



# External Doctor of Pharmacy Program

Offered jointly by the University of Washington and Washington State University

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## Student Handbook on Prior Learning Assessment

— *Instructions for Portfolio Development* —  
Version 09.4

University of Washington

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## Introduction

Handbook because you have been accepted for admission to the Joint External Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Program offered by the University of Washington School of Pharmacy and the Washington State University College of Pharmacy. The program recognizes that work experience can provide valuable, university level learning experiences that can complement learning acquired through formal education. The program offers an assessment of experiential learning that emphasizes the connection between learning from work experience, practice skills, continuing education, and knowledge. This process will help you avoid enrolling in clerkships that duplicate knowledge and skills you already possess, as well as save you time and money in the pursuit of a degree. Before beginning to assemble the information necessary to prepare your portfolio, we recommend that you review this entire Handbook—it will save you time in the long run.

The Prior Learning Assessment program is designed to evaluate all learning experiences, including non-sponsored learning. This is learning that has not been supervised by an accredited post-secondary institution and for which you have not already received academic credit. Nonsponsored learning is also referred to as prior learning (i.e., learning acquired through professional experience before enrolling in the program).

Although you are asked to describe your experiences in order to provide the context in which your learning was acquired, it is important to remember that credit is waived for *learning*, not experience. An item of learning is any new (or revision of old) knowledge, skills, or attitudes which you perceive has enhanced your expertise or ability to apply that expertise in practice. Learning is distinguished from experience alone by the extraction of meaning from the experience. In an analogy to classroom instruction, credit is not awarded for attendance alone, although attendance may be required. Credit is awarded when students demonstrate by papers, exams, laboratory reports, or participation in discussions or simulations that they have mastered a particular skill or subject matter. In the same way, credit is not awarded based on length of any experience. Spending many years on a job may not indicate advanced learning. A skill may have been mastered in the initial year and repeated with no additional learning. Credit is waived for demonstration of learned skills or knowledge.

This Handbook aims to help you understand the difference between learning and experience. You will then be able to articulate and verify learning in a written document, called a portfolio, and present it to the program office for evaluation. This Handbook explains the procedures for preparing and submitting a portfolio for evaluation, and techniques for identifying, describing, and documenting your learning. The portfolio will serve three purposes:

- It will help provide evidence of prior learning;
- It will serve as a guide to help individualize your program of study; and,
- Its updated version—submitted as a graduation requirement—will serve as an outcome measure of what you have learned during the program.

It is important for you to remember that you should maintain your portfolio throughout your time in the program as documentation of your learning and you will be expected to *submit an updated portfolio as a graduation requirement*.

### **What is a Portfolio?**

- A portfolio is a collection of evidence that demonstrates your continuing acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, understanding, and achievements. It reflects the current stage of your development and activity.

- A portfolio reflects your life—it shows who you are, explains how you are unique, and illustrates your mastery, strengths, and accomplishments.
- A portfolio provides evidence of learning skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values.
- A portfolio facilitates the task of moving from a description of an experience to the identification of the learning derived from the experience.

***What does a Portfolio Contain?***

- A portfolio contains anything that is meaningful to you and represents your growth and understanding in health care in general, and pharmacy specifically.
- A portfolio contains documents and material that collectively demonstrate the scope and quality of your accomplishments; your portfolio summarizes what you have learned from your activities and assignments.
- A portfolio contains items that can illustrate your accomplishments: papers, videotapes, audiotapes, computer programs—or any other tangible items you have created.

***When is the Portfolio Due?***

Because the portfolio primarily defines your prior learning for the clerkships, it is due when you begin to plan your advanced practice experiences. If you wish to demonstrate prior learning for a Phase I course, submit that request as soon as possible (see below *Requests for Recognition of Learning fulfilling the Phase I Prerequisite Courses*).

***Is the Portfolio Required?***

Yes. Submission of the portfolio is required before beginning the clerkships.

## Procedures for Developing a Portfolio

### **First Things First**

In order to develop a well-organized and thorough portfolio, you should:

- Understand the academic and curricular requirements for the External Doctor of Pharmacy Program (*see the next sub-section*). These will serve as the benchmark to which you will compare your pharmacy learning;
- Identify courses you have already passed that may meet these academic and curricular requirements; and
- Describe and provide supportive documentation for learning that meets or exceeds the program requirements. This is the portfolio!

A note about definitions: in this handbook and throughout the program, we use the term “waive” to refer to coursework requirements that you have fulfilled in a non-academic setting. For example, your experience in implementing an immunization program in your practice — while not completed as an official university course for credit — could very well be identified as a quality learning experience for which we could waive our requirement for one of the clerkships. This is different from a course that you took as an undergraduate, or in a Master’s degree program (for which you have already received academic credit). In general, it will take less documentation to provide us with evidence of learning for the academic coursework.

