

ASHP/ACPE Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Technician Education and Training Programs 2026 Crosswalk

The updates in the ASHP/ACPE Pharmacy Technician Accreditation Standard reflect more than four decades of accreditation experience, recent program review trends, and a strategic effort to modernize and simplify accreditation while maintaining public protection and workforce quality. This Crosswalk illustrates the similarities and changes of the 2026 Standard from the 2018 version.

Key changes:

- Consolidated the previous 15-standard framework into five focused standards, resulting in a 26% reduction in total number of standards.
- Strengthened accountability for sponsoring organizations that support and operate pharmacy technician training programs.
- A single level of pharmacy technician education and training replaces the former Entry-level and Advanced-level model.
- Minimum training hours remain at 400, though curricular hour allocation has been adjusted to provide greater flexibility and better alignment with contemporary practice settings.
- More flexibility and description in the criteria for serving as the program director and faculty for the program.
- Changes the frequency of the requirements of conduct of Advisory Committee meetings to at least once a year.
- Utilization of Credit for Prior Experience.
- Faculty members must be evaluated by students annually.
- Elimination of the strategic plan requirement.
- Increased emphasis is placed on experiential readiness and hands-on practice.

Table 1. Summary of 2026 Standard to former 2018 Standard

Standard 1: Required Program Structure and Resources

- Establishes minimum infrastructure, staffing, technology, and administrative capacity required to operate a pharmacy technician training program.
- Requires governance, oversight, and continuous quality improvement, including advisory committee input, faculty evaluation, and data-driven program enhancements.
- Defines a structured, multi-modal curriculum totaling at least 400 hours, integrating didactic, simulation, and experiential learning in a sequenced manner.
- Sets standards for experiential education, including site licensure, preceptor preparation, student placement verification, and competency demonstration in real pharmacy settings.
- Mandates systematic assessment of student competencies and program effectiveness, with ongoing feedback and documented outcomes.

- Requires formal recognition, reporting, and accountability, including certification of graduates, tracking of completion/employment/exam outcomes, and policies for credit for prior experience.

Standard 2: Student Recruitment, Acceptance, Enrollment, and Representation

- Requires clearly documented, maintained, and consistently applied policies governing student recruitment, acceptance, enrollment, and dismissal.
- Ensures transparent, accurate communication to prospective students, including program purpose, curriculum, duration, accreditation status, costs, financing options, and career/licensure requirements.
- Mandates ethical recruitment practices, with guidance provided to all enrollment and admissions personnel involved in student recruitment.
- Establishes fair and compliant student selection criteria, including eligibility requirements related to education level, age, and ability to successfully complete the program.
- Requires policies supporting student rights and success, including accommodations for disabilities, academic integrity, harassment/grievance procedures, and timely responses to student inquiries.
- Requires pre-admission screening processes (e.g., background checks, drug screening, immunizations, and technology readiness) to ensure students can meet program, experiential, employer, and regulatory requirements.

Standard 3: Program Director

- Requires designation of a single, authorized Program Director who is accountable for program operation, compliance, and maintenance in accordance with accreditation standards.
- Defines minimum qualifications for the Program Director, requiring either a licensed pharmacist with relevant experience or a nationally certified pharmacy technician with substantial accredited training and professional experience.
- Assigns responsibility for appropriate student supervision, ensuring a safe learning environment with timely, criteria-based assessment and feedback.
- Establishes the Program Director's role in program oversight and safety risk assessment, ensuring educational and training activities are conducted safely and effectively.

Standard 4: Faculty and Preceptors-of-record

- Requires qualified faculty and preceptors-of-record who meet state licensure or registration requirements, hold appropriate pharmacist or nationally certified pharmacy technician credentials, and have a minimum of two years of relevant experience.
- Defines the preceptor-of-record's responsibilities, including supervising students at experiential sites, coordinating training activities, serving as liaison with the program director, ensuring qualified trainers, and maintaining required documentation.
- Mandates systematic evaluation of instructional personnel, with faculty evaluated by students at least annually and preceptors evaluated after each experiential rotation.
- Requires ongoing faculty and preceptor development, overseen by the program director, focused on improving instructional effectiveness, assessment skills, and student learning outcomes.

