

R&E: How to Get a Pharm Tech License

11/21/2023

Start time: 8:15 PM

End time: 9:00 PM

Roles of the Pharmacy Technician

- Fill prescriptions
 - Dispense meds verified by pharmacist
- Handle + verify insurance
- Customer service
 - Help + interact with patients daily

How to Get Licensed

- **Path 1** (more common)
 - Qualify to take PTCE (Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam)
 - Take a course or work 500+ hours as technician
 - Apply + take the PTCE
 - Tip: schedule exam when almost done with course
 - Apply for license
 - Get licensed by CA State Board of Pharmacy
 - Work and renew license
 - Licenses need to be renewed every 2 years
 - Can start looking for jobs once certified
 - Will still be hired if waiting for license to get processed
 - Just let the interviewer know your situation!
- **Path 2**
 - Work for 240 hours
 - Work in pharmacy with an approved didactic program instead of taking the PTCE
 - Apply for license
 - Get certified by the CA State Board of Pharmacy
 - Work and renew license
 - Licenses need to be renewed every 2 years

Applying and Prepping for the PTCE

- **Eligibility Requirements**
 - PTCEB-recognized education/training program (or completion within 60 days) *OR*

- Can apply for exam while doing program
 - Online + in-person courses are available
 - Must submit proof of completion of course
 - Equivalent work experience as pharmacy tech in training or pharmacy clerk
 - Minimum of 500 hours
 - Pharmacies sometimes pay for course for you to get certified
- **Recommended Resources**
 - [RxTechExam](#) (costs \$250-300)
 - PTCB-recognized program
 - Many officers took this online course to get certified!
 - Online practice exams and quizzes
 - PTCB.org provides a practice test (\$29) → good to get comfy with format
 - Mosby's Review for Pharmacy Technician Certification Examination
 - 3rd edition works fine
 - Other resources
 - <https://ptcbtestprep.com/ptcb-blog/>
 - <https://rxtechexam.com/home/>
 - <https://quizlet.com/RxTechExam/sets>
- **How to Apply & What to Expect on Exam Day**
 - Applying
 - Create account on <https://www.ptcb.org/>
 - Order exam (costs \$129)
 - Only in-person
 - Once approved, email is sent to schedule exam date
 - Many locations and hours offered
 - Exam Day
 - Arrive and check in at least 30 min early
 - Bring an approved form of ID (e.g. driver's license)
 - Preliminary exam result shows on screen immediately after test
 - Official test results posted online 1-3 weeks later
- **Exam Details**
 - 90 multiple choice questions (10 unscored)
 - Won't know which questions are unscored
 - 2 hours to complete exam (includes 5 min tutorial + 5 min post-survey)
 - Passing score = 1400 (score between 1000-1600)
 - All questions are weighted differently from each other
 - Depends on complexity
- **Topics Covered in PTCE**

- Overall breakdown:
 - 40% = Medications
 - 21.25% = Order Entry + Processing
 - 12.5% = Federal Requirements
 - 26.25 = Patient Quality + Assurance
- More details on exam content can be found [here](#)

License

● Requirements

- Application fee (\$195) made to Board of Pharmacy
- Pharmacy technician application
 - Download from pharmacy.ca.gov
- SSN or Taxpayer Identification Number
- Passport style photo
 - Must be taken within 60 days of filing application
- Proof of education
 - Official/notarized high school transcript
- PTCB certification
 - Download from PTCB + print copy
- Self-query report
 - Obtain from [NPDB](#)
 - Fee required
- Fingerprint live scan receipt
 - Taken within 60 days of filling application
- Application may take up to 45 days to be processed
 - Double check that everything is completed
 - Process will be delayed if there was something missing
 - Will send license once approved

● Certification Renewal

- CPhTs are required to renew certification *every 2 years*
- Renewal application opens *60 days* before certification expiration date
- Recertification fee = \$49 (can renew online)
- Requirements
 - Renew by continuing education (min of 20 hours of CE)
 - 1 hour in subject of pharmacy law
 - 1 hour in subject of patient safety
- How to keep tracks of CE hours?

