

Surviving the Residency Application Process

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The 4th year of pharmacy school can be stressful for students who are applying for a postgraduate year (PGY) 1 pharmacy practice residency. Navigating through the madness of the residency process, you may find yourself saying, “Wow, I wish I would have known that before I went to Midyear” or “I sure am glad I knew that before interviewing.” The purpose of this article is to provide a summary of helpful and important tidbits of information that we have collected to help 4th year pharmacy students become better prepared for the entire PGY1 residency process. This article will cover information you need to know your 3rd year of pharmacy school, your 4th year before the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting, at Midyear including the Personnel Placement Service (PPS), and following Midyear.

Third Year of Pharmacy School

We recommend attending the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting the 3rd year of pharmacy school if you are seriously considering postgraduate training. If you don't have the money, apply for a stipend through your school's Society of Health-System Pharmacy chapter. Even as a 3rd year pharmacy student, the networking you can experience has helped shape many future careers in pharmacy. It is important to research programs you might be interested in by checking the listings online in the ASHP residency directory (www.ashp.org/import/accreditation/residencydirectory.aspx) or in the October *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, as well as ask them questions at the ASHP residency showcase in person. Attend as much as you possibly can! It is an overwhelming experience, but going your 3rd year means you will be much less overwhelmed your 4th year of pharmacy school. It often helps during this time to ask what advice residency directors, preceptors or

residents may have for you as a pharmacy student to do in school to increase your chances of getting accepted into a future residency program.

Fourth Year of Pharmacy School

Before Midyear

The beginning of September is a good time to start preparing for Midyear by updating your curriculum vitae (CV) first and understanding all the acronyms (e.g., PPS, PGY1, PGY2) you will experience. You may not really know where to start, but everyone will want a copy of your CV so share what you have on your CV with your rotational preceptors, professors, and pharmacy employers (including a residency director at the site if possible) to get useful feedback on what to additionally include and highlight for visibility. Next preferably in late September or early October, we suggest exploring ASHP's website by going to www.ashp.org, then "Accreditation", then "Resident Information" and you will find the "Residency Checklist" (which most students will find helpful) along with other important information. This is also a good time to develop your own "Residency Notebook" to put all the information in a central location to organize all the programs you may be considering, much like being an actual pharmacy resident. You should then start reviewing programs within your geographic limits (if applicable) from the ASHP Residency Directory to determine the ones you may be interested in obtaining more information (than listed on their web residency description) prior to PPS opening in mid-October. Once PPS is open, you can officially search for programs (and they will search for you too) through CareerPharm. Table 1 can assist you in determining or at least narrowing your options for the available programs. If you have pharmacy residents at your rotation sites, ask them questions since they are an important resource because they just went

through this process. An important consideration is to ask for more information from student rotation sites that also have residency programs since they will have a good idea of how you performed during your rotation at their site and take this into consideration when selecting candidates. Two major items you need to know about before going to Midyear are the National Matching Service and PPS. Table 2 provides more information about the National Matching Service and Table 3 focuses on PPS.

As Midyear approaches and you will likely begin to feel nervous, it will help relieve your anxiety by being well prepared. Table 4 contains a list you will want to complete before Midyear, and items you will want to bring to Midyear to feel less overwhelmed. If you want more information, there are several helpful articles that have been previously published in Table 5 to help you prepare.

Prior to Midyear is the best time to identify whom you would ask to write a letter of reference or recommendation for you. Many residency programs may have their own forms for these individuals to complete for you or they may allow use of the ASHP Residency Applicant Recommendation Request Form (http://www.ashp.org/s_ashp/docs/files/RTP_ResidentRecomendForm.pdf). Ideally, you will need one from an employer (or previous employer), college faculty or advisor, and past or current preceptor who can answer questions about your knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Most programs will request three letters of reference or recommendation that are typically due in late December or January with your residency application, so you may want to ask for four (one additional) letters to be sure you do not miss any deadlines if one of your letters does not make it in time. You will need to provide the

individuals whom you have requested to write a letter on your behalf a copy of your letter of intent for each program so they will understand your motivation for seeking the residency. You should also ask for a copy of your letters of reference or recommendation so that you know all the information that the individuals who will be interviewing you will be reviewing about you. Additionally, this is a good time to determine how long it will take for your graduating college or university to provide a transcript on your behalf, as well as any costs associated with obtaining an official transcript.

