

VIRGINIA BOARD OF PHARMACY
PHARMACY TECHNICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM AND REGISTRATION
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND:

Refer to [§54.1-3321](#) of the Code of Virginia and [emergency regulations](#)

Except as noted below, effective July 1, 2022, to be registered with the Board as a pharmacy technician, an applicant who enrolls in a pharmacy technician training program shall provide:

- 1) Evidence of completion of a pharmacy technician training program that is:
 - a. A program jointly accredited by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE),
 - b. An accredited training program operated through the Department of Education's (DOE) Career and Technical Education program,
 - c. A program operated through a federal agency or branch of the military, or
 - d. A program accredited by an accreditation body approved by the board.
- 2) Evidence that they successfully passed a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA.

NOTED EXCEPTIONS:

1. A person who successfully completed or was enrolled in a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program but did not successfully pass a national examination **prior to July 1, 2022** may be eligible to obtain registration as a pharmacy technician after successfully passing a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA and submitting to the board documentation of such completion or enrollment in a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program and passing examination score.
2. A person who passed a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA but did not complete a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program **prior to July 1, 2022** may be eligible to obtain registration as a pharmacy technician upon documentation of having passed such examination.
3. A pharmacy technician who has previously practiced in another U. S. jurisdiction may be eligible to obtain registration as a pharmacy technician upon documentation of previous practice and having passed a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA.

GENERAL FAQs:

1. **Q: I operate a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program. We will not pursue ASHP/ACPE accreditation, but currently have a pharmacy technician trainee enrolled in our program who may not have sufficient time to complete the program prior to 7/1/22. Is this trainee eligible for obtaining a pharmacy technician registration from the Board of Pharmacy?**

A: Yes, if the pharmacy technician trainee was enrolled in the Board-approved training program prior to July 1, 2022, he or she must simply pass a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA and submit to the board documentation of enrollment in the Board-approved pharmacy technician training program and passing examination score. As of July 1, 2022, this trainee is no longer required to complete the Board-approved pharmacy technician training program prior to sitting for the national exam, however, timely completion of the program may assist the trainee in successfully passing the exam. At no time may a trainee perform the duties restricted to a pharmacy technician without holding a current active pharmacy technician registration.

- 2. Q: I operate a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program. We will not pursue ASHP/ACPE accreditation, but currently have a pharmacy technician trainee enrolled in our program who may not have sufficient time to complete the program prior to 7/1/22. May we continue to teach this trainee after 7/1/22?**

A: Yes, you may continue to teach trainees who enrolled prior to 7/1/22 and have a current active pharmacy technician registration to prepare them for taking the national PTCB or NHA examination, however, the trainee is legally not required to complete the training program. Effective 7/1/22, any person enrolled in a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program but did not successfully pass a national examination prior to July 1, 2022 may be eligible to obtain registration as a pharmacy technician after successfully passing a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA and submitting to the board documentation of such completion or enrollment in a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program and passing examination score.

- 3. Q: I operate a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program. Must I continue to renew this approval with the Board after 7/1/22?**

A: No. The authority for the Board to approve pharmacy technician training programs ceases as of 7/1/22. A program could elect to obtain accreditation from ASHP/ACPE if it wishes to continue to offer a pharmacy technician training program.

- 4. Q: I operate a pharmacy technician training program and intend to obtain accreditation from ASHP/ACPE. Do I also need to obtain approval from the Board of Pharmacy?**

A: No, simply maintaining accreditation from ASHP/ACPE is sufficient.

- 5. Q: What if a registered pharmacy technician trainee is enrolled in a Board-approved distance learning program prior to 7/1/2022 that will not pursue ASHP/ACPE accreditation? Will the pharmacy technician trainee still be allowed to complete their externship training experience in a pharmacy that is not an approved site by an ASHP/ACPE accredited pharmacy technician training program after 7/1/2022 in order to complete/graduate from the program?**

A: Yes, if the pharmacy technician trainee was enrolled in the Board-approved training program prior to July 1, 2022, he or she may choose to complete the externship training experience in a pharmacy in order to complete/graduate from the program. However, as of July 1, 2022, completion of the Board-approved training program is no longer required. The trainee must simply pass a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA and submit to the board documentation of enrollment in the Board-approved pharmacy technician training program and passing examination score.

