Pharmacy Assistant

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

Grade 12 or equivalent or mature student status.

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.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Courses	Hours
Student Success Strategies	20
Computer Fundamentals	40
Anatomy, Physiology and Terminology	80
Pharmacy Mathematics	60
Pharmacy Compounding	60
Pharmacy Law and Ethics	40
Retail Pharmacy Practice	40
Pharmacology	80
Pharmacy Software	40
SJA Standard First Aid/Heartstart Training/WHMIS	20
Career Planning and Preparation - Level I	20
Career Planning and Preparation - Level II	20
Field Placement	6 Weeks
TOTAL WEEKS	**32**

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Student Success Strategies

In this orientation module, emphasis is placed on thinking about achieving success from Day One. This module stresses the importance of developing non-technical skills to enhance personal, academic, and career success. This includes understanding learning styles and honing 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; techniques for managing change, stress and conflict will also be explored.

Software Lab - Computer Fundamentals

Through a combination of theory and hands-on-practice, this module examines the role and use of the computer in today's workplace. Emphasis is placed on those computers outfitted with the Microsoft Windows operating system. Students will review basic computer concepts, Windows OS usage, and complete hands-on training exercises in business-standard software applications, including Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Word. Keyboarding skills are also honed via daily keyboarding exercises and drills.

Anatomy, Physiology and Terminology

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

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 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

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

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 New Brunswick Pharmacy 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.

Retail Pharmacy Practice

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.

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Pharmacology

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.

Pharmacy Software

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.

St. John Ambulance Standard First Aid/Heartstart Training/WHMIS

This course introduces participants to basic first aid techniques and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The course is designed to offer participants the confidence and knowledge to provide safe and correct medical assistance. Students will also complete an online course in WHMIS.

Career Planning & Preparation - Level I

This module introduces tools for planning and preparing for a successful job search so that students can maintain a career-focused approach throughout their education program. Students will learn about the "Hidden" Job Market and ways to access it in their upcoming job search, how to research opportunities and network for industry contacts, and use appropriate etiquette when communicating with prospective employers. Students will identify their personal skills, values and preferences for the workplace, begin preparation of a professional resume and references, and organize proof documents for their career portfolio. Class discussions on various self-management topics introduced in Student Success Strategies will round out this module, which is a pre-requisite for Career Planning and Preparation - Part II.

Career Planning & Preparation - Level II

This module continues to build on the concepts and skills introduced in Career Planning and Preparation - Part I. Students will learn how to conduct an effective job search and identify various methods of applying for work with today's technology. Students will create a personal list of "Top Employers" and target current industry opportunities, while finalizing their professional resume, portfolio and career correspondence. Students will learn to identify the different types and forms of interviews, practice responding to typical questions, and practice follow-up, evaluation and negotiation techniques they can use to ensure success. Self-management topics from Career Planning and Preparation - Part I will be reviewed, with a focus towards on-the-job success in both learner placements and post-graduate employment.

Pharmacy Assistant Field Placement

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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