



School of Pharmacy

300 Prince Philip Drive, Health Sciences Centre
St. John's, NL Canada A1B 3V6
www.mun.ca/pharmacy

SPE Program

Policy Handbook

for Students and Preceptors

If you have questions regarding the SPE Program, please contact:

Ms. Wanda Spurrell
SPE Program Coordinator
Room 3442, School of Pharmacy
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL
A1B 3V6

Phone: 709-777-6498 Fax: 709-777-7044 e-mail: wspurrel@mun.ca

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I. Introduction

This handbook is intended to provide information about the Structured Practice Experience (SPE) Program. It outlines the SPE program structure, administration and policies as well as reviews the expectations of the School of Pharmacy for students completing practice experience rotations as a component of the pharmacy academic program. Students are required to adhere to all policies.

Students are advised to carefully read this information and retain it for their reference. Each student is required to sign an *SPE Agreement Form* indicating that (s)he has read, understood and agrees to abide by these policies.

II. Structured Practice Experience Program

Program Structure

The SPE Program is a MUN School of Pharmacy Program requirement, the purpose of which is to have students observe and practice the skills necessary to become a pharmacist. It is intended to bridge the gap between the academic study of pharmacy and the practice of pharmacy. Under the supervision of pharmacist preceptors, students will have the opportunity to apply their university gained knowledge and skills to deal with patients and practice situations in order to achieve proficiency and competency in performing the functions of a pharmacist.

The SPE Program is managed by the School of Pharmacy, with direction from the Joint Committee on Structured Practice Experience, which has representatives from the School of Pharmacy and the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board (NLPB). **Twenty weeks** of structured practice experience (three SPEs, each of four weeks duration, and one SPE of twelve weeks duration) are required to be completed as follows:

Course Number	Location	Number of Weeks/ When	Number of Hours (minimum)
Pharmacy 201W	Community Pharmacy	4 weeks at end of Winter Semester of 1 st academic year	35 hours per week
Pharmacy 302W	Hospital Pharmacy	4 weeks after 2 nd academic year	35 hours per week
Pharmacy 403W	Community Pharmacy	4 weeks at end of Winter Semester of 3 rd academic year	35 hours per week
Pharmacy 500X (clinical)	Institution, Community Pharmacy, Clinic, etc.	12 weeks (2 x 6 weeks) during Winter semester of 4 th academic year	35 hours per week

* A **week** is a period of seven consecutive days, i.e. a calendar week.

* The weeks must be served **consecutively**.

Students will register for each of the SPE courses in the Winter semester of the year in which they will be completed as per university registration procedures.

SPE Manuals

An SPE manual is provided at each level of the program to serve as a guide for students and preceptors in an effort to give uniformity and standardization to each student's learning experiences. Activities and projects that are required to be completed during the rotation are outlined in the manual. Some may require, or allow for, independent work by the student; others may necessitate discussion with, and participation by, the preceptor.

SPE manuals may be accessed on the School of Pharmacy website under the corresponding SPE course at <http://www.mun.ca/pharmacy/practice/>. A hard copy is mailed to preceptors.

The preceptor should be familiar with the contents of the SPE manual and work with the student to ensure that the manual is completed. It is important to strike a balance between working on projects and participating in pharmacy practice activities. **While some of the work presented in the manual is best completed at the SPE site, other work may, and should, be done on the student's own time.**

Assignments cannot address all the competencies needed to practice pharmacy in a particular setting and the preceptor may identify areas not covered, or have additional ideas for useful activities to maximize the student's experience.

Learning Objectives

The Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada (AFPC) has developed educational outcomes for pharmacy graduates in Canada. The following outcomes have been adopted by the School of Pharmacy and guide the curriculum and experiential learning in the program.

Outcome	Description
Care Provider	Pharmacy graduates use their knowledge, skills and professional judgment to provide pharmaceutical care and to facilitate management of patient's medication and overall health needs.
Communicator	Pharmacy graduates communicate with diverse audiences using a variety of strategies that take into account the situation, intended outcomes of the communication and the target audience.
Collaborator	Pharmacy graduates work collaboratively with teams to provide effective, quality health care and to fulfill their professional obligations to the community and society.
Manager	Pharmacy graduates use management skills in daily practice to optimize the care of patients, to ensure the safe and effective distribution of medications and efficient use of health resources.
Advocate	Pharmacy graduates use their expertise to advance the health and well-being of individual patients, communities, and populations, and to support pharmacist's professional roles.
Scholar	Pharmacy graduates have and can apply the core knowledge and skills required to be medication therapy experts, and are able to master, generate, interpret and disseminate pharmaceutical and pharmacy practice knowledge.
Professional	Pharmacy graduates honour their roles as self-regulated professionals through both individual patient care and fulfillment of their professional obligations to the profession, the community and society at large.