- Get certification → make an NABP (National Association of Boards of Pharmacy) account
- On NABP e-Profile, there's a CPE Monitor
 - Completed CPE hours are listed
 - CE hours on CPE monitor don't have to be entered on the PTCE application
- Apply → attest → submit
 - *Apply* by logging into PTCE account
 - *Attest* that you've completed the requirements
 - *Submit* your renewal application with the renewal fee
- **License Renewal**
 - Renewal for license is a *separate* process from renewal for certification
 - Renewal notices mailed about 90 days before expiration
 - Renewal process can be done online
 - Renewal fee = \$195
- **Tips**
 - Set a schedule for studying to give yourself enough time before exam
 - Take each topic seriously
 - Prioritize topics that will be covered more on exam (40% = medications)
 - Take advantage of online study resources
 - Many online resources (e.g. top 200 medications on quizlet)
 - Make sure you have all your materials for application
 - EX: high school transcript, live scan, etc
 - After you pass your exam, but while you're still waiting for results from BOP, you can apply for pharm tech jobs (CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, etc)

Q&A Time

1. When did you get your certification/license and where do you work?

- Officer 1: got certification in summer after freshman year + license 3 months after, work at Walgreens
 - Did path 1 (took RxTechExam course) to get certification
- Officer 2: got certification in January of this year + license in April (4 months after), work at Walgreens in Woodland
 - Did path 1 (took RxTechExam course) to get certification

2. Does the PTCE course completion expire?

- Must complete course before it expires but you can take the exam any time after completing the course

- Recommended to take exam soon after completing course while the knowledge is still fresh on your mind
- 3. How much does becoming a pharm tech cost overall?**
 - Around \$600-700 (online course, application fee, ordering transcripts, fingerprint live scan fee, etc)
 - 4. If I want to intern as a pharm tech, should I apply for the PTCB license as well?**
 - Yes, you still need to apply for the license in order to intern + start working as a pharm tech
 - 5. Will there be any chemistry questions on the test?**
 - No, you don't need any chemistry background, but you do need to know math (for basic calculations and conversions)
 - 6. What is the difference between a pharm tech & PharmD?**
 - Pharm tech is diff from PharmD degree but both are solid career paths
 - Pharm techs receive less pay (more of an assistance to pharmacist)
 - PharmD allows you to become a pharmacist
 - Pharmacists can do more things that pharm techs can't
 - EX: verify prescriptions + handling controlled substances
 - 7. What is the best and worst part about working as a pharm tech?**
 - Best part = get hands-on experience + interact with patients/pharmacists
 - Help patients with medications/insurance
 - Worst part = still a retail job + customers can be rude sometimes
 - Pharmacy is very fast-paced ⇒ have to be efficient in multitasking (e.g. phone calls, fill prescriptions, customer service, processing insurance)
 - 8. Do you have to be a pharm tech to go to pharmacy school?**
 - No! Just recommended bc pharmacy schools like to see that you have pharmacy-related experience but any other extracurriculars (e.g. volunteering, shadowing) is good as well
 - 9. As a pharm tech, should we be familiar with how many doses of medicine a patient should take for certain diseases?**
 - No, pharm techs don't need to be familiar with exact dosages (pharmacists' job)
 - Be familiar with which medications are controlled substances
 - 10. Should you work as a pharmacy clerk as you go through the pharm tech process? How would you get a job as a clerk/tech, do you apply to jobs online or in-person?**
 - Don't have to work as a pharmacy clerk but there are benefits!
 - Gain pharmacy experience while working (pharmacies may pay for your application fees as well)
 - 11. What's the most interesting medication you've handled?**
 - Most prescriptions are tablets/capsules but:

- Some are reconstituted (in powder form first → have to mix with water before dispensing to patients)
- Some are refrigerated (have to store in fridge)

12. How many customers do you interact with per shift?

- Work 8 hour shifts so there's a lot of people that stop by (can't keep count)

13. What's the difference between working in a pharmaceutical company and working as pharm tech?

- Biopharmas (e.g. Genentech) is more research/chemistry-oriented
 - More focused on drugs rather than interacting with patients
- Pharm tech is more on retail side

14. Does UCD have a pharmacy for students to work or as a clerk?

- UCD Med Center does not accept undergrads