Standard 5: Curriculum

- Demonstrate professional behavior and ethical conduct, including appropriate appearance, communication, respect for diverse populations, teamwork, self-management, and adherence to organizational policies and codes of conduct.
- Apply foundational knowledge and skills essential to the pharmacy technician role, including anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, medical terminology, mathematics, infection prevention, wellness promotion, and disease prevention.
- Safely process, prepare, and handle medications and medication orders, including non-sterile compounding, special-handling medications (e.g., controlled, hazardous, investigational), inventory management, storage, recalls, shortages, and proper disposal.
- Support patient care, quality, and safety, including medication safety practices, point-of-care testing, medication histories, immunization administration techniques, equipment maintenance, and emergency preparedness.
- Demonstrate regulatory compliance and systems awareness, including adherence to state and federal laws, HIPAA/PHI protection, DSCSA requirements, use of pharmacy technology, and understanding the roles of pharmacists, technicians, and regulatory agencies.

Table 2. 2026 Standard comparison from former 2018 Standard

2026 Standard	2018 Standard	Additional Information about 2026 Standard
Standard 1: Required Program Structure and Resources		
1.1		
1.1.a (New)		The sponsoring organization must provide adequate space to conduct and maintain the program.
1.1.b	10.8	Shifts responsibility for providing technology to support the learning environment to the sponsoring organization as a whole.
1.1.c (New)		The sponsoring organization must provide personnel and simulation resources required.
1.1.d (New)		
1.1.e	6.7 13	Requires programs to keep records for the program's structure and operations for at least four years.
1.1.f	13.8	Requires the assessments of enrolled students to be actively maintained along with records of students who've completed the program.
1.1.g	10.9	No significant change.
1.1.h	6.1	Requires active continuous quality improvement (CQI) and the ongoing maintenance of all assessment data used in the CQI process.
1.1.h.1	15.2	
1.1.h.2	4.8	
	7.1	
1.2	8.1 8.2 8.3 8.4 8.5	The Advisory Committees meets at least once a year (versus twice a year in former 2018 Standard) and clarifies that virtual meetings are acceptable.

	1.2.a (New)		Meeting minutes must be produce and maintained in the program records.
1.3		9.1 9.2 9.4	Students must be introduced to curriculum components prior to entering experiential training. The total number of required hours students must complete remains a minimum of 400 hours. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didactic: 100 hours • Simulation: 50 hours • Experiential: 120 hours (must perform at least 2/3rds of the total hours in a dispensing pharmacy) • Remaining education/training hours can be redistributed among modalities
	1.3.a (New)	9.3 10.1	
	1.3.b	9.3 10.2	
	1.3.c (New)	9.3 10.3.a	
	1.3.d		
1.4		6.8 13.4	The program director is required to maintain approved experiential sites, verify licensure and affiliation agreements, and confirm preceptor and student assignments, but it no longer mandates reviewing sites within 12 months before student placement.
	1.4.a		
	1.4.b	10.4	
	1.4.c		
1.5 (New)			The sponsoring organization must allow time for the program director to administer the program.
1.6		13.3 14.1	The 2026 Standard mirrors the 2018 Standard 14.1, but now divides documentation requirements for didactic, simulated, and experiential activities into separate standards.
	1.6.a		
	1.6.b		
	1.6.c		
	1.6.d		
1.7		13.5	Students who complete the program are to be awarded with a certificate only, whereas the 2018 Standard allowed awarding a certificate or diploma.
	1.7.a	11.7	No significant change.
	1.7.b	13.6	
	1.7.c	13.7	
			No longer need the certificate to indicate if it is an entry-level or advanced-level program.
1.8		14.2	The organization must maintain record of graduates from their program for a minimum of four years.
	1.8.a		
	1.8.b		
	1.8.c		
	1.8.d	13.8	
1.9		6.5 15.3	Credit for Prior Experience may be awarded to students if permitted by the program.
Standard 2: Student Recruitment, Acceptance, Enrollment, and Representation			
2.1		11.1 11.6	No significant change.
	2.1.a	10.10	
	2.1.b		

