

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Interpretation Guide

Approved Date

1. INTRODUCTION

The *Pharmacy Act, 2024*¹, states that “every pharmacy and pharmacy technician shall participate in continuing professional development as required by the board”. As a regulatory body, the College of Pharmacy of Newfoundland and Labrador (CPNL) has a legislative responsibility to ensure that pharmacy professionals remain competent throughout their careers to provide safe and effective quality care. With changes in scope of practice, along with newly emerging medications and therapies, it is crucial that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians engage in continuous learning and improvement of existing skills and knowledge. Pharmacy professionals are expected to identify their learning needs, choose learning activities to adequately meet these needs, and incorporate that learning into their practice.

2. DEFINITIONS

Accredited learning activity: either a formal activity that has been reviewed by an accrediting body and assigned a credit/CEU value, or an activity approved as equivalent to an accredited learning activity by CPNL.

Continuing education unit (CEU) / Credit: generally, accredited learning programs are assigned a “CEU” or “credit” value approximately equal to the number of hours the program would take a person to complete. This is typically assigned as one hour of time = one hour of learning = one CEU or credit.

Learning record: each learning activity, whether accredited or not, must be individually and appropriately documented on the pharmacist or pharmacy technician’s profile in the CPNL Registrant Portal.

¹ Enabling Legislation: Pharmacy Act, 2024, section 27.

Non-accredited learning activity: a learning activity that a pharmacy professional undertakes to improve their practice that has not been formally reviewed by an accrediting body or approved by CPNL, but that still meets certain minimum criteria.

Professional development cycle: the professional development cycle is aligned with the registration renewal cycle and runs from December 1 – November 30 each year.

3. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

3.1 *Minimum Hours of Learning*. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of learning during each professional development cycle.

3.2 *Minimum Hours of Accredited Learning*. Of the minimum 15 hours of learning required, a minimum of 5 hours of learning must be from accredited learning activities.

3.3 *New Registrants*. Pharmacist and pharmacy technician registrants who register with CPNL in the same year that they receive Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) certification will be exempted from the above continuing professional development requirements in their first year of registration.

- For example, if the registrant both receives PEBC certification and registers with CPNL in 2025, then they will not be required to document learning activities during that year in order to renew their registration for 2026.

3.4 *Registration Reinstatement*. Former pharmacist and pharmacy technician registrants who apply to reinstate their registration in accordance with CPNL's *Registration Policy – Registration Reinstatement* are not required to complete professional development requirements in order for their registration to be reinstated but will be required to meet the above continuing professional development requirements before the next registration renewal period.

- For example, if a person applies to reinstate their registration in 2025, they will not be required to document learning activities prior to reinstatement but will need to document learning activities prior to renewing their registration for 2026.

4. SELF-ASSESS AND IDENTIFY NEEDS

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are encouraged to conduct an informal self-assessment early in the professional development cycle to aid in identifying learning needs for the upcoming year. As part of this self-assessment, the pharmacy professional should think about their current practice setting and consider what competencies they would like to improve upon or what topics they wish to learn more about. Some factors to consider include:

- Have there been any changes to scope of practice which have resulted in new learning needs?
- Have there been any recent changes to legislation, regulations or standards of practice that may impact pharmacy practice?
- Are there any new documents from external bodies/stakeholders (e.g., CAMH, ISMP) to review?
- Are there any new guidelines, treatments or technologies designed to improve quality of patient care that may warrant exploration?
- Are there any observations from performance reviews or peer feedback that may identify learning needs?

While formal documentation of learning needs is not required, it may be helpful to document a list of learning needs or topics to focus on during the professional development cycle.

5. PARTICIPATE IN LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning activities for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can take many different forms and can be either accredited or non-accredited. To ensure that learning activities are reliable for informing practice, pharmacy professionals should prioritize participating in activities that are unbiased, relevant to the pharmacy profession and their practice environment, and in keeping with their identified learning needs.

5.1 *Choosing Learning Activities.* Before completing a learning activity, pharmacy professionals should assess its quality and, if non-accredited, ensure that the learning is appropriate for a healthcare professional and not intended for the general public. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Is the activity related to the practice of pharmacy?
- Is the activity appropriate to your scope of practice (i.e. pharmacist, pharmacy technician)?
- Does the activity enhance your skills as a health professional?
- Does the activity provide well-defined learning objectives?
- Are the authors or presenters of the activity qualified and experienced in the subject matter?
- Has the activity been reviewed by subject matter experts or peers to ensure accuracy and relevance?
- Are the references current and based on credible sources?
- Does there seem to be any potential conflict of interest with the authors, presenters, provider, or sponsor that are not disclosed?

