Certification Exam Review for Technicians, Fourth Edition

ASHP Alignment and Accreditation

Chapter Correlations with ASHP *Model Curriculum* Goals

This guide has been developed to assist instructors with ASHP accreditation. Instructors are encouraged to consider applying for national accreditation with ASHP if their program meets the published standards with a minimum of 600 hours of instruction over 15 weeks or more. The education and training must include didactic content-based academic teaching with laboratory replications of practice and experiential training in at least two different types of practice settings. See www.ashp.org for additional information, specifically their guidance document for accreditation: http://www.ashp.org/DocLibrary/Accreditation/Guidance-Document.pdf.

The Model Curriculum for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training, Fourth Edition from the ASHP (http://www.ashp.org/DocLibrary/Technicians/Model-Curriculum.pdf) categorizes its curriculum goals into the following topic areas:

- Personal/Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills
- Foundational Professional Knowledge and Skills
- Processing and Handling of Medications and Medication Orders
- Sterile and Nonsterile Compounding
- Procurement, Billing, Reimbursement, and Inventory Management
- Patient and Medication Safety
- Technology and Informatics
- Regulatory Issues
- Quality Assurance

Paradigm's Pharmacy Technician Series Correlations with Goals

The goals, as listed on the ASHP website, are listed by category and are correlated with *Certification Exam Review for Technicians,* Fourth Edition, below. The goals that are not covered in the study review for a certification exam are covered in *Pharmacy Practice for Technicians,* Sixth Edition, and the other recent editions of Paradigm's Pharmacy Technician series. A correlation mapping chart is posted along with this guide and available from the Paradigm Education Solutions sales staff.

Personal/Interpersonal Knowledge and Skills

1. Demonstrate ethical conduct in all job-related activities (Introduction, Ch 3)
2. Present an image appropriate for the profession of pharmacy in appearance and behavior (supplement)
3. Communicate clearly when speaking and in writing
4. Demonstrate a respectful attitude when interacting with diverse patient populations
5. Apply self-management skills, including time management, stress management, and adapting to change
6. Apply interpersonal skills, including negotiation skills, conflict resolution, and teamwork
7. Apply critical thinking skills, creativity, and innovation to solve problems

Foundational Professional Knowledge and Skills

8. Demonstrate understanding of healthcare occupations and the healthcare delivery system (Ch 4, 7)
9. Demonstrate understanding of wellness promotion and disease prevention concepts, such as use of health screenings; health practices and environmental factors that impact health; and adverse effects of alcohol, tobacco, and legal and illegal drugs
10. Demonstrate commitment to excellence in the pharmacy profession and to continuing education and training (Introduction)
11. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in areas of science relevant to the pharmacy technician's role, including anatomy/physiology and pharmacology (Ch 11)
12. Perform mathematical calculations essential to the duties of pharmacy technicians in a variety of contemporary settings (Ch 2, 5, 6, 9, 10)
13. Demonstrate understanding of the pharmacy technician's role in the medication-use process (all)
14. Demonstrate understanding of major trends, issues, goals, and initiatives taking place in the pharmacy profession (Ch 4, 7)
15. Demonstrate understanding of nontraditional roles of pharmacy technicians
16. Identify and describe emerging therapies (Ch 1)
17. Demonstrate understanding of the preparation and process for sterile and non-sterile compounding (Ch 5, 6)

Processing and Handling of Medications and Medication Orders

18. Assist pharmacists in collecting, organizing, and recording demographic and clinical information for direct patient care and medication-use review (Ch 4)
19. Receive and screen prescriptions/medication orders for completeness, accuracy, and authenticity (Ch 4)
20. Assist pharmacists in the identification of patients who desire/require counseling to optimize the use of medications, equipment, and devices (Ch 4)
21. Prepare non-patient-specific medications for distribution (e.g., batch, stock medications) (Ch 6)
22. Distribute medications in a manner that follows specified procedures (Ch. 4)
23. Practice effective infection control procedures, including preventing transmission of blood borne and airborne diseases (Ch 6, 7)
24. Assist pharmacists in preparing, storing, and distributing medication products requiring special handling and documentation (e.g., controlled substances, immunizations, chemotherapy, investigational drugs, drugs with mandated Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies [REMS]) (Ch 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9)

25. Assist pharmacists in the monitoring of medication therapy (Ch 8)
26. Prepare patient-specific medications for distribution (Ch 8)
27. Maintain pharmacy facilities and equipment, including automated dispensing equipment (Ch5, 6, 8)
28. Use material safety data sheets (MSDS) to identify, handle, and safely dispose of hazardous materials (Ch 5, 6)

Sterile and Nonsterile Compounding

29. Prepare medications requiring compounding of sterile products (Ch 6)
30. Prepare medications requiring compounding of nonsterile products (Ch 5)
31. Prepare medications requiring compounding of chemotherapy/hazardous products (Ch 6)

Procurement, Billing, Reimbursement and Inventory Management

32. Initiate, verify, and assist in the adjudication of billing for pharmacy services and goods, and collect payment for these services (Ch 10)
33. Apply accepted procedures in purchasing pharmaceuticals, devices, and supplies (Ch 9)
34. Apply accepted procedures in inventory control of medications, equipment, and devices (Ch. 9)
35. Explain pharmacy reimbursement plans for covering pharmacy services (Ch 10)

