

Alberta Herbalists Association - Education Standards

The AHA has adopted certain minimum standards for its professional members that we feel are reasonable to ensure the safe and effective practice of herbal medicine.

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

There are three possible educational pathways available:

1. For applicants with formal education qualifications acquired through a combination of classroom, correspondence and/or apprenticeship programs, the minimum requirement is 1500 hours* broken down as follows:
 - 1.1. Minimum 500 hours must consist of instruction in core herbal subjects such as history and philosophy of herbalism, materia medica, herbal therapeutics, herbal pharmacology, herbal pharmacy, safe use of herbs, therapeutic interactions, herbal energetics, botany and field identification;
 - 1.2. Minimum 350 hours must consist of instruction in the health sciences including anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, pathology and nutrition;
 - 1.3. Minimum 100 hours of practical supervised clinic;
 - 1.4. Minimum 200 hours semi-supervised practicum;
 - 1.5. Minimum 350 hours, which may consist of extra hours in any of the above points and/or additional complementary alternative medicine related subjects. See Appendix 1 for possible suggestions.

*Each Classroom hour presumes two additional study hours.

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

Semi-supervised practicum consists of independent work that is regularly checked by qualified supervisor who provides feedback and guidance.

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

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

If training is through more than one program of instruction, applications will be individually assessed based on level of education undertaken, rather than solely on the number of hours completed.

If training was completed more than five 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.

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 those teacher(s) are

respected within their community, and their authority is recognized within their tradition. Their teacher(s) must be willing to either:

- 2.1. Meet or speak with a representative of the Member 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
 - 2.2. If their tradition does not allow them to provide their assurances in writing, meet with two representative of the Member 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 Member Association if it feels that a request to meet with two representatives may be considered disrespectful.
3. The AHA recognizes that many herbalists do not have the formal herbal education outlined above, and provision is made for applicants who fall into this category.
- 3.1. Applicants in this category must submit all of the following information where applicable:
 - 3.1.1. Documentary evidence of all training in relevant fields
 - 3.1.2. Documentary evidence of completion of any supervised practical hours with a herbalist(s), together with the qualifications and training of the herbalist(s).
 - 3.1.3. The applicant must have established and maintained a herbal practice for a minimum of 2 out of the past 5 years, and must provide evidence of practice (advertising, business registration, etc.).
 - 3.1.4. The applicant should also provide 3 practitioner, and 3 client references. All references should be willing to allow direct contact from the Alberta Herbalists Association as necessary.
 - 3.1.5. Where documentary evidence is insufficient, or not available, applicants may be asked to demonstrate their ability to practice safely by taking a written and/or oral examination.
 - 3.2. 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.

All applicants under this category are subject to final approval by the Member Board of Directors. The Board reserves the right to request a peer assessment for any applicant, regardless of documentation. Membership in another herbal association does not mean automatic membership in the Alberta Herbalists Association.

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

Continuing Education

AHA recommends that each practitioner completes 40 hours per year of continuing education which can take a variety of forms that include such things as: conferences; workshops; apprenticeships, writing a published book and articles, mentoring; field trips; university, college and distance education from herbal institutions; self study through videos, research, new presentations (which required research).

APPENDIX 1

Minimum 350 hours, which may consist of educational hours in complementary alternative medicine related subjects, such as:

- Cultivation of herbs
- Good Wild Crafting Practices
- Organoleptic: tasting, smelling, & touching of plants in fresh, dried, & tinctured forms
- Research Skills
- Thesis
- Laboratory Science: interpreting and analyzing medical diagnostic tests
- Business Skills
- Additional Clinical Skills; referral protocols, legal issues
- Applied Remedy Preparation
- Plant Spirit Medicine
- Aromatherapy
- Flower Essences
- Study of Additional Natural Health Products
- Homeopathy
- Study of Additional Complementary Alternative Medicine