At Midyear

In December, it is finally time for the much-anticipated Midyear meeting. The event will take place from Sunday to Thursday, but make sure to schedule your flight in on Saturday by mid afternoon as the ASHP meeting registration and PPS usually close by 5 pm (saves you time Sunday morning not to delay any important interviews). Your flight out can be as early as Wednesday morning, since the major event at Midyear is the Residency Showcase, which occurs on Monday afternoon (1-4 pm) and Tuesday (8-11 am and 1-4 pm). The Residency Showcase is free for all to attend, but is generally very crowded with all your fellow pharmacy student colleagues looking for the best programs for them. It is best to review the Residency Showcase diagram in your ASHP registration materials to identify which programs will be participating and where to find them with their specific location (see Table 6). If you signed up and paid for PPS before the October deadline, Table 7 reviews the process for how each program is scheduled and the interview process. Midyear is a great time for networking, so attend as many networking events that you can, especially if you already know what specialty area you may be interested in pursuing as a career path. It is also important to ask specific

programs if they have an evening reception (more common with university-based residencies) so you can meet others you may work with during your residency. There are also plenty of continuing education events to attend and network with others at the Midyear Clinical Meeting. Lastly, have fun!

After Midyear

If you were well prepared for Midyear, it may or may not have seemed too stressful and now it is time to choose where to apply! The application and interview process can be time-consuming, but do not let that keep you from applying or interviewing somewhere. It is best to develop for yourself a timeline with a finalized list of places you will apply to before Christmas since some programs have application deadlines as early as December 31st.

→Applications

The reason you need to finalize your list of where you are applying so quickly is mainly because you need to give the people writing your letters of reference or recommendation time to send them in on your behalf, preferably before the deadline. Several factors may assist you in finalizing your residency list, such as developing a checklist of the qualities in a program that are most important to you, and then checking to see which programs you choose to interview with have most or all of those qualities. It also helps to discuss this with someone you trust, such as a preceptor, college advisor or faculty member. Most of the time having to explain your choices to others helps it become clearer to you as well. It also helps to talk with current residents at your current or previous rotations. Table 8 provides more details about the application process. Keep in mind that you need to be willing to interview at all the places you are applying to, and finance your way with travel and lodging. Some programs may offer partial

funding or offer to provide housing for residency candidates if you ask. It takes each program time to review all their applications, so if they offer you an interview you should plan to travel and know many of them may be relatively short notice for making economically feasible travel plans.

→Interviews

Every interview is different, yet they all have the same basic structure; so be prepared to spend an entire weekday onsite and check in advance with your college or university, as well as your rotation site to get approval for the dates of your interviews. Many residency programs offer interviews on Mondays or Fridays to allow lower airfares (if needed), while some programs have interviews during the week (typically local residency candidates). Yes, this means you will miss your current rotation and will have to make up the hours at some point depending on your college or university. The general structure of what happens at your interview includes (see Appendix D):

- Overview of Program: usually the program director or coordinator will meet with you for an hour and review the structure of the residency year. Listen carefully to ask relevant questions and if there is something that doesn't make sense or sound right to you, ask about it even if it feels like a dumb question. Many programs are flexible and allow you go off-site for a specific rotation they may not be able to offer. Some programs have even allowed residents to do 2 weeks in a different country! If you are interested, this is definitely a good time to ask about off-site rotations that are not available at the program site.

- Interview with Preceptors and/or Other Staff: This is where you receive numerous questions, but it is also your chance to really share with the program how great a candidate you are! Some candidates prefer to think of every answer they give as a story, and then it becomes story-telling time rather than a potentially intimidating experience. The common questions asked are listed in Table 9; however, this is by no means a complete list.
- Tour: Most programs enlist one of their current residents to provide you a tour of the facility, and often the program director or coordinator may also contribute. It is generally preferable to wear appropriate comfortable shoes on the day of your interview.
- Lunch: Usually with the current residents and the best time to ask them questions about the program. You will want to ask them questions when the program coordinator or director is not around, so the residents will be honest with you about the issues they do and don't like about their program.
- Case Presentation or Discussion: Each program may ask you to provide a presentation or oral discussion and/or a written case with SOAP note or some other variation. Examples are provided in Table 10.
- Wrap-up and Questions: Most programs allow you several opportunities to ask questions throughout the day, so it is reasonable if you do not have questions at the end of your interview day. Additional helpful hints for the interview are provided in Table 11 with question examples provided in Table 12 and Appendix A.

