

	<b>Policy:</b> Cone Health Pharmacy Technician Academy Practice Manual	
	<b>Department Responsible:</b> Pharmacy	<b>Date Approved:</b> 8/8/2022
	<b>Effective Date:</b> 09/01/2023	<b>Next Review Date:</b> 09/01/2024

**PURPOSE:**

This document will provide a set of practice policies for technicians participating. Cone Health Human Resources polices are applicable to all other situations.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:**

Cone Heath Pharmacy Technician Academy is a **ASHP candidate** program. The program is to prepare current and aspiring pharmacy technicians with standardized training that meets state requirements to practice as a pharmacy technician. In addition, this program is to prepare technicians for any state or national certification exam.

The program is a 400 hour program completed within 20 weeks. The didactic portion of the program is completed online, is self-paced, and contains graded quizzes, unit exams, midterm, and final exam. The simulation portion of the program is observed and graded by local instructors. The experiential portion of the program is completed at designated pharmacy sites with an assigned preceptor.

Hours breakdown:

- Didactic: 130 hours
- Simulation: 52 hours
- Experiential: 224 hours

Cone Heath Pharmacy Technician Academy helps students train as pharmacy technicians and become certified. Cone Heath Pharmacy Technician Academy is designed to train pharmacy technicians to better support pharmacists, to improve patient safety, reduce medication errors, and improve efficiency in the pharmacy, as well as helping pharmacies meet regulatory and training requirements. Cone Heath Pharmacy Technician Academy graduates are well trained to meet high quality performance standards and are prepared to pass state and national certification exams. Important topics covered in the Cone Heath Pharmacy Technician Academy curriculum include: medication error prevention and safety, calculations, pharmacology, community pharmacy practice, institutional pharmacy practice, federal law, and state specific pharmacy law.

Prospects for Employment and Salary Expectations: Employment of pharmacy technicians is expected to grow by 5 percent from 2021 to 2031, as fast as average for all occupations.

Summary Facts: Pharmacy Technician	
2021 Median Pay	\$36,740 per year

	\$17.66 per hour
Typical Entry-Level Education	High school diploma or equivalent
Work Experience in a Related Occupation	None
On-the-job Training	Moderate-term on-the-job training
Number of Jobs, 2021	447,300
Job Outlook, 2021-31	5% (As fast as average)
Employment Change, 2021-31	22,400

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Pharmacy Technicians, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/pharmacy-technicians.htm> (visited December 15, 2022).

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **Hiring/Admission Requirements:**

1. The technician is required to comply with the hiring practices of Cone Health. All pre-employment checks and screening must be completed prior to a written offer being extended to the technician. (Cross ref: Cone Health Policy on [Post-Employment Offer Health Screen](#)).
2. All candidates must
  - Possess a high school diploma or the equivalent.
  - Meet state-specific age requirements for employment of pharmacy technicians.
  - Meet state-specific requirements as regulated by the State Board of Pharmacy.
3. The recruitment process is laid out below:
  - A systemwide memo will be sent out announcing the next recruiting cycle of the pharmacy technician academy. The memo will include a start date requirement, in order to meet policies regarding internal transfer.
  - Candidates must have English language and math proficiency sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the pharmacy technician job responsibilities, demonstrated by passing the reading comprehension and math assessments. A minimum score of 85% is required for each assessment. If a student fails to achieve an 85% score, but achieves at least a 70%, the candidate would be given 1 additional opportunity to achieve a score of 85%.
  - Upon passing the assessments, an interview will be offered to the candidate after applying to the position posting with Talent Acquisition. Interviews will occur after an initial screening the Talent Acquisition.
  - After completion of all interviews, the leadership team will select candidates and notify all interviewed candidates of the decision.
4. At times, the pharmacy technician academy may recruit multiple cohorts at the same time. In the event of this, once all candidates are chosen, they will then be randomly placed in a cohort.

