



Pharmacy Technician Program FAQ

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SUITABILITY AND JOB MARKETING INFORMATION

How will I know if I am right for this program?

Prospective students should love math, science, and technology, as well as collaborative teamwork. Pharmacy technicians need to be methodical, objective, and precise. An ability to work in a fast-paced environment with many interruptions and distractions is also required. The work has many physical demands, which include standing for extended periods and strong hand/eye coordination. Employers are seeking technicians with strong problem-solving and customer service skills, as well.

How does the employment forecast look for pharmacy technicians in Manitoba?

Most pharmacy technicians will get their start in community pharmacy practice; however, many move over to institutional pharmacy practice within a few years of experience.

According to the Canadian Job Bank, the employment outlook for technicians in Manitoba is good (3 out of 3 stars) for the 2018-2020 period. The current job market is very stable owing to Canada's aging population and people will always need medicine, elderly or not.

How much can I expect to earn?

Wages range from \$14 to \$26+ per hour, in which the higher earning potential is more commonly associated with institutional job opportunities.

What is the difference between the duties of a pharmacy technician and pharmacy assistant?

The difference is significant as technicians have the autonomy to do more within their scope of practice.

In Manitoba, only a regulated pharmacy technician can perform the following tasks:

- Identify drug-related problems that require a referral to a pharmacist
- Review the information in a prescription for compliance with federal and provincial law
- Perform a final check when a medication was prepared for dispensing by another technician, student, intern, or pharmacy assistant, but only if the pharmacy manager has received approval from College Council for the drug packaging and preparation process
- Dispense a drug if the supervising pharmacist has approved filling the prescription and the supervising pharmacist counsels the patient
- Instruct a patient on how to operate a medical device, but not provide an explanation involving the interpretation of the results of the device
- Ask for, and receive, a refill authorization from a practitioner on an existing prescription without any changes to the prescription as originally prescribed
- Perform necessary tasks at an external dispensing site

Currently, there are nine provinces in Canada in which technicians are regulated – British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and

Newfoundland. While pharmacy technicians are regulated in Manitoba, they are listed, rather than licensed in this province. Students can find more information about becoming a regulated/listed pharmacy technician through the [College of Pharmacists of Manitoba](#) website.

Why should I take the Pharmacy Technician Diploma Program if I can work as an assistant without this education?

Technicians have higher earning potential and MITT graduates have an excellent reputation in industry.

Pharmacy technician education will increase employability and listed technicians can find employment in community, long-term care and institutional pharmacy practice settings, as well as in educational facilities. Leading employers such as Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Costco, and Loblaws give preference to listed pharmacy technicians with an educational credential from an accredited program.

As a listed pharmacy technician with the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba, **their qualifications would also be recognized in other provinces** where pharmacy technicians are licensed and/or registered.

CREDIT TRANSFER QUESTIONS

I have completed pharmacy technician or pharmacy education at another institution or in another country. Would any of my courses be recognized?

It would depend. Credit Transfer requests will only be considered for students who have received a formal offer of admission to MITT and who submit a Request for Credit Transfer form at least 30 days prior to the program start date. Students should refer to the policy and form for details on the process and other requirements.

The MITT program is accredited with the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) and as such, MITT must comply with the CCAPP standards for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). According to these standards, simulation and pharmacy practice experience components of a program cannot be considered for RPL. Additionally, because pharmacy practice knowledge and skills change rapidly, CCAPP does not recognize RPL credit awarded for courses completed earlier than a duration that is more than twice the length of the program. In the case of MITT, this would equate to credits earned more than 4 years prior.

The design of the new diploma program significantly differentiates the program curriculum to the one-year model of local competitors; it was designed, not just, to align with the new CCAPP standards (introduced in July 2019), but with the majority of post-secondary models across Canada.

MITT will consider credit transfer requests on a course-by-course basis as per the provisions of the MITT Credit Transfer Policy. Further, MITT reserves the right to deny credit transfer requests of course work that does not meet the MITT academic and CCAPP accreditation standards.

I already have my first aid certificate – do I have to repeat this training?

No. If your certificate meets the requirements for the program and is valid and up to date, the training would not need to be repeated.

Is my tuition adjusted for credit transfers or when I do not need to repeat other recognized training?

MITT does not provide tuition reimbursements for courses that are awarded a credit transfer.

WORKLOAD, ASSESSMENT, AND GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

What is the difference between the new diploma program and the old certificate program?

The new diploma program is approximately twice as many hours as the old certificate program and contains three times as many laboratory components (or a net increase of 5 laboratory courses). Further, sterile and non-sterile compounding have been developed into standalone courses. Leading edge curriculum include courses such as Medication Safety and Risk Management that prepare technicians for high risk practice situations. Culture and Diversity in Canadian Society prepares students for work with diverse patient populations.

