



Guidance to ACPE-Accredited Providers to Plan and Conduct CE for Pharmacy Technicians *Updated April 2025*

Introduction

Similar to the education of pharmacists, there is a continuum of learning for pharmacy technicians. Many students attend a training program to become a pharmacy technician. 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:

- Entry-level and Advanced-level pharmacy technician education and training standards have replaced the previous concept of one level of pharmacy technician education and training.
- All students need to complete an Entry-level program to pursue Advanced-level education and training or can complete a program that prepares for both levels as a continuous program.

The Entry-level program prepares students for practice as Entry-level pharmacy technicians in a variety of contemporary settings (e.g., community, hospital, home care, long-term care) and has students acquire knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities needed for such practice.

The Advanced-level program prepares students for practice as Advanced-level pharmacy technicians, in a broad range of advanced roles in a variety of contemporary settings (e.g., community, hospital, home care, long-term care) and has students acquire additional knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities beyond those of the Entry-level pharmacy technician, needed for such advanced practice. (See Appendix I)

Competencies for Pharmacy Technicians

Competencies were identified for entry- and advanced-level training. These competencies are located in Appendix I and [here](#). 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 change, 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*)

The education and training program develops the competencies that reflect current and future pharmacy technician functions and responsibilities at the Entry-level and the Advanced-level. To educate at the Advanced-level, the education and training program will prepare students to achieve both Entry-level and Advanced-level knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities. The program prepares students for practice as Entry-level pharmacy technicians in a variety of contemporary settings (e.g., community, hospital, home care, long-term care) and has students acquire knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities needed for such practice. The program prepares students for practice as Advanced-level pharmacy technicians, in a broad range of advanced roles in a variety of contemporary settings (e.g., community, hospital, home care, long-term care) and has students acquire additional knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities beyond those of the Entry-level pharmacy technician, needed for such advanced practice.

Standard 1: Personal/Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills

Key Elements for Entry-level:

- 1.1 Demonstrate ethical conduct.
- 1.2 Present an image appropriate for the profession of pharmacy in appearance and behavior.
- 1.3 Demonstrate active and engaged listening skills.
- 1.4 Communicate clearly and effectively, both verbally and in writing.
- 1.5 Demonstrate a respectful and professional attitude when interacting with diverse patient populations, colleagues, and professionals.
- 1.6 Apply self-management skills, including time, stress, and change management.
- 1.7 Apply interpersonal skills, including negotiation skills, conflict resolution, customer service, and teamwork.
- 1.8 Demonstrate problem-solving skills.

Additional Key Elements for Advanced-level

- 1.9 Demonstrate capability to manage or supervise pharmacy technicians in matters such as conflict resolution, teamwork, and customer service.
- 1.10 Apply critical thinking skills, creativity, and innovation.
- 1.11 Apply supervisory skills related to human resource policies and procedures.
- 1.12 Demonstrate the ability to effectively and professionally communicate with other healthcare professionals, payors and other individuals necessary to serve the needs of patients and practice.

Standard 2: Foundational Professional Knowledge and Skills

Key Elements for Entry-level

- 2.1 Explain the importance of maintaining competency through continuing education and continuing professional development.
- 2.2 Demonstrate ability to maintain confidentiality of patient information, and understand applicable state and federal laws.
- 2.3 Describe the pharmacy technician's role, pharmacist's role, and other occupations in the healthcare environment.
- 2.4 Describe wellness promotion and disease prevention concepts.
- 2.5 Demonstrate basic knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pharmacology, and medical terminology relevant to the pharmacy technician's role.

- 2.6 Perform mathematical calculations essential to the duties of pharmacy technicians in a variety of settings.
- 2.7 Explain the pharmacy technician's role in the medication-use process.
- 2.8 Practice and adhere to effective infection control procedures.

Additional Key Elements for Advanced-level

- 2.9 Describe investigational drug process, medications being used in off-label indications, and emerging drug therapies.
- 2.10 Describe further knowledge and skills required for achieving advanced competencies.
- 2.11 Support wellness promotion and disease prevention programs.

Standard 3: Processing and Handling of Medications and Medication Orders

Key Elements for Entry-level:

- 3.1 Assist pharmacists in collecting, organizing, and recording demographic and clinical information for the Pharmacist Patient Care Process.
- 3.2 Receive, process, and prepare prescriptions/medication orders for completeness, accuracy, and authenticity to ensure safety.
- 3.3 Assist pharmacists in the identification of patients who desire/require counseling to optimize the use of medications, equipment, and devices.
- 3.4 Prepare patient-specific medications for distribution.
- 3.5 Prepare non-patient-specific medications for distribution.
- 3.6 Assist pharmacists in preparing, storing, and distributing medication products including those requiring special handling and documentation.
- 3.7 Assist pharmacists in the monitoring of medication therapy.
- 3.8 Maintain pharmacy facilities and equipment.
- 3.9 Use information from Safety Data Sheets (SDS), National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Hazardous Drug List, and the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) to identify, handle, dispense, and safely dispose of hazardous medications and materials.
- 3.10 Describe Food and Drug Administration product tracking, tracing and handling requirements.
- 3.11 Apply quality assurance practices to pharmaceuticals, durable and non-durable medical equipment, devices, and supplies.
- 3.12 Explain procedures and communication channels to use in the event of a product recall or shortage, a medication error, or identification of another problem.
- 3.13 Use current technology to ensure the safety and accuracy of medication dispensing.
- 3.14 Collect payment for medications, pharmacy services, and devices.
- 3.15 Describe basic concepts related to preparation for sterile and non-sterile compounding.
- 3.16 Prepare simple non-sterile medications per applicable USP chapters (e.g., reconstitution, basic ointments and creams).
- 3.17 Assist pharmacists in preparing medications requiring compounding of non-sterile products.
- 3.18 Explain accepted procedures in purchasing pharmaceuticals, devices, and supplies.
- 3.19 Explain accepted procedures in inventory control of medications, equipment, and devices.

- 3.20 Explain accepted procedures utilized in identifying and disposing of expired medications.
- 3.21 Explain accepted procedures in delivery and documentation of immunizations.
- 3.22 Prepare, store, and deliver medication products requiring special handling and documentation.

Additional Key elements for Advanced-level

- 3.23 Prepare compounded sterile preparations per applicable, current USP Chapters.
- 3.24 Prepare medications requiring moderate and high level non-sterile compounding as defined by USP (e.g., suppositories, tablets, complex creams).
- 3.25 Prepare or simulate chemotherapy/hazardous drug preparations per applicable, current USP Chapters.
- 3.26 Initiate, verify, and manage the adjudication of billing for complex and/or specialized pharmacy services and goods.
- 3.27 Apply accepted procedures in purchasing pharmaceuticals, devices, and supplies.
- 3.28 Apply accepted procedures in inventory control of medications, equipment, and devices.
- 3.29 Process, handle, and demonstrate administration techniques and document administration of immunizations and other injectable medications.
- 3.30 Apply the appropriate medication use process to investigational drugs, medications being used in off-label indications, and emerging drug therapies as required.
- 3.31 Manage drug product inventory stored in equipment or devices used to ensure the safety and accuracy of medication dispensing.

Standard 4: Patient Care, Quality and Safety Knowledge and Skills

Key Elements for Entry-level

- 4.1 Explain the Pharmacists' Patient Care Process and describe the role of the pharmacy technician in the patient care process.
- 4.2 Apply patient- and medication-safety practices in aspects of the pharmacy technician's roles.
- 4.3 Explain how pharmacy technicians assist pharmacists in responding to emergent patient situations, safely and legally.
- 4.4 Explain basic safety and emergency preparedness procedures applicable to pharmacy services.
- 4.5 Assist pharmacist in the medication reconciliation process.
- 4.6 Explain point of care testing.
- 4.7 Explain pharmacist and pharmacy technician roles in medication management services.
- 4.8 Describe best practices regarding quality assurance measures according to leading quality organizations.

Additional Key Elements for Advanced-level

- 4.9 Verify measurements, preparation, and/or packaging of medications produced by other healthcare professionals.
- 4.10 Perform point-of-care testing to assist pharmacist in assessing patient's clinical status.
- 4.11 Participate in the operations of medication management services.
- 4.12 Participate in technical and operational activities to support the Pharmacists' Patient Care Process as assigned.
- 4.13 Obtain certification as a Basic Life Support Healthcare Provider.

Standard 5: Regulatory and Compliance Knowledge and Skills

Key Elements for Entry-level

- 5.1 Describe and apply state and federal laws pertaining to processing, handling and dispensing of medications including controlled substances.
- 5.2 Describe state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to pharmacy technicians.
- 5.3 Explain that differences exist between states regarding state regulations, pertaining to pharmacy technicians, and the processing, handling and dispensing of medications.
- 5.4 Describe the process and responsibilities required to obtain and maintain registration and/or licensure to work as a pharmacy technician.
- 5.5 Describe pharmacy compliance with professional standards and relevant legal, regulatory, formulary, contractual, and safety requirements.
- 5.6 Describe Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and United States Pharmacopeia (USP) requirements for prevention and treatment of exposure to hazardous substances (e.g., risk assessment, personal protective equipment, eyewash, spill kit).
- 5.7 Describe OSHA requirements for prevention and response to blood-borne pathogen exposure (e.g., accidental needle stick, post-exposure prophylaxis).
- 5.8 Describe OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (i.e., “Employee Right to Know”).

Additional Key Elements for Advanced-level

- 5.9 Participate in pharmacy compliance with professional standards and relevant legal, regulatory, formulary, contractual, and safety requirements.
- 5.10 Describe major trends, issues, goals, and initiatives taking place in the pharmacy profession.