SPE Placement Process

- During each placement cycle, a “call for preceptors” is sent out to the pharmacy community. A list of preceptors and sites willing to host students for practice experience rotations is maintained and posted by the School. Preceptors and sites must meet specific criteria as set by the Joint Committee on Structured Practice Experience. (See Appendix A for these criteria).
- The placement process is managed by the SPE Program Coordinator. **Students are assigned to sites and preceptors rather than selecting their own.** Therefore, students are asked not to contact sites or organizations regarding possible placement.
- Students will be given the opportunity to request placement in particular locations. While every effort will be made to accommodate requests, students may be assigned to any participating site within Newfoundland and Labrador. (Please note that the St. John’s area is not able to accommodate SPE rotations for all students and students must be prepared to complete SPE rotations outside the St. John’s, Mt. Pearl, CBS area). **Accommodations, travel expenses, and other costs related to SPE are the responsibility of the student.**
- Students wishing to complete SPEs **out-of-province** may be asked to assist in identifying possible placement sites outside NL. **Those students should, first, contact the SPE Program Coordinator to discuss options before any communication with the site takes place.**
 - ◻ For **SPE IV**, comprised of two, six-week rotations during the Winter semester of final year, **a student will normally not complete both rotations out-of-province.**
- SPE assignments will be to a **single** site/location per rotation.
- Placements are **not** subject to grievance. Students are not allowed to change SPE sites with other students. If a site/preceptor withdraws after placements are made, the student will be notified and presented with available alternatives.
- Students will be assigned to a particular SPE **location** or **preceptor** only **once**.
 - ◻ **Exceptions** may apply in the case of institutional placements (i.e. a student who has completed SPE II at a particular institution may be permitted to return to that site for a clinical placement, SPE IV).
- Students will NOT be permitted to complete SPEs in a location where the **preceptor, co-working pharmacist, or owner** of the pharmacy is **related** to the student.
 - ◻ A “related person” means a person connected with another by blood relationship, marriage, conjugal relationship or adoption.
- Students will NOT be permitted to complete SPEs in a pharmacy, or with a pharmacist, where a potential **conflict of interest** exists.
 - ◻ This includes any sort of business, financial or contractual agreement that a student may have entered into with a pharmacist or pharmacy/organization.
 - ◻ This also disallows students completing SPEs in a community pharmacy where the student has previously worked, or volunteered, either as a registered pharmacy student or in another capacity (as a technician, cashier, etc.).

- All preceptors must complete a *Preceptor Agreement Form* prior to the beginning of any rotation. In the case where two pharmacists are involved in supervising one student, one pharmacist should assume the role of primary preceptor and, as such, be responsible for ensuring the SPE learning objectives are covered. If a secondary preceptor is involved, a second *Preceptor Agreement Form* should be completed and forwarded to the School of Pharmacy. This allows for proper recognition of all preceptors who participate in the SPE Program.
- Students and preceptors will be advised once placements have been made.
 - ◻ Students are required to sign a *Student Placement Agreement* prior to the start of rotations. This form will be distributed by, and must be returned to, the SPE Program Coordinator.
 - ◻ Each student should prepare a letter of introduction. Once notification of placement is received, the student is responsible for making contact with the preceptor and arranging for a brief meeting and submission of his/her letter of introduction to the preceptor. This should be done well in advance of the starting date of the SPE.