In discussion with Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP), MITT anticipates CCAPP will award the new Pharmacy Technician Diploma Program Provisional Accreditation on review of the program in May 2020. Provisional Accreditation is the category of accreditation granted to new program initiatives. Graduates from a school designated as having provisional accreditation will be deemed by CCAPP to be graduates of an accredited program. Graduates will be eligible to write the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada's Qualifying Exam.

The MITT Pharmacy Technician Program has qualified for accreditation since 2010.

The program curriculum aligns with the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) Professional Competencies for Canadian Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice and the Canadian Pharmacy Technician Educators Association (CPTA) Educational Outcomes.

If I was previously enrolled in the old program, what can be transferred into the new program?

Given the significant changes under the new accreditation standards and curriculum design of the new program, there would not be any credit transfer opportunity between the old and new program.

What should I expect for academic work including assignments and exams?

Theory-based assignments, tests and exams may consist of math, multiple choice, and short answer questions, as well as case studies. Practical assessments are often based on laboratory activities such as sterile and non-sterile compounding and entering, preparing and checking prescriptions.

Students love the simulation-based learning activities. These replicate real-world pharmacy practice activities and conditions which help students develop their technical and clinical skills and confidence without compromising patient safety.

Do all the courses have exams?

While not all courses have a final exam, most courses will include final exams.

What can I do to prepare myself for the program?

The [Pharmacy Technician Program Information](#) on the MITT webpage includes sample calculation questions that approximate the types of calculations students will perform in the program.

Students who wish to prepare themselves before beginning their technical program can focus on the following math skills:

- numbers and operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division)
- fractions, decimals, and percentages
- ratios
- conversions within and between different systems of measurement (metric and imperial)
- basic algebra
- interpreting charts and graphs
- basic statistics
- military/hospital time, adding units of time
- scientific notation

As error-free calculations are an important requirement to patient safety, review of basic algebra and metric unit conversions will be good preparation for this program.

Keyboarding is another useful skill. There are many free online tutorials that can help students learn touch typing technique.

Can you point me towards any free resources that I could use to improve my math skills?

The following links may be helpful to students wishing to brush up on their math skills:

- www.wolframalpha.com
- www.cliffsnotes.com/study-guides
- www.math.com
- www.khanacademy.org/math
- www.analyze-math.com/precaculustests.html
- www.jamesbrennan.org/algebra/ (algebra)
- www.basic-mathematics.com/basic-geometry.html (geometry)
- www.studygeek.org
- www.youtube.com/user/videomathtutor
- www.studygs.net/mathproblems.htm (word problems)
- www.math.about.com/cs/testprep/a/ps.htm (word problems)

What are some of the coolest components of the program?

In a previous intake, there was a student-run Flu Shot Clinic. The program also integrates various inter-professional and intra-professional learning activities with the University of Manitoba, College of Pharmacy, the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba, and other MITT health programs to provide students with robust simulation experiences and cross-disciplinary teamwork opportunities. Many of these are the most memorable learning experiences captured through student feedback on program evaluations.

We have also invested significantly in a new community and institutional simulation laboratory and will continue investing in this space in the coming years. Why is simulated learning so important to healthcare training programs? It enhances clinical competence and mirrors real world practice; plus, it provides a safe and supervised environment for skill development and integrates continuous feedback mechanisms to improve student learning.

The program also includes a series of health education outreach learning seminars with specialized subject-matter experts, industry partners and private healthcare vendors to explore trending topics or issues in the healthcare field. Plus, student develop their own facilitation and leadership capacity by leading health outreach training sessions with the general student population and other programs at the

Institute.

How difficult is this program?

The compressed schedule and rigorous educational standard of the program demand students who are willing to work hard and be challenged. Students who put in the work and dedicate time to study should be successful. While it is possible to complete some work in class, students should anticipate homework each night.

Balancing a full-time job with a full-time course load (plus any family obligations) make achieving high grades extremely challenging. When full-time work interferes with their academic success, students may need to consider scaling back the number of hours they work per week. What if I am not doing well in one of my courses? What help can I get?

The first place to start for help is with the instructor.

The MITT Student Services team can also provide academic, personal, and career supports to future and current MITT students. Student Services may also be able to provide assistance through the MITT Learning Specialist or through the option of a peer tutor.

The program curriculum includes a Student Success Seminar which is comprised of a series of sessions designed to support students in organization, time management, study skills, test-taking, stress management and other areas. Additionally, there are other academic supports built into the program. The Pharmacy Technician Program integrates blended learning technology such as OttoLearn and Kahoot as supplementary instructional resources for curriculum components such as medical terminology and drug names. Finally, supplementary tutorial sessions in courses such as Pharmaceutical Calculations provide small group or one-on-one support.