6. **Q: I received my PTCB or NHA national certification in a different state, and I'm moving to Virginia. I did not complete/graduate from an ASHP/ACPE-accredited program. Am I eligible to apply for registration as a pharmacy technician in Virginia?**

A: A pharmacy technician who has previously practiced in another U.S. jurisdiction may be eligible to obtain registration as a pharmacy technician upon documentation of previous practice and having passed a national certification examination administered by PTCB or NHA.

7. **Q: I operate an independent pharmacy that does not have an ASHP/ACPE-accredited training program. As of July 1, 2022, am I able to hire a pharmacy technician trainee to work in my pharmacy?**

A: Yes, as long as the pharmacy technician trainee is registered by the Board and enrolled in a training program accredited by ASHP/ACPE, accredited and operated through the Department of Education's (DOE) Career and Technical Education program, or through a federal agency or branch of the military, you may hire the trainee to perform the duties of a pharmacy technician under the supervision of a pharmacist.

If the pharmacy is an approved site of the training program for obtaining the required hours of practical experience AND the trainee has completed the didactic and simulation components of the program, the paid hours will be evaluated against the key elements and standards which may satisfy the externship rotation. Paid hours worked prior to completing the didactic and simulation components of the program cannot be used to satisfy the externship rotation.

If the pharmacy is NOT an approved site of the training program for obtaining the required hours of practical experience, the trainee may be paid for performing duties restricted to a pharmacy technician under the supervision of a pharmacist but the hours will not satisfy the externship rotation which may be required by the training program. Such pharmacy technician is responsible for ensuring successful completion of an eligible pharmacy technician training program and passing the required exam prior to the expiration of the pharmacy technician trainee registration.

8. **Q: Once I complete/graduate from an ASHP/ACPE-accredited pharmacy technician training program, how long can I continue to work as a registered pharmacy technician trainee before I take and/or pass the PTCB or NHA national certification exam?**

A: A registered pharmacy technician trainee that completes/graduates from a training program accredited by ASHP/ACPE, accredited and operated through the Department of Education's (DOE) Career and Technical Education program, or through a federal agency or branch of the military is strongly encouraged to sit for the PTCB or NHA national certification exam as soon as practical. A trainee's registration shall be assigned a registration with an expiration date, not to exceed two years, to cover the estimated time period for the trainee to complete the training required for completion of the program and pass the required examination.

9. **Q: Are the pharmacy technicians who were registered with the Virginia Board of Pharmacy prior to the 7/1/2022 grandfathered in or are they required to meet current requirements?**

A: A pharmacy technician that has obtained registration with the Board prior to 7/1/2022 shall not be required to meet the increased educational standards in Regulation 18VAC110-21-141(B) and may simply renew the registration after obtaining the required 5 hours of continuing education annually. If a pharmacy technician allows the registration to expire and fails to reinstate the expired pharmacy technician registration within five years of expiration, the technician must satisfy the increased educational requirements and re-testing.

10. Q: I was not enrolled in a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program prior to July 1, 2022, nor did I pass the PTCB or NHA exam prior to July 1, 2022. May I simply complete a self-study and take the PTCB or NHA exam?

A: No. Only a person who was enrolled in a Board-approved pharmacy technician training program prior to July 1, 2022 but who did not complete the program is eligible to simply pass the PTCB or NHA national examination. Proof of enrollment and successful passing of the exam must be submitted to the Board with the application for a pharmacy technician registration.

11. Q: If I operate an independent pharmacy, and I'm approved to serve as a site for externship training experience by an ASHP/ACPE-accredited distance learning pharmacy technician training program, am I automatically eligible to serve as an externship training experience site for all ASHP/ACPE-accredited distance learning training programs or do I have to be approved by each program I work with?