Attendance, Punctuality and Absenteeism

- **Attendance is required.** Students are expected to begin their SPE rotations on the agreed upon dates and to complete them during the assigned period.
 - ◻ Typically, students will begin SPE I, II and III as soon as possible after exams have ended in the Winter Semester. The dates for SPE IV follow the university calendar and are not flexible.
 - ◻ Should a student require a **change** in the starting/ending date, or in the case of other **anticipated nonattendance, a request for approval must be made in writing to the SPE Program Coordinator** at least **two weeks in advance** of the date(s) affected, outlining the reason for the change/absence.
- A **minimum** time requirement of **35 hours per calendar week** is mandatory during the SPE.
 - ◻ In order to optimize the learning experience, students should complete five, 7 hour days per week vs. three, 12 hour days, for example. It is recognized that there will be occasions where longer shifts (e.g., 9 - 12 hours) may be required, and this is acceptable. However, it is not acceptable for a student to reduce the number of days that (s)he participates in the SPE by completing exclusively 12 hour shifts.
 - ◻ If a **statutory holiday** falls during the SPE period, students are still expected to complete 35 hours that week (e.g., if the pharmacy is open the student may work the holiday; if the student takes the holiday, then (s)he should make up the required time).
- **Preceptors may occasionally expect students to attend more than the minimum number of hours designated for the rotation** (e.g., attendance at a continuing education session or other event). **Students should also expect that additional time may be required outside of their regular SPE hours** (nights and weekends) **for completion of SPE activities** (e.g., research, case work-ups, presentations, etc.). Students should not expect that the preceptor will grant time away from the practice site for library research.

- Students must work at least 50% of the SPE time with their designated preceptor.
 - E Scheduling of hours should be undertaken by the preceptor and student.
 - E Students may have to work shifts similar to the preceptor's, including evenings and weekends.

- Students are expected to be punctual and in attendance at the SPE site according to the schedule arranged with the preceptor.
 - E Sign in/sign out sheets must be respected if they are requested at the site or by the preceptor.
 - E Schedule changes (i.e. those of a minor nature) must be approved by the preceptor.
 - E **Any changes in the starting/ending dates or other absences** must be approved by the SPE Coordinator.
 - E Students who anticipate arriving **late** on any day of their SPE must contact their preceptor directly as soon as possible (e.g., via telephone or e-mail). Students should review with the preceptor the best way to report a late arrival. Sending a message via a classmate is **not** acceptable. **Preceptors should report issues of repeated lateness to the SPE Program Coordinator.**

- **Absences** are permitted only in the case of legitimate illness, bereavement or family emergency.
 - E Any student who must be absent during the SPE is required to **notify both the preceptor and the SPE Coordinator** (phone, 777-6498, or email, wspurrel@mun.ca) as soon as it is determined that (s)he is not able to attend the SPE.
 - E **A note from a health professional** (as per *Memorial University Regulations 2011/12, Section 5.14.4*; <http://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=REGS-0859>) **or other appropriate written documentation must be supplied for all absences.** Such documentation must be submitted to the SPE Program Coordinator
 - E **Preceptors are requested to note any absences on the student evaluation forms.**

- **Any student who misses 2 or more days of a 4-week SPE or 4 or more days of a 6-week SPE will normally be required to make up missed time.**

- In the case of **unapproved absence** or absence which does not meet the above criteria (i.e. illness, bereavement or family emergency), one or more of the following may apply:
 - E A letter may be placed in the student's School of Pharmacy file citing the unexcused absence.
 - E The student may not be eligible to receive the grade of "Pass with Distinction" or to be considered for certain Scholarships and Awards.
 - E The student's eligibility for consideration for the Director's List that academic year may be compromised.
 - E Remedial work may be required.
 - E The student may fail the rotation.

- Students attending **professional conferences** in an **official capacity** during the SPE period may be granted time away from the SPE site, for which they may receive credit. An **application** must be made by the student to the SPE Coordinator at least **two weeks in advance** of the conference, outlining the name of the conference, location, nature of participation and dates for which the absence is requested. A post-conference report by the student may also be required. (This policy is supplementary to the School's PDW policy.)