Table 1

How to choose residency programs of interest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="215 352 1385 619">➤ Websites to Review: ASHP online residency directory (www.ashp.org/ResidencyDirectory), American College of Clinical Pharmacy (www.accp.com/resandfel), American Pharmacists Association (www.pharmacist.com/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Residencies_Advanced_Training) <li data-bbox="215 661 1385 928">➤ If you know or are considering a specific area of pharmacy practice you want to focus your career, then search for programs with that specific focus. For example, if you are interested in ambulatory care/primary care, try looking at different Veterans Affairs Medical Center programs. <li data-bbox="215 970 1385 1159">➤ If you are planning a PGY2 residency and know the specialty area you are primarily interested in pursuing, then review programs that also offer your specific PGY2 career focus as a PGY1. <li data-bbox="215 1201 1385 1390">➤ If you are unsure or undecided, then review programs providing a broad range of rotations so you can get the greatest range of possible career options and hopefully determine what area most interests you professionally. <li data-bbox="215 1432 1385 1852">➤ Do your RESEARCH! Ask around about programs by discussing with current residents you may meet during rotations or professional meetings. Specifically ask about their experiences and listen to what they share about their programs to see if it is what qualities you desire. Ask the residents what has occurred that was expected and unexpected. Ask preceptors or faculty for advice and any words of wisdom in making final selections.

- Formulate a list of requirements you **MUST HAVE** in a residency (e.g., direct patient care, speaking and writing opportunities, administration, research). This will help narrow your final search. The minimum goal is to develop a list of programs you are truly interested in finding more information about before Midyear comes.

Table 2

About The Matching Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="215 352 1403 546">➤ www.natmatch.com/ashprmp/<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="310 432 1403 546">○ This is also linked from the ASHP website (www.ashp.org/Import/ACCREDITATION/ResidentInfo/SeekingaResidency.aspx).<li data-bbox="215 590 1403 621">➤ Cost: \$112<li data-bbox="215 665 1403 858">➤ The online registration deadline is in early January – so do not delay in signing up. You will receive an information packet in the mail shortly after their registration deadline passes.<li data-bbox="215 903 1403 1096">➤ After you register, write down your matching number (a 5-digit applicant code number) and put it in your “Residency” folder. You will need it for your letter of intent for some programs.<li data-bbox="215 1140 1403 1333">➤ You are required to complete your interviews by early March so you can submit your Rank Order List of programs you would be willing to accept an offer provided they select you as well.<li data-bbox="215 1377 1403 1478">➤ The Matching Process results are generally available in mid-March to see if you matched with any of the programs you listed on your Rank Order List.

Table 3

About Personnel Placement Service (CareerPharm)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="215 352 386 384">➤ Cost: \$60<li data-bbox="215 432 711 464">➤ Where to find PPS: ASHP's website<li data-bbox="215 512 1321 852">➤ Allows you to interview ONLY during Midyear; however, it does not take the place of an on-site interview. If you don't sign up, you cannot participate in interviewing at Midyear (onsite registration is available at a higher price). You do not need to sign up for PPS if you are only planning on attending the Residency Showcase as a P3 student.<li data-bbox="215 900 1284 1010">➤ PPS is recommended especially if you are interested in out-of-state residencies and also gives you practice interviewing for your on-site interviews.<li data-bbox="215 1058 1321 1318">➤ Some programs, especially PGY1 residencies, may not all participate in PPS. Be sure to stop by their residency showcase booth if this is the case on Monday or Tuesday. If the program will not be participating in the residency showcase, make plans to contact them before Midyear.<li data-bbox="215 1367 1321 1864">➤ Once you have signed up for PPS, post your CV as soon as you can in CareerPharm since searching generally starts in mid-October. Programs will then begin to contact you for PPS interviews and you can do the same. This is highly recommended, especially since PPS interview spots can fill up even before you get to Midyear. If you are not interested in a particular program, be sure to respond professionally that you are looking elsewhere if you are sure the program is not for you so they know your career intentions.

- Here is an example email to send to prospective programs you are interested in interviewing:

Dear Dr. X,

I am currently a 4th year pharmacy student at ***Insert University Name***, and my area of interest is ***insert your area***. I am very interested in your PGY1 residency program since your hospital has ***insert institution specifics of relevance***. I will be attending the ASHP Midyear meeting in ***insert city***. If you are participating in PPS, is it possible for me to set up an interview with you ahead of time? My CV is attached and I look forward to hearing back from you!

Regards,

Insert your name

- After you register for PPS, write down your mailbox number and put it in your “Residency” folder.
- IMPORTANT NOTE: Each program has 3 numbers you’ll need to know at Midyear if they are participating in PPS: PPS mailbox number, PPS booth number (to know where to go for your interview), and residency showcase booth number (so you can find them on the date they are participating). Write down ALL THREE of these numbers! If they aren’t participating in PPS, they will only have a residency showcase booth number.
 - Finding the PPS mailbox number: directly from CareerPharm
 - Finding the PPS booth number: obtain from residency director
 - Finding the residency showcase booth number and date of their showcase