Math is my weakest subject. What support do you have for these courses?

On the first day of the Pharmaceutical Calculations course, the instructor will administer a basic math skills assessment to identify students who may require additional support. The assessment results are shared with the student, but do not count toward the course grades and are kept confidential. Academic supports are available to all students, regardless of performance on this assessment.

Support generally begins in the form of small-group workshops held over lunch hours. During these sessions, students will review and practice material both from the pharmaceutical calculations courses, as well as material designed to support foundational math skills. Individual support is also available to students; this can be in the form of time with the instructor(s), peer tutors and/or the MITT learning supports available through Student Services.

If I fail one of the courses, would I be able to continue in the program?

It would depend on the course in question and whether it is a prerequisite for any subsequent courses in the program. It should be noted that course repeats can significantly delay program completion timelines and are subject to program scheduling and seat availability.

When do I receive my program schedule?

Students will receive the program schedule on the first day of class. It should be understood that this schedule may be subject to change.

Can I change or customize my course schedule?

No. MITT sets the program schedule.

When will I know what textbooks I need to purchase?

MITT posts the required textbook information for the program a few months prior to the program start date.

Why do I need a locker?

To maintain clean and sterile conditions in the classroom and simulation lab spaces, students should only be bringing textbooks, note taking materials and other relevant supplies into these areas. Therefore, a locker is required for other personal belongings.

IMPORTANT REGULATION INFORMATION

What is the difference between a listed and a licensed pharmacy technician?

The primary difference between listed and licensed pharmacy technicians lies in the legislation of the province in question. Licensure, which not in place in Manitoba, implies separate liability frameworks.

When I graduate, can I call myself a pharmacy technician if I am not listed?

No. *The Pharmaceutical Act* in Manitoba and the accompanying regulations make “pharmacy technician” a protected title. The Act governs the use of this title, as well as registration, education, licensing, standards of practice, and other parameters.

MITT’s Pharmacy Technician Program is a CCAPP accredited program, which means our graduates are eligible to pursue the pharmacy technician regulation pathway through the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba. For more information about this process, students should refer to the [Steps to becoming a Pharmacy Technician in Manitoba](#) on the CPhM website.

Do I have to write the PEBC exam?

Not all students go on to write this exam. That being said, the new diploma program will fully prepare students to write this exam and even includes a PEBC preparation course in the curriculum. Students will also be exposed to Objective Structured Performance Examination (OSPE) activities throughout the program. Theory exams, across various courses, will approximate the style of PEBC exam questions to prepare students to write their PEBC exam and self-assess their readiness.

CRIMINAL RECORD INFORMATION

Do I need to provide MITT with a clear criminal record check prior to admission?

No. A clear police information check (PIC) is not a mandatory admission requirement; however, a PIC clearance is a mandatory program requirement for Work Practicum eligibility. Ultimately, student would not be able to graduate if they cannot complete the Work Practicum components of the program.

Why do I need a clear Police Information Check?

In the health care sector, a **clear criminal record may be a legitimate occupational requirement** depending on the nature of the criminal conviction. During the Work Practicum, students work closely with the patients and the general public (including vulnerable persons) and will also have access to confidential information, narcotics and other medications, and money.

When should I apply for my Police Information Check?

MITT recommends students apply for these after the program start date. The Police Information Check (PIC) and provincial child and adult abuse registry clearances **must be dated no more than six months of the Work Practicum start date** to comply with Winnipeg Regional Health Authority requirements.

The police information check must include a vulnerable sector search.

What happens if I have a criminal record?

At the discretion of individual Work Practicum sites, students may be declined access to Work Practicum based on the findings of a Police Information Check. **Before applying for admission to this program, prospective students must advise MITT of the existence of a criminal record or any pending legal issues that may adversely impact their practicum eligibility.** MITT has a responsibility to disclose such criminal record finding to prospective practicum sites, who at their sole discretion, must vet and approve any clearance waivers.

As a waiver denial will ultimately impacts Work Practicum eligibility (and therefore, graduation eligibility), such Police Information Checks must be pre-screened prior to admission to the program so prospective candidates may make an informed decision on whether to proceed with the program application.

For this screening, details of the conviction and authorization to release this information will be required of the student. Please consult the Academic Coordinator (Healthcare Programs) for more details about this process.

If my waiver is denied, how would I complete the practicum course credits?

Unfortunately, this would not be possible. If a waiver is denied, the student would be unable to proceed with any Work Practicum components in the program. Nor would MITT be responsible for providing alternative Work Practicum placements in these situations.

What happens if I am convicted of an offense between checks? Do I have to disclose this conviction?

