

Interview Skills Packet for Residency Candidates

Commonly Asked Questions of Interviewees

Please Note: Members of the ASHP Pharmacy Student Forum Career Development and Education Advisory Group prepared this document to assist student pharmacists in with their interview preparation.

Introductory Questions

- Tell me about yourself
 - *Prepare a ~2 minute long summary*
- What is your biggest strength? What is your greatest weakness?
 - Prepare at least 3 of each
 - Give examples of times you displayed these strengths and weaknesses
 - Be able to elaborate:
 - *How will your strengths help you in the residency?*
 - *How can work to improve your weaknesses during residency?*
- How do you handle time-management during a hectic time?
 - Give specific examples from school/rotations/extracurricular activities
- If you had not chosen the pharmacy profession, what career would you pursue? Why?
- What have you done to improve yourself this past year?
- Have you read something that has changed your life? How has it changed your life?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What else do you think that I should know about you?
- Why do you think that you deserve the position?
- What do you do to “keep up with the literature?”
- Tell me about a recent paper you’ve read or a presentation you have attended
- What would your coworkers say about you?
- Who among all your teachers and mentors has had the most influence on you and why?
- I see from your CV you have done a presentation about _____. What can you tell me about _____?
- Tell me why I should choose you over your peers for this residency
- What are you most proud of? What are you most proud of that is not on your CV?

Residency-Specific Questions

- What made you interested in this program?
- Why have you selected this institution?
- What do you think you will bring to our program?
- What made you want to do a residency
- What drove you to the profession of pharmacy?
- How will this program prepare you for your career goals?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- You are required to take specific rotations as a part of this residency. How will these help you in your pharmacy career?
- What qualities would your ideal preceptor have?
- What do you see as a weakness/strength of this program?

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Education/Rotation Questions

- What is the hardest job you have had to perform? Why?
- Tell me about a time you did work you didn't find valuable. How did you deal with this?
- What was your least favorite rotation? What was your favorite rotation? Why?
- How has your education prepared you for your career?
 - Give specific examples from your work/rotation/education/extracurricular activities/leadership experiences
- What is your least favorite aspect of where you work now? Why?
- Describe a time when you felt overwhelmed and explain how you handled the experience

Questions Involving Experiential Reflection

Clinical Experiences

- Tell me about a time you impacted a patient's healthcare
- What was your most rewarding moment during your job/experience/rotation/etc.?
- Tell me about a patient that had the greatest impact on you and your perception of pharmacy practice
- Tell me about a difficult patient and how you were able to make an impact on their health
- Tell me about your most memorable patient
- Tell me about a recommendation that was accepted by your team

Interprofessionalism

- How do you work with members of other healthcare professions?
- Describe an instance where you had to collaborate with other healthcare professionals to accomplish a goal
- Do you prefer to work as an individual or within a team? Why?

Leadership

- Tell me about a leadership project or position you have been involved in
- Give me an example of a team situation you have worked in. What was your role within the team? Did you experience any conflicts?
- Describe your leadership style
- As a leader in the pharmacy profession, describe a situation where you had to motivate others to accomplish a goal

Problem Solving

- Tell me about a time when your carefully laid plans were fouled up. How did you react? What happened?
- We all have to bend the rules at one time or another... tell me about a time when you had to bend the rules

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Conflict Resolution and Ethical Dilemmas

- Tell me about a time you wish you had handled differently. What did you learn from your mistake? How do you wish you had handled the situation?
- Give me an example of a conflict you have encountered on your rotations. What did you do to resolve that conflict?
- Give me an example of an instance where you disagreed with how the team handled a specific problem. How did you deal with the situation?
- Tell me about a time when two people disagreed. How did you arrive at a compromise for the task to be successful/unsuccessful?

Just for Fun Questions

- If you were stranded on a deserted island, what two drugs would you take with you?
- If you were a drug/dosage form, what would you be?

Questions to Ask Interviewers

Always make sure to thoroughly review the website before asking any questions to ensure that the answers are not already there!

