

CAREER LADDER®

MAY
2019

Tips for Finding the Perfect Residency Match

ADRIANA HUGHES, PHARM D CANDIDATE 2019

This article is the author's opinion and is not intended to guarantee, secure, solidify, or assure a successful match.

For fourth-year residency candidates across the nation, January through March can be a whirlwind of presentations, program overviews, panels, and a plethora of questions. It's a time of clinical skill assessment and communicating how you see yourself aligning with the goals and objectives of the program. You may have the opportunity to interact with the residency program director, residents, clinical preceptors, and more.

I have yet to interview at a place where I've interacted with fewer than 10 people throughout the day. Ten people can give rise to both 10 perspectives and 10 or more opportunities to connect.

The goal of the residency interview is to find the right fit. If you've been selected for an interview, you're qualified in the eyes of the program. You 'look good on paper.' Those who are selected to interview along with you likely have similar qualifications.

Your hard work over the past 4 years gets you through the doors. However, the factors for granting an onsite interview are vastly different from

(Continued on page 2)

Match Day Pairs Thousands of Pharmacy Students With Residency Programs

JENNIFER NESSEL, ASSISTANT EDITOR

March 15 marks Match Day, in which thousands of student pharmacists from across the United States are 'matched' to residency positions in hospitals and community pharmacies. Of the approximate 5,134 residency positions available, 4,697 are now filled, according to the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists' (ASHP). The remainder of the open positions are expected to be filled in

during Phase II of the Match.

"The 2019 Match results for Phase I demonstrate remarkable expansion in residency programs and available positions," said Janet A. Silvester, Pharm.D., MBA, FASHP, Vice President, ASHP Accreditation Services Office, in a prepared statement. "PGY2 growth continues to outpace PGY1 growth, supporting the market demand for pharmacists with advanced training to fill medication expert roles on the patient care team."

(Continued on page 3)

Also in this issue...

PharmD or RPh:
Does It Matter?

page 4

NAPLEX Preparation:
Tips for the Most
Important Exam of Your
Career

page 6

Public Perceives
Pharmacists as Some
of the Most Trusted
Professionals

page 7

Tips for Finding the
Perfect Residency Match

page 8

Tips for Finding the Perfect Residency Match

(Continued from page 1)



those considered in the ranking of candidates.

In 2012, the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy published results of a survey, completed by 377 residency program directors across the nation, which sought to determine the factors that programs use to select residents for an onsite interview and ranking. The factors which were most commonly considered important for granting an interview were the perception of the candidate's ability to learn, a recommendation from employers or preceptors in pharmacy practice, and previous work experience. For ranking of candidates, compatibility with the program, commitment to hard work, and ability to work with a team were most often considered critical. This shift from the objective to subjective is intended to ensure that the time the candidate spends at the institution is mutually beneficial and seeks to identify the right fit.

The concept of 'fit' may be difficult for those who have not experienced the process to understand. Well-meaning family and friends may ask which place is 'the best.' This can also be subjective for the candidate.

Though reputation, history, and values are important, hospitals may be evaluated by different entities each year and rankings should not be the

only thing to consider when finding the ideal program.

In the ever-changing field of health care, I consider the best facilities to be those which value an ongoing commitment to patient outcomes and progress. I feel that the best place for me is one which shares my patient-centered approach to care, which is open to embrace changes that enhance patient care, and a place which fosters an environment of professional collaboration.

As an applicant, there are ways to identify which place is best for you. However, this does require some preparation and later introspection.

A common suggestion is to schedule the places which you are most interested in at a later date to allow for practice. However, due to the increasingly competitive nature of pharmacy residencies, applicants are applying to more and more programs. Interviews may be offered from January through March, but

programs often offer dates which fall within a much shorter window. Considering timing is good advice, but candidates must also work with the dates offered by each program. In an ideal world, we could interview at our most esteemed institutions when we feel more prepared and polished. In reality, you may have some control, but must also work with the hand you are dealt.

