



INFORMATION ON BECOMING A PHARMACIST IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Who should read this guide?

Becoming a practising pharmacist in British Columbia can be a challenging process. The College of Pharmacists of British Columbia (“the College”) has developed this guide to help you through this process.

This guide will be useful if you wish to practise in BC and are a:

- International pharmacy graduate
- New pharmacy graduate from other Canadian Universities
- New pharmacy graduate from US Universities
- Pharmacist from other Canadian province or territory (through the Mutual Recognition Agreement)
- Pharmacist from other Canadian province or territory (not through the Mutual Recognition Agreement)
- Pharmacist reinstating to practice
- Student pharmacist (University of British Columbia)

How is pharmacy regulated in British Columbia?

Canada is divided into provinces and territories, each of which has an elected government. Every province and territory also has its own pharmacy regulatory body. In BC, the regulatory body is the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia.

Each regulatory body takes its authority from legislation specific to the province or territory. This is why all pharmacists practising in BC need to be familiar with the laws and regulations regulating pharmacy in our province. Each regulatory body sets its own standards of practice and licensing requirements.



Registration process overview

British Columbia is a multi-cultural community and we are proud of our ethnic diversity. We welcome pharmacists from all over the world to come and practise in our province.

This guide will help you through the process, regardless of where you come from or where you trained and qualified as a pharmacist.

In general, all BC pharmacists must:

- Be of good character. This means that there is no evidence of dishonesty or misrepresentation on your application to become a pharmacist and that you have no outstanding criminal charges or convictions relevant to the practice of pharmacy.
- Be proficient in English. For students who graduated from universities outside Canada or the United States, we require an English language proficiency test which assesses your ability to communicate in English with patients and healthcare professionals.
- Be up-to-date on the legislation and regulations that govern the practice of pharmacy in BC.
- Be able to provide proof of identity and qualifications.
- Complete all registration requirements and pay the appropriate fees.

Why should I choose to be a pharmacist in British Columbia?

BC's pharmacists are in high demand. Vacancy rates average ten per cent, with strongest demand in rural areas. In 2009 there are more than 4200 pharmacists and 1000 pharmacies in BC.

Pharmacists are BC's most accessible health-care professionals. They practise in many settings - community pharmacies, hospitals, universities, government, and industry. Most pharmacists work directly with patients. Others conduct research, consult and work in administration, and management.

How long does it take to become registered to practise as a pharmacist in British Columbia?

The process of becoming registered to practise as a pharmacist in BC ranges from a few months to more than a year. The length of time depends on your educational qualifications, language skills and practice experience, and on your completion of the steps in the process.

Can I work as a pharmacist while I'm going through the process?

Yes. Depending on the requirements you have completed, you may be eligible to practice as a pharmacist under the Limited Pharmacist Registration category.

Can I work in a pharmacy without being a pharmacist?

Yes. Not every person behind a pharmacy counter in BC is a pharmacist. In many pharmacies, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants help pharmacists with day-to-day technical functions, so pharmacists can focus on patient care responsibilities.

Pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants are employed in both community and hospital pharmacies.



Where can I find information about immigration and employment?

For immigration questions, please contact a Canadian consulate if you are outside Canada. If you are living in Canada, please contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada at <http://www.cic.gc.ca/>.

You can find information about job opportunities for hospital pharmacists in BC from Health Match BC, a free health-care recruitment service at: www.healthmatchbc.org.

If you live in Canada or the United States, you can check employer listings in Canadian hospital directories available in public libraries. If you are looking for employment in community pharmacy, you may also wish to contact the BC Pharmacy Association at <http://www.bcpharmacy.ca/>.