

# Accrediting and Standardizing Pharmacy Technician Training Programs

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# Disclosure

Paul Sabatini reports no significant or relevant relationships or other affiliations to disclose.

## Program Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, participants should be able to:

- Identify the key components and requirements necessary to initially accredit and standardize a Pharmacy Technician Training Program based on the January 2014 ASHP Accreditation Standard.
- Describe and explain the key components that go into the accreditation & standardization of Pharmacy Technician Training Programs
- Use and apply the key components in order to earn and maintain accreditation & standardization for Pharmacy Technician Training Programs

## Understanding the Difference and Similarity between Institutional/ Organizational and Programmatic Accreditation

- The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education and learning meets acceptable levels of quality.
- Institutions and/ or programs that request an agency's evaluation and that meet an agency's criteria are then "accredited" by that agency.
- Institutions which remains in compliance with all accreditation standards maintain a good standing with the accrediting agency .
  - Accrediting Commission of Career Schools & Colleges (ACCSC)
  - Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges & Schools (ACICS)
    - Western Association of Schools & Colleges (WASC)

## Understanding the Difference and Similarity between Institutional/ Organizational and Programmatic Accreditation

- Programmatic accreditation: The act of granting approval to a program conducting pharmacy technician training after the program has met requirements and has been reviewed and evaluated through an official process (document review, site survey, and review and evaluation by the Commission on Credentialing)
- ASHP strives to align its standards of accreditation for Pharmacy Technician Training Programs with the Institutional/ Organizational accrediting agencies by having the program remain in compliance in order to be in good standing

(American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists)

## Administration of Institutional/ Organizational Accreditation

- Beginning in January of 2014, all Technician Training Programs conducted by these organizations, must be accredited, when applicable, by the appropriate agency or agencies and shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the requirements for meeting this standard.
- The technician education and training program shall be subject to similar general administrative control and guidance employed by the organization for other allied health care training programs. The organization conducting the program must provide financial support to the program sufficient to enable the program to achieve its stated goals.

## Key Components of a Pharmacy Technician Training Program

As January is fast approaching, the following key components are required to already be in place for any Technician Training Program to become initially accredited and standardized.

- The organization must ensure that physical facilities for all parts of the program are appropriate, safe, and sufficient to enable students to meet the programs' educational goals and must allow for confidential meetings between students and faculty.
- Information about the Program provided to the candidates
- Program Director, Faculty/ Instructors, Program Advisory Committee
- Experiential Site Coordinator and Experiential Sites
- A curriculum which must prepare students for practice as entry-level pharmacy technicians in a variety of contemporary settings (e.g., community, hospital, home care, long-term care) and students must acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for practice.

## RU Ready Assessment Tool

- Prior to starting a new technician training program and/ or seeking accreditation with ASHP for the technician training program, ASHP has developed an assessment tool which will assist a member of the program's team, through a series of questions related to pharmacy technician training program accreditation readiness.
- When completed, the individual responsible for completing the RU Ready Assessment Tool, will have a good grasp of how close he/ she may or may not be to initiating the formal accreditation process and will ultimately save him/ her time and maximize the effectiveness of your future program.
- You may triple check or re-start the assessment tool to be sure the key components are already incorporated and will meet the standards.

## Earning ASHP Accreditation Some Preliminary Steps

- Discuss, review, reflect and follow through with delivering and implementing the standards of accreditation, the Model Curriculum for Pharmacy Technician Training and ALL of the forms and tools required for the program's initial visit as well as, the surveyor team visit, with the faculty, the students and the administration team.
- Prepare the school and/or program for a surveying team visit and expect the unexpected during the visit
- Await the results of the surveying team visit
- If and when they citations or findings are found during the survey team's visit, correct them in a timely manner in order to earn accreditation and for the program to be in full compliance.
- You will have time to fix the citations or findings!

## Qualifying Methods for the Technician Training Program's Program Director

Depending on the institutional/ organizational accrediting agency, the qualifying methods for an instructor to teach a candidate to become a Pharmacy Technician, may be slightly different that ASHP's standards.

- The program director must:
- (1) be a licensed pharmacist or a nationally certified pharmacy technician;
- (2) have at least five years of experience in pharmacy practice prior to entering the position;
- (3) adhere to the state's regulations for licensure or registration in the practice of pharmacy; and,
- (4) demonstrate on-going continuing education in the field of pharmacy and/or education.

## Qualifying Methods for the Technician Training Program's Program Director

- 2.1.c. If the program director is a pharmacy technician, he/she:
  - (1) should have graduated from an ASHP-accredited pharmacy technician training program; and, (2) must possess or be pursuing actively, with a written plan for achieving, an Associates Degree or an appropriate state teaching credential at a minimum.
- 2.1.d. To stay current with professional issues, the program director must be a member of a national pharmacy or education association and a state pharmacy association. He/she must ensure that memberships in pharmacy and education associations are represented among the program faculty members.
- 2.1.e. The director must ensure that there is a sufficient complement of appropriate program faculty and staff to meet the needs of the program and to enable compliance with the standards.
- 2.1.f. In the simulated portion of the program, the program director must take necessary precautions to ensure an effective and safe level of direct supervision of students.

