



Pharmacy Technology Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Is pharmacy for me?

A career in pharmacy opens avenues to become a part of one of the fastest growing fields in health care. Pharmacy technicians work closely with pharmacists to help ensure that patients have the medications that they need.

Is being a pharmacy technician easy?

Although careers in pharmacy are rewarding, pharmacy is not easy work. Many pharmacy technicians spend a majority of the day on their feet. Pharmacy technicians may be asked to work a variety of shifts, including weekends and holidays.

What are the legal requirements to work as a pharmacy technician?

The requirements to work as a pharmacy technician differ from state to state. For detailed requirements for your specific state, contact the state board of pharmacy.

How do I find an accredited training program?

The Accreditation Services Division of ASHP publishes and maintains an online directory of accredited pharmacy technician training programs arranged alphabetically by state. HGTC is proud of our educational partnership and accreditation with ASHP.

Why is accreditation important?

Pharmacy technicians play an increasingly important role in public safety. Responsibilities are expanding and evolving as the pharmacy profession changes with new medications, technologies, and challenges. The accreditation process is designed to protect the public by requiring training programs to meet a nationally recognized standard of excellence.

Can I complete an ASHP accredited pharmacy technician training program through an online or correspondence course?

Be wary of programs advertised in media that seem “too good to be true”. Becoming a competent pharmacy technician requires both knowledge and skills that are best developed through a hands-on experience. ASHP-accredited programs involve a combination of classroom instruction and working experiences in an actual pharmacy. ASHP-accredited programs must be a minimum length of 600 hours extending over 15 weeks or longer.

Does my state require that I graduate from an ASHP-accredited program in order to work?

Each state has different requirements, controlled by the board of pharmacy in that state. Not all states require pharmacy technicians to complete an ASHP-accredited educational program. However, many states require formalized training and accept ASHP-accredited programs to meet that requirement. Some state boards of pharmacy require both formal training and national certification (passing of an examination) in order to become registered or licensed to work. Enrolling in an accredited technician training program will help you to build the necessary skills to assist pharmacists and patients.

For detailed requirements for your specific state, contact the state board of pharmacy.

In South Carolina, for example, you will need to understand the difference between a registered pharmacy technician and a certified pharmacy technician. The Board of Pharmacy makes specific distinctions between acceptable duties of each category, making certified pharmacy technicians a valued and fundamental element within many pharmacies. Currently, to be granted a status of “SC certified pharmacy technician,” one of the requirements is, indeed, the successful completion of an ASHP accredited program.

What is certification?

Certified pharmacy technicians successfully completed a test that shows that they have the knowledge needed to perform the duties of a pharmacy technician. The certification exam is given by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB). PTCB's certification is valid nationwide, but is not a substitute for registration or licensure by your state board of pharmacy. PTCB is currently the only certification program endorsed by the major national pharmacy organizations, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). Recently, the NABP *Task Force on Standardized Pharmacy Technician Education and Training* has issued a recommendation that was approved by the Executive Committee of the NABP that all boards of pharmacy require pharmacy technicians to be certified by 2020.

How much do pharmacy technicians earn?

Pharmacy technician salaries in the Myrtle Beach area range from \$22,417 to \$33,692 with the median income being \$27,592. Formally trained and/or certified technicians may earn more. (source: www.salary.com)

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the national median hourly wage of pharmacy technicians was \$14.62 per hour, or \$30,410 annually. This survey, however, did not 'carve out' the element of certification among this population. (source: www.bls.gov)

What is the employment outlook for pharmacy technicians?

Pharmacy technicians are currently in very high demand and this demand is expected to continue through at least 2024. As pharmacies expand patient care services, the role of and need for pharmacy technicians will also expand. The pharmacy technology office at HGTC routinely receives requests from area employers in search of certified pharmacy technician students for gainful employment opportunities.

Where can a career as a pharmacy technician take me?

With the appropriate amount of training and experience, pharmacy technicians may be promoted to supervisory roles, may seek specialization (e.g. oncology, nuclear pharmacy), or may pursue further education and training to become a pharmacist. Some technicians gain specialized skills in sterile products admixture, pharmacy

automation, and health information systems. An ASHP survey of pharmacy practice managers in August 2009 revealed 56 percent of organizations offer career advancement opportunities for technicians. In an ASHP survey of pharmacy technicians, 81 percent indicated they expect to perform duties of a pharmacy technician for five or more years.

Where can I learn more about the profession of pharmacy?

For additional information about the profession of pharmacy, accreditation standards, and/or employment within the industry, consider the following online resources:

<http://www.ashp.org/>

<http://www.ptcb.org/>

<http://www.pharmacytechnician.com/>

<http://www.pharmacist.com>

For more information about HGTC's Pharmacy Technology Program, contact:

Kevin Hope, RPh, Associate Professor/Program Director

(843) 477-2177

kevin.hope@hgtc.edu