



# From Classroom to Career: A Model for Pharmacy Technician Training Success

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# Faculty Disclosure

I have no actual or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.



# Educational Gap

- Many health systems lack structured recruiting and training programs for pharmacy technicians
- Employers over-rely on hiring already-certified techs—despite limited candidate pools and high vacancy rates
- On-the-job training alone often lacks consistency, depth, and formal preparation for national certification
- Relying on technicians to self-study while working often results in inconsistent outcomes
- Structured, in-house training programs help address staffing and recruiting challenges while improving certification readiness and employee retention



# Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this educational activity, you will be able to:

- Discover how to create a technician training model that balances academic rigor, practical experience, and community engagement to meet healthcare workforce needs.
- Learn how ASHP/ACPE accreditation provides a structured framework that ensures program rigor, quality, and consistency.
- Gain strategies to incorporate professional development opportunities, foster upward mobility into advanced roles, and implement retention-focused initiatives that support long-term employee satisfaction and success.

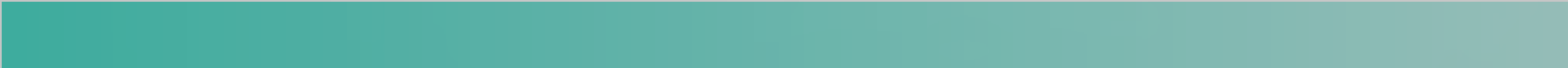


# Expected Outcomes

- Identify strategies from our in-house technician training program that can be adapted to support technician development in your setting
- Apply elements of the ASHP/ACPE standards to help build or strengthen technician training programs
- Incorporate outreach ideas to improve technician recruitment and grow your talent pool
- Embed professional development and career exploration into the training process to support retention and advancement



# The Pharmacy Technician Shortage



# The Pharmacy Technician Shortage

- ASHP Pharmacy Administrator Survey – 2021
  - Most administrators reported at least a 21–30% turnover rate
  - Nearly 1 in 10 experienced a loss of more than 41% of their technician workforce
  - 97% increased the use of overtime to fill technician shifts
  - 89% reported using pharmacists to perform pharmacy technician duties

# Impact of the Shortage

- 53% of respondents delayed expansion of pharmacy services
- 48% reduced pharmacy services
- 41% outsourced medication preparation and products as a result of the shortage
- Administrators report a severe shortage of pharmacy technicians with sterile compounding experience (84%) and in advanced pharmacy roles (76%)



# Multifaceted Approach

## Compensation

- Competitive rates that are regularly reviewed
- Develop career lattices and advanced roles

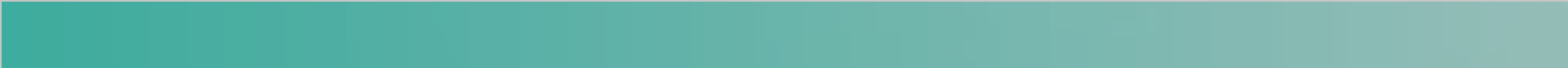
## Alignment

- Entry level requirements for the profession
- Registration requirements with boards of pharmacy

## Pipeline

- New techs through employer-based training programs
- Invest in local potential
- Living wage

# The Pharmacy Technician Academy



Launching Our Own In-House Program at UKHC

# Program Overview

- Program began May 2023
- ASHP/ACPE accreditation earned May 2024 (retroactive to start date)
- 1 Full-Time Technician Education Coordinator
- 14 FTE for student-employees
- Cohort model
- Emphasis on classroom
- Contractual obligation
- Job placement



# Program Outcomes

- 45 new technician apprentices hired into program
- 38 graduated
  - 5 actively enrolled – Graduate August 2025
- 31 earned PTCB-certification
  - 2 in progress
- 81.6% PTCB pass rate
  - 70% national average (PTCB, 2024)



# Our Design

- Structured Didactic Education
  - Classroom setting with content expert
  - Recurring assessments
  - Didactic resource aligned with ASHP/ACPE standards
- Simulations
  - Inventory management
  - Non-sterile and sterile compounding
  - **Customer service and cash handling**
- Experiential Rotations
  - Training in inpatient, outpatient, and specialty **settings**
  - Medication history, non-sterile and sterile compounding



# What is a key benefit of dedicated classroom time in a technician training program?

- A. It reduces the need for experiential learning
- B. It gives students protected time to study and receive guided instruction
- C. It ensures students complete training faster than traditional programs
- D. It is used primarily to complete new employee onboarding



