



Guidance to ACPE-Accredited Providers to Plan and Conduct CE for Pharmacy Technicians *Updated March 2026*

Introduction

Similar to the education of pharmacists, there is a continuum of learning for pharmacy technicians. Many students attend a training program to become pharmacy technicians. Within the newly revised *ASHP/ACPE Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs*, there is more emphasis on the collaborative behaviors and workflow of pharmacy technicians with pharmacists and health care staff, including these key structural changes to the Standards:

- There is now one level of pharmacy technician education and training program, replacing the option for Entry-level and Advanced-level pharmacy technician education and training standard
- Standards restructured from 15 standards with key elements -> to 5 standards focused on specific areas related to the technician education and training program

Competencies for Pharmacy Technicians

Competencies were identified for pharmacy technician training. These competencies focus on medication safety, pharmacy law, quality assurance, and technical skills like compounding and calculations to support pharmacists. Core areas include managing prescription orders, pharmacy informatics, sterile/non-sterile compounding, and inventory control to ensure accuracy, safety, and regulatory compliance in various pharmacy settings. These competencies will assist ACPE-accredited providers to conduct and plan CPE activities at the appropriate level of a pharmacy technician.

In addition, once in practice, most pharmacy technicians are required to engage in CPE to meet regulatory and certification requirements. Regulatory requirements include state boards of pharmacy requirements composed of specific number of contact hours and topics. Certification bodies require CPE for recertification. Specific outlines are noted below:

Pharmacy Technician Certification Board:

- Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination® (PTCE®) Content Outline: [PTCE Content Outline](#)
- Compounded Sterile Preparation Technician® (CSPT®) Content Outline: [CSPT Exam Content Outline](#)
- Certified Pharmacy Technician Educator™ (CPTeD™) Content Outline: [CPTeD Exam Content Outline](#)

National Healthcareer Association

- [2016 to 2023 ExCPT Test Plan Crosswalk](#)

Content for CE for Pharmacy Technicians

As accredited CPE providers, all CPE activities must be in compliance with the ACPE *Accreditation Standards for Continuing Pharmacy Education*. Organizations must plan appropriately for pharmacy technicians

including identification of an educational gap, development of measurable learning objectives, inclusion of balanced content, use of active learning techniques and incorporation of learning assessment methods.

Standard 2: Gap Analysis

The provider must develop CPE activities based on a knowledge, skill, or practice gap. The provider should identify gaps between what pharmacy technicians currently know or do and what is needed and desired in practice.

Guidance:

An identified knowledge, skill, and/or practice gap should guide content development and delivery of CPE activities. These may include legislation changes, evaluation from a regulatory or accrediting body (i.e. Joint Commission), release of new or updated evidence-based treatment guidelines, self-report from practitioners, etc. Providers should identify the root of the identified gap (i.e. the specific knowledge, skill, attitude, experience) which should establish the activity type, learning objectives, active learning exercises, and outcomes.

The provider should consider the desired competencies for entry-level or advanced-level pharmacy technicians, practice setting, and level of content to practice.

Standard 4: CPE Activity Objectives

The provider must develop objectives for each CPE activity that define what the pharmacy technicians should be able to do at the completion of each CPE activity.

Guidance:

Objectives must be:

- ✓ specific and measurable
- ✓ developed to specifically address the identified educational need or gap (Standard 2)
- ✓ addressed by an active learning activity (Standard 7) and
- ✓ covered by a learning assessment (Standard 9)

Note: If the CPE activity is designed to address an educational need and/or practice gap for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, separate learning objectives may or may not be needed. If the content is related to a pharmacist and pharmacy technician to work as a team, one set of objectives may exist with each team member's roles and responsibilities defined.

Refer to the pharmacy technician scope of practice and Appendix 1 for aid in developing appropriate learning objectives.

Standard 7: Teaching and Learning Methods

The provider must assure that all CPE activities include active participation and involvement of the pharmacy technician.

Guidance:

The methodologies employed should be determined by the CPE activity planned, objectives, educational content, and the size and composition of the intended audience of pharmacy technicians. The provider should design and implement active learning exercises as a component of live and home study instructional methods.

Standard 8: Educational Materials

The provider in collaboration with faculty must offer educational materials for each CPE activity that will enhance the pharmacy technicians' understanding of the content and foster applications to pharmacy practice.

Guidance:

Educational materials should serve as a guide, provide additional sources of information, and include reference tools usable in practice.

Standard 9: Assessment of Learning

The provider in collaboration with faculty must include learning assessments in each CPE activity to allow pharmacy technicians to assess their achievement of the learned content. Completion of a learning assessment is required for CPE credit.

Guidance:

The provider may select formal and informal techniques for assessment of learning. Informal techniques typically involve participant discussions or polling. Formal techniques, such as tests and quizzes, are typically individualized, written, and graded. The assessment should be consistent with the identified CPE activity objectives, activity type, and learner type.

Standard 10: Assessment Feedback

The provider must ensure learner assessment feedback is provided to pharmacy technicians in an appropriate, timely, and constructive manner.

Guidance:

The provider in collaboration with faculty is encouraged to consistently provide the learner with the rationale for the correct response in instances when a learner has an incorrect response.