(Monday or Tuesday): October issue of *Am J Health-Syst Pharm*

Table 4

Preparing for Midyear
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Professional business suit ➤ 15-20 copies of your CV (you may need less or more depending on how many programs you are interested in) ➤ Business cards (you can easily make your own) ➤ Your “Residency” folder and student portfolio ➤ Schedule of ALL events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop your own schedule that includes events you are required to attend, events you want to attend, and student programming (all of this can be found in the October issue of <i>Am J Health-Syst Pharm</i> or in the program you receive upon registration check-in at Midyear). Be sure to include your PPS interviews, any continuing education (CE) events (you will get CE flyers in the mail), and most importantly the booths you want to visit at each residency showcase. Be sure to include the residency booth number on the schedule, along with all other locations. ➤ List of questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile a list of questions to ask at interviews (or use the one provided – see Appendix A) and print out 15-20 copies of it. This way, before each interview or showcase booth that you visit, you can circle questions you want to ask about each program, or write new questions down. After you ask the question, you can simply write the answer beside it. Be sure to use a

different sheet for each program. It is quick and easy, and it can make your Midyear experience so much less stressful!

- Thank you notes
 - You may want to consider including a small professional picture of yourself so they can remember you in the note.
- Filing system
 - A small, flexible, inexpensive filing folder that has multiple tabs in it is usually preferred. You can label the tabs with the programs you already know you want to visit, and leave a few open for programs that you might become interested in after each networking opportunity. Each program gives you a lot of different information, and you will be glad you stayed organized when it comes time to get applications completed on time.
- List of programs you are interested in
 - Review as much information on the programs you are interested in, especially if you are planning to interview with them at PPS. Write the information down, or type it out, and keep it in your filing system. It reflects very positively on you during PPS interviews if you already know information about their program!

Table 5

Helpful Articles for Residency Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="212 352 1385 464">➤ Mancuso CE, Paloucek FP. Understanding and preparing for pharmacy practice residency interviews. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2004;61:1686-9.<li data-bbox="212 506 1385 617">➤ Nelson T. Selecting the right residency program. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2005;62:1138,1140.<li data-bbox="212 659 1385 770">➤ Pochop S. Pharmacy practice residency programs. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2005;62:1562,1564.<li data-bbox="212 812 1385 924">➤ Song A. SOAP note: Why I want to complete a pharmacy practice residency. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2005;62:2041-2.<li data-bbox="212 966 1385 1077">➤ Fit KE, Padiyara RS, Rabi SM, Burkiewicz JS. Factors influencing pursuit of residency training. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2005;62:2226,2235.<li data-bbox="212 1119 1385 1152">➤ Weant KA. On being a pharmacy resident. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2006;63:1230-1.<li data-bbox="212 1194 1385 1306">➤ Burkiewicz JS, Sincak CA. Online tool for pharmacy students seeking residency positions. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2008;65:2091-2.<li data-bbox="212 1348 1385 1459">➤ DeCoske MA, Cavanaugh T, Elliott S, Garris L, Giannakos M, Hegg AM, et al. A new practitioner's guide to a successful interview. Am J Health-Syst Pharm 2008;65:2100-3.

Table 6

Preparing for the Midyear Residency Showcase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="215 352 1287 619">➤ Be prepared to bring your list of questions (mentioned in Table 4), ask to speak with current residents and the residency director, and write down the answers they provide. It can be a hassle, and you might have to talk in groups, but get in there, get your information and get out.<li data-bbox="215 661 1308 850">➤ Be sure to visit all the sites you are interested in. If you can't get the information you need right then, get their contact information and email them with your additional questions.<li data-bbox="215 892 1312 1003">➤ Be sure to talk to the current or former residents. No one knows the inside of the residency program like they do.<li data-bbox="215 1045 1305 1157">➤ If possible, talk to the residency director. You will be spending the next year with that individual so make sure you can get along well with him/her.

Table 7

Personnel Placement Service Helpful Hints
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The mailbox system can be overwhelming, but it's actually very simple in CareerPharm. You have a mailbox to use in communicating with residency programs. They will express their interest in you by inviting you for a PPS interview through your mailbox (i.e., you will receive an email message from the email address you linked to your mailbox) and they have a mailbox that you can reply to as well. Be sure to reply if you are interested or not to let them know your career intentions.➤ The interviews usually last around 20 to 30 minutes. They generally ask you questions regarding why you want to do a residency, what your interests are, why that specific location, etc. Be prepared to answer these questions concisely as your time is limited. It is helpful to bring extra copies of your CV even if they have asked you to email them one. Sometimes, there are 2 to 3 people interviewing you and each person wants a copy of your CV.➤ Wear a professional business suit with appropriate comfortable shoes to your PPS interview and be on time.➤ It helps to know the differences between a fellowship and a PGY1 or PGY2 residency when you are interviewing as some programs may offer all three.➤ Try not to schedule more than 6-8 interviews, as it can be very stressful and mentally/physically draining. Always remember to approach each interview with a positive attitude and display that consistently throughout your interview. They are

interviewing a number of people that day, and you want to make sure you leave a positive lasting impression by showing how passionate you are about what you want to do.

