

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 300 hours supervised clinical practicum experience
 - 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.

Clinical Requirements

- **Total hours:** 300 clinical hours, supervised clinic, distributed as follows:
 - **Supervised clinical training:** 200 hours in-person direct supervised clinic in person with a qualified mentor or Clinical Supervisor.
 - **Semi-supervised training:** minimum 100 hours, including virtual/online supervised clinic with a Clinical Supervisor present on the telehealth call, case reviews and client management under less direct supervision.
- Clinic hours may consist of client/patient consultations, assessment, physical exams, protocol development, remedy formulation, herbal dispensing, record-keeping, and followup. This can take the form of a paid or unpaid internship.

Clinical experience must encompass more than casual consultations with family and friends. To qualify, sessions with individual clients must include a full health history intake, differential assessment, herbal protocols, and a reasonable number of formal follow-up visits. **Providing herb recommendations in a retail sales environment does not count as clinical experience unless it includes all of the above.** Although everyday health upsets are part of the herbal care herbalists routinely provide, we expect that Registered Herbalist applicants have spent most of their 300 clinical hours addressing health issues that require a broad and comprehensive process of differential assessment, herbal protocols, and follow up care.

All applicants should have sufficient knowledge of health assessment using medical sciences and utilize a holistic approach. The mandatory 300 clinical hours can be obtained as part of a college, university or educational program, or a mentorship program. In special cases, the Membership Committee may take into

consideration private practice experience. If training was completed more than 5 years prior to application, the applicant must be able to demonstrate ongoing continuing education, professional activity and proof of clinical practice during those years (case history analysis, business licenses, insurance etc.).

For herbalists from paradigms outside of the western herbal medicine model, the applicant must have completed at least 250 hours of supervised clinical training in Western herbal medicine, under a professional Western herbalist with an active practice (and who is an active registered professional member of a western herbal medicine association such as a provincial association under the CCHA, NIMH, AHG, NHAA).

In case of mentorship or apprenticeship, a letter of completion is required outlining the mentorship program, skills completed and obtained competence of the applicant. At the discretion of the Membership Committee additional case histories and protocol development may be requested.

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 AHA / 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 representatives 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