Standard 11: Evaluation of CPE Activity

Providers must develop and conduct evaluations which allow pharmacy technicians to provide feedback on CPE activities. Elements of the evaluation should be relevant to the intended outcome of the activity. Feedback should be summarized for pharmacy technicians separately and used in a systematic fashion for the purpose of ongoing improvement of the overall CPE program.

APPENDIX 1. COMPETENCY EXPECTATIONS FOR PHARMACY TECHNICIANS

(Taken from the *ASHP/ACPE Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs*)

Standard Five provides evidence of contemporary pharmacy technician education and training knowledge, skills, and abilities that pharmacy technicians will need to be competent members of the pharmacy workforce. Through didactic, simulation, and externship training, the student will gain experience and knowledge to have ability to demonstrate professional behaviors and ethical conduct; process and handle of medications and medication orders; demonstrate patient care, quality and safety knowledge and skills; understand regulatory and compliance knowledge and skills.

The education and training program develops the competencies that reflect current and future pharmacy technician functions and responsibilities.

Standard 5: Curriculum

- 5.1 Students demonstrate professional behaviors and ethical conduct to fulfill responsibilities entrusted to pharmacy technicians, while following their organization's policies and Code of Conduct. Student behavior and conduct shall include the following:
 - 5.1.a Appearance and behavior is professional and appropriate for the pharmacy work environment.
 - 5.1.b Communicate clearly and effectively, both verbally, non-verbally, and in writing.
 - 5.1.c Demonstrate a respectful and professional attitude when interacting with diverse patient populations, colleagues, and other healthcare professionals.
 - 5.1.d Apply self-management skills, including time and stress management.
 - 5.1.e Demonstrate problem solving skills, customer service, and teamwork.

- 5.2 Participate in wellness promotion and disease prevention.

- 5.3 Understands basic knowledge relevant to the pharmacy technician's role, including the following:
 - 5.3.a Anatomy and physiology
 - 5.3.b Pharmacology
 - 5.3.c Medical terminology

- 5.4 Perform mathematical calculations essential to the duties of pharmacy technicians in a variety of settings.

- 5.5 Demonstrate adherence to infection prevention procedures.

- 5.6 Accurately receive, process, and prepare products and prescriptions/medication orders that are safe for patient use.

- 5.7 Collect, organize, and record demographic and clinical information to assist pharmacists in the monitoring of medication therapy.

- 5.8 Identify patients who desire/require counseling to optimize the use of medications, equipment, and devices.

- 5.9 Explains concepts and processes for both compounded sterile and non-sterile medication

products per applicable, current United States Pharmacopeia (USP) Chapter(s).

5.10 Prepares non-sterile medication products.

5.11 Store and prepare a variety of medication products (including requiring special handling and documentation), that will align with planned experiential rotation(s) and are in compliance with applicable current USP Chapters.

Some examples may include:

- Non-Patient Specific medications, variety of oral syringes prepared, unit dose medications, long-term care, and non-sterile compounding during simulation, emergency kits, emergency carts, and bulk compounding.
- Prepare or simulate chemotherapy or hazardous drug preparations, per applicable current USP Chapters.
- Controlled substances.
- Investigational drugs: ○ Understand the appropriate medication use process to investigational drugs, medications being used in off-label indications, and emerging drug therapies as required. Understand the handling of investigational drugs, including immunotherapy agents, biologic agents, and pharmacologic therapies.

5.12 Maintain pharmacy facilities and equipment.

5.13 Use information from Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

5.14 Describe the Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA) for product tracking, tracing, and handling requirements.

5.15 Use current technology to ensure the accuracy of medication dispensing.

5.16 Demonstrate Point of Sale process and adjudication, including collection of payment for pharmacy services.

5.17 Explain accepted procedures in purchasing pharmaceuticals, devices, and supplies.

5.18 Manage inventory of medications, equipment, and devices.

5.19 Describe the management of product recall, product shortages, and medication error reporting.

5.20 Describe accepted procedures utilized in identifying disposing of medications and supplies.

5.21 Process, handle, and demonstrate administration techniques of immunizations and other injectable medications.

Patient Care, Quality and Safety Knowledge and Skills

5.22 Demonstrate patient-safety and medication-safety practices (e.g., management of high alert, high risk, tall man lettering, look-alike sounds-alike).

- 5.23 Explain basic safety and emergency preparedness applicable to pharmacy services (e.g., floods, hurricanes, robberies, bioterrorism, terrorism).
- 5.24 Perform medication histories as part of the medication reconciliation process.
- 5.25 Demonstrate point-of-care testing (e.g., glucose monitoring, cholesterol screening, blood pressure, temperature).
- 5.26 Verify measurements, preparation, and/or packaging of medications produced by others.

Regulatory and Compliance Knowledge and Skills

- 5.27 Demonstrate application of state and federal laws pertaining to processing, handling and dispensing of medications including controlled substances.
- 5.28 Discuss state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to pharmacy technicians, including obtaining and maintaining registration, licensure, and/or certification to work as a pharmacy technician.
- 5.29 Describe the pharmacy technician's role, pharmacist's role, and other occupations in the healthcare environment.
- 5.30 Explain the importance of regulatory and related agencies, such as: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP), The Joint Commission (TJC), US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), United States Pharmacopeia (USP), Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), National Coordinating Council for Medication Error Reporting and Prevention (NCC MERP), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).
- 5.31 Describe Protected Health Information (PHI) and maintains compliance with all Health Insurance Portability and Accountable Act (HIPAA) regulations.