Evaluation

- **SPE rotations are academic courses and must be successfully completed in order to enter the next year of pharmacy study and to graduate from the School of Pharmacy.**
- Overall evaluation of SPEs will result in the assignment of one of the following letter grades: PWD (pass with distinction), PAS (pass), or FAL (fail).
- Evaluation is based on:
 - E Preceptor's assessment of student performance, using the evaluation tool supplied by the School
 - Evaluation of student performance is required to be conducted by the preceptor at the **mid-point** and **end** of the rotation.
 - E Attendance
 - E Written assignments or presentations
 - E Workbook audits or examination on material learned during the SPE period.
- Evaluation criteria for each SPE are outlined in greater detail in the corresponding rotation manual.
- Students who conduct themselves in such a manner as to cause their termination from the SPE site will be assigned a grade of FAIL for the rotation

Confidentiality

- **Students are responsible to ensure that all information obtained during SPE rotations is held in the strictest confidence.**
 - E Collection, use, sharing, disclosure or disposal of information must be done in accordance with the **Personal Health Information Act, the terms of the Pharmacy Network, professional standards and codes of ethics** as well as **site policies**.
 - E Information that is to be kept confidential and private includes that which would not otherwise be publicly available including patient personal health information or personal information, the organization's financial information, business information, etc.
- To help prevent inadvertent breaches of confidentiality, the following should be adhered to:
 - E Discussion of patient cases should be **avoided in public** or other areas where it may be overheard (e.g., hallways, elevators, cafeteria, etc.).
 - E **All identifying features** (i.e. patient name, address, phone #, MCP #, etc.) **must be removed from any papers/notes immediately after copying patient information or printing patient profiles.**
 - E During group discussions or case presentations, patients should be referred to in a manner by which they cannot be identified (e.g., Patient A, Patient B, ...).
- Students should be aware that the intentional collection, use, and/or viewing of confidential information that is not necessary to perform one's duties is a breach of privacy even if that information is not disclosed to anyone else.

Professional Appearance

Students must exhibit a professional appearance, both in manner and dress, and must follow the standards of the site to which they are assigned. Each student must wear a **name badge** indicating his/her full name and title, "*Pharmacy Student.*" A laboratory/dispensing jacket is also required, unless otherwise directed by the preceptor.

Remuneration

Students are NOT permitted to be paid during the SPE since it is intended primarily as a **learning experience** rather than a work experience, with both the student and preceptor working together in a student-teacher relationship.

CPR and First Aid

Students are required to provide evidence of a valid certificate in St. John Ambulance or Canadian Red Cross Standard First Aid Level C that is valid for the duration of the SPE. Equivalent certificates will be considered and assessed on an individual basis for acceptability.

- Students must provide a copy of their certificate (or re-certification, where applicable) showing successful completion of an approved program to the SPE Program Coordinator by the end of the **Fall semester** of the academic year in which SPE rotations are scheduled. Since students are required to have this course for the duration of the SPE Program, re-certification will be necessary throughout the Pharmacy program.

Immunization

Students are responsible to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases by protecting themselves and patients through immunization. This requires ensuring immunizations are up to date and that a baseline test for tuberculosis is performed **prior to beginning the hospital SPE after second year and kept up to date for SPE IV.**

- The School works with the Student Health Nurse at MUN to facilitate this process, though it is the students' obligation to ensure their records are complete and to provide documentation to the site where required. Any costs associated with this are the responsibility of the student.
- Most healthcare institutions require records of immunization as a condition of allowing students to complete rotations at their sites and may refuse to permit a student to complete a practice experience rotation at the site if immunization requirements are not fulfilled.
- Students who develop a potential communicable disease during an SPE must discuss the appropriate procedure to follow with their preceptor.

Criminal Record Checks

While the School of Pharmacy does not require criminal record checks of applicants to the program, such record checks or other screening procedures may be required by some SPE sites.

- SPE sites may refuse to accept students on the basis of information obtained from a criminal record check thereby preventing the student from completing a practice experience rotation.

- All costs associated with the criminal record check or other screening procedures are the responsibility of the student.

N95 Mask Fit Testing

Some institutional sites require students to be fit tested for N95 masks prior to the start of their SPE. Any costs associated with the fit testing are the responsibility of the student.

Student Registration with the Provincial Regulatory Authority / Liability Insurance

- All MUN Pharmacy students must register as a “Pharmacy Student” with the Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board by September 30th of each academic year.
- In accordance with the *Pharmacy Act* and *Regulations*, **students completing SPEs in Newfoundland & Labrador must be registered with the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board as pharmacy students before commencing SPE rotations.**
- All applicants for registration as a pharmacy student **must provide proof of liability insurance coverage** as outlined in the NLPB Policy, *Professional Liability Insurance for Pharmacists, Pharmacy Students and Interns*.
- Students completing SPEs in other provinces must contact the appropriate provincial pharmacy society/board and follow registration procedures for students in that province **before** starting their rotations.
 - E Student application forms and information on registration can be found on the NAPRA website at www.napra.org or obtained from the individual provincial regulatory authorities.
- **Failure to register with the appropriate regulatory authority may result in the student being disciplined by the provincial regulatory authority and/or being required to repeat the practice experience.**

III. Roles and Responsibilities of the Preceptor

The preceptor accepts responsibility for the **education and supervision** of the student during the period of the practice experience.