	2.1.c (New)	10.10 11.4 11.5 11.8	A new policy list is included in the 2026 Standard for all personnel involved in student recruitment.
2.2		11.3	Combines previous standards and broadens terminology to ensure the applicant can successfully complete the program instead of detailing specific requirements (e.g., Math or English proficiency).
	2.2.a		
	2.2.b		
	2.2.c (New)		
Standard 3: Program Director			
3.1		6.2 6.3 13.1	The program director qualifications are listed as alternative (“or”) options rather than cumulative criteria, while also updating the required years of experience.
	3.1.a		
3.2		6.5 6.6	The program director ensures students are safely and effectively supervised and receive timely, criteria-based feedback.
3.3 (New)			The program director must provide effective oversight of the program and assess safety risks.
Standard 4: Faculty and Preceptors-of-record			
4.1		10.6 12.1 12.2 12.3	The 2026 Standard combines the previous standards into one.
4.2		10.6	No significant change.
4.3		12.4	Faculty must be evaluated annually and preceptors after each student rotation, and the results of these evaluations must be analyzed and used for continuous improvement.
	4.3.a		
	4.3.b		
4.4 (New)			The program director is responsible for ensuring the ongoing development of all individuals who provide instruction to students, with examples provided to guide this requirement.
Standard 5: Curriculum			
5.1		1.1	Standards have been consolidated and now broaden expectations for ethical conduct, requiring technicians to uphold professional responsibilities while adhering to organizational policies and codes of conduct.
	5.1.a	1.2	
	5.1.b	1.4 1.7	
	5.1.c	1.5	
	5.1.d	1.6	
	5.1.e	1.7 1.8 1.9	
5.2		2.4 2.11	Previous standards have been consolidated, and the requirement now emphasizes “participating,” placing

		greater focus on hands-on practical application rather than simple verbal understanding.
5.3	2.5	No significant change.
5.3.a		
5.3.b		
5.3.c		
5.4	2.6	
5.5	2.8	
5.6	3.2 4.8	Emphasizes patient safety and aligns with quality-assurance practices, while removing references to completeness and authenticity.
5.7	3.1 3.7	Guidance is expanded to detail how technicians can assist pharmacists in monitoring medication therapy, while the framework of the Pharmacists' Patient Care Process are removed.
5.8	3.3	Responsibility is placed directly on pharmacy technicians to identify patients who need or request counseling.
5.9	3.15 3.23 3.24 3.9	The 2026 Standard combines previous standards and is in compliance with USP chapters.
5.10	3.16	No significant change.
5.11	2.7 2.9 3.5 3.6 3.17 3.22 3.23 3.24 3.25 3.30 3.16	Previous standards are consolidated, and expectations are expanded to include proper handling, storage, and preparation of various medication products, including investigational drugs.
5.12	3.8	No significant change.
5.13	3.9	Only mentions the use of Safety Data Sheets in the 2026 Standard; other agencies are mentioned in different standards.
5.14	3.10	2026 Standard specifies the Drug Supply Chain Security Act to be described.
5.15	3.13	No significant change.
5.16	3.14 3.26	Combines the previous 3.14 and 3.26 standards with a focus on the point-of-sale processes and adjudication for pharmacy services.
5.17	3.18 3.27	Changes from an action item to explain the accepted procedures.

5.18	3.11 3.19 3.28 3.31	Outlines expectation for pharmacy technicians to correctly handle and manage inventory of medications, while the 2018 Standard required applying procedures.
5.19	3.12	Focus shifts to the actions involved in managing product recalls, medication shortages, and error reporting, reflecting updated expectations for pharmacy technician involvement.
5.20	3.20	The requirement is broadened to include additional reasons for disposing of medications and supplies, such as adulteration.
5.21	3.21 3.29	Documentation of immunizations is no longer included in technician responsibilities, with expectations now focused solely on following accepted procedures for administering immunizations, including processing, handling, and proper technique.
5.22	3.31 4.2	Previous standards are consolidated, and wording is updated to better demonstrate the expected competency.
5.23	4.4	Provides examples of emergency situations.
5.24	4.5	Assisting pharmacists with medication reconciliation is no longer included; instead, pharmacy technicians are expected to perform medication histories independently.
5.25	4.6 4.10	Requires technicians to demonstrate the Standard rather than assist the pharmacist.
5.26	4.9	No significant change.
5.27	2.2 5.1	The 2026 Standard changes “describe and apply” to “demonstrate” state and federal laws.
5.28	5.2 5.4	Language shifts from “describe” to “discuss” state and federal laws, and examples of relevant laws and regulations are now included.
5.29	2.3 2.7 4.1 4.7 4.12	The requirement no longer uses the Pharmacists’ Patient Care Process and instead asks for a broader description of the pharmacy technician’s role within the healthcare environment.
5.30	3.9 4.8 5.5 5.6 5.7 5.8	Previous standards are consolidated, with added emphasis on technicians being able to explain the importance of regulatory agencies.
5.31	2.2	The 2026 Standard specifies being able to describe Protected Health Information and Health Insurance Portability and Accountable Act regulations.

