



2025 Annual Board Meeting Summary

The Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada met on March 21 and 22, 2025 in Toronto. Several important outcomes from this meeting are summarized in this update, namely:

- **Leadership Transition**
- **Governance Modernization**
- **Updates to PEBC Examinations Processes and Policies, Including Streamlined Pathway for International Graduates**

For further information, please contact the PEBC Board President, Gabriella Wong, the Registrar-Treasurer, Dr. John Pugsley, or the Deputy Registrar, Mahmoud Suleiman.

Leadership Transition

Dr. John Pugsley is retiring as Registrar-Treasurer, effective April 30, 2025. Please see [PEBC's news release](#) that recognizes Dr. Pugsley's legacy.

To ensure uninterrupted leadership, as per established policy, Deputy Registrar, Mahmoud Suleiman has agreed to serve as Acting Registrar-Treasurer while a search is conducted. Mahmoud has been with PEBC since 2016 and has been in the role of Deputy Registrar for the past three years. His responsibilities include overseeing PEBC's Credentialing, MCQ Exam Development and Technology Teams and leading the implementation of strategic initiatives at PEBC. Over the years, Mahmoud has served as John's designate in a variety of capacities.

Mahmoud has practiced as a community pharmacist, managing different pharmacies and as an educator, involved in the education of Canadian and international pharmacy and pharmacy technician students at the University of Toronto and Humber College, respectively. He has also worked as the lead for the Structured Practical Training Program at the Ontario College of Pharmacists and led the development of the Practice

New Board Appointments

- Dr. Jennifer Bolt – Canadian Society of Healthcare-Systems Pharmacy
- Kim McIntosh – College of Pharmacists of Manitoba
- Dr. Danielle Paes – Canadian Pharmacists Association
- Sue Sampson – Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists

2024-2025 Executive Committee

Officers

- President – Gabriella Wong
- Vice-President – Dale Cooney
- Past-President – Harriet Davies

Executive Members

- Michael Davis
- Jeff Jardine
- Taggart Norris

Assessment of Competence at Entry (PACE). Along with his pharmacy degree, Mahmoud has also completed a Master's degree in Health Administration and a Master of Laws focused on innovation and technology.

The PEBC Board is pleased to work with Mahmoud Suleiman and the PEBC team during this transition until a permanent leadership role is appointed. The Board of Directors has assigned responsibility for executive search to one of the board committees and will begin the search for new leadership at PEBC.

The Board expects to engage directly with external partners to provide input on the characteristics required of PEBC's next leader, who will be responsible for driving forward on PEBC's mission and adapting our examinations to respond to the shifting landscape of the pharmacy profession across Canada.

Governance Modernization

In 2024, PEBC underwent a governance review that identified opportunities to update and improve the board's current governance approach and practices for greater effectiveness.

Since then, the PEBC Board of Directors has committed to a multiphase Governance Modernization initiative that is expected to significantly change board oversight and its practices. The board's vision for governance modernization is to enhance board oversight on the future strategic direction of PEBC and provide guidance to new leadership at PEBC. Important changes have already begun, including:

- **Extended One-Year Term for Outgoing Directors.** A decision to offer an extended one-year term to outgoing directors to serve as non-member advisors, in order to preserve institutional knowledge and to continue momentum of various governance modernization plans.
- **Board Committees.** The board has dissolved several pre-existing committees and created/updated three new ones effective immediately. PEBC's Board Committees now include Governance & Nominations; Finance Audit Risk; HR & Compensation. The composition, mandate and activities of the Committee on Examinations will be assessed for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the coming months.
- **Virtual Participation.** Although there continues to be a need for in-person meetings, particularly related to governance modernization activities, most committee meetings will now be held virtually in the weeks prior to board meetings. This is expected to provide greater effectiveness, and reduce the travel commitments for PEBC directors to attend board meetings.
- **Board Meetings.** To support governance modernization, PEBC is planning to hold more frequent Board and Committee meetings throughout 2025 and 2026. The next Board Meeting will be held on June 11 - 13, 2025. The date of the next Annual Meeting is tentatively set for March 21, 2026.

