

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Pharmacy Assistant Diploma Program combines instructor led training with a work placement designed to prepare students for a career in healthcare. The Pharmacy Assistant provides services and assistance to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians by compounding, packaging and labeling pharmaceutical products and by maintaining prescription records and inventories of medications and pharmaceutical products.

The purpose of the program is to prepare students with the necessary skills and academic knowledge for entry-level positions in retail pharmacies as well as pharmaceutical companies.

This program provides an overview of the theory, principles and practices of the Pharmacy Assistant. Areas of study include accurately and safely processing prescriptions, pharmacy software practice, proper extemporaneous compounding techniques, controlling inventory, keeping accurate and confidential records, third-party billing, acting within relevant legislation and effectively communicating verbally and in writing.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

As a Pharmacy Assistant, you'll work as part of a health care team to ensure that consumers receive the best possible pharmaceutical care. Graduates of the Eastern College Pharmacy Assistant program may work in retail pharmacies, home healthcare divisions/companies, insurance companies, institutional settings and pharmaceutical distribution wholesalers/manufacturers.

PREREQUISITES

1. Student has Grade 12 or equivalent, OR can pass a qualifying test.
2. The approved qualifying test for this program is the Wonderlic test. A passing score for this program is 13.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student must obtain an overall grade, in each module of at least 70% in order to graduate and receive a diploma. A student must complete all requirements of Student Success Strategies as well as the field experience requirements.

The Field Placement for Pharmacy Assistant is the last module you will complete in your program before graduating. This module is 6 weeks in length and a minimum of 30 hours must be completed each week. We highly recommend that you treat this module as a job and complete as many hours as possible with your Host Site.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

| Courses | Hours |
|--|-----------|
| Student Success Strategies | 20 |
| Career Planning and Preparation - Level I | 20 |
| Digital Literacy for Professionals | 40 |
| Anatomy, Physiology and Terminology | 80 |
| Pharmacy Mathematics | 60 |
| Pharmacy Compounding | 60 |
| Pharmacy Law and Ethics | 40 |
| Pharmacology | 80 |
| Retail Pharmacy Practice | 40 |
| Pharmacy Software | 40 |
| Career Planning and Preparation - Level II | 20 |
| CPR and First Aid/WHMIS | 20 |
| Field Placement | 6 Weeks |
| TOTAL WEEKS (without breaks) | 32 |
| TOTAL WEEKS (with maximum** scheduled breaks) | 35 |

**Number of break weeks will depend on student start date

**Work terms/internships are scheduled for a minimum of 30 hours per week, but the total number of hours worked and the timing of hours scheduled are at the discretion of the employer/host to a maximum of 40 hours per week

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

Instructor Led

In this orientation module, you will focus on achieving success from day one. You will develop non-technical skills to enhance your personal, academic, and career success. You will explore learning styles, including visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning. You will also enhance your practical study skills, such as memory, reading, note- and test-taking techniques. Personal exercises will focus on teamwork, decision-making and problem-solving skills, setting SMART goals, and maintaining a positive attitude. You will also explore techniques for managing change, stress, and conflict.

Career Planning & Preparation - Level I

Instructor Led

This module will introduce you to and provide practice in using the tools required for a successful job search. The concepts covered in this module will help you maintain a career-focused approach throughout your studies so that you are better prepared to conduct a job search after graduating. Specifically, you will learn how to identify your soft and hard skills and how to articulate your abilities in a clear and concise Elevator Pitch that will appeal to employers and resonate with industry contacts. You will learn about the job search resources available to you including using career websites, creating Linked In profiles, accessing the “hidden” job market, and networking. You will examine sample resumes and cover letters and begin the process of creating your own professional resumes and cover letters that align with current conventions for content, organization, and formatting. You will also learn about the role of references, thank you letters, workplace philosophies, and strategies for success including maintaining a professional image and using proper etiquette when communicating with potential employers and industry contacts.

An introduction to Occupational Health and Safety is also provided with specific focus on employees’ rights and responsibilities, workplace health and safety policy and programs, hazard identification and control, and safety training options such as WHIMIS and First Aid.

Digital Literacy for Professionals

Online Facilitated

This course has four units that introduces you to the fundamental concepts and principles of learning and working in a digital environment. The first unit introduces you to using devices and handling information with topics on operating systems (Windows, MAC, and Linux), computer organization (folder management and naming conventions), cloud storage (including Microsoft OneDrive), types of web browsers including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Apple Safari), and fundamental troubleshooting. In the second unit, you will become familiar with creating and editing information through learning about file formats (pdf, mp4, docx), productivity (including iWork and Microsoft Office Suite) and creativity (Adobe, Canva, iMovie) platforms, and basic introduction to Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. The third unit on communicating and collaborating will introduce you to web conferencing applications (Slack, Zoom, Microsoft Teams), mail applications (including Microsoft Outlook and Gmail), project management tools (Trello, Asana), and time management tools (including Todoist, Outlook Calendar, and iCal), and building rapport virtually. In the final unit, you will gain an understanding on netiquette, cybersecurity, and digital wellness. After completing this course, you will have enhanced digital literacy skills as a professional in the working and learning environment.