**Impairment:**

This means that an individual's behavior, perception, judgment, coordination, skill, or performance is adversely affected by alcohol or a substance to an observable extent. The symptoms of impairment are not confined to those consistent with misbehavior or the obvious impairment of physical abilities such as slurred speech or difficulty in maintaining performance. Being unfit to work may subject an individual to corrective action, in accordance with Cone Health policies and procedures, up to and including termination of employment. (*Cross reference: Cone Health Policy on [Professional Conduct and Prohibition of Workplace Harassment](#); Cone Health Policy on [Drug and Alcohol Use](#); Cone Health Policy on [Workplace Violence Prevention, Reporting Actions, and Support](#)*)

**Evaluation:**

1. The following evaluation and guidelines apply to pharmacy technicians as part of their Cone Health training programs. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a system for evaluation of the performance of pharmacy technician and procedures to deal with unsatisfactory progress or performance during the residency and or other conduct. (*Cross ref: Cone Health Policy on )* The HR 3-month and 6-month new employee performance evaluations provide an evaluation of performance on Cone Health Values and Principles, Job Performance (on Major Work Activities [MWAs]), Attendance, and Overall Performance. Employees may be required to complete an online self-appraisal process providing comments about their performance during the review period. Employees are required to electronically sign their performance appraisal by the required deadline in order to confirm they have had the opportunity to review their appraisal and make comments. The electronic signature does not indicate the employee agrees with the evaluation.

**Exam Attempt Reset Policy:**

In order to maximize the pharmacy technician education, and prove competence, each exam is limited to 3 attempts to achieve a passing score. It's understandable that some topics may be more difficult than others, and students may request additional attempt(s) for a particular exam. In these rare cases instructors, preceptors, or program directors should follow the recommended policies:

- Attempts on the SAME exam:
  - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> attempts are allowed without any intervention
  - 4<sup>th</sup> attempt can be authorized with documented remediation by the instructor, preceptor, or program director
  - After 4<sup>th</sup> attempt, program director will determine if dismissal from the academy is necessary

**Performance Improvement Counseling:**

1. The pharmacy site manager or director, program directors, and preceptors will follow a corrective action process based counseling and warning system when a serious deficiency in a technicians performance is noted. This includes but is not limited to unsatisfactory progress toward attainment of all program goals and objectives, and lack of adherence to all Cone Health and pharmacy policies.
2. The corrective action process will be used when addressing areas of technician performance and or behavior requiring improvement or elimination. It is intended to initiate action that will assist the technician in correcting problems and improving performance and behavior.
3. Failure to improve performance as addressed by the corrective action process within the specified schedule(s) will result in the technicians not receiving a certificate of successful completion of the training program and may result in involuntary dismissal or extension of the

program duration. (Cross ref: Cone Health Policy on [Performance Accountability and Commitment](#))

### **Termination or Dismissal from Technician Academy Program:**

A termination of employment is defined as a complete separation of the employer-technician relationship between Cone Health and a technician for any reason. Actions that involve dishonesty, violation of law, or material risks to Cone Health operations or the safety or well-being of oneself or others may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the technician certificate program in accordance with the system's performance standards as found in *Cone Health Policy on [Performance Accountability and Commitment](#)*. Termination of employment will be completed following *Cone Health Policy on [Separation of Employment](#)*.

### **Academic Integrity:**

The value of Academic Integrity is priceless, and the training program sets the highest standards for students to maintain the value of education. The goal is to prepare students to become productive pharmacy technicians in the workforce and professionals in the community. It is considered a violation of academic integrity for students to deceive and/or misrepresent their academic work, including, but not limited to:

- Copying work, ideas, or projects from any other person or media
- Sharing computer identification logins with another person and accessing another person's account
- Allowing another person to copy or borrow original work in any form
- Allowing another person to copy answers on an exam or to communicate with another person during an exam
- Representing the work of another team member as one's own
- Stopping or delaying another student in the completion of any work
- Plagiarism in any form, including failing to give credit to the source of thoughts, words, ideas, or work from any other person, printed material, or web site

When a violation of this policy occurs, disciplinary action will be taken. Subject to the severity of the violation or repeated/multiple occurrences, academic dishonesty may result in a written warning or the dismissal from the training program. All violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are documented and made part of the student's human resources record. The Program Director, employee official and program official have the discretion to determine what constitutes a violation of Academic Integrity Policy.

### **Academic Progress**

Each student must complete the full training program (didactic, laboratory, and experiential) within the time frame laid out by the program director. Students must balance staffing within the central pharmacy space with making daily progress on the academic modules. With that understanding, a student will be a candidate for dismissal from the training program if

- Progress is not consistent with the time frame required by the curriculum and schedule created by the program director;
  - If a student falls behind by 1 module day, their remote work privileges will be revoked and be required to complete modules on site. Progress will be monitored daily until student can be on track each day for at least 1 week.
    - If the student is not caught up at the end of each day, the student will be paid less the number of hours of modules that the student is behind. PAL can be used to make up the difference between pay and the FTE.