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# The Schedule

Weeks 1-7

- Full-Time Classroom Instruction
- PharmTech Ready, simulations, weekly drug quizzes, unit exams

Weeks 8-12

- Experiential Rotations
- Classroom instruction continues each Friday

Weeks 13-14

- Review, Remediation, and PTCE Preparation
- Official practice tools: PTCB Practice Bank and Pre-PTCE



# Fostering Growth and Retention

- Professional Development Starts in the Program:
  - Full-time instructor mentors and guides students beyond technical content
  - Students learn soft skills: communication, professionalism, respect, teamwork
- Exposure to Advanced Roles:
  - Simulations and rotations to experience roles in inventory, compounding, automation, etc.
  - Guest speakers share their stories of career advancement within the organization
- Culture of Belonging and Recognition:
  - Graduation ceremony affirms professional identity and celebrates accomplishment
  - Students feel part of a team
- Career Conversations:
  - Speed interviews with department managers – gives students choices
  - Help students visualize long-term career trajectories, not just entry-level roles



# Each of the following is a strategy that supports technician retention and long-term career growth, EXCEPT:

- A. Providing mentorship and exposure to advanced roles during training
- B. Rotating students across multiple pharmacy sites so they can explore different practice areas
- C. Assigning students to training sites based only on immediate departmental shortages
- D. Encouraging early conversations about career advancement pathways



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# ASHP/ACPE Accreditation



# Overview of the Standards

- The *ASHP/ACPE Accreditation Standards For Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs (2018)* are grouped into three main sections:
  - Section I: Competency Expectations (Standards 1–5): Define what students should know and be able to do by the end of the program. These include both technical and soft skills.
  - Section II: Structure and Process (Standards 6–13): Outline the structural and operational requirements of the program, including program leadership, strategic planning, curriculum length and delivery, admissions, and faculty qualifications.
  - Section III: Assessment (Standards 14–15): Focus on evaluating both student competency and program structure through data-driven continuous improvement.



# Benefits of Accreditation

- Ensures standardized, high-quality training
- Enhances institutional credibility and supports employer partnerships
- Supports structured curriculum mapping (didactic, simulation, experiential)
- Drives continuous process improvement
- Accreditation site visit



# Let the Standards Guide You

- These standards ensured our program had a clear roadmap for structure, operations, and instructional content.
- We found the standards especially valuable for:
  - Setting expectations for program length and scope
  - Reinforcing professionalism as a teachable, assessable skill
  - Promoting collaboration and engagement with stakeholders through a required advisory committee
  - Encouraging long-term vision and sustainability by mandating a strategic plan aligned with institutional goals
  - Providing a mechanism for continuous feedback and adaptation through recurring quality assurance and improvement processes



# How do ASHP/ACPE standards help structure a technician training program?

- A. They define expectations for curriculum, program length, and admissions
- B. They support technician development primarily through on-the-job learning
- C. They eliminate the need for formal documentation or long-term planning
- D. They prioritize PTCB exam preparation as the main training outcome



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# Outreach Leads to Applicants



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- Host public library info sessions prior to each cohort to educate on the technician role and share program details
- Announce program milestones and graduation stories on external social media platforms (LinkedIn, Facebook) and internal platforms (intranet, newsletters)
- Attend community and high school career fairs to inspire future applicants
- Share program openings and information with internal networks such as staff senate, leadership councils, and workforce development groups as well as external career centers
- Create and manage a dedicated email address for inquiries from prospective student-employees



# Final Takeaways

- Creating a Balanced Training Model
  - Address the technician shortage directly through structured in-house training programs
  - Prioritize dedicated classroom time rather than relying solely on student self-study
  - Complement classroom instruction with hands-on simulations and diverse clinical rotations
  - Community outreach strengthens your applicant pipeline and supports workforce development
- Benefits of ASHP/ACPE Accreditation
  - Accreditation standards provide a practical roadmap for building quality programs
  - Standards establish clear requirements for didactic, simulation, and experiential learning
  - Accreditation enhances program credibility with employers and prospective students
- Supporting Growth and Retention
  - Expose students to advanced roles during training to foster career aspirations
  - Implement professional development opportunities starting in the training program
  - Measure program success through graduation rates, certification pass rates, and retention metrics



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