



**REVISED ASHP/ACPE ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR PHARMACY  
TECHNICIAN EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS (Standards)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

July 2018

**Q: *When will my pharmacy technician program be required to use the newly revised ASHP (American Society of Health-System Pharmacists) / ACPE (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education) Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Program Standards that go into effect on January 1, 2019?***

- A: All Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Program accreditation applications received after January 1, 2019, will be required to abide by the newly revised Standards.
- A: If a program application is submitted prior to January 1, 2019, the program will have a choice of the program adhering to the newly revised Standards or to meet the requirements of the existing Standards that went into effect on January 1, 2016.
- A: If a pharmacy technician program is in the Reaccreditation cycle in 2019, the program will have a choice of adhering to the newly revised Standards or to meet the requirements of the existing Standards that went into effect on January 1, 2016.
- A: All ASHP/ACPE accredited pharmacy technician programs will eventually be required to meet the requirements of the newly revised Standards and will have until January 1, 2020 to convert their programs, to abide by the newly revised Standards.

**Q: *How will programs notify ASHP/ACPE what level of program they are providing?***

- A: Programs will self-identify what type of program the site is conducting and will complete a written survey explaining how their program supports a particular program level, Entry or Advanced-level (an online survey will be distributed by ASHP/ACPE in Fall of 2019).
- A: Programs will use Pre-survey materials to designate if their program is an Entry-level or an Advanced-level program (or combined), prior to a program accreditation site survey.

**Q: *What are the key differences between the current Technician Program Accreditation Standards (effective January 1, 2016) and the newly revised Standards (effective January 1, 2019)?***

A: Within the newly revised Standards, there is more emphasis on the collaborative behaviors and workflow of pharmacy technicians with pharmacist 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.
- Programs can choose to offer an Entry-level, an Advanced-level, or a combination of Entry-level and Advanced-level pharmacy technician education and training programs.
- 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.
- Standards have been reorganized into three sections with the competency expectations being moved to the forefront.
- The Standards have been restructured into 15 standards with key elements of each standard that need to be met.
- For some of the Standards, the key elements are subdivided into Entry-level and Advanced-level.
- These Standards no longer include the words “must” and “should”. The Standards are declarative statements of expectation.
- Minimum hour requirements have been edited to reflect education and training needs for Entry-level and Advanced-level competencies.

**Q: *Why was there a revision of the current pharmacy technician Standards?***

A: The bullets below capture an overview of the considerations and steps that determined the need to revise the existing pharmacy technician Standards (effective January 1, 2016):

- Pharmacy Technician Accreditation Commission (PTAC) recommended a revision of the 2016 Pharmacy Technician Standards.
- Both the ASHP and ACPE Board of Directors supported this initiative.
- Pharmacy Technician Stakeholder Consensus Conference (PTSCC), sponsored by Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) and planned by PTCB, ASHP, and ACPE, convened in Feb. 2017. A multi-stakeholder advisory group recommended revising the 2016 Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Program Standards, including addressing the following broad topics ([click here to view the published proceedings in the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy \[AJHP\]](#)):
  - Defining Pharmacy Technicians
  - Pharmacy Technician Education
  - Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities of Entry-Level Pharmacy Technicians
  - Certification of Pharmacy Technicians
  - State Laws and Regulations on Pharmacy Technicians

- Advanced Pharmacy Technician Practice
- Moving Forward on Pharmacy Technician Issues

**Q: *What was the Pharmacy Technician Standards revision process?***

A: The bullets below capture an overview of the considerations and steps of the revision process:

- Review of the PTSCC recommendations (listed in the Q&A above).
- Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam (PTCE) job analysis review.
- Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ExCPT) blue print review.
- Compared job analyses to the existing 2016 Standard.
- Any PTSCC recommended Entry-level competencies missing were added.
- Separated Entry-level competencies from Advanced-level competencies.
- A draft revision was developed by the writing group from August 2017 to January 2018.
- Draft Standards were sent out broadly for stakeholder comment at the end of January 2018, with a two month comment period.
- The writing group reviewed the stakeholder feedback (500+ comments from 50+ sources) and revised the draft for further review by PTAC for their May 2018 meeting for review.
- After implementing comments/edits, PTAC sent the final draft to both ASHP's and ACPE's Board of Directors for approval, at their June 2018 meetings.
- Both ASHP's and ACPE's Board of Directors approved the final revision of the Pharmacy Technician Standards, on June 2, 2018 and June 23, 2018 respectively.
- The approved revised Standards have been published to the ASHP website here: <https://www.ashp.org/Professional-Development/Technician-Program-Accreditation/Accreditation-Standards>, with accreditation reviews based on the new standards starting in January, 2019.

