



Directions for Immigrants in  
Trades and Professional Careers

## Study Groups Start Dates

Canadian Registered  
Nurses Exam (CRNE)  
**October 19**

APEGGA National  
Professional Practice  
Exam **October 22 and  
23**

Canadian Society for  
Medical Laboratory  
Science (CSMLS)  
Certification Exam  
**November 13**

Pharmacy Examining  
Board of Canada  
(PEBC) Qualifying  
Examination Part 1  
**November 20**

Pharmacy Examining  
Board of Canada  
(PEBC) Qualifying  
Examination Part 2  
**November 20**

Clear Communication  
for Business and Clear  
Communication for  
Health Professionals  
**January 2011**

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# Directions Headlines

Issue 11

November 2010

## Dedication and hard work: Key ingredients in becoming a licensed Pharmacist

Becoming a licensed pharmacist in Alberta is not an easy task. Many internationally educated pharmacists have gone through long hours of study and personal and family sacrifices in order to attain licensure and practice a profession they have spent many years striving for in their own countries.

To obtain registration with the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP), internationally educated pharmacists must successfully write the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) Evaluating Exam (EE), Qualifying Exam Part 1 (MCQ) and Part 2 (OSCE), and the Jurisprudence and Ethics Exam. Additionally, candidates must meet ACP's language proficiency requirement and complete a minimum of a 1000 hours of structured practical training.

*"The OSCE study group allows clients to role play over 120 different OSCE scenarios over the course of 20 weeks. During these sessions each client receives individual feedback directed at improving their patient and physician interactions."*

Anjali Acharya Co-facilitator of Pharmacy study groups

Directions for Immigrants began offering study groups for the PEBC EE in 2007 and for the PEBC Part 1 and Part 2 in 2008. To date, Directions has offered 18 study groups, and a total of 64 participants have succeeded in their licensing exams.

Darlene Baker, career coach and facilitator of the pharmacy study groups notes three challenges internationally educated Pharmacists face when pursuing accreditation: understanding that a proactive customer service is an expectation of the pharmacy practice; learning the commercial names of drugs; and engaging in long hours of study after being out of school for many years.

Darlene points out some of the strengths of the Directions' study groups. "High quality written materials, structure, and access to Canadian pharmacist co-facilitators who are in charge of clarifying pharmacy concepts, constitute the fundamental pillars of our study groups," she says.



Peer support is also an essential asset of study groups. Participants are always willing to support each other. Some do better in certain areas so they will share knowledge and experience. The bonding that happens is amazing. They share time together and become friends, and most importantly, they create a peer support community.

Anjali Acharya, co-facilitator of the pharmacists study groups shares her experience. "I often learn as much from the clients as they learn from me. It is that shared goal of moving forward towards success for each unique client that keeps me excited and engaged. Facilitating makes me appreciate the international pharmacists I work with," Anjali says. Anjali feels professionally fulfilled when she makes participants broaden their scope of knowledge. (Go to next page)

## Dedication and hard work... (cont.)



*"The PEBC EE study group guided me in different study techniques. Resources such as reference books and mock exams were available to participants."*

Daniela Majzoub  
Participant of the PEBC  
QE Part 1 study group

*"As a group, we had a chance to present ourselves for cases in front of the class and also see others presenting which really helped us to improve our shortcomings."*

IMG Ayesha Nasir  
Successfully  
study group participant



She says there have been many changes in Alberta and these pharmacists will have many wonderful opportunities to engage in patient care once

licensed. "Today, pharmacy goes so much beyond dispensing and basic counselling," Anjali adds.

Bina Patel, a pharmacist from India, recently found a job in a national chain pharmacy. She has passed

the PEBC EE, Part 1 (MCQ) and Part 2 (OSCE). "The study groups always encouraged me to study more, and I had the opportunity to meet people who were in the same boat as I was," says Bina, adding she did not feel alone in achieving her professional goals.

Regarding the PEBC Evaluating Exam study group, Willa Encarnacion, from the Philippines, says the practice exams helped her improve and continuously evaluate herself. "Optimism and enthusiasm of my career coach and group mates

contributed a lot to my success," Willa stated.