- What are some of your former residents doing now?
- Are there any teaching/precepting opportunities?
 - If a teaching certificate is available: What are the requirements to obtain the teaching certificate?
- What projects are the current residents working on?
- What do you believe makes your program successful?
- What part of the program are you most passionate/excited about?
- What is a typical day for you (if speaking to a resident or preceptor)?
- What organizations can the residents become involved in during the program?
- How flexible are rotation schedules? Do you tailor the rotations/residency to the residents' interests? Can I change rotations that have been scheduled in the spring?
- How easy is it to get a desired elective rotation?
- Are there any opportunities to publish? How about outside of my research project?
- How are residents evaluated during the program?
- What degree of research collaboration is there between the medical and pharmacy departments?
- What is the current pharmacy model? Are there any changes for the future?
- What clinics are available during the ambulatory care rotation?
- What opportunities are available for leadership development?
- Have there been any significant changes in the residency program this year? Are there any changes planned for next year?
- What is the vision for the pharmacy department?
- How much autonomy is encouraged after the resident is oriented to a new rotation?
- What type of electronic medical record/computer system does the hospital use?

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- What was your favorite rotation? Was it the content of the rotation or the preceptors that you liked (if speaking to a resident)?
- What is the relationship between pharmacists and other healthcare providers at the hospital? Are pharmacists' recommendations and opinions valued?
- How often is there an opportunity to round in an interdisciplinary team approach?
- What changes are being made to the residency program based on prior resident feedback?

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Reflection Log

The STAR method is an interviewing strategy used to deliver all desired information in a story format when asked a behavioral interview question. You can use the following structure to reflect on experiences that will help you answer the “Questions Involving Experiential Reflection.” An example is provided below.

<p>Question. Listen carefully, understand the question, and organize your thoughts.</p> <p><i>Ex. Tell me about a time you impacted a patient’s healthcare.</i></p>	
<p>S - Situation (Give background, provide context)</p> <p><i>This past year, I was on my 6-week Internal Medicine rotation at Super-duper Hospital. My team often took care of patients with heart failure, and readmission to the hospital due to non-adherence is a common problem.</i></p>	<p>T - Task (Describe challenge and expectations)</p> <p><i>We were taking care of one memorable patient who struggled to take his heart failure therapy regimen consistently. During my relatively short rotation, he had been admitted twice. My interprofessional team looked to pharmacy to help improve this patient’s adherence and help keep him out of the hospital. As the student pharmacist on rotation I was up for the challenge.</i></p>
<p>A - Action (Elaborate on the action you took)</p> <p><i>The first step that I took was to communicate with the patient without judgment. I asked him about his medications one-by-one, then asked how he organizes his medications. He expressed frustration that he had “too many bottles, with too many confusing names on them” and that often times he “gets frustrated and takes them all at once, or just doesn’t bother with them.” I communicated options for easing medication use, and the patient liked the idea of filling a weekly pill box. I was able to obtain a 7-day pill box, and the patient and I filled it together before he was discharged. I followed up with him a week later and he was still effectively using the pill box.</i></p>	<p>R - Results (Explain the results)</p> <p><i>From this experience, I feel that I helped this patient make the best use of important medications that can improve his life. It impacted the way I view communicating with patients, such that simple communication and identifying patient-specific problems can make a big difference. I will always value patients’ unique situations as a pharmacist.</i></p>

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Reflection Log

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<p>A - Action (Elaborate on the action you took)</p>	<p>R - Results (Explain the results)</p>

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Notes

References

Holt SL. Residency Prep 101: What to Do While You are Still in Pharmacy School. ACCP ESCP International Congress on Clinical Pharmacy. 2009 Apr 26; Orlando, FL.

Career Services: Wayne State University. Behavioral Interviewing Techniques - The Star Approach. n.d; Detroit, MI.
<https://careerservices.wayne.edu/behavioralinterviewinfo.pdf>