PLEASE NOTE:

From time to time, CPNL may require pharmacists and/or pharmacy technicians to complete specified learning programs (e.g. pharmacist-in-charge orientation, code of ethics) or learning specific to certain categories or topics (e.g. cultural competency, communication).

5.2 *Assigning CEU Value.* When determining CEU value for completed activities,

- For accredited learning activities, CEUs should be documented as assigned by the accrediting organization.
- For non-accredited learning activities, consideration must be given to the amount of time the pharmacy professional spent completing the activity as well as how much of that time was relevant and meaningful learning. Generally, CEUs should be assigned in increments of 0.25 CEUs with one hour of relevant and meaningful learning being equivalent to 1 CEU. However, CPNL has set limits on the number of CEUs that can be assigned in certain circumstances.

The appropriateness of CEU assignment may be reviewed as part of the CPNL professional development audit process.

5.3 *Accredited Learning Activities*

- a) Formally Accredited Activities. Learning activities accredited by the following organizations will be accepted:
 - Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) (0.1 ACPE CEU = 1.0 CEU)
 - Canadian Council on Continuing Education in Pharmacy (CCCEP)
 - College of Family Physicians of Canada (Mainpro+)
 - Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (MOC)
 - Provincial accrediting bodies (e.g., Dalhousie University or University of Saskatchewan)
- b) Special Circumstances. In addition to activities accredited by the above organizations, the following may also be documented as accredited learning activities:
 - A course or program delivered by an accredited university or college that is relevant to pharmacy practice – to a maximum of 5 CEUs per course

5.4 *Non-Accredited Learning Activities.* Non-accredited learning activities may include but are not limited to:

- a) Academic / Professional Study
 - Non-accredited certification programs (e.g. certified diabetes educator)

- Non-accredited professional conferences, workshops, retreats
 - Group courses such as CPR or First Aid courses – up to 3 CEUs per year
- b) Scholarly Activities
- Participating in pharmacy-related research – up to 3 CEUs per year
 - Presenting and/or publishing scholarly works – up to 3 CEUs per presentation / publication
 - Serving as content reviewer for publications, dissertations, or other scholarly works – up to 2 CEUs per publication
- c) Teaching and Precepting
- Developing, presenting, and/or authoring educational content (e.g. academic course, seminar/webinar, publication) – up to 3 CEUs per presentation / publication
 - Teaching, precepting, or mentoring students, interns, or residents – 0.5 CEU per week to a maximum of 6 CEUs per year
- d) Workplace Activities
- Participating in in-service training to learn a new skill
 - Engaging in self-directed learning on topics relevant to practice (e.g. to prepare to assess a prescription for or to counsel a patient on a new or unfamiliar medication or formulation; to investigate a solution to a patient’s drug-related problem; management-specific training for pharmacists-in-charge)

6. RECORD LEARNING & UPLOAD DOCUMENTATION

6.1 *Information to Record.* Once completed, both accredited and non-accredited learning activities must be documented on a learning record in the CPNL Registrant Portal. This includes:

- The program title or description of the activity;
- The date that the activity was completed;
- Whether the activity is accredited or non-accredited;
- Who the program is accredited by, if applicable;
- The accreditation number, if applicable;
- Number of CEUs or hours of learning; and
- A brief description of how the learning will benefit the pharmacist or pharmacy technician’s practice.

6.2 *Supporting Documentation.* When completing learning activities, pharmacists and pharmacy

technicians are expected to appropriately document the completion of each activity and retain supporting documentation by uploading it to the associated learning record entry. The record and documentation may be reviewed as part of the CPNL professional development audit process.

- a) Accredited Learning Activities. For most accredited learning activities, a supporting document in the form of a certificate, record, or statement of completion is supplied by the program provider. In the case of coursework or postgraduate studies, documentation could take the form of a transcript indicating course completion or a diploma indicating graduation.
- b) Non-Accredited Learning Activities. In the case of non-accredited learning activities, what is considered appropriate supporting documentation varies depending on the learning activity.
 - If the learning is a type of academic or professional study, then, a certificate of completion, transcript or diploma would be appropriate.
 - For scholarly activities and teaching-related learning, research letters, copies of publications, presentations, lectures, etc. would suffice.
 - When teaching, precepting, or mentoring students, interns or residents, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians should use the form on the Professional Development page of the CPNL website.
 - For more open-ended types of self-directed learning, the pharmacist or pharmacy technician will have to consider what is most appropriate depending on the situation and can contact CPNL for advice as required.