## Qualifying Methods for the Technician Training Program's Faculty/ Instructors and Experiential Site Coordinators

- 2.2.a. Faculty/instructors must have demonstrated expertise in the areas in which they are instructing and adhere to state regulations for licensure or registration to practice as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician. They must have a minimum of three years of experience in the practice setting or area of expertise in which they are teaching.
- 2.3.a.. The experiential site coordinator is the person who works at the experiential site and coordinates or oversees students' activities at the practice site.
- 2.3.b. Experiential site coordinators must have demonstrated contribution and commitment to pharmacy practice and patient care, and have at least three years experience in the type of pharmacy setting for which they are training students.
- 2.3.c. If experiential site coordinators delegate training responsibilities, it must be to an experienced staff member.
- 2.3.d. Experiential site coordinators must act as a liaison between site and the program director to ensure that the student receives the intended educational experience and is evaluated effectively

## Curriculum and the training schedule

### The Foundation of What We Teach is ALL Relevant to the Job

- The training schedule must consist of a minimum of 600 clock hours of health-related education and training, extending over a period of 15 weeks or longer. The curriculum should consist of current and relevant core competencies for entry level positions as a pharmacy technician
- Pharmacy Technology didactic, simulated and experiential components are vital for the adult learner/ technician trainee to be taught by qualified faculty members. Along with a standardized curriculum already in place for the faculty to provide the trainees with an enriched and full understanding of the depth and nature of the work and of the career path for the pharmacy technician.
- By doing so, the trainees will then receive a comprehensive, rich education and a strong working knowledge of Pharmacy practice

## Education and Training Program Goals

- The education and training program shall be based on the following goals that reflect current and future pharmacy technician functions and responsibilities at the entry-level.
- **Goals to be addressed and discussed within the curriculum are;**
- Personal/Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills
- Foundational Professional Knowledge and Skills
- Processing and Handling of Medications and Medication Orders
- Sterile and Non-Sterile Compounding
- Procurement, Billing, Reimbursement and Inventory Management
- Patient- and Medication-Safety
- Technology and Informatics
- Regulatory Issues
- Quality Assurance

## Laboratory Training *A.K.A. The Fun Stuff*

- As a part of the sequence of instruction, the sequence of activities to transition from simulated to experiential must be:
- 3.4.a. observation (student observes expert performing task);
- 3.4.b. simulation (including observation, feedback, and evaluation by an expert); and,
- 3.4.c. experiential performance under supervision.
- Live, hands-on, skill development for adult learners is a good thing, a surprising fact is that not all Pharmacy Technician training programs have it.
- Minimum laboratory components of an accredited & standardized training program should coincide with the two main areas of practice settings: Community pharmacy and In-patient pharmacy, which involves teaching the manipulative tasks and techniques within those practice settings and other branch-out areas of practice settings

## Experiential Training - Real World Experience

- Experiential training instills traits of accountability, inner confidence, networking skills and the skill retention for a student.
- Students' experiential activities must be performed in at least two different types of contemporary pharmacy settings, one of which must be a dispensing pharmacy (e.g., hospital, community) for 160 hours.
- ASHP accredited and standardized training programs should embrace experiential sites which will enhance and incorporate the goals & objectives of accreditation

## Maintaining accreditation and the standards with a Strategic Plan

- The program must develop a strategic plan that is reviewed and revised, if appropriate, at least annually.
- The plan must: reflect the role of the program within the community; include long-term program goals, specific measurable objectives, strategies for achieving the goals and objectives, a schedule for analyzing and evaluating the plan, and progress on the plan; and address program outcomes (e.g., graduation rates)
- Strategic plans are beneficial for the training program's growth and development

## The Pharmacy Practice Model Initiative (P.P.M.I.)

- As a part of the P.P.M.I.'s goals stemming from the National Dashboard, Goal Three is where both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will have appropriate **training and credentials** for the activities performed within their scope of practice.
- Goal measure 3.4., the percentage of pharmacy technicians working in hospitals/health systems who have completed ASHP-accredited training [B6d, D5] has proven a significant increase of the 2012 composite score of : 25.9% (from 23.8% in 2011) The actual increase for goal measure 3.4 is 13.6% in 2012.
- The goal of the P.P.M.I is to have all technician training programs ASHP accredited by 2015

## Legislation, it's up and it's downs!

- Legislation should be put into place at the state level to have all Technician Training Programs accredited by ASHP.
- In order to increase consumer/patient, and peer confidence of the Technician's abilities and stature in the profession, accrediting & standardizing all Pharmacy Technician Training Programs is a worthwhile process with many positive outcomes, specifically for the consumers/patients.
- The State Boards of Pharmacy, the legislature, and pharmacy professional organizations may face challenges of working together when the concerted efforts of accrediting & standardizing Pharmacy Technician Training Programs are not proven as effective to the legislature.
- The P.P.M.I. is designed to work with the legislature and the State Boards of Pharmacy

## Post-test Questions

- What is the overall similarity between Institutional/Organizational and Programmatic accreditation?
- What are the qualifying methods for a Pharmacy Technician Instructor?
- What is the name of the assessment tool available from ASHP for a Technician Training Program to start up a new program or use prior to the accreditation process?
- What will experiential training instill for the student?
- How can Pharmacy Technician Training Programs increase consumer, patient, & peer confidence?

## Post-test Answers

- Compliance
- Must have demonstrated expertise in the areas in which they are instructing and adhere to state regulations for licensure or registration to practice as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician. They must have a minimum of three years of experience in the practice setting or area of expertise in which they are teaching.
- RU Ready Assessment Tool
- Accountability, inner confidence, networking skills and skill retention
- By being accredited with ASHP!

# Questions, Answers, Discussion & Closing

Thank you for your time and attention.  
I sincerely hope you learned something new  
today!

# Reference

- [www.ashp.org](http://www.ashp.org)