- Bring your list of questions (mentioned in Table 4), ask questions not already answered, and write down the answers as they are speaking. This will be good practice for asking questions at your on-site interviews.
- Plan to provide each program you interview with a thank you note since pharmacy is a small world and many programs interview the same candidates. It also helps to personalize it by including statements you or the interviewers made during the interview and what attracts you to their program.

Table 8

Completing Application Packets	
➤ Letter of intent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Example: see Appendix B
➤ Letters of Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask early – preferably in October ▪ Provide each person with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An envelope with a list of programs you request a letter of reference or recommendation on your behalf → Example: see Appendix C ○ Pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelopes (double-check your addresses) for each program ○ Any forms required by the program ▪ Follow up with each person by sending out a reminder email 3 to 5 business days before you want the letters to be mailed or emailed (or both). Many people providing your reference or recommendation letters may send them via email with a hard copy in the mail to make it to the specific program by their respective due date.
➤ CV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have it reviewed by your preceptors, college faculty and/or a residency program director if possible
➤ Transcripts	

- Remember many schools are closed for the holidays, so send requests in early to prevent delays in completing your application packet

Table 9

Common Interview Questions for Residency Candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Describe your strengths and weaknesses.➤ What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the pharmacy profession?➤ Would you characterize yourself as a leader or a follower?➤ How do you handle stress and what do you like to do for fun?➤ Why do you want to do a residency?➤ Why are you interested in our program?➤ How did you become interested in (area of interest)?➤ What do you expect to gain upon completion of this residency program?➤ Describe the different types of preceptors you have experienced, including the pros and cons of each including which you prefer.➤ Where do you see yourself professionally in 5 and 10 years?➤ Describe a time where you provided a recommendation that was met with resistance from the prescriber and explain how you handled it.➤ What is the most significant clinical intervention you have made?➤ How are your time management skills?➤ What do you do when your preceptor gives you 3 articles to read tonight, you have a presentation tomorrow and a topic discussion, while Midyear is in 2 days and you haven't packed or finished your poster?<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ This could be an actual question as they are trying to get a feel for how you handle stress and manage your time.

- Describe a time where you have gone above and beyond what was expected of you. Why did you do this and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a project that you successfully completed and one in which you were not successful. What did you learn from each one?
- We have an excellent pool of candidates this year. Why should we pick you over the others?
- What is your biggest accomplishment (can be outside the profession of pharmacy)?

Table 10

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Assessments for Residency Candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="215 352 1300 850">➤ <i>Case Discussion</i> - During interview sessions, a short case may be provided to you with about 5 minutes to review it. The questions the interviewers were going to ask were listed at the bottom of the case so the candidate has time to think through their answers and make relevant notes. Generally, your verbal answers are evaluated and any notes you made are for your reference only. The interviewers generally attempt to provide a relaxed environment by telling the candidate not to be nervous and do their best.<li data-bbox="215 898 1300 1241">➤ <i>Written Case</i> – You may be provided a computer with 30 minutes to work up an anticoagulation case and write a pharmacy consult SOAP note. Generally, the information for the case will be provided on the computer so the candidate can cut and paste labs, diagnostic testing, vital signs and any other pertinent data for your SOAP note.<li data-bbox="215 1289 1321 1703">➤ <i>Case Presentation</i> – Candidate are generally required to do a 30 minute presentation over a topic of their choice. It is best to choose a presentation that you have done before to other preceptors and received positive feedback on your performance. Be sure to practice the day before your interview and anticipate common questions after the presentation, while most preceptors will ask several practical questions, so be prepared!<li data-bbox="215 1751 1300 1864">➤ <i>Case Presentation and Discussion</i> – The candidate may be required to do a short informal presentation after being provided a choice of several different disease

state topics. If you have not previously done a presentation over any of the topics listed, it is best to choose the topic you are most interested. Your presentation will likely be timed with a specific time limit (e.g., 10 minutes). Anticipate 10 to 15 preceptors or attendees for your presentation and expect them to stay for the case discussion following your presentation. This can be an intimidating experience, but generally any time the interviewers see you struggling with a question, they may ask another question to guide you in the right direction.