**Q: *Who wrote the Standards?***

A: A diverse stakeholder group representing all aspects of the pharmacy and pharmacy technician professions participated in the revision, including various entities from:

- Corporate; Health-Systems; Academic; Research; Associations; ASHP; ACPE; PTAC; Lead Accreditation Surveyors

**Q: *How are the 2018 Standards structured?***

A: Instead of the Standards containing Goals and Objectives, the Standards are written with Key Elements listed for each Standard.

A: The Standards have three sections with 15 standards among the three sections, as follows:

- **Section I: Competency Expectations** (Standards 1-5)

- **Section II: Structure and Process to Promote Achievement of Competency Expectations** (Standards 6-13)
- **Section III: Assessments of Standards and Key Elements** (Standards 14-15)

A: An overview of the Standards and Key Elements within each:

- **Standard 1: Personal/Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills**
  - Entry-level: 8 Key Elements
  - Advanced-level: 4 Key Elements
- **Standard 2: Foundational Professional Knowledge and Skills**
  - Entry-level: 8 Key Elements
  - Advanced-level: 3 Key Elements
- **Standard 3: Processing and Handling of Medications and Medication Orders**
  - Entry-level: 22 Key Elements
  - Advanced-level: 9 Key Elements
- **Standard 4: Patient Care, Quality and Safety Knowledge and Skills**
  - Entry-level: 8 Key Elements
  - Advanced-level: 5 Key Elements
- **Standard 5: Regulatory and Compliance Knowledge and Skills**
  - Entry-level: 8 Key Elements
  - Advanced-level: 2 Key Elements
- **Standard 6: Authority and Responsibility provided to Program Director**
  - 9 Key Elements
- **Standard 7: Strategic Plan**
  - 2 Key Elements
- **Standard 8: Advisory Committee**
  - 5 Key Elements
- **Standard 9: Curricular Length**
  - Entry-level: 4 Key Elements
  - Advanced-level: 2 Key Elements
- **Standard 10: Curricular Composition and Delivery (includes distance learning expectations)**
  - 10 Key Elements (4 Elements specific to Distance Learning)
- **Standard 11: Student Recruitment, Acceptance, Enrollment, and Representation**
  - 8 Key Elements
- **Standard 12: Faculty/Instructors**
  - 4 Key Elements
- **Standard 13: Documentation**
  - 8 Key Elements
- **Standard 14: Assessment of Competency Expectations**
  - 2 Key Elements
- **Standard 15: Assessments of Structure and Process**
  - 3 Key Elements

**Q: *What does an Entry-level program prepare students to do versus what an Advanced-level program?***

A: 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.

A: 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.

**Q: *What are the minimal program time requirements for an Entry-level program versus an Advanced-level program?***

A: See **Standard 9: Curricular Length** for details, including:

- **Entry-level:** 400 hours total, ≥ 8 weeks
  - 300 hours divided as:
    - Didactic – 120 hours
    - Simulation – 50 hours
    - Experiential – 130 hours
  - Plus an additional 100 hours allocated as program director and faculty see fit.
- **Advanced-level:** 600 hours, ≥ 15 weeks (includes Entry-level program hours)
  - 460 hours divided as:
    - Didactic – 160 hours (40 additional hours beyond Entry-level)
    - Simulation – 100 hours (50 additional hours beyond Entry-level)
    - Experiential – 200 hours (70 additional hours beyond Entry-level)
  - Plus an additional 140 hours allocated as program director and faculty see fit.

**Q: *How will programs be reviewed?***

A: Program will be reviewed against the Standards, based on the designated technician program level (Entry, Advanced, or both) and the program on-site survey and review processes are consistent with existing practices.

**Q: *Will the Accreditation fees differ?***

A: The annual Accreditation fees will be consistent with how they are determined and administered now.

**Q: *Additional questions, please email ASHP's Accreditation Services: [asd@ashp.org](mailto:asd@ashp.org)***