A: Each training program reviews the sites for externship training experience, therefore, your pharmacy will need to be approved by each program that you work with for externship training.

12. Q: My pharmacy technician training program applied for ASHP/ACPE accreditation and obtained "candidate status" upon submission of an application. Will the Virginia Board of Pharmacy accept graduates of an ASHP/ACPE training program in "candidate" status?

A: Yes. Assuming no other reasons exist for denial, graduates of an ASHP/ACPE training program in "candidate status" are eligible to obtain Board registration as a pharmacy technician if the applicant has also successfully passed the PTCB or NHA national examination.

FAQs RELATED TO ASHP/ACPE ACCREDITATION PROCESS (Prepared by ASHP):

13. Q: Where can I find information regarding ASHP/ACPE accreditation of pharmacy technician education and training programs?

A: Refer to the ASHP website for the accreditation standards, regulations, application fees, directory of accredited programs, and videos on how to start a program.

<https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>

Once on that page, hit the “Learn More” button in the box on the far right on the top line of boxes. Within this box is information that someone interested in starting a program or is seeking accreditation MUST review:

- **Accreditation Standards, Regulations, and Other Tools**

The following documents and webinars are found under this section:

- **Accreditation Standards**
 - Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Tech Education and Training
- **Accreditation Regulations**
 - Regulations on Accreditation for Pharmacy Tech Education/Training
- **Accreditation Tools**
 - Guidance Document - provides what surveyors are looking at against the Accreditation Standard when surveying the program
 - Model Curriculum - provides example activities for each key element of the Standard to modify or develop a program
- **Informational Videos** - designed to answer questions in concert with reviewing the Accreditation Standards
 - Advisory Committees for Pharmacy Technician Programs - how to put together an advisory committee for your program
 - Developing a Strategic Plan for your Program
 - 10 Key Steps to ASHP/ACPE to Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs - a must watch

14. Q: What are some of the key factors within the ASHP/ACPE accreditation standards that I MUST have to apply for accreditation?

A: It is essential to review the Standards prior to considering applying for accreditation. The program must be constructed to meet the Standards and include the key elements within the Standards. Not all Standards and Key Elements will necessarily be in place when you apply for accreditation since this is a continuous quality process. BUT, with that said, there are a few areas that MUST be in place prior to applying for accreditation:

- A) Must have at least one student in the program**-you can apply for accreditation the first day of the program, as long as there is one student in the program.
- B) The program director must meet the elements of the Standard:**
 - (a) is a licensed pharmacist or a nationally certified pharmacy technician; (b) has at least five years of experience as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician in pharmacy practice prior to entering the position; (c) adheres to the state's regulations for licensure or registration in the practice of pharmacy;
 - (b) if the program director is a pharmacy technician- has graduated from an ASHP/ACPE-accredited pharmacy technician training program; or (b) possesses or is actively pursuing, with a written plan for achieving, at least an Associate's Degree; or (c) has an appropriate state teaching credential.
- C) Must have an active advisory committee that meets at least twice a year that consists of a broad base of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians-this group of individuals will be the group that assists in approving your curriculum, externship sites, strategic plan, criteria for admission and dismissal; criteria for**

successful completion of the program. They can also help by serving as externship coordinators to place your students for rotation, ultimately hire your students, provide you with supplies/technology that they are no longer using at their pharmacies.

D) Length of program-most will be applying for an Entry-level program, the following hours MUST be followed within the program:

The training schedule consists of a minimum of 400 hours total, of health-related education and training, extending over a period of at least 8 weeks. The period of training includes the following educational modalities: Didactic; Simulated; and Experiential. The minimum number of hours for each component is as follows: Didactic – 120 hours; Simulated – 50 hours; Experiential – 130 hours (total of 300 hours); plus 100 additional hours, to obtain the minimum of 400 hours of training total. The additional 100 hours may be allocated to the three educational modalities listed above, based on the discretion of the program director and faculty.

Advanced level programs are 600 hours in duration-see the Standards for details on Advanced level programs.