Mock interviews are a great opportunity to shake off some jitters and reflect. However, a true reflection of a pharmacy residency interview would require 4-8 hours with a large team of people. My first interviews were esteemed institutions, and I did not have the luxury of a 'practice run.' However, I am genuinely interested in each of the programs I chose to apply to and feel it would be an insult to the institution to deliberately schedule an interview for the sake of practice.

The interview offers you 1 day to assess your compatibility with the program for an entire year. This decision is not and should not be taken lightly by the candidate or the program. My hope is that I will be evaluated on my capabilities as a clinical pharmacist, team member, and educator. I hope to match with a program that values my work ethic, positive attitude, and dedication to optimizing patient care.

In closing, know the program and know yourself. Seek to find an environment where you will be both supported and challenged to grow. Reflect. Be respectful to the program and its people. Be professional. Be yourself. You may fit in, you may not. That is what the interview day is all about. If you're there, you are qualified to do the job. Ask yourself which program will help you to become the best clinical pharmacist you can be, not just in terms of

content knowledge but applicability of this knowledge, transferability to your future career, and personal satisfaction.

Though the matching algorithm may be unequivocally objective and impersonal, it is my belief that passion is what makes the best pharmacists. Better pharmacists

provide better patient care. Reflect on the places that motivate and inspire you, and may the odds be ever in your favor.

REFERENCES

1. Gair, R. Factors used by pharmacy residency programs to select residents. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm.* 2012;69(1):1105-1108.

Adriana Hughes is a PharmD Candidate of the Class of 2019 at the University of South Florida (USF) College of Pharmacy with clinical internship experience in the ICU and Emergency Department. She also enjoys writing and has been a contributing writer for *Pharmacy Times* since 2016. She is currently pursuing a PGY1 with robust experiences in critical care, emergency medicine, academia and which offers diverse learning experiences.

Match Day Pairs Thousands of Pharmacy Students With Residency Programs

(Continued from page 1)

According to Jill Fitzgerald, PharmD, director of experiential learning and continuing professional development at University of Connecticut, Match Day is as exciting as it is stress-inducing for pharmacy students. "Student preparation for residency programs begins very early in their academic career. That has to do with requirements for residency training. [Residency programs] are looking for leadership and skills, research experiences, and teaching experience as well," she said, in an interview with *Pharmacy Times*.

The process in order to attain the necessary experience for such programs requires preparation and foresight. Students must research accredited programs, attend regional and national residency showcases, such as ASHP's clinical meeting in December, to meet program directors and residents; participate in rotations based on their interest—all before applying.

After proper research, students focus the application process, which includes a letter of intent, 3-4 recommendations and a CV.

For students like Jessica Hong, a PharmD candidate on her 6th year at the University of Connecticut, the process was challenging, yet worth the preparation in order to be matched with Western New England University (WNE), a program affiliate with Walgreens.

"It was definitely a challenging process with interviews, and presentations. There was a lot involved, especially with being familiar with my CV and [relating] my personal and professional life experiences to my aspirations," said Hong, in an interview.

The PGY1 residency through WNE will allow Hong to gain experience in community pharmacy setting, direct patient care, and ambulatory care, she added.

Over the last 5 years, post-graduate year-1 (PGY1) residency positions have grown by 34% and post-graduate year-2 (PGY2) positions by 64%, according to a news release by ASHP. Residencies in ambulatory care, much like Hong's, have seen a 112% increase in growth, with infectious disease residencies following by 68% and oncology residencies by 40%. Expansive growth occurred in emergency medicine residencies, which grew by 230%, and in pain management and palliative care residencies, which increased by 127%.

Students like Nicholas Pugliese, a 6th year PharmD Candidate at University of Connecticut, the growth in such residency programs comes at a good time. While in pharmacy school, he used his interest for pain management and infectious disease to seek opportunities to learn. In his 3rd year, Pugliese, an



ASHP affiliate president, participated in a longitudinal rotation program through Hartford Hospital, which "matched" with him today.