For Nouman Rashid, from Pakistan, the licensing journey is almost over as he will complete his final practical training and receive his license this month. Having completed three study groups at Directions and successfully written the exams, he says that the study groups provided plenty of practice tests and the opportunity to be part of an effective learning environment. "My advice to immigrant pharmacists is to believe in themselves."

## AIMG OSCE Study Group: A passing success rate of 93 per cent

Outstanding results were obtained in the Alberta International Medical Graduate (AIMG) Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) study group. A total of 27 participants passed last September's AIMG OSCE, representing a success rate of 93%.

In Alberta, upon successful completion of the Medical Council of Canada Examination (MCCQE) and the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examination Part I (MCCQE Part I), International Medical Graduates (IMGs) can apply to the AIMG Program for assessment and matching to available residency positions in the province. The AIMG Program evaluates candidates for residency based on results obtained in the OSCE and a multiple mini interview.

Cayti Beyer, career coach and facilitator of the AIMG OSCE study group, explains why this learning experience was so successful. "The way the study group was organized and structured created an environment where all participants felt valuable, safe and encouraged," says Cayti, adding that weaknesses and strengths were discussed by all to encourage stronger clinical reasoning and a better understanding of the underlying ethics.

For Dr. Melissa Jack, physician consultant of this study group, three elements were key to outcomes achieved: relevant study materials, strong commitment from physician instructors (10 in total), and focused and direct feedback to address specific individual and group issues.

Dr. Randall Sargent, Councillor for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA) and physician instructor on ethics, refers to the quality and dedication of the study group's participants. "Participants studied hard and made use of study group resources and they also came with skills that had been activated by the course and their hard work," Dr. Sargent says.

Participants of the AIMG OSCE study group also recognize the value of this learning resource. When asked how the study group helped her in passing the exam, Pita Tingey, IMG from Indonesia, responded that the study group kept her focused on studying for the exam and helped her to be organized in her approach to clinical cases.



Directions for Immigrants in  
Trades and Professional Careers

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***Helping Immigrant Professionals  
restart their careers in Alberta***

Directions for Immigrants in Trades and Professional Careers support internationally trained and experienced professionals towards securing employment in their profession and gaining accreditation.

- Career Coaching
- Study Groups for licensing exams
- Workplace Communication
- Industry Networking Sessions

[www.directionsforimmigrants.ca](http://www.directionsforimmigrants.ca)

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## Moving towards licensure: Study Groups for Internationally Educated MLTs

In Alberta, internationally educated Medical Laboratory Technologists (IEMLTs) must register with the Alberta College of Medical Laboratory Technologists (ACMLT) to practice as a MLT. One of the steps to achieve MLT registration is to successfully write the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) Certification Exam.

Directions for Immigrants started offering CSMLS study groups in January 2009. Melanie Fox-Smith, career coach and facilitator of this

study group refers to the challenges IEMLTs face when pursuing accreditation. "IEMLTs struggle with the difference in techniques, devices and substrates used in MLT practice in Alberta," Melanie says. "There are differences between the responsibilities and definitions of the MLT role as compared to other countries."

The Directions' study group provides a clearly defined strategy on what to study for the CSMLS exam and a weekly opportunity to discuss and review the materials with both practicing, licensed MLTs and other internationally trained technologists studying for the same exam.

To develop the study group's curriculum and materials, Directions for Immigrants contacted the Calgary Lab Services, the

ACMLT and CSMLS. Melanie adds that these experts provided details on what materials to use in preparing for the exam and advice in developing the content of the study group. A teaching professional who worked for the CSMLS exam advisory was also consulted to ensure the study group content was in line with the exam content.

Vandana Bakshi, a former study group participant who succeeded in the CSMLS exam gave us her feedback. "Discussing the quizzes every week provided me with the opportunity to continuously update my knowledge," Vandana says. "The study group's participants had worked in different disciplines and had the expertise in different subjects, so it was very helpful to discuss and share knowledge with them."



**Next CSMLS study group starts on November 13**

### Extended Resource Centre hours

Directions for Immigrants is offering extended resource centre hours from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm on the following evenings:

(Tuesdays) November 16, 30  
and December 14

### Peer Networking Event: November 25th

On November 25, at 4:30 pm, Directions will be having a peer networking event. It will be a great opportunity to meet with former clients of Directions, from various professions and backgrounds who are now working in their professional field and/or have completed professional licensure. A promotional flyer with all the details is coming soon!