- *Written Case and Discussion* – Candidates are provided a clinical case, several reference books, and a progress note to construct a problem list (in order of highest to lowest priority), therapeutic goal(s), plan(s) for treatment, and monitoring for each problem identified. Candidates are then expected to work up the case, write out their assessment and plan (including dose, route, frequency, and duration), and be prepared to present a 2 minute summary of the case. Generally, you will have less than 20 minutes to complete all of this work. Following your presentation of the case, there may be another 10 minutes of questioning from preceptors and current residents from the program.
- *Written Case In Advance* – The residency program sends their case to you one week in advance of your interview date. You are requested to work up the case and send them your answers three days before your interview date. Generally, you do not have to present the case, only be prepared to answer questions about it.
- *Quiz* – The candidate is provided a quiz over general ambulatory care questions or other disease state topic areas that may be the main focus of the specific

residency program. If you will be receiving a quiz during your interview, spend some time reviewing the common disease areas that the residency program specifically addresses.

Table 11

Helpful Hints for Onsite Interviewing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="215 352 1336 699">➤ Always have questions prepared! It may seem as if interviewers ask you “Do you have any questions for us?” every 5 minutes. Generally, you do not have to have a question every time they ask, but if you do not have ANY questions, you may leave the program interviewers with a sense that you were not interested or prepared adequately for the interview.<li data-bbox="215 741 1336 856">➤ Do your research prior to any interview to know what is unique for each program and the reason(s) you are choosing them.<li data-bbox="215 898 1336 1014">➤ Schedule your initial top choice program interview the last if possible (usually late February), as this provides you practice interviewing and what to expect.<li data-bbox="215 1056 1336 1476">➤ Keep an open mind – you may be thinking, “remain calm as this is only an interview, I am not obligated to rank this program at the current time”, while you may end up ranking them first once you get onsite and meet their staff. Your top choice initially (before completing all of your interviews) may end up being ranked last after you consider all of the elements of what you are looking for in a residency program.<li data-bbox="215 1518 1336 1854">➤ Stay on time – especially if you are requested to provide a presentation (or other timed activity) and may be unsure of your time limit. Some programs may be flexible in this regard and even allow a longer time period if you are doing well; however, you may be stopped at your time limit so know what key points you definitely need to cover in your activity.

- Make a reflection list – after each interview, be sure to write out a list of the positives and negatives for each program. Document what you experienced, how they made you feel, what was the learning atmosphere, what their resident(s) liked and disliked, etc. If you schedule several interviews, you may find it helpful to keep a “running rank order list”. You will be glad you did when it comes time to ranking the programs!
- Request a tour of the city – some places may even take you out to lunch or dinner if you ask. If they invite you to lunch or dinner, plan to attend since this is an appropriate time to interact with them socially.
- Ask for support – some programs provide housing or cover hotel costs associated with your interview.

Table 12

Valuable Questions for You to Ask During Onsite Interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What specific skills, knowledge or abilities are you looking for in a residency candidate? ➤ What core rotations are there (including the timing of them in the schedule) and is the program flexible in tailoring rotations to meet the residents' needs prior to Midyear if there is an area of interest for a future PGY2 residency? ➤ What type of mentoring can the resident expect from the residency program director, individual preceptors and/or other pharmacy staff? ➤ How many preceptors (onsite and offsite) does your program have and how long have they been associated with the program? ➤ How are preceptors selected for your program and what type of preceptor development does your program offer them and the resident(s)? ➤ Are preceptors encouraged or required to obtain board certification in their respective areas for the program? ➤ Are your residents encouraged to pursue board certification? ➤ What structure does the program offer to keep residents on track with their major and/or minor project(s)? ➤ Have you ever had a resident not complete your program? ➤ If you already have an interest in a given specialty area, ask questions about that specialty if they are relevant to the site or program. Ask if you could go offsite if the program does not provide a rotation onsite within your chosen specialty area.

- Where do the residents live this year? How far is the commute? Is there traffic? Is there parking? Where do you suggest I live next year? What is the cost of living in those areas you suggest?
- Do you feel that your program is a good fit for me? (This is usually asked toward the end of the interview, after they have had a chance to get to know you better.)
- As the residency program director, what aspects of the residency would you alter and why?
- For the Residents:
 - What is a typical day like for you?
 - Would you do it all over again?
 - What originally attracted you to this program?
 - Are you satisfied with your choice of this program?
 - What do you like best about the program?
 - What were your most and least favorite rotations during the residency and why?
 - Do you receive useful feedback from each preceptor on areas for improvement and/or areas you may have mastered?
 - How much oversight does the program director and preceptors have in the residency?
 - What are you going to do next year and would you consider staying on as staff here after your residency?
 - What would you do differently with the program if you were the residency

director?

Appendix A

Question List

Questions to ask every Residency Program

1. What would you change about your program?
2. What did your residents do after finishing their residency?
3. How many residency positions does your program offer?
4. What PGY2 programs are or plan to be available in the next year at your facility?

Questions for Interviewers/Residency Director

→Application:

1. How big of a factor is grade point average, letter of intent, letters of reference or recommendation and presentations?
2. What qualities do you look for in a resident's application specifically?