In the coming months, the Board will work with the leadership team and Acting Registrar-Treasurer to integrate various major initiatives at PEBC with Governance Modernization for a coordinated, organized, and strategic approach to PEBC's ongoing evolution.

Updates to PEBC Examinations Processes and Policies

The Committee on Examinations (COE) made several recommendations to the Board that were approved, and the COE received several updates on projects in progress and administrations of examinations:

Pharmacist and Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination - Process for Blueprint Update

The foundation of PEBC's Pharmacist and Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination blueprints is the NAPRA professional competencies for entry-to-practice. Pharmacy subject matter experts (SMEs) use the competencies to guide the development of exam content that is reflective of current practice. PEBC is preparing to embark on a practice analysis study to validate the competencies required for the assessment of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians for entry to practice. These validated competencies will form the basis of the blueprint for the Pharmacist and Pharmacy Technician

Qualifying Examinations, including both the multiple choice and OSCE/OSPE examinations. The study will focus on the testable competencies from the updated Professional Competencies for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice in Canada developed by the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) that were approved in the fall of 2024.

A working group was appointed in January 2025 to oversee and participate in blueprint development. The group includes current members of PEBC's external pharmacist and pharmacy technician content development teams / panels, a pharmacist and pharmacy technician educator, a NAPRA representative and other practising pharmacy professionals representing the profession with no previous connection to PEBC. The survey will be finalized at an April meeting with pilot testing to follow. A large-scale practice analysis study which will involve national surveys of practising pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will be conducted in May and June.

PEBC will need the support of the provincial regulatory authorities, provincial and national pharmacy organizations and practising professionals for the success of this important practice analysis survey.

The results will be analyzed and the findings shared at a final meeting which will be held in July. The updated blueprint will be presented to the Committee on Examinations and the Board for approval in the fall midyear meeting with implementation planned for May 2026 for Pharmacists Qualifying Exam and September 2026 for Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Exam. Following these exams, standard setting will occur for each Part of the exams based on the new blueprints for the two professions to determine their respective passing standards.

Framework for Streamlined Pathway to the Pharmacist Qualifying Examination

The Board approved a policy to streamline the PEBC certification pathway for international pharmacy graduates where PEBC is satisfied that the candidate's education would support admission into the Pharmacist Qualifying Examination Part I (MCQ) without the necessity for the Pharmacist Evaluating Examination. Candidates must successfully complete Part I (MCQ) to be eligible to apply for Part II (OSCE).

The policy will apply to graduates from international pharmacy programs that held:

1. CCAPP/ACPE 'International Accreditation' status; or
2. accreditation from a national, regional or other international accreditation body and the country of education had a comparable:
 - a. scope of practice to the minimum scope of practice in Canada that is common across Canadian provinces (with a focus on patient care in addition to dispensing and compounding), AND
 - b. regulatory framework that requires a competency assessment for licensure as a pharmacist in that jurisdiction
 - i. PEBC will also consider this pathway for candidates who were educated in a different country; however, they were licensed and practicing in an acceptable jurisdiction.

PEBC researched many of the top source countries of candidates and has currently approved accredited programs in the following countries to be eligible for the second branch: United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (and the U.S. for 2.b.i.).

PEBC will continue its research and will explore adding further approved programs on an annual basis to allow opportunities to expand this pathway in a fair and objective fashion.

This streamlined pathway is one of the ways in which PEBC is looking to reduce barriers to certification while maintaining a strong and robust assessment of competence.

Additional Administrations of Pharmacist Examinations

As announced in 2024, PEBC is now delivering the Pharmacist Evaluating Examination quarterly to increase access to this exam which is double the previous number of administrations. PEBC is now focused on changes to the Pharmacist Qualifying Examination to support more frequent administrations of both Part I (MCQ) and Part II (OSCE). PEBC is planning for a third administration in 2026, tentatively being scheduled for February to be offered alongside the typical May and November administrations. It is PEBC's intent to move to quarterly administrations of these exams as early as possible.