Patient and Medication Safety

36. Apply patient and medication safety practices in all aspects of the pharmacy technician's roles (Ch 4, 6, 7)
37. Verify measurements, preparation, and/or packaging of medications produced by other healthcare professionals (e.g., tech-check-tech) (Ch 4, 7)
38. Explain pharmacists' roles when they are responding to emergency situations and how pharmacy technicians can assist pharmacists by being certified as Basic Life Support (BLS) Healthcare Provider
39. Demonstrate skills required for effective emergency preparedness
40. Assist pharmacists in medication reconciliation (Ch 4 mention).
41. Assist pharmacists in medication therapy management (Ch 8 mention)

Technology and Informatics

42. Describe the use of current technology in the healthcare environment to ensure the safety and accuracy of medication dispensing (Ch. 7, 8)

Regulatory Issues

43. Compare and contrast the roles of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in ensuring pharmacy department compliance with professional standards and relevant legal, regulatory, formulary, contractual, and safety requirements (Ch 3, 4)
44. Maintain confidentiality of patient information (Ch 3, supplement)

Quality Assurance

45. Apply quality assurance practices to pharmaceuticals, durable and nondurable medical equipment, devices, and supplies (Ch 7)
46. Explain procedures and communication channels to use in the event of a product recall or shortage, a medication error, or identification of another problem (Ch 3, 9)

Tips for ASHP Accreditation

The ASHP accreditation process is not meant to discourage instructors or programs but to survey their elements and offer them counsel for improvement to meet the standards. The best source for information is the ASHP website and staff. The staff members are very willing to answer questions to assist you as your program moves through the accreditation process. Having ASHP surveyors take the time to personally survey your site and offer recommendations improves the quality of your program, the experience you offer your students, and the care they will offer patients later.

Class Alignment

As a teacher, you are not responsible for seeing that the whole program fits ASHP guidelines, but you can be sure that your course fits the ASHP goals by using the chapter correlations guide and the ASHP curriculum objectives provided at the links above to make sure students successfully master the content. To track and verify the course's coverage of each of the 35 goals, you will need to fill out the ASHP Accreditation Crosswalk form found at: http://www.ashp.org/DocLibrary/Accreditation/Pharmacy-Techinicians/ASHP-Crosswalk.pdf.

In using the *Certification Exam Review for Technicians,* Fourth Edition, the chapter correlations guide will be a key resource for filling in the didactic section of the crosswalk while keeping homework and assessments as documentation of your students accomplishing the goals. The ASHP website offers a webinar on the curriculum and supplemental resources at: http://www.ashp.org/accreditation-technician.

Program Alignment

ASHP accreditation usually requires that you provide the ASHP with examples of the department's student files. A student file consists of the student's program application with all the required entrance paperwork. It also includes all of the pre-clinical paperwork, such as immunizations, drug tests or pledges if required, and all signed clinical agreement paperwork. The student files also must have all the time sheets and evaluations of the clinical sites they attended.

In order to show documentation that the student has met the specific goals aligned with each program course, instructors should save all of the final exams for each course throughout the program in the student's department file. As explained above, for courses with lab components, instructors should also add the dated checklists for each lab, attaching the criteria checklist used to grade the student. This is especially important with sterile compounding, where there should be zero room for error and students should pass their competency with 100%.

To guarantee that you have all the paperwork required of each student, it may be helpful also to create a department checklist to go inside each student file folder of what is required of each student to complete the program. (This should also be given to the student at their acceptance into the department. Having the student expectations and keeping all your paperwork organized makes it easier to present your department documentation to the site inspectors on the day of the onsite visit.

Going through ASHP accreditation as a program can be stressful but rewarding. If you start the process at least six months in advance, you can work through the process as a program team and in a manageable fashion. The process includes a few crucial steps:

1. Planning as a department and setting a timeline and goals for each deadline. If you make each instructor aware of what they need to collect each semester in order to have all student documentation makes it easier in having all your student files in order.
2. Submitting an application with fee.
3. Filling out the survey and ASHP crosswalk. The crosswalk can take around 80 hours to complete a total of two weeks to make sure that you have covered every goal.
4. Preparing for a Site Inspection.
5. Undergoing the Site Inspection.
6. Addressing the ASHP Recommendations.
7. Verifying Improvements and Attaining Accreditation.

Each step requires some forethought and coordinated action. If you are a member of the Pharmacy Technician Educators Council (PTEC), you can use the PTEC Google group chat forum to ask other instructors for advice when you are looking for laboratory equipment, an example of a specific form, class ideas, and other questions. The PTEC conferences are also great chances to network and look at how other programs operate. The PTEC chat room connects you with other college and training educators across the United States and Canada. PTEC offers members a chat room where they can connect with others and express their opinions. Overall, PTEC was established to influence and improve the future of pharmacy technician education and practice. To join PTEC, go to https://www.pharmacytecheducators.com/join.

