadian Test of English for Scholars and Trainees (CanTEST)
<http://www.olbi.uottawa.ca/en/cantest.php>