Pharmacy Technician International Evaluation – Portfolio Assessment Pilot

Over the past 4 years, the Portfolio Assessment has been piloted as a mechanism to determine the eligibility of internationally educated pharmacy technicians for the Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination. Candidates had to complete a comprehensive portfolio that allowed them to demonstrate how they developed their competence through formal and informal education and how they have been engaged in common practice activities that are relevant for practice in a Canadian context. Candidates were provided with various resources to support their completion of the portfolio.

Since 2022, approximately 50 candidates have applied for the process; however, only a fraction has completed the portfolio and even fewer attempted the PT Qualifying Examination. Given the slow uptake of the portfolio and its resource-intensive nature, PEBC has chosen to simplify the process for international candidates, opting to utilize a portion of the portfolio to create an enhanced Document Evaluation instead. The new process will be launched in the coming months.

Diversity/Equity/Inclusion (DEI) in Exam Development

In view of PEBC's 2024 strategic plan focus area to *Optimize Certification and Exam Development & Delivery* through training of PEBC Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) in principles of DEI, the COE received information on the training sessions that had been completed for SME exam development teams and PEBC staff to support the incorporation of DEI principles into the development of assessment content for the MCQ and performance exams.

2024 PEBC Statistics and Outreach

PEBC Pharmacist Register:

There were 1497 names added to the Pharmacist Register as the result of examinations in 2024.

Pharmacist Qualifying Examination:

A total of 2818 candidates took the Qualifying Examination-Part I (MCQ) in 2024, compared to 2390 in 2023. A total of 2038 candidates took the Qualifying Examination-Part II (OSCE), compared to 1990 in 2023.

There was a total of 18 candidates assessed for non-certification purposes.

Pharmacist Evaluating Examination:

A total of 3476 candidates took the Pharmacist Evaluating Examination in 2024 compared to 2140 in 2023.

Pharmacist Document Evaluation:

A total of 3479 applicants in 2024 were ruled acceptable for admission into the Evaluating Examination, compared to 2883 in 2023.

PEBC Pharmacy Technician Register:

There were 861 names added to the Pharmacy Technician Register by examination in 2024, bringing the total to 14,586 since 2009.

Pharmacy Technician Qualifying Examination:

A total of 1342 candidates took the Qualifying Examination-Part I (MCQ) in 2024, compared to 1214 in 2023 and 1191 took the Qualifying Examination-Part II (OSPE), compared to 1149 in 2023.

PEBC Sponsorship of Awards for Research and Innovations in Assessment of Competence

- PEBC/AFPC awarded one award:
Dr. Emily Black, College of Pharmacy, Dalhousie University, for the design of the pharmacy executive course PHAR3003.03 and implementation of the assessment: Antimicrobial Resistance, Antimicrobial Stewardship and Advanced Infectious Diseases
- PEBC/CPTEA awarded one award:
Sue Mack-Klinger, Pharmacy Technician Program, School of Health Sciences, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, for her project: *"Digital literacy: Teaching today and beyond for pharmacy practice with AI"*

Publications/Research/Conference and External Webinar Presentations

National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) Annual Research Conference, Philadelphia, PA, April 2024:
"Comparability between In-Person versus Virtual Modality of Performance Examinations" K. Fung, S. Satchu, M. Suleiman, Y. Chu, J. Pugsley

Council on Licensure Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR) Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD, September 2024: *"Join the Expedition: The Exam Accommodation Journey"* M. Suleiman, S. Tooze, K. Morris, L. Sproule, A. Collier

PEBC Webinars (2 sessions divided into 2 groups) for PEBC Subject Matter Experts, Oct-Nov 2024

Session I: *"DEI Principles and Unconscious Biases"*; The Orion Group

Session II: *"DEI Considerations in Assessments"*; PSI

Sessions coordinated by S. Satchu

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