Yes. Students are expected to disclose this information to their instructor for waiver vetting purposes.

Is there anything else I can do in this situation?

It should be noted that prospective students can also explore the Pardon/Record Suspension process through the Government of Canada before applying to the program. However, this can be a very lengthy process and there are some situations where the expungement of a criminal record would not apply.

How can I learn more about the other documentation requirements?

At the start of the program, the instructor will provide students with a **Required Documentation Checklist** and explain the requirements including the submission deadlines.

What happens if I do not submit all required documentation by the deadline?

If all required documentation is not submitted by the deadline, then the documentation would be considered incomplete. As this documentation is mandatory for Work Practicum, their eligibility would be withdrawn.

WORK PRACTICUM

How long is my practicum?

There are three (3) Work Practicum experiences in the Pharmacy Technician Program. Year 1 of the program includes a 2-week work practicum placement in a community pharmacy practice setting. Year 2 of the program includes two (2) 6-week pharmacy practice experiences: one in community pharmacy practice and one in institutional pharmacy practice.

All Pharmacy Technician Program practicum experiences are preceptor-led placements where students work under the direction of a pharmacy technician and/or pharmacist.

What is a preceptor?

During practicum, students must work under the direction (i.e., preceptorship) of a licensed pharmacist or listed pharmacy technician with at least 3-5 years of experience in the field. This individual provides instruction, training, supervision, and/or mentorship, as well as guides students through the practice experience and evaluates their performance.

Will I get paid during my practicum?

Practicums are an unpaid, work-integrated learning experiences.

Where might I be placed on a practicum?

Students will have one institutional placement and this placement might be within a Winnipeg, Prairie Mountain, Interlake Eastern, Southern, or Northern Regional Health Authority facility.

For the community placements, we have partnerships with privately-owned operations, as well as large corporations such as Walmart, Loblaws, Sobeys, Safeway, and Shoppers Drug Mart.

Can I choose or find my own practicum site?

MITT will arrange all aspects of the placement process. There are a number of factors involved in the site selection and placement decision process. Therefore, students are not permitted to arrange their own placements.

Can I complete my practicum at a current place of employment?

No. Any conflict of interest must be avoided; therefore, students would not be permitted to complete a Work Practicum with their current place of employment. If a student is working in a pharmacy, she/he must inform their instructor at the earliest possible opportunity in their studies.

When do I find out the locations/organizations for my practicum placements?

Once placement decisions are finalized, students will receive details of their Community and Institutional Work Practicum assignments from their instructors. Typically, the placement assignment details are confirmed between 3 and 4 weeks prior to the practicum start date.

Can I complete my practicum outside of Manitoba?

No. Pharmacy is a self-regulating profession and the federal and provincial governments have delegated their authority in our province to the College of Pharmacists of Manitoba (CPhM). Though national regulations are in place, interprovincial variations in legislation governing the practice of pharmacy including laws, standards and policies (jurisprudence) can be significant. Additionally, CPhM establishes scope-of-practice regulations, as well as performance, technical, ethical, and educational criteria for

pharmacy technicians in Manitoba. Given these factors, students must complete their Work Practicum experience within Manitoba.

What might a practicum work schedule look like?

The preceptors and practicum sites determine student schedules. MITT expects students to work full-time hours up to a maximum 40 hours per week. Day, evening and weekend shifts may be required.

It should also be noted that students may not exceed more than 2 absences (with or without documentation) during a Work Practicum placement (see the MITT Attendance Policy for details).

What are the prerequisites for practicum?

The Pharmacy Technician Program has the following mandatory practicum requirements, many of which are incorporated into the program:

- Successful completion of all prerequisite courses
- Successful completion of all mandatory patient safety tests
- Satisfactory attendance record (see the MITT Attendance Policy for details)
- Clear Police Information Check (PIC) with Vulnerable Sector Check
- Clear Provincial Child Abuse Registry check
- Clear Provincial Adult Abuse Registry check
- Complete immunizations and testing (as per the [WRHA Guidelines for Health Care Workers](#))
- Emergency First Aid and CPR Level C certificate
- N95 Fit Mask Test certificate
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) certificate
- Violence Protection Program completion
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCI) certificate
- Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) certificate
- Valid Co-op Work Permit (*note this requirement only applies to international students*)

Work Practicum eligibility is contingent on receipt of all required documentation by a specific deadline.

What is the Co-op Work Permit authorization?

When a program includes a Work Practicum experience within the curriculum, international students must apply for a co-op work permit to obtain the appropriate authorization from the Government of Canada before they may participate in this experience. For more information about the authorization process, prospective international students should consult the Government of Canada Immigration and Citizenship website or Mindy Cho (the MITT Immigration Services Advisor).