



***Road to Residency:
Tips for Navigating a Local Residency Showcase***

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What is the purpose of a local residency showcase?

The purpose of local residency showcases is to:

- Allow students to gain time interacting with a residency program relatively early in the residency application cycle.
- Provide residency candidates a platform to have additional face-to-face interaction with residency programs located in the same state or region.
- Offer a smaller showcase experience and/or “practice opportunity” prior to the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting residency showcase events.
- Provide students who are early in their pharmacy training with a more accessible residency showcase experience.

Additional Information

A local residency showcase provides a platform for interested students and residency program representatives to meet one another. As a student, you can get a feeling for programs and requirements to help you make an informed decision about pursuing residency training. While many ASHP-accredited residency programs attend the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting residency showcase events, local residency showcases may recruit programs at the state or regional level to link students with a more geographically defined set of residency sites. Participation in a local residency showcase also serves as a “practice opportunity” in-advance of the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting residency showcase events.

The local residency showcases tend to be smaller recruitment events that may allow students more time to interact with local programs. This may result in increased face time with local or regional programs of interest, allowing interested candidates an early point-of-contact with programs in attendance. Active participation and engagement at a local residency showcase may allow you to concentrate efforts on out-of-state programs at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting. Though keep in mind the balance of visiting a program of interest at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting after meeting with them at a local residency showcase. The additional points-of-contact may be an opportunity to continue to build a relationship.

A local residency showcases also affords students who are early in their pharmacy training an opportunity to navigate a residency showcase prior to the year during which they are seeking a residency program position. It is important to be mindful that programs attending showcases are actively recruiting prospective residents; students who are early in their pharmacy training should let program directors know their academic year and allow graduating students’ adequate time to speak with program representatives.

What can I expect at a local residency showcase?

- Local showcases are a great opportunity to prepare for residency interviews and to network. If you plan on attending the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting residency showcase events, your local showcase is a great time to practice your interactions with residency programs. You may even encounter a local program that you may not have previously considered.
- The set-up will likely be a large room full of booths. The program representative at the booth could include the program director, preceptor(s), and/or current resident(s).
- If you have completed IPPE or APPE rotations at a program who is present at the showcase, be sure to stop by and greet everyone at the booth, especially if you are interested in pursuing a position at their residency program. This will reinforce the programs' recognition of your interest in their program. Do not make the mistake of assuming you will match to a program solely because you have had a rotation at the location.
- You should be prepared to ask program-specific questions. As these local showcases may occur earlier in the year and before the start of the residency program application cycle, you may not have had as many APPE experiences to reflect on when asking or responding to questions. Talk about the experiences you have had so far and express eagerness to progress through the remainder of your year where you will gain exposure to new areas of pharmacy practice.
 - *Some programs may not have their recruitment materials fully up-to-date at the time of the local residency showcase, thus it may be appropriate to ask certain questions that you typically wouldn't ask at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting residency showcase events. For example, "I saw the deadline for the application was 12/31 last year, is that still applicable for this year?"*
- Remember: Programs are actively recruiting for the upcoming year, so if the booth is crowded with prospective candidates, allow final-year students the opportunity to ask questions. Students in earlier years are welcome to attend local residency showcase events to get early exposure to programs and can observe/listen to the questions posed by final-year student pharmacists.

How do I prepare for a local residency showcase?

It is becoming more common for students to attend a local residency showcase outside of where they currently live and/or attend school. If you are on rotation in another state, consider looking into local residency showcase event in that state, especially if there are residency programs that interest you. To obtain information on a local residency showcase event, inquire with one of your rotation preceptors. Early preparation can help ease your mind and reduce anxiety.

If you decide to attend a local residency showcase, it is important to consider the following pieces of advice:

- Be aware of the registration deadline for your local residency showcase.
 - This information might be found on the professional organization's website, whether it is an ASHP state affiliate or locate chapter. Information may also be displayed on a local College/School of Pharmacy website, if a residency showcase is being hosted by them. The registration process is typically completed online.
- Conduct online research of residency programs of interest to you.
 - Most showcases should provide a list of participating programs prior to the showcase. Read about the programs before you attend to learn what each program and its institution has to offer.
- Prepare a list of questions that you would like to ask each program.
 - These questions may be specific to one program or a set of similar questions for each program, so you can begin to compare your interest in the programs. Consider pausing after you talk to a program to immediately jot down notes and your own reflections.
- Identify the location of the local residency showcase.
 - Typically, local residency showcase events might occur within driving distance of your residence. Research the venue to ensure you are aware of where to park and add a buffer to your travel time.
- Prepare your outfit a day or two before the local residency showcase.
 - These events may be day-long professional engagements, so consider preparing to dress as though you are attending a residency interview. Choosing what you will wear in advance of the event may help you avoid panic or potentially running late.

What do I bring to a local residency showcase?

The following checklist is a great place to start when thinking about what to bring to a local residency showcase:

During Local Residency Showcase

- Dress professionally and comfortably
- Consider bringing:
 - Questions for each program to reference prior to your interactions
 - Padfolio, notebook, or tablet for writing notes about the program
 - Writing utensils
 - CV (*only a few copies would be needed*)
 - Business cards
 - Nourishments (*food, drink, mints*)
- Consider collecting business cards of the individuals that you speak with at the showcase to help you reference these individuals in your letter of interest when applying for a residency
- Silence or turn off your cell phone
- Smile and relax – you got this!