15. Q: Okay, I've read the standards, I'm a pharmacist that meets the criteria, I have put together an advisory committee (and even watched the video on the website), and I have 400 hours in the correct amounts for each component. I've watched the 10 Key Steps to ASHP/ACPE Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Accreditation. I also have a student enrolled for the fall, now what?

A: As mentioned previously, you can apply for accreditation the first day of the class of the program. Once you apply, the program is in ASHP/ACPE Candidate Status. The Virginia Board of Pharmacy accepts programs in candidate status since they have started the ASHP/ACPE accreditation process. Once accredited, the accreditation is retroactive to the date of application. This is why it is essential that the application for accreditation occurs when a program is constructed against the Standards.

16. Q: How much is it to apply or accreditation?

A: It depends on how many sites you have within your organization. Most will have one site, therefore the fees will be \$750 (in 2023) for the initial application fee and \$3000 (in 2023) for the annual fee. The annual fee is prorated to the time of the year that you apply. If you apply in July, you would pay ½ of the annual fee, in February, you'd pay 10/12th of the fee. You will be invoiced for the fees, you do not need to send a check in for the fees. For more details of fees for other training environments see the following site:

<https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation/applying-for-accreditation?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>

The application for accreditation is located on this page of the website, too. Complete that form and include a completed academic and professional form (found in the link below) and a current CV:

<https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation/preparing-for-an-accreditation-survey?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>

17. Q: I'm ready to apply for accreditation, what's next?

A: Submit the materials (application, program director's academic and professional form; program director's CV) to asd@ashp.org and copy lifshin@ashp.org. Your application, academic and professional form, and CV will be reviewed. The Senior Director for Technician Education and Training will contact you to confirm that all of the items are approved. She will ask you when you will have your first graduate. She will schedule your accreditation survey for a time close to when your first class has graduated. She will assign a lead surveyor (who will also have a practitioner educator surveyor) to review your program against the standards. This generally happens between 6-12 months after receipt of the application, if you have a graduate at that point. You will receive a copy via email of the pre-survey questionnaire that must be completed and submitted electronically back to ASHP 45 days prior to the survey. You will receive these directions for submission when the date for your survey is confirmed. You will also receive the pre-survey packet upon confirmation of the survey date. You can review the pre-survey questionnaire (which you should do prior to application) from the site below: <https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/technician-program-accreditation/preparing-for-an-accreditation-survey?loginreturnUrl=SSOCheckOnly>

18. Q: What happens when my site survey is scheduled?

A: Your lead surveyor will be the main person that you will communicate questions to until the survey report is submitted for review for accreditation. The lead surveyor will help you with the agenda for the review, answer any questions that you may have in putting together your packet, and any other questions that you may have in getting ready. The main thing to remember is to prepare with the materials listed in FAQ #13. The Guidance Document found on the website under Accreditation Standards, Regulations and Other Tools will be very helpful to get ready for the survey.

19. Q: What happens during the survey?

A:

- a. Surveyors conduct review onsite or virtually.
- b. Surveyors meet with you, your instructors, current students, graduates, your advisory committee, and your college, hospital, or store administration.
- c. Surveyors review site and discuss program against the standard and pre-survey questionnaire-you may feel like you had everything in the packet, but the surveyors want to make sure that they understand everything-they are your advocates for you to be successful in the process.
- d. Areas of non- (the area is not happening), partial (1-99 percent fulfilled), and full compliance (100% done), as well as consultative recommendations are documented.
- e. Draft report is presented to technician training program director and college, hospital, or store administration.

20. Q: What happens after the survey, I'm nervous, I had a lot of citations?

A: a) Technician Training Program Director and College, Hospital, or Store Administration receive report within 30 days of the survey.

b) Technician Training Program Director has 75 days from the survey to respond to the report.