→Residency, General

1. How many electives are onsite or possibly offsite?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this program and how do you evaluate them?
3. How often is staffing required? What kind of staffing is expected (e.g., distributive, clinical, administrative)? Is there an on call component to staffing?
4. What longitudinal components does the residency provide?
5. What professional training do you provide? (e.g., sterile/aseptic technique, immunizations, basic life support, pediatric advanced life support, advanced trauma life support, advanced cardiac life support)

6. Do you pay for any professional memberships or provide resources?
7. Do residents have holiday breaks or are they expected to work on a regular “holiday schedule”?
8. What is the resident call schedule and what responsibilities does it encompass? What training do you provide?
9. What are the current pharmacy department and residency program goals?
10. What can I expect in terms of autonomy or direct supervision during the residency?
11. How much contact should I expect to have with my preceptor and residency director?
12. Do residents have a regular office/desk space to perform their work?
13. How will the residents be evaluated and how often?
14. (If not accredited) When will the program be accredited? How come it is not accredited?
How is this going to affect my experience?

→Preceptors

1. What do you expect from your residents?
2. How do you think the residents are doing this year?
3. How do you incorporate direct instruction, modeling, coaching and facilitating into your rotation for each resident?

→Projects

1. What minor and major projects do you require?
2. How does a resident choose their major research project?
3. Have any of your residents' projects been accepted for publication?

4. What current research projects are other pharmacists or residents at this institution working on?

→Changes

1. Will you be making any changes to the program as a result of the current residents' feedback?
2. What do you think can be improved?
3. What changes have occurred in the program in the last 2 to 5 years?
4. When is your current or next accreditation visit and are there any plans for changes?

→Institution

1. Please describe your clinical program (inpatient and outpatient if applicable).
2. Do any of your pharmacists have medication therapy management privileges?
3. How many pharmacists and technicians are employed in the pharmacy department?
4. Do you have access to a medical library?
5. What hardcopy and online resources are offered onsite?
6. Do you have a formulary and what impact does pharmacy have in managing it?
7. How much impact do you have on drug therapy decisions?
8. What are the most common questions pharmacists receive from other healthcare professionals?

Questions for Residents

1. What do you like about this institution?
2. What do you not like about working here?
3. How does it feel to be a resident in this large or small of a program?

4. How and why did you choose this program?
5. What is the most challenging aspect of the program?
6. How many informal and formal presentations have you given to the medical/nursing/pharmacy staff? What other opportunities for presentations are available?
7. Did you receive any preceptor training during the residency and do you get to precept students independently?

Other questions

1. What teaching/precepting opportunities (including medical, nursing or pharmacy) do you provide and how frequently?
2. Do you hire your residents upon program completion?
3. What are your previous residents doing now?
4. What specific learning experiences will I be receiving?
5. What is your structure for providing research training?
6. What are the benefits of being a resident at your institution?
7. How and why did you choose this pharmacy specialty?
8. If you had to do it all over again, would you choose this area of pharmacy? Why?

Appendix B

Sample Letter of Intent

December 15, 20??

John/Jane Doe, *insert credentials*

Residency Program Director

Insert address

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Doe,

I am very interested in pursuing a position as a PGY1 pharmacy practice resident at *insert facility or institution*. Your institution's reputation as one of the finest (*e.g., teaching*) hospitals in the nation make it an ideal site for my postgraduate training. I am also excited about the exceptional learning opportunities your facility can provide especially in the specialty area of *insert if applicable*.

Even before being accepted into pharmacy school, one of my career goals has been to obtain a position as a pharmacy resident in order to eventually pursue a position as a competent clinical pharmacist. Given the time for my PGY1 pharmacy practice residency has finally come, I am eager to gain a broad overview of the clinical opportunities in the field of pharmacy. I also hope to refine my verbal and written communication skills so that I may better provide consultative drug information services to healthcare professionals and patients.

Upon completion of my PGY1 pharmacy practice residency, I plan to pursue a PGY2 specialty residency in *insert if applicable* with the hope of one day obtaining a position as a

insert specialty area clinical pharmacy specialist. As a clinical pharmacy specialist, I plan to provide tailored and compassionate pharmaceutical care and drug information in the ***insert specialty area***. I believe that learning is a life-long process and it provides a rationale for why I wish to obtain a position that would also allow me the opportunity to teach others.