- If a student falls behind by 2 or more module days and requires more than 2 exam attempts, student must remain on site during working hours with daily check in to monitor progress.
  - A meeting with student and program director(s) will occur to discuss student's progress and plan to improve student's performance
  - Time will be set aside to review previous exam attempts
- If a student fails multiple attempts on more than 1 exam and remains behind with modules, a discussion with program director(s) will occur with possibility that student will be removed from Technician Academy and transition into an open non-certified technician role within the Acute Care Pharmacy.
  - An initial modified schedule will be created to get student back on track. In the event a student cannot get back on track within 5 days or prior to a simulation day, removal from the Technician Academy will occur.
  - Students will not be eligible for further Academy cohorts, but will be provided resources to assist in learning material required to sit and pass for the PTCB exam.
- No progress is demonstrated in a 30-day period;
- Failure to achieve a passing grade\* within three attempts on any didactic exam or lab simulation; or
- Failure to achieve a satisfactory rating for any aspect of an experiential rotation.

The Program Director will review the student's progress to determine which skills or areas of learning should be remediated and if the student will remain in the training program. *Note: A student who is granted a leave of absence will not be dismissed from the training program while on leave.*

\*Passing grades are as follows:

- 80% minimum score for each didactic module quiz
- 75% minimum score for the final exam
- 100% minimum score for each simulation

### **Academic Support**

Academic support is continually available for all students enrolled in the program. Academic support includes assistance with: program progress, didactic or simulation content, experiential rotations, or other matters that affect successful completion of the program. Students should follow the following procedures to obtain academic support:

- Students are directed to contact their onsite supervisor for assistance.
- In the event the onsite supervisor is not able to provide adequate support, students are directed to contact one of the program director(s).
  - Rebekah Matthews ([rebekah.matthews@conehealth.com](mailto:rebekah.matthews@conehealth.com))
  - Michelle Turner ([michelle.turner@conehealth.com](mailto:michelle.turner@conehealth.com))
  - Michael Maccia ([mike.maccia@conehealth.com](mailto:mike.maccia@conehealth.com))
  - LaKeisha Mayo ([lakeisha.mayo@conehealth.com](mailto:lakeisha.mayo@conehealth.com))
- Contact TRC staff directly by clicking on "Help" at the upper right corner of the PTU dashboard.

### **Leave of Absence**

A leave of absence is a means of bridging service while a technician must be absent from work for a period of time due to unusual, unavoidable, or compelling circumstances. Such leaves are subject to careful consideration and are approved at the discretion of the program director in concert with the department management. Proof of medical or personal circumstances requiring leave may be required. (Cross ref: Cone Health Policy on [Leaves of Absence](#))

- The technician academy program is designed to be completed in no more than 20 weeks. No more than 5 days of absence are permitted during the program in order to complete on-time. In the event of more than 5 absences, the program director may allow an additional 5 days of paid time to complete the curriculum.

**Position Placement:**

All students are guaranteed a position in one of the acute care facilities (Moses Cone Hospital, Wesley Long Hospital, Annie Penn Hospital, Alamance Regional Medical Center) upon graduation from the program. The position will be operations-based on 2<sup>nd</sup> shift with a rotating weekend schedule.

To determine placement, students will be asked their preference of campus on day 1 during orientation. Students will then be assigned to a campus to perform their staffing component of the academy, which will also be the campus the student will be assigned a position after graduation from the academy. Campus assignments will be determined randomly after receiving student preferences if there are less positions than interested students.

**Service Component:**

Weekend staffing will be a standard component of the Technician Academy.

1. Schedules are prepared in 2-4 week blocks. A work week is defined as Sunday 0000 to Saturday 2359 (Cross ref: Cone Health Policy on [Attendance](#)).
  - a. Students are required to staff at least 8 hours in the acute care pharmacy each week of the program
  - b. Based on department needs, students may be asked to work a shift on either Saturday or Sunday, but this will not exceed every 3 weeks.
2. All schedule adjustments must be approved by the residency program director or pharmacy site manager/director.

**PREVIOUS REVISION/REVIEW DATES:**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Reviewed</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Notes</i>