Your Response is more important than the report that is written by the team during the survey and sent to you. Listen to all of the feedback that they provide to you at the site survey when they provide the report to you and your administration. They are also available to you when you are preparing your response if you have any questions. Make sure and provide evidence that you are remediating any areas that were cited. Provide completed forms, picture of equipment that is purchased, documentation of things that are in the works. The survey report and your response are reviewed by the lead surveyor and practitioner educator surveyor to make a recommendation (not accredit, one year, three years, full cycle accreditation) for accreditation for consideration by the Pharmacy Technician Accreditation Commission (PTAC).

c) The survey team reviews both the response against the initial report to review progress since the survey.

21. Q: When do I find out if I am accredited?

A: Once the surveyors review the reports, they write up a summary on progress on each of the findings and make a recommendation for accreditation or to withhold accreditation to the Pharmacy Technician Accreditation Commission (PTAC) and they will vote on accreditation. These actions must go to the ASHP and ACPE Board of Directors meetings for final voting. Once they vote, you will receive notification on your accreditation. Depending on when you're reviewed, that's when you'll find out your accreditation decision. If you are reviewed from July 16-February 14th, your report will go to the May PTAC meeting and the June ASHP and ACPE Board of Directors meetings and you will find out in early July. If you are reviewed from February 15th to July 15th, your report will go to the October PTAC meeting and the January ASHP and ACPE Board of Directors Meeting and you will find out in early February.

REMEMBER SUCCESSFUL ACCREDITATION IS RETROACTIVE TO THE DATE OF APPLICATION

22. Q: Will I get a letter and certificate to verify that my training program is accredited?

A: Yes, you will receive a certificate that you can hang on your wall, you can then put the ASHP/ACPE-accredited seal that you download from the website on all graduation certificates (prior to that, you add the ASHP/ACPE-candidate downloaded seal to the graduates' certificates).

23. Q: How long is my program accredited?

A: Successful programs are reviewed every six years. Surveys will occur every six years. Written reports are required at either 1 or 3 year points, depending on what still needs to be resolved. No program goes longer than 3 years reporting back to the PTAC.

24. Q: Can my graduates take the national exams if my program is in candidate status?

A: Yes. ASHP/ACPE candidate programs are recognized by the Board of Pharmacy. ASHP/ACPE candidate programs are also recognized by PTCB.

25. Q: How does the VA Board of Pharmacy (VABOP) know which programs are in candidate status and accredited status?

A: The ASHP Accreditation Services Office staff will notify the VABOP of the status of programs that have submitted applications for accreditation and when status changes.

26. Q: Where may I find a list of ASHP/ACPE technician training programs?

Visit: <https://accreditation.ashp.org/directory/#/program/technician>

To search for Distance Learning Pharmacy Technician Training Programs, choose “Distance Learning/Online Program” under “Select Organization Type”. Then, select “Entry (400)” under “Select a Sub-Category”. Any program listed here with an Accreditation Status of “Accredited” or “Candidate” will satisfy Virginia’s requirements.

To search for a training program with a classroom located in Virginia, simply choose “Virginia” under “Select a State”.

27. Q: So, tell me what candidate status is again?

A: ASHP/ACPE candidate status is the designation that programs are given when they have met the criteria to apply for accreditation and submit their application and it is approved by ASHP staff to be scheduled for review for accreditation. Please review #12-27 for the full accreditation process. Candidate status continues until the program is accredited. Be ready, read the standards, work towards fulfilling the key elements and standards and you will be ready to be accredited.

28. Q: What if I don’t have the resources to have an accredited program, but I have to get my technicians trained?

A: There are many distance learning programs available that are ASHP/ACPE- accredited that you can use to support your employees to complete while working. They can even use your place as their externship experience. The distance learning programs will review your site for approval for externship experiences and then you can count the 130 hours that will be at the end of the program, while you’re reviewing them as their preceptor, against the designated key elements established for the rotation by the program. In addition, there are several training and education programs in Virginia that are ASHP/ACPE accredited or in candidate status that you may be able to send your students.

29. Q: Any other questions?

A: For VABOP questions, send an email to: pharmbd@dhp.virginia.gov
For ASHP/ACPE accreditation questions, email: asd@ashp.org