After Local Residency Showcase

- Send thank you emails, cards, or letters
- Submit applications as applicable
- Compile and organize your notes about each program
- Reflect on each program and determine which ones you will consider applying to

What are questions I can ask?

Avoiding the *wrong* questions is equally as important as asking the *right* questions. For graduating students, continue to avoid asking questions that can be easily found on the program's website (e.g. what rotations are available, staffing requirements, the general organization of the program). As a serious residency candidate, program directors expect you to ask specific and thought-provoking questions, some of which we have listed below.

Non-graduating students, however, may not have the same experiences and background information as final-year students. They may still be familiarizing themselves with the terminology of residency programs or the intricacies of clinical practice. For example, when speaking with a program director that is a critical care pharmacist, it would be prudent to avoid asking how much patient counseling they do on a daily basis. To help bridge this knowledge gap, we have developed a glossary of common terms that are encountered when researching residency programs (see page 6).

Example questions to ask the resident program directors:

- What personal characteristics do you look for in a resident?
- How often do you meet with your residents? Will I be matched with an advisor?
- How have you incorporated feedback to improve the program?
- What changes do you expect in the next year to the program?
- How often and what is the strategy for providing feedback to residents?
- What opportunities for precepting students are available?
- What do most of your residents go on to do after finishing their PGY1? (e.g. PGY2, fellowship, or clinical position)
- How does the program encourage personal and mental well-being of the residents?
- What can I do over the next year to make myself stand out to program directors when applying for residency?***
- What rotations do you suggest I prioritize during my last year of school?***
- What work experience will prepare me best for residency?***

***: appropriate for P1-P3 students to ask

Example questions to ask the current residents:

- How much preceptor oversight do you have on the rotation?
- Is there a formal mentoring program, and if so, how are mentors assigned?
- Describe the pharmacy resident interactions with other healthcare professions?
- If there is one thing you could change about the program, what would it be?
- What does the staffing component involve at this program?
- What are the expectations for being on-call?
- How was your research project selected?
- Are there preceptorship opportunities? Teaching opportunities?
- What do you and your co-residents do for fun outside of residency?

Glossary

What is staffing?

“Staffing” refers to a required component of all residency programs that typically incorporates residents into an organization’s non-resident pharmacist working schedule. Staffing components of most PGY1 residency programs may occur on weekends and/or potentially weekday evenings. This may involve residents verifying and dispensing medications in a centralized pharmacy alongside other pharmacists. Note, significant variability exists between programs regarding how often (frequency) a resident engages in staffing, as well as, the activities involved by staffing; program websites typically elaborate the details of what is required. This is an excellent topic to discuss with program representatives during residency showcases.

What is an audit?

An audit is typically a smaller scale project that looks at a specific process within an institution. For example, a resident may be asked to review medications that are removed from an automated dispensing cabinet via an override and administered to patients in a specific unit or by a specific time of day. Audits of key performance improvements or compliance initiatives may be required or assigned on an as needed basis, depending on the department and health-system needs.

What is an MUE?

A Medication Use Evaluation (MUE) is an ongoing performance improvement method with the purpose of evaluating and understanding medication-use processes. A MUE also provides suggestions to improve how an intervention is being used in order to positively affect patient care outcomes. MUEs typically assess how often a medication or group of medications are utilized and compare such usage to organizational goals or evidence-based standards.

What is research?

Research is a crucial aspect of residency and timelines will vary between institutions. Some health-systems will have a list of projects for you to rank in order of preference whereas other health-systems may require you to come up with your own project idea. As a PGY1 pharmacy resident, you will likely see all aspects of the research process (gathering background information, specifying a research purpose, collecting data, analyzing and interpreting data, and reporting out results). Research is a great opportunity to apply and expand upon the biostatistics and research design that student pharmacists learn in pharmacy school. Residents may be required to present their outcomes either through a preparation of a manuscript, presentation to a live audience, such as during a residency conference, or a submission of a manuscript to a journal for publication.

What is a CE presentation?

A CE (Continuing Education) presentation is a formal presentation for which attendees may claim continuing education credit. Each state board of pharmacy requires pharmacists to obtain a certain amount of continuing education to maintain licensure. Residents are typically required to deliver at least one lecture eligible for CE credit during their residency year. Presentations are deemed eligible to provide CE by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). The presentation is submitted for review by ACPE and assigned an attendance code once approved. Pharmacists may then utilize this code to prove their attendance and claim CE credit.

What is on-call?

An on-call program or “being on call” refers to an experience offered by many residency programs that requires residents to respond to certain situations or questions that arise. In-house on-call requires residents to be physically present in the hospital and residents may respond to codes and answer specialized questions from providers or other pharmacists. Other programs have a remote on-call program where residents respond to clinical scenarios that arise during off-hours. Each residency program has specific requirements and aspects of an on-call program.

What is a teaching certificate?

A teaching certificate program is an optional learning experience, usually provided by a nearby college of pharmacy, to provide residents with training needed to educate students, residents, and pharmacists upon completion. The composition of these programs varies, but often include didactic lectures, opportunities to provide lectures or facilitate small group learning sessions, and participate in college-related recruitment activities. If the residency program does not offer this program, consider exploring the [ASHP Teaching Certificate for Pharmacists](#).