

## THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR PHARMACEUTICAL SALES PROFESSIONALS

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Back in the days when promoting drugs was just a sales job, there was a wide discrepancy in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. In the late sixties a number of pharmaceutical executives and owners made a commitment to elevate the job to the rank of profession.

In 1969, the Council for Accredited Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Representatives (APMR) was created by members of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada (PMAC). These organizations are now respectively known as CCPE and Rx&D.

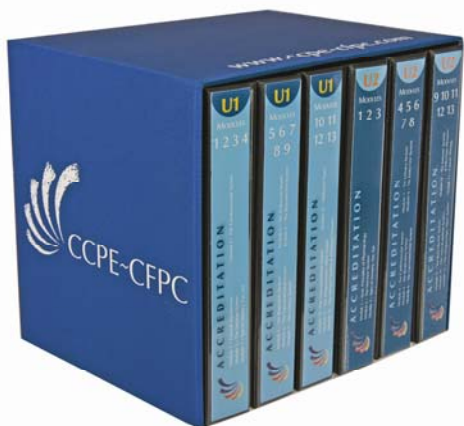


The task was to develop a learning program that would provide basic knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology, and an introduction to pharmacology and pharmaceutical treatments. The first standard was created for what is now known as the Pharmaceutical Sales Professional.

In 1971, the first accreditation exam was offered to the 500 representatives in Canada. CCPE has since accredited nearly 15,000 professionals.

### WHY DO WE NEED AN ACCREDITATION PROCESS?

With 60% of current pharmaceutical sales representatives having a university degree in science, the background of the 6,700 representatives working in the Canadian pharmaceutical community is not uniform.



Every profession has an accreditation process to ensure that members meet minimal standards in their field. Since there is no recognized academic program that specifically prepares individuals to become pharmaceutical sales representatives, the Accreditation is the official way to ensure that standards are met. There must be common knowledge of:

- Human anatomy
- Physiology and pathophysiology
- Pharmacological treatments

While you may be a credible expert in your drug and disease area, you may have little of value to offer a healthcare professional facing other conditions and challenges. Health care professionals expect to meet credible, well trained, competent pharmaceutical consultants.

## HOW DO YOU BENEFIT FROM BEING ACCREDITED?

An accredited representative ...

- Is a proud member of an important profession
- Has earned professional recognition
- Has earned the right to practice
- Meets basic credibility requirements
- Understands healthcare professionals' challenges and expectations
- Is competitive and employable

## WHO SHOULD BE ACCREDITED?

The answer is simple – anyone who wants to be a pharmaceutical sales professional. Think of your accountant, real estate agent, electrician, financial planner, lawyer, and all the healthcare professionals we call on. They have all trained and successfully earned their professional status through an accreditation process.

We estimate that over 90% of pharmaceutical sales representatives have completed their accreditation. On average, 300 individuals that aspire to become sales representatives complete the accreditation exam every year.

Since May 1993, Rx&D's Code of Conduct prescribes that to ensure professional standards for the pharmaceutical community, representatives must pass the accreditation course offered by the CCPE within two years of their employment.



## WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?



It is the process of documenting your basic knowledge and comprehension, and your ability to apply the information in pharmaceutical practice.

Upon successfully completing the CCPE accreditation exam you earn the privilege of being called an accredited representative, and you have the right to put CCPE next to your name.

You receive a certificate and can proudly wear the colourful accreditation pin.

## WHAT IS NEW WITH ACCREDITATION?

The content of the accreditation course has been split in two distinct units, and starting in May 2007, there will be two separate exams.

Since many individuals have specific needs based on their background or role in a pharmaceutical organization, participants can now order each unit separately.

However, for Pharmaceutical Sales Representatives, the course will always include the two units, and individuals must successfully complete both units to receive accreditation.

## WHERE DO I GO TO BECOME ACCREDITED?

You don't have to go anywhere! The accreditation process involves self-paced distance learning and an Internet-hosted exam. The study materials and the certificate will be sent to you by courier.

## WHEN CAN I BECOME ACCREDITED?

You can complete a registration form any day of the year. Study material will be delivered within a week and exams are available on the first Friday of each month. Some people have completed the accreditation within two months. Starting in May 2007, the accreditation process can be completed with two separate exams, so you can focus on only one unit at a time.

ACCREDITATION ~ TABLE OF CONTENTS	
UNIT 1: ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY	UNIT 2: PATHOPHYSIOLOGY AND PHARMACOLOGY
Module 1: General Introduction	Module 1: Basic Principles of Pharmacology
Module 2: The Nervous System	Module 2: The Nervous System
Module 3: Special Sensory: Eye, Ear	Module 3: Special Sensory: Eye, Ear
Module 4: The Cardiovascular System	Module 4: The Cardiovascular System
Module 5: The Respiratory System	Module 5: The Respiratory System
Module 6: The Gastrointestinal System	Module 6: The Gastrointestinal System
Module 7: The Urinary System	Module 7: The Urinary System
Module 8: The Endocrine System	Module 8: The Endocrine System
Module 9: The Reproductive System	Module 9: The Reproductive System
Module 10: The Musculoskeletal System	Module 10: The Musculoskeletal System
Module 11: The Integumentary (Skin) System	Module 11: The Integumentary (Skin) System
Module 12: The Immune System and Infectious Diseases	Module 12: The Immune System and Infectious Diseases
Module 13: Additional Topics	Module 13: Cancer Therapy & Metabolic Syndrome & Diabetes

## SOME REASONS YOU MAY BE AVOIDING ACCREDITATION, AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- **I am not working for an Rx& D organization.** Rx&D made accreditation mandatory in 1993 and it has been included in the Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup> since that time. Even if you are not working for an Rx&D organization, in the public's eye there is only one set of standards. The official recognition process for Pharmaceutical Sales Professionals is the CCPE Accreditation course. Being a pharmaceutical sales representative used to be a job. It has evolved into a profession. Accreditation elevates you to the level of pharmaceutical professional.
- **My employer does not require it.** In this case what standard do you follow? Stakeholders expect a single standard for pharmaceutical professionals. With accreditation, you receive the respect that 15,000 professionals have received since 1971. Even if your standards are superior to CCPE accreditation, you will need to document them.
- **I have a solid science background and don't see the need for accreditation.** Then the process will be simple for you to become accredited.
- **I have no time for it. I can be successful without it.** Once you are accredited, it's valid for your entire career.
- **I'm not motivated to invest the effort to complete the accreditation course.** This is currently the only standard across the pharmaceutical community, and standards are required to earn the respect of our stakeholders.

Imagine what would happen if physicians were allowed to practice without completing their studies and being accredited by the College of Physicians! Would you expect a healthcare professional to trust you if you weren't accredited?

- **I worry about failing.** Then you should know that 97% of participants who take the accreditation course are successful. If you don't pass the first time, you will receive feedback on your exam and you can write the exam again the next month.
- **Is it really mandatory?** You may feel that you have no say in this process. However, every profession is regulated by standards, exams, audits and other processes. When we deal with people's health there is very little room for improvisation. We encourage you to develop a positive attitude, and see the value in the process.

What we do as pharmaceutical professionals has a big impact on the health of Canadians. Let's be passionately proud of what we do, and make a difference.

**1- Section 8.2.3 of the CODE OF CONDUCT:** To ensure professional standards for the industry, member representatives must pass the accreditation course offered by the Council for Continuing Pharmaceutical Education (CCPE) within two years of their employment.