"[The rotation program] provided opportunities for research and teaching. I took advantage of that to branch out and learn more, and as I went through, I learned that I liked cardiology and critical care more than my previous idea of pain management and infectious disease. So, I used those experiences to learn what I like and inform my decision," Pugliese said.

In an interview, Pugliese said that he intends to seek a PYG2 in order to specialize in either cardiology or

Survivorship Care Plans May Help Patients After Cancer Treatment

(Continued from page 3)

critical care.

For Doug Buckheit, a current 4th year student from the University of Connecticut, the residency match process may feel long and stressful at times, yet once match day finally arrives, one suddenly realizes how well the system works. "The match process is a great way for students to find residency programs they love, and for programs to find the candidates that fit them best. No matter which phase of the match a student ends up in, there are plenty of strong programs that are looking

for great candidates.

In 2016, ASHP collaborated with National Matching Services (NMS) and the Pharmacy Online Residency Centralized Application Service (PHORCAS) to create a 2-phase Match process to help meet the needs of not only the rapidly growing number of pharmacists and student pharmacists who are seeking residencies, but also residency programs that are seeking applicants.

"Residency for pharmacy students is not always a requirement, but for those who want to work in a hospital practice, it's a differentiator," said Fitzgerald. "Most PGY1 students have a general residency where they rotate through clinical settings and departments [in order] to get a broad range of hospital and

pharmacy experience. This enables them to have more opportunities when they finish their residency, since many hospitals see residency as 1-3 years of experience."

Now in its 4th year, ASHP's Phase II of the Match gives student pharmacists who did not match in Phase I another opportunity to apply for a number of postgraduate training programs. The deadline to register to participate in Phase II of the Match is April 2, 2019. ■

REFERENCES

1. ASHP 2019 Residency Match Phase I Shows Continued Increase in Positions [news release]. Bethesda, MD; March 15, 2019: ASHP website. <https://www.ashp.org/news/2019/03/15/ashp-2019-residency-match-phase-i-shows-continued-increase-in-positions>. Accessed March 15, 2019.

PharmD or RPh: Does It Matter?

ALEX EVANS, PHARM.D, BCGP

In my career, I have experienced several temperature excursions when storing vaccines, primarily as a result of storage in consumer-model refrigerators.

As I discussed in a previous article,¹ one crucial step is to call the manufacturer and obtain any off-label stability data that they might have to validate the continued use of those vaccines.

The medical affairs departments of those manufacturers always gathers basic information on both me and the pharmacy as part of their write-ups of the case.

For some reason, they always seem to ask "PharmD or RPh?"

The first time I heard that question,

I was confused as to why they were even asking it, and I said "both."

The representative was then confused, and I let her check whatever box she wanted to, so that we could move on to the problem at hand.

Upon further reflection, I realized that it really highlights a systemic problem in the pharmacy world: Companies, without even understanding the background or meaning of those terms, treat pharmacists who have a bachelor's degree and those who went to school to pursue a doctoral degree differently. Furthermore, they do not seem to understand that an RPh is earned by every pharmacist who is licensed, not just those with a bachelor's degree.

Most of us have also seen job ads that require a PharmD, and I saw an older pharmacist get laid off when his position was changed to "director" from "manager," and the company had everyone in that position reapply for their jobs and then listed one of the job requirements as a PharmD. The company later realized that it had extremely qualified applicants applying with bachelor's degrees, plus master's degrees in pharmacy (for those who do not now, that was an older route of pursuing post-graduate training) with years of experience in his specialization. Because of that, the company later changed the job description to read "PharmD or master's degree in pharmacy."