The preceptor:

- must be the pharmacist most directly involved with the student for **at least 50% of the student's hours in the pharmacy** (*An exception to this may be in SPE IV*). Other pharmacists or staff members may be designated to supervise the student from time to time to allow for a broad range of experiences.
- should be familiar with the goals and activities of the SPE Program as outlined in the SPE manual.
- should provide the student with an **orientation** to the site.
- should discuss with the student expectations for the rotation (e.g., learning, conduct, scheduling).

- should ensure that the student is given the opportunity, **under the preceptor’s direct supervision**, to **actively participate** in the practice of pharmacy and **contribute meaningfully** to patient care at a level appropriate to his/her education and experience. (It is not acceptable for the student to spend most of the time working on the manual or merely “observing” while others fulfill job duties).
- should act as a role model for the student by exhibiting a high degree of professional motivation, unquestionable standard of ethics, good judgement and professional behaviour.
- must be willing to give continuous, constructive **feedback** to the student.
- must **evaluate** student performance. At the **midpoint and end** of the SPE, the preceptor must determine whether the student has met the learning objectives and achieved an accepted level of performance. In the case of **performance that is below expected**, the preceptor should **communicate** this (or any other problems) to the SPE Program Coordinator in a **timely manner** to allow assistance and support to be provided by the School to both the student and preceptor.

IV. Responsibilities of the Student

The student, not the preceptor, is responsible for his/her own learning. Preceptors volunteer their time to teach students. Their primary obligation is to their patients, colleagues and employer. Students must respect this.

The student is expected to:

- be willing to discuss learning expectations with the preceptor.
- exhibit initiative and a self-directed approach to learning (i.e. seek and become involved in learning opportunities as they arise and within the guidelines set by the preceptor).
- find out from the preceptor when it is most convenient to discuss issues, review materials, etc.
- **be respectful and courteous** toward all pharmacy staff, patients and their families, and other health professionals.
- **clearly identify him/herself as a pharmacy student (not a pharmacist). Professional decisions or judgments should not be made by the student without the approval or consent of a pharmacist.**
- be prepared and punctual for all scheduled activities.
- participate to the fullest extent possible.
- adhere to university and site policies and guidelines.
- seek regular feedback
- accept and act upon constructive criticism
- perform self-assessment regularly, especially prior to mid-point and final evaluations.
- **be flexible** and appreciate that sites and rotations will differ in activities, expectations and workload.
- be prepared to work hard and ENJOY!

Students may be removed from the practice site because of unsatisfactory performance, unprofessional conduct, violation of school or site policies or conduct which poses a risk to patients. Preceptors are asked to report any such occurrences to the SPE Coordinator.

V. Addressing Student/ Preceptor Concerns during the Rotation

It is important for students to discuss any concerns they have about their SPE with the preceptor or the SPE Program Coordinator at the time of the concern. Little or nothing can be done if the student waits until the end of a rotation to bring up a problem.

The following approach is suggested as the best way to handle troublesome situations that may arise during the SPE program:

- Address the issue promptly; do not wait too long, hoping that the problem will disappear.
- Bring the concern directly to the attention of the other person and attempt to resolve the issue together.
- Listen carefully and thoughtfully to the other person.
- Be as specific as possible when identifying a problem and remember to focus on the situation, not the person
 - If the preceptor has a specific issue with a student, an attempt should be made to discuss this with the student as part of the regular feedback process. Discussion may include restating the rotation goals or professional expectations, outlining steps to help the student overcome the problem and explaining to the student how they will be evaluated to assess improvement.
- **Serious or unresolved difficulties should be brought to the attention of the SPE Program Coordinator.**

Students with concerns should share these only with the individual involved, the preceptor, or the SPE Program Coordinator, not with other students, or other pharmacy staff, etc.