1.3	Demonstrate active and engaged listening skills.
1.10	Apply critical thinking skills, creativity, and innovation. (Advanced-level standard)
1.11	Apply supervisory skills related to human resource policies and procedures. (Advanced-level standard)
1.12	Demonstrate the ability to effectively and professionally communicate with other healthcare professionals, payors and other individuals necessary to serve the needs of patients and practice. (Advanced-level standard)
2.1	Explain the importance of maintaining competency through continuing education and continuing professional development.
2.10	Describe further knowledge and skills required for achieving advanced competencies. (Advanced-level standard)
3.11	Apply quality assurance practices to pharmaceuticals, durable and non-durable medical equipment, devices, and supplies
3.4	Prepare patient-specific medications for distribution.
4.11	Participate in the operations of medication management services.
4.13	Obtain certification as a Basic Life Support Healthcare Provider. (Advanced-level standard)
4.3	Explain how pharmacy technicians assist pharmacists in responding to emergent patient situations, safely and legally.
5.3	Explain that differences exist between states regarding state regulations, pertaining to pharmacy technicians, and the processing, handling and dispensing of medications.
5.9	Participate in pharmacy compliance with professional standards and relevant legal, regulatory, formulary, contractual, and safety requirements. (Advanced-level standard)
5.10	Describe major trends, issues, goals, and initiatives taking place in the pharmacy profession. (Advanced-level standard)
6.4	To stay current with professional issues, the program director is a member of a national pharmacy or education association and a state pharmacy association. He/she ensures that memberships in pharmacy and education associations are represented among the program faculty members.
6.9	The program director ensures that students' achievement of educational objectives is evaluated appropriately, to include their knowledge, skills, and abilities leading to Entry-level or Advanced-level pharmacy technician job competencies.
7.2	The plan: (a) reflects the role of the program within the community; (b) includes short-term and long-term program goals; (c) has specific measurable objectives; (d) has strategies for achieving the goals and objectives of the strategic plans; (e) has a schedule for analyzing and evaluating the plan and progress on the plan; and (f) addresses program outcomes.
9.5	The training schedule consists of a minimum of 600 hours total, .of health-related education and training, extending over a period of at least 15 weeks (at least 7 additional weeks beyond Entry-level requirements). (Advanced-level standard)
9.6	The minimum number of hours for each component is as follows: Didactic – 160 hours (40 additional hours beyond Entry-level requirements); Simulated – 100 hours (50 additional hours beyond Entry-level requirements); and Experiential – 200 hours (70 additional hours beyond Entry-level requirements); plus 140 additional hours beyond

	Entry-level requirements, to equal a minimum of 600 hours training total. The additional 140 hours may be allocated to the three educational modalities listed above, based on the discretion of the program director and faculty. (Advanced-level standard)
10.3.b	Students in an Advanced-level program complete at least one additional experiential rotation, in addition to any completed during an Entry-level program. This advanced experiential rotation takes place in a facility where the student will utilize skills learned during the Advanced-level curriculum. (Advanced-level standard)
10.5	The sequence of activities to transition from simulated to experiential is: (a) observation (student observes expert performing task); (b) simulation (including observation, feedback, and evaluation by an expert); and (c) experiential performance under supervision.
10.7	Distance learning programs comply with all Key Elements of Standard 10.
11.2	The organization establishes qualifications that the applicants possess to ensure that they are reasonably likely to be able to achieve the educational goals and objectives of the program.
13.2	Training activities that delineate the scope and period of training.
15.1	The program develops resources and implements a plan to assess attainment of standards 6-13.