In reality, there is little difference in



the number of years spent in school between the Bachelor of Science and the Doctor of Pharmacy degree. For example, at the University of North Carolina in 1979, the BSc pharmacy curriculum was changed to include 2 years of undergraduate work and 3 years of pharmacy school. During that time (and many years prior), there was a lot of debate about making a PharmD the entry-level degree, but oddly enough, many academics and even the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) resisted the idea, leaving it at a BSc degree. It was not until 1992 that the AACP officially decided to make the PharmD the entry-level degree, and that was not mandated until 2000.

A History of the UNC School of Pharmacy (Cocolas) has, at the very bottom of the document, a comparison of a BSc curriculum and a PharmD curriculum. The primary change in the last year was that the entire experiential portion

of the education moved into the school.^{2,3} The didactic portion of the curriculum has also certainly evolved in that time period, but there have always been curriculum changes, and in fact the curriculum in pharmacy school is already very different than when I graduated in 2010. I hope it continues to evolve to suit the changing educational needs and roles of pharmacists.

Instead of focusing on the name of the degree, it would be much better to focus on experience and transferable skills, whether that is through a residency, which, as I said earlier, many “RPhs” have completed, through work experience or through some other type of post-graduate training (MBA or MPH, certificate programs, etc.). Making hiring decisions based on a person’s aptitude, emotional intelligence, and soft and transferable skills will lead to a much better team and ultimately better quality health care for patients. ■

REFERENCES

1. Evans A. 6 best practices for refrigerated vaccine storage and handling. *Pharmacy Times*. June 28, 2016. pharmacytimes.com/contributor/alex-evans-pharmd-cgp/2016/06/6-best-practices-for-refrigerated-vaccine-storage-and-handling. Accessed August 25, 2018.
2. Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy. Credentialing in pharmacy. *The Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy*. *Am J Health Syst Pharm*. 2001;58(1):69-76.
3. Cocolas GH. A history of the UNC School of Pharmacy. pharmacy.unc.edu/files/2015/03/school-of-pharmacy-history.pdf. Accessed August 25, 2018.

Alex Evans, PharmD, CGP, works in community pharmacy in Jacksonville, Florida, and is preceptor at the University of Florida and Florida AM University. He graduated from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro with a BS in Biology and graduated from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with a Doctor of Pharmacy degree. He has worked in both the community and long-term care settings. He can be reached at alex.evans.pharmd@gmail.com

NAPLEX Preparation: Tips for the Most Important Exam of Your Career

DIPTI DESAI, PHARM.D;
LIZA PATEL, PHARM.D;
AND OLIVER MILLS, PHARM.D

For many pharmacy students, the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) is the final challenge standing between them and their careers as pharmacists. Although it may seem overwhelming to review all the material you have learned over the past few years at pharmacy school for 1 exam, it is important to focus on key learning points.

of Pharmacy website provides information on what you can and cannot bring to the exam and details the structure of the exam itself. NAPLEX contains 250 questions; 200 are operational and count toward your score, whereas the remaining 50 are being evaluated as potential operations questions for future exams.

You will have 6 hours to complete the exam, so it is important to track how much time you have left as you are working. If you do not finish the exam, any unanswered questions will

a scale of 0 to 150, with 75 being passing. It is based on a complex "item response theory" model that evaluates patterns of correct and incorrect answers and weighs scoring based on the content of the question. This scoring model makes it very difficult to predict your score, but you should still try your best. Completing practice exams, such as the Pre-NAPLEX, can be a useful way to familiarize yourself with the types of questions that may appear on the exam.

There are various types of

questions, including multiple choice, multiple response, fill in the blank, constructed response, ordered response, and hot spot. Calculation questions can be free throws, so be sure to specifically practice statistical questions and know your formulas. Another recommendation is to think through casebased questions that may provide you with unnecessary details as distractions.

Ensure you have an ample amount of time to review material at a

speed at which you are comfortable. This is a comprehensive exam, and cramming all the material in over a few days would be tough for anyone. Consider identifying which therapeutic areas you feel are your weakest and tailoring your studying as appropriate. As with any exam, make sure you get plenty of sleep

Creating an effective studying plan early on to reinforce your strong subjects and brushing up on your weaker ones can make the difference in overcoming this last obstacle.