VI. Workers' Compensation Coverage for Students

In accordance with the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, Section 42 (Work Training Programs) and Regulation 16 (Educational Institutions), a Memorial University Pharmacy student participating in the SPE Program who is not compensated by the employer is considered to be a worker employed by the Province. Such a worker is eligible to receive Workers' Compensation benefits if a work-related injury occurs during the course of the training period.

VII. SPE Credit towards Licensing Requirements

Time served by students in SPEs is recognized by the Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board as contributing towards licensing requirements upon graduation. Once a student successfully completes an SPE, the School of Pharmacy will notify NLPB of the number of weeks completed. Successful completion of all four SPEs will result in students receiving credit for 24 weeks of practice experience.

The Newfoundland & Labrador Pharmacy Board requires a total of 44 weeks pharmacy practice experience in order to be eligible, upon graduation, to be licensed as a pharmacist in this province.

The 20 weeks of pharmacy practice experience required by the Pharmacy Board beyond the 24 weeks SPE required by the School is divided into:

- 12 weeks of Supervised Studentship served during the summers after the 1st, 2nd or 3rd year of the pharmacy program, which may be served in continuous blocks of no less than 4 weeks and no more than 8 weeks.
- 8 weeks supervised Final Internship served after successful completion of the B.Sc. Pharm. degree requirements.

For further information, please refer to “Practice Experience Requirements for Registration as a Pharmacist”, NLPB. (See http://www.nlpb.ca/Documents/Standards_Policies_Guidelines/Policy-Practice_Experience_Requirements-June2009.pdf). Questions may be addressed to Ms. Arlene Crane, Deputy Registrar, NLPB. Contact information: Tel: 753-5877; E-mail: acrane@nlpb.ca.

Students considering becoming licensed in a province other than NL are advised to contact the licensing authority in that province for information about requirements for practice experience with respect to licensing.

VIII. Inquiries and Special Requests

- General inquiries and requests for assistance regarding the School of Pharmacy SPE Program should be directed to the Program Coordinator, Ms. Wanda Spurrell. (Contact information on the front cover.)
- Students requesting interpretation or variance from these regulations must do so **in writing** to the Program Coordinator. Individual requests are generally referred to the Joint Committee on Structured Practice Experience for consideration.

Appendix A

Preceptor Criteria

Pharmacists wishing to serve as preceptors must normally meet the following criteria:

- be currently licensed to practise pharmacy and be in good standing with the provincial regulatory body; and not have restrictions placed upon their practice.
- have been licensed for a minimum of 21 months.
- have a minimum of three months “on site” experience, to provide adequate familiarity with systems and patients.
- be willing to accept responsibility for the student during the SPE period and **must be the pharmacist most directly involved with the student for at least 50% of the student’s hours in the pharmacy**; and be accountable for providing learning opportunities for the student.
 - ◻ Pharmacists who are also responsible for the operations of the pharmacy (i.e., owners, managers) should consider whether these added responsibilities would interfere with their ability to meet this requirement.
- be willing to assess student performance by providing ongoing feedback on a regular basis; and completing required evaluation forms.
- have only one student under their responsibility during the training period. (Exceptions to this criterion may be permissible).
- must not be immediately related to the student.
 - ◻ A “**related person**” means a person connected with another by blood relationship, marriage, conjugal relationship or adoption.
- must not have any relationship with the student that could preclude the preceptor giving an honest and unbiased assessment of the student’s performance or could be perceived as a conflict of interest.
 - ◻ This would include any person in a **business, financial or contractual** relationship with the student.

While not required, pharmacists wishing to serve as preceptors should endeavor to participate in preceptor orientation sessions or other preceptor learning modules when possible.

Practice Site Criteria

The practice site should:

- display high standards of pharmacy practice and meet all legal and professional standards.
- maintain adequate staffing to ensure sufficient opportunities for patient interaction and allow the preceptor and student sufficient opportunity to interact in a teacher-student role.
- provide an environment that allows the student access to work space and required reference materials.
- where applicable, have been licensed and in operation for at least 6 months; and have a prescription volume that allows for adequate opportunities for the student to learn (i.e. not too low OR too high).

In addition, all pharmacists at the site must be in good standing with the provincial regulatory body and not have restrictions placed upon their practice.