Anatomy, Physiology and Terminology

Instructor Led

This course will introduce the foundations of the language of medicine and will develop medical vocabulary through the study of the structures and functions of the major body systems. Topics include medical terminology; general body organization; and the skeletal, muscular, cardiovascular, lymphatic, immune, respiratory, digestive, urinary, nervous (including special senses and psychiatric disorders), integumentary, endocrine, and reproductive systems.

Pharmacy Mathematics

Instructor Led

This course begins with a review of basic mathematics and its application to pharmacy calculations. Mathematics used in retail pharmacies, namely: business math; prescription pricing; and calculating medication dosages, are studied in this

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Pharmacy Assistant

course. In order to prepare the student for a wide range of pharmacy settings, calculations used in specialized and institutional pharmacies are also discussed.

Pharmacy Compounding

Instructor Led

This course is an introduction to drug preparation and dosage forms. Students will gain an understanding of ingredients used in preparing pharmaceutical products. Students will gain knowledge and hands-on experience in non-sterile compounding. This course involves the application of both pharmacy math and pharmaceutical abbreviations in the compounding and dispensing of medications.

Pharmacy Law and Ethics

Instructor Led

This course offers students the opportunity to learn about both Federal and Provincial legislation that governs pharmacy in Canada today. A solid understanding of jurisprudence (pharmacy law) is essential for Pharmacy Assistants to perform well in the field of pharmacy. The provincial act as it relates to pharmacy and third-party billings will be discussed in detail. This course will also introduce students to ethical concerns that are becoming increasingly important in pharmacy and health care in general.

Pharmacology

Instructor Led

This course will introduce the basics of pharmacology and include a review of physiology and the basic mechanisms of action involved in diseases/disorders of body systems. Students will learn to distinguish between the trade names and generic names of drugs and identify classifications of drugs used in the treatment of diseases and disorders.

Retail Pharmacy Practice

Instructor Led

This course will introduce students to the roles and responsibilities of Pharmacist and Pharmacy Assistants. It will also teach students the procedures to prepare and dispense medications, which include prescription interpretation skills, billing and inventory as well as medication safety. This course also addresses professionalism, work ethics and communication in the workplace.

Pharmacy Software

Instructor Led

This course provides instruction and hands-on training with Kroll, one of the leading computerized dispensary systems in the pharmacy industry. Students will be required to: enter patient, prescription and doctor information; generate labels; and practice accurately and efficiently filling prescriptions by selecting the correct medication. Pharmacy reports will also be generated using Kroll in order to give students the pharmacy software experience necessary to enter the workplace with confidence.

Career Planning & Preparation - Level II

Instructor Led

This module builds on concepts and skills introduced in the Career Planning and Preparation Level 1 prerequisite module. In this subsequent module, you will update and refine your resume and LinkedIn Profile. You will continue writing cover letters and learn the value of customizing cover letters to specific job postings. You will have the opportunity to apply this knowledge as you conduct a job search and write a cover letter tailored to an ideal job post. Through research, you will create a list of top employers and target current industry opportunities. You will learn about current methods for applying to job postings using technology. You will also gain an understanding of the job interview process, typical interview questions and possible responses, and expectations of both the interviewer and interviewee. In addition, you will engage in practical application of the interview process through role-plays. Topics such as negotiating salary, self-management, and on-the-job success for placements and post-graduate employment will be also covered.

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CPR and First Aid/WHMIS

Instructor Led

In this module, you will complete several certifications/trainings. The CPR component provides you with comprehensive CPR training. It includes the latest first aid and CPR guidelines and meets federal and provincial regulations for Standard First Aid and CPR. Topics include preparing to respond; the EMS system; check, call, care; airway emergencies; breathing and circulation emergencies; first aid for respiratory and cardiac arrest; wound care; head and spine injuries; bone, muscle and joint injuries; sudden medical emergencies; environmental emergencies; and poisons. The WHMIS component teaches you the basic elements of WHMIS 2015 and the Global Harmonization System. This covers the safety measures and guidelines to be followed when exposed to or working with hazardous materials.

Pharmacy Assistant Field Placement

Internship

The field placement component of the program is the practical application of a student's knowledge and skills in an industry environment. The focus of the field placement is within a retail pharmacy to emphasize a customer-centered approach; therefore, the field placement is not within a hospital setting. The duration of the field placement is 6 weeks, during which the student must satisfactorily complete a minimum of 200 hours of work experience.

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