1. Planning and Timeline
Key to having a successful site visit is to stay organized and make sure all of the program staff is on board with what each staff member needs to do in order to meet ASHP standards. As noted, starting at least six months in advance and having department policies of what documentation to save is crucial. Such preparation makes it so much easier to put together your accreditation binder when the time comes to provide it to ASHP. Make sure you read all of the advisory documents posted on the ASHP accreditation web page at: http://www.ashp.org/menu/Technicians/Technician-Accreditation/Accreditation-Regulations-Standards-and-Guidance-Documents.aspx.

2. Submitting the Application
Submitting the application should be done at least four months prior to the site survey, but check with the ASHP website in case timeline recommendations change.

3. Filling out the Survey and Crosswalk
Filling out the pre-survey questionnaire and providing the documentation that the pre-survey requires should be about two months prior to the site survey date. Again, check the ASHP website or staff for the most current timeline recommendations. The best guide for filling this out is the ASHP's own guidance document at: http://www.ashp.org/DocLibrary/Accreditation/Guidance-Document.pdf.

This will help you sort out the standards included in the pre-survey questionnaire, which will ask you about your advisory committees, strategic plan, simulations, and other key elements. For the advisory committee, you will want representatives from your community who are involved in pharmacy: members from community, chain, and hospital pharmacies (and other types in your community) who

may hire your graduates, insurance, state board of pharmacy (if possible), and others. You'll want to have a guidance document that outlines membership criteria, each member's responsibilities, such as attending a meeting every quarter, reading proposals and weighing in, voting on initiatives, etc. You must also have criteria for being asked to step down the position. Having each member sign a commitment is useful and makes them take the responsibility seriously. Also, you will want to have someone take careful specific minutes for each meeting to show progress. You will need to set up ways to communicate with them before and after meetings, recognize their value in appreciation, and be able to set up virtual meetings for when they cannot attend in person but want to attend from a distant location. These members should help your faculty and administration form a strategic plan and policies.

For the strategic plan, you will likely want to make a mapping table of your 1-year goals and 3-year goals. For each goal, you will want columns that note the measurable objectives, strategies of implementation, resources needed, who is responsible for implementation, what the schedule is, what are small steps with dates to measure the progress, and what the observable, measurable outcomes will be. If you form a table of this sort, it will help you organize your strategic plan. That way, at each advisory meeting, you can provide reports on the incremental steps for progress toward each plan, keeping the group and program on track for attaining goals.

Program Goal	Measurable Objective	Strategy to implement	Resources Needed	Who Is Responsible	Deadline	Progress Steps and Dates	Outcomes

In terms of policies and program information for the pre-survey, you will need to outline the overall purpose of your program, qualifications for successful applicants, drug-testing and background check policies, educational requirements for graduation (including breakdown of the required 600 hours and ASHP goals), cost of the full program for students, dismissal criteria, legal restrictions, prospects for employment in your local area and region, and salary expectations (advisors can help gather this information). You will also need some information on the faculty, staff, program, and facilities, including staff qualifications, simulation and externship descriptions, and program retention rates.

You need to think carefully through the policy regarding drug testing and background checks. Some students have sued institutions that did not pass them or they could not get hired because of drug and criminal background issues. The argument is that the students should have known at the onset that they couldn't be hired before investing time and tuition fees.

4. Preparing for the Site Inspection
Make sure to have all required program paperwork ready. Useful elements include: curriculum and syllabi; student files, advisory committee proceedings, contracts and academic and professional records for your staff and experiential site coordinators, experiential site inspections records, memberships, and online products used for training in the program. Make sure your documentation, equipment, and facilities are sufficiently up to date.
You can prepare in several ways for a successful site visit:
1. Ask the site inspectors ahead of time if there is anything in particular they would like to see.
2. Reserve a room for the day of the site visit.
3. Put together all of the required onsite documentation needed in the room where the meeting will be held.

4. Have snacks and refreshments in the meeting room and if possible cater lunch to the inspector(s).
5. Ask the site inspector(s) prior to their visit if they have any special preferences in food.
6. Create an itinerary of the day for your site inspection. Give your site inspector(s) information about the closest hotels and restaurants nearby.
7. Do your homework! Revisit all of the material you have submitted and make sure you understand the purpose of the site visit.

5. Undergoing the Site Inspection
The most important thing to remember the day of the site visit is to be confident and stay calm – if you and your department team are developing successful, well-educated pharmacy technicians, there should be nothing to worry about. You just have to make sure you provide the documentation.

6. Addressing the ASHP Recommendations
After the inspection, you will need to wait to hear the specific results and recommendations from the site visit. Some recommendations will be easy to implement and verify; others will take more time.

Many instructors say how useful the suggestions of the ASHP are. They use them as documentation to advocate to the institution for greater funding for equipment or facilities or other important improvements that the department often desired but could not convince institutional administrators to invest in. The ASHP gives programs an additional tool of specific advocacy to improve their programs!

7. Verifying the Changes and Attaining Certification
Each process is unique in terms of the recommendations, fulfillment, and timing, as ASHP works individually with each program. Congratulations, though, if you have come this far. It is likely that your program will complete the full process and become accredited. Well done!