The student rotations I have completed thus far, along with the rotations that I will soon complete will continue to help me develop the clinical and communication skills necessary to fulfill the demands of a PGY1 pharmacy practice residency such as yours. I have gained experience in developing and implementing pharmaceutical care plans while monitoring patient progress. On multiple occasions, I have presented both verbal and written drug information to patients and healthcare providers, as well as assisted in formulary management through drug restrictions. In addition to my rotation experiences, I have worked as a pharmacy student intern at a ***insert type*** pharmacy while pursuing my Pharm.D. degree. I was also an active member of several professional pharmacy organizations that have helped me develop my leadership skills, including ***insert if applicable***. I believe all of these experiences have helped prepare me for a challenging residency position.

I look forward to interviewing for the PGY1 pharmacy practice residency offered at ***insert institution/university/facility***. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Insert Name

ASHP matching # ***insert number***

Phone:

Email:

Appendix C

Letters of Reference or Recommendation Requested for Listed Programs of Interest

- 1) ***Insert institution/university/facility***
 - a. Contact: ***insert name and credentials of residency director or designee***
 - b. Address: ***insert***
 - c. Phone: ***insert***
 - d. Fax: ***insert***
 - e. E-mail: ***insert for above individual***
 - f. Application Deadline: ***insert date*** (Please post-mark letter by ***insert date***)
 - g. Include any forms specifically required from the program if applicable
 - h. Please email me a copy of your letter to ***insert your email address*** by above application deadline date.

Appendix D

Possible Residency Interview Schedules

Example 1

9-9:30 am	Meet with program director
9:30-10 am	Tour with resident
10-11 am	Case discussion with preceptors (You will pick one case to work up and present this case to the preceptors)
11 am-12 pm	Attend inpatient rounds with a residency preceptor
12-1 pm	Lunch with the residents
1-2:30 pm	Group interview with preceptors
2:30-3:00 pm	Wrap-up with program director
5:30 pm	Dinner at a restaurant with residents/preceptors/other interview candidates

Example 2

9-9:30 am	Welcome and Review of Application Materials
9:30-10 am	Interview with Program Director
10-11 am	Interview Session – Group #1 of Preceptors and staff (3-6)
11 am-12:30 pm	Candidate Presentation with Question & Answer Session
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch with Residents and other Residency Applicants
1:30-2:30 pm	Tour of facility with Current Pharmacy Resident(s)
2:30-3 pm	Break and Chat with Preceptors
3-4 pm	Interview Session – Group #2 of Preceptors and staff (3-6)

4-4:30 pm Wrap-Up Discussion with Program Director

Example 3 (Multisite program)

8:30-9 am Interview with Residency Program Director

9-9:30 am Tour of Facility #1

9:30-10 am Rounding with Preceptor at Facility #1

10-11 am Interview Panel with Director of Pharmacy, Operations Manager &
Clinical Staff at Facility #1

11-11:30 am Presentation to pharmacy staff at Facility #1

11:30 am-12:30 pm Lunch with Resident(s)

12:30-1 pm Travel to Facility #2

1-1:30 pm Interview with Residency Coordinator at Facility #2

1:30-2 pm Tour of Facility #2

2-3 pm Interview Panel with Preceptors at Facility #2

3-3:30 pm Presentation to Pharmacy Preceptors and Staff at Facility #2

3:30-4:00 Follow-up with Residency Program Director & Coordinator

Example 4

8-8:30 am Welcome and Program Overview with Residency Director

8:30-9:15 am Interview with Pharmacy Administrative Director

9:15-10 am Case Evaluation (Time for Resident to Prepare for Presentation)

10-11 am Interview with 3-6 Preceptors Group #1

11:15 am-12 pm Candidate Presentation to Pharmacy Preceptors and Staff

12-1 pm Lunch with Resident(s)

1-2 pm	Interview with 3-6 Preceptors Group #2
2-3 pm	Tour of Facility
3-4 pm	Interview with Resident(s) in Resident's Office
4-4:30 pm	Wrap-up with Residency Director

Example 5

10-10:40 am	Welcome and Residency Program Overview with Residency Program Director
10:40-11:40 am	Tour of the Hospital and Introduction with Chief Pharmacy Officer, Chief of Medical Staff
11:40 am-12:20 pm	Lunch with Residents
12:20-1 pm	Interviews Stations 1-5 for Candidates (See Below)
1-1:40 pm	Interviews Stations 1-5 for Candidates
1:40-2 pm	Break
2-2:40 pm	Interviews Stations 1-5 for Candidates
2:40-3:20 pm	Interviews Stations 1-5 for Candidates
3:20-4 pm	Interviews Stations 1-5 for Candidates
4-4:45 pm	Wrap-up with Current Pharmacy Residents
4:45-5 pm	Wrap-up with Residency Program Director

Station 1 – Interview with Preceptors

Station 2 – Interview with Residency Program Director and Residency Program Coordinator

Station 3 – Interview with current residents

Station 4 – Program review

Station 5 – Computer overview