Before you start preparing for NAPLEX, familiarize yourself with what to expect for the exam. The National Association of Boards

be scored as incorrect. Therefore, try not to waste too much time on one question if you are stumped, and make sure to provide an answer for all questions. However, do not rush either, because once you submit your answer, you will not be able to go back to it.

The scoring for the exam is on



and eat nutritious meals; avoid too much caffeine and sugar.

These tips will also be invaluable when studying for your state's Multistate Pharmacy Jurisprudence Examination. This exam is shorter than NAPLEX, but it is still just as important for you to have a grasp of both federal and state laws. The exam questions may not specify which laws you should consider when answering the question, but it is important to always remember that

the more stringent law prevails.

You might walk out of either exam feeling as if you failed; and many of your peers will likely share this sentiment. Don't let this discourage you. As long as you properly prepare for the exam, you will likely do better than you think.

Remember, getting through pharmacy school was the tough part. If you've made it this far, you can conquer this exam! ■

Dipti Desai, PharmD, is the senior director of scientific affairs for Pharmacy Times Continuing Education™ and a graduate of the Rutgers Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy.

Liza Patel, PharmD, is a director of scientific affairs for Pharmacy Times Continuing Education™ and a graduate of the Rutgers Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy.

Oliver Mills, PharmD, is a manager of education for Pharmacy Times Continuing Education™ and a graduate of the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy

Public Perceives Pharmacists as Some of the Most Trusted Professionals

KRISTEN CROSSLEY, MA, EDITOR

Pharmacists are again among the most highly trusted people in their occupations, according to a recent Gallup poll.^{1,2}

The poll ranked pharmacists third among professionals in the United States for honesty and ethical standards, with 66% of respondents rating their trustworthiness as "very high" or "high."¹

Pharmacists ranked behind nurses (84% rated "very high" or "high"), who held the top spot for the 17th consecutive year, and medical doctors (67%). High school teachers (60%) and police officers (54%) rounded out the top five most trusted professionals.¹

Poll responses were collected in telephone interviews conducted by Gallup from December 3 to 12, 2018, with a random sample of 1025 US adults 18 years and older. Respondents resided in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Landline and cellular

telephone numbers were selected using random-digit-dial methods, according to Gallup.¹

At the bottom of the 2018 ranking for trustworthiness were members of Congress and car salespeople, both of whom earned an 8% rating of "very high" or "high" for honesty and ethical standards. Telemarketers (9%) were third from the bottom.¹

Many other occupations, including accountants, funeral directors, clergy, journalists, building contractors, bankers, and real estate agents, had more "average" levels of trust from poll respondents.¹

Pharmacists' ranking in the 2018 Gallup poll is an improvement over their place in the previous year's Gallup poll, which placed these professionals fifth among occupations included in the survey. Previously, 62% of respondents rated the honesty and ethical standards of pharmacists as "high" or "very high."²

In 2017, military officers and grade school teachers ranked in the top 5 for trusted professionals in the

Gallup poll. However, neither of those occupations was included in the 2018 poll.¹

Gallup has measured the public's views of various occupations' honesty and ethics since 1976. Although the rankings and the list of included occupations change each year, the latest poll's results revealed that health care workers are consistently rated highly for their trustworthiness. ■

REFERENCES

1. Brenan M. Nurses again outpace other professions for honesty, ethics. Gallup website. news.gallup.com/poll/245597/nurses-again-outpace-professions-honesty-ethics.aspx. Published December 20, 2018. Accessed February 26, 2019.
2. Brenan M. Nurses keep healthy lead as most honest, ethical profession. Gallup website. news.gallup.com/poll/224639/nurses-keep-healthy-lead-honest-ethical-profession.aspx. Published December 26, 2017. Accessed February 26, 2019.

