

Education Standards For Professional Membership in the Ontario Herbalists Association

The OHA has adopted certain minimum standards for its professional members which we feel are reasonable to ensure the safe practice of herbal medicine.

A professional member of the OHA is expected to meet or exceed the following education and training requirements.

There are four possible sub-categories available:

- 1 (a). Applicants with formal education qualifications acquired through a single program of education which meets or exceeds the minimum requirement of 1500 hours as outlined below:

At least 1100 hours of instruction / training, or equivalent in distance education format.

Of this, a minimum of 500 hours must consist of instruction in core herbal subjects such as materia medica, herbal therapeutics, herbal pharmacology, herbal pharmacy, history and philosophy of herbalism, herbal energetics, and field identification. The core herbal subjects should focus primarily on a single herbal tradition (eg. Western herbalism, TCM, Ayurveda, etc.)

In addition, a minimum of 350 hours must consist of instruction in the sciences including anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology, and nutrition.

At least 350 hours of practical supervised clinic. Clinic hours must primarily consist of client / patient consultations, assessment, protocol development, remedy formulation, herbal dispensing, record keeping and follow-up.

The program may consist of a combination of classroom, distance education and / or apprenticeship hours.

Applicants must submit documentary evidence to support all training hours. If training has been acquired through a program not recognized* by the OHA, detailed transcripts must be provided, together with contact information for the school and/or instructor.

If training was completed more than three years prior to application, the applicant must be able to demonstrate on-going education, professional achievement, or clinical practice during the intervening years. Documentary evidence must be included.

** Certain programs of study are known to meet the minimum requirements for professional membership in the OHA. These programs are listed on our web site, and graduates need only supply proof of graduation. In addition, specific programs may be approved which do not necessarily meet all of the hourly requirements. These are reviewed individually, and are approved based on the quality of the training provided.*

- 1 (b). Applicants who meet the required number of hours of training, but who have done so through more than one program of instruction will be asked to take a written and / or oral examination as part of their assessment.

Applicants must submit documentary evidence to support all training hours. Detailed transcripts must be provided, together with contact information for the schools and/or instructors.

Notwithstanding the OHA minimum requirements, all applicants are expected to have met the training requirements for the particular tradition in which they intend to practice.

2. Applicants who have received training or have apprenticed within an oral tradition that does not recognize certificates or diplomas as a means of attesting to the qualifications of practitioners within that tradition, will be assessed on the basis of the recommendations of their teacher(s) as long as the latter are respected within their community, and their authority is recognized within their tradition.

Their teacher(s) must be willing to either:

- (i) Meet or speak with a representative of the OHA Board of Directors or Professional Members Committee and provide their verbal and written assurance that the applicant is qualified to practice within their tradition, or
 - (ii) If their tradition does not allow them to provide their assurances in writing, meet with two representative of the OHA Board of Directors or Professional Members Committee and provide their verbal assurance that the applicant is qualified to practice within their tradition. The Board of Directors has the right to change this requirement to meeting with one representative of the OHA if it feels that a request to meet with two representatives may be considered disrespectful.
3. The OHA recognizes that many herbalists do not have the formal herbal education outlined in 1 above, and provision is made for applicants who fall into this category.

Applicants in this category should submit all of the following information:

Documentary evidence of all training in relevant fields.

Documentary evidence of completion of any supervised practical hours with a herbalist(s), together with the qualifications and training of the herbalist(s).

The applicant must have established and maintained a herbal practice for a minimum of 5 out of the past 7 years, and must provide evidence of practice (advertising, business registration, etc.). The applicant should also provide 1 professional healthcare practitioner letter of reference, and 5 client references. All references should be willing to allow direct contact from the OHA as necessary.

All applicants under this category will be asked to demonstrate their ability to practice safely by taking a written and/or oral examination.

Written examinations have their foundation in the Western herbal tradition at this time. Applicants who are trained in other disciplines may request a peer assessment only. In this case, every effort will be made to assemble a committee with knowledge and understanding of the applicant's tradition.

The OHA reserves the right to request a peer assessment for any applicant, regardless of documentation.

All applicants under all categories are subject to final approval by the OHA Board of Directors.

These standards are subject to ongoing review by the OHA Professional Members Committee.

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