

About Pharmacy

When someone mentions a pharmacy, you think of the corner drug store. However, many different types of pharmacies exist. Hospital, community, compounding/specialty, and mail order are just a few types of pharmacies. All these pharmacies need technicians.

The goal of a pharmacy is to help patients receive their medications and to help educate patients about their medications. This sounds simple, but it is a complex system that involves inventory, laws, calculations, compounding, and many other processes. Pharmacists are responsible for checking patient medications and educating patients. Technicians aid pharmacists through medication ordering, stock management, packaging, and helping to prepare medications. After a technician completes their duties, a licensed pharmacist must check their work.

Technicians, like pharmacists, are held to a high standard due to their responsibility. If a technician or a pharmacist makes a mistake, a person's life could be in danger. Therefore, training and education of technicians is very important.

Common Abbreviations

CPhT – Certified Pharmacy Technician
PTCB – Pharmacy Technician Certification Board
PTCE – Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination
TSHP – Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists
ASHP – American Society of Health-System Pharmacists
TSBP – Texas State Board of Pharmacy

Other Helpful Links

The American Association of Pharmacy Technicians:
<http://pharmacytechnician.com/index.html>

Pharmacy Technician Educators Council:
<http://www.rxptec.org/career.html>

ASHP: <http://www.ashp.org>
- program info:
http://www.ashp.org/s_ashp/technician_index.asp?CID=3495&DID=5433

TSHP: <http://www.tsHP.org>

PTCB: <http://www.ptcb.org>



Texas Society of Health-System Pharmacists

3000 Joe DiMaggio #30-A
Round Rock, TX 78664-3994
1-800-242-8747
www.tsHP.org

Texas Society of
Health-System
Pharmacists

Prospective Pharmacy Technician Information

An Introduction on
Becoming a
Pharmacy
Technician

Ways to become a Technician

Two main ways exist to become a pharmacy technician.

1. Complete a formal educational program and take the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam (PTCE)
2. Find an employer that will hire you as a trainee and, through self study and on-job training, take the PTCE.

Each way has its benefits and drawbacks. If you are the type that never got their homework done, you might want to do a formal program. If you are self motivated, then finding a technician trainee position could work for you.

What is required to be a Pharmacy Technician

If you would like to gain experience prior to becoming a CPhT, you will have to register with the Texas State Board of Pharmacy. To work in a Texas pharmacy prior to registering as a CPhT, you will be expected to register as a Technician in Training. Requirements for registration as a technician in training are:

- High school diploma **OR**
- GED **OR**
- Attending high school

A Technician in Training registration is good for two years and there is no cost to register. After two years, you cannot be a technician in training.

To become a Certified Pharmacy Technician (CPhT), you must do the following:

- Pass the Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination (PTCE)
- Register with the Texas State Board of Pharmacy (TSBP)
- Have no felonies on your record

Registration with TSBP as a Technician requires a fee and is good for two years. More information regarding board registration can be found at: <http://www.tsbp.state.tx.us/Pharmacytechs.htm>

What is PTCB Certification?

The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB) is responsible for the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam or the PTCE.

Requirements to take this exam include:

- No felonies in the last 5 years
- GED or High School Diploma

This is an electronic test that has four testing windows a year. PTCE is a national certification program.

The PTCE tests over 3 areas:

1. Assisting pharmacists in serving patients (66% of exam);
2. Maintaining medication and inventory control systems (22% of the exam);
3. Participating in the administration and management of pharmacy practice (12% of the exam).

The test is two hours long and 100 questions. More information regarding the certification exam is available at the following website:

<http://www.ptcb.org>

Typical Pharmacy Technician Education Program

Usually a formal Pharmacy Technician Education program includes the following:

- An Introduction to Pharmacy
- Calculations
- Pharmacy Law
- Compounding
- Pharmacy Practice
 - Community
 - Institutional
- Pharmacy Laboratory Component
- Pharmacy experience through internships/externships

More information on education programs may be found at your local community colleges, or the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) website.

Question to ask Programs

When considering a formal pharmacy technician training program through a college or school, it is important to ask questions to see if you will achieve your goals. Here is an example list of questions that can be helpful when comparing programs.

- What is the cost of the full program?
- Do you provide financial aid? If so, what type of financial assistance?
- Is your program accredited by the ASHP?
- What percentage of your students pass the PTCB exam?
- Do you have a coordinator for intern/externships?
- What are your faculty's credentials?
- Where do your students go after graduation?

Costs

- Formal Education Program: price varies
- Registration for Pharmacy Technician in Training through TSBP: Free (valid for only 2 years)
- Registration for Certified Pharmacy Technician: \$54 (renewable every 2 years)
- Certified Technician Salary: ~\$10 per hour (starting and varies by location)
- PTCE: \$129 each attempt
- 20 hours of CPhT Continuing Education- to maintain registration every 2 years: price varies, employers may assist
- Helping patients: PRICELESS