The Steps to a New Pharmacy Job After Losing Employment

ALEX BARKER, PHARM D

You've just lost your Job. Now what?! Emotionally, you may be a little distraught. I still remember the feeling of a giant pit in my stomach the first time I was fired in college. It is only reasonable to expect that the feeling is magnified several times over when you are providing for yourself.

“The first thing to know is that you are not alone.”

You have bills to pay, student loans, a mortgage... You may even have a family to support in this pharmacy job crisis. How in the world are you going to make ends meet when the only source of income is gone?

The first thing to know is that you are not alone. We are seeing all sorts of people losing opportunities and jobs in the current pharmacy job market. Some of that loss is for personal reasons, and some of it is because corporations have decided to eliminate a costly workforce.

STEPS TO TAKE NOW TO GET THAT NEW PHARMACY JOB.

[Update that resume and that career profile](#)

Use all the accomplishments and activities that you have done over the years.

[Look up all the job openings in your area](#)

Remember, you are not looking for your dream job—you are looking for any job—so learn your options. While this isn't the easiest way to find a job (since you're competing with likely dozens of other applicants), it is a good place to start.

[Wait to start that New Business](#)

There are those who see unemployment as an opportunity to start a new business, and while I love the idea of being self-employed, it is much better to have a stream of

income coming in first, so that you have room to maneuver. Additionally, starting a new business when you are worried about money and finances only increases the likelihood of making a poor decision based on that anxiety.

However, if you are very confident, you should not be discouraged. In fact, if that is where your interests lie, I would recommend that you get started right away so as to bring in that extra income sooner.

As an example, I knew a pharmacist who used her knowledge of functional medicine to provide nutrition consults for an independent pharmacy after she became unemployed. While it wasn't a full-time stable income with benefits, it definitely provided extra income when she needed it most, and gave her room to maneuver.

[Network](#)

Attend every healthcare networking event you can. You never know who you might meet.

I went to one just last week and had the opportunity to enter a real estate investment that I would have missed had I stayed home.

Go out, shake hands, and build relationships with people who want to, and can, help you. Push the social anxiety aside and just do it. You have to get out there because your livelihood is on the line.

[Volunteer](#)

Even on your best days, you will only spend 4-6 hours of time dedicated to the pursuit of a new job, so create opportunities for yourself with the rest of your time by volunteering, particularly somewhere related to health. And it sure beats sitting at home and watching TV.

[Implement Healthy Habits](#)

Losing a job affects everyone differently. Some feel a sense of worthlessness or depression or anxiety, and poor habits, like wasting your time in front of the television, will only make it worse.

Start implementing healthy habits to improve your situation instead. Get up early. Exercise. Read a book, journal, meditate, pray... All of these things can push you forward; positive momentum instead of negative.

WHAT ABOUT GOING BACK TO SCHOOL?

The job market is so saturated that many people believe that in order to stand out, they need more education, more certifications. While it is always a good idea to keep learning, it isn't necessary for a job search unless you know it will lead you down a path you love.

Going back to school is a poor excuse to avoid the marketplace. Taking on more debt is not something I would recommend to someone who is unemployed and certifications often take months of study, (not to mention the weeks you'll spend waiting for the exam results).

That is valuable money and time that could have been spent looking for a job and networking.

LEARN FROM MY EXPERIENCE

I've spent the last 5 years learning and applying these lessons to my own career. I was able to transition from working a safe and secure job in Veterans Affairs, to working for myself, and I would love to share what I've learned with you.

Check out our free Master Class. It is a free, one-hour long webinar about how pharmacists can get into a new job without relevant experience. There are lots of good tips about how to stand out in the marketplace and how to avoid common mistakes. ■

Alex Barker is the founder of The Happy PharmD, which helps pharmacists create an inspiring career, break free from the mundane "pill-flipping" life. He is a Full-time Pharmacist, Media Company founder, franchise owner, Business Coach, Speaker, and Author. He's also the Founder of Pharmacy School HQ, which helps students get into pharmacy school and become residents.