### **Understanding the Full External PharmD Curriculum**

You will be required to complete all phases of the curriculum to earn the Doctor of Pharmacy degree. We start with the assumption that as a licensed pharmacist, you already possess most of the knowledge and skill competencies required in the program. You will be filling in and adding to your understanding and practice of pharmacy. Our curriculum is divided into the following three phases:

#### **Phase I: Prerequisite Basic Knowledge Courses**

In addition to possessing a Bachelor’s degree in pharmacy, there are three specific courses we view as prerequisites. You may have completed one or more of them while in another academic program. It is also possible that you have completed a professional development program (e.g., lengthy CE program) that will fulfill the requirement for one of these courses.

- Pharm 493, *Medical Literature Evaluation*, 2 quarter credit (UW) or PharP 558, *Drug Information Retrieval and Evaluation*, 1 semester credit (WSU);
- Pharm 479, *Quantitative Methods 2*, 4 quarter credit (UW) or PharP 531, *Clinical Research Methods*, 3 semester credit (WSU);
- Pharm 494, *Introduction to Pharmacokinetics*, 2 quarter credit (UW) or PharP 557, *Clinical Pharmacokinetics*, 2 semester credit (WSU). This is a clinical or applied pharmacokinetics course taken after a basic pharmacokinetics course.

#### **Phase II: Advanced Therapeutics Courses**

Advanced pharmacotherapeutics is covered in nine modules, each consisting of a self-study knowledge component (for which you must pass an examination) and a two-day workshop. It is not possible to waive the requirement for advanced therapeutics — this sequence must be completed within the program. Those who are Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialists must complete all nine modules, but are not required to take the self-study examinations.

### **Phase III: Clerkship Courses**

To complete the program, you will be required to finish eight (nine after July 1, 2008) months of full-time clinical clerkship experience. All students *must complete at least three clerkships* at university-supervised or approved clerkship sites *while enrolled in the program*. You will undoubtedly have earned credit for one or more clerkships completed as a requirement for your Bachelor's degree, and may be able to demonstrate learning that will allow us to waive others.

In general, the Doctor of Pharmacy Program has the following *expectations* of students for each clerkship:

- Five of your eight or nine clerkships experiences must involve a significant degree of direct patient care.
- You must complete at least 160 hours of experiential learning during each clerkship.
- This experiential learning will encompass primarily cognitive services provision, rather than drug distribution. Examples of cognitive services include: patient counseling (disease prevention, prescription, and OTC drugs), patient interviewing, consultation with other health care providers, medical literature evaluation, dissemination of drug information, information transfer between inpatient and outpatient environments to facilitate continuity of care, patient assessment including physical examination, exercise of prescriptive authority, drug use review, formulary management, development of drug use guidelines or protocols, documentation of patient care activities via written notes or letters, and developing and/or piloting new services.

As of July 2007, the American Council for Pharmacy Education has changed the accreditation guidelines to require experiences in the following four areas:

- A general medicine acute care experience.
- A health system administration or a second hospital experience.
- A clinic-based ambulatory care experience.
- A community pharmacy ambulatory care experience.

### **Portfolio Organization**

Your first task is to identify, articulate, evaluate, and document creditworthy learning experiences. This could be learning acquired from your job(s) or certification programs. University-level learning is defined in terms of quality, general applicability, both theoretical and practical understanding, currency, and verifiability. The learning must be described in the form of written commentary on the learning experience for which recognition is being sought. You should begin by examining course objectives and identifying experiences that provide equivalent learning outcomes.

You present this learning in a portfolio (1 copy) mailed to the *program* office—you should also keep a copy for your records and to continually update. The format should include:

- A *Title Page* with your name, address, email address, specialty certifications (e.g., BCPS) with an attached photocopy of the certificates, date of the submission, and a list of the learning experiences for which you are specifically requesting review. Please organize it by first listing the Phase I prerequisite courses (if requesting any waivers), followed by clerkships earned as an undergraduate, and finally the life learning experiences for which you are requesting a waiver.
- Table of Contents*
- A Statement of Career Objectives*

- ❑ *Requests for Recognition of Learning fulfilling the Phase I Prerequisite Courses.* Optional — these may be submitted separately and do they have to be part of the portfolio. (Use a separate page for each course):
- Attach a course outline or syllabus which contains the following information: the nature and content of information covered, the text book used, the institution at which the course was taken, the calendar year the course or experience was completed, and a reference to proof of successful completion such as a certificate or university transcript.
  - If you do not have a course outline write an explanation, not to exceed one page in length, describing the information above. If you believe you have fulfilled a course by an in-depth CE program, include the above information along with a photocopy of successful completion.
  - For the Medical Literature Evaluation course, you may be asked to demonstrate successful critique of a primary literature article.
- ❑ *Requests for Recognition of Learning Clinical Clerkship Courses Already Completed* (use a separate page for each course):
- If you wish to have us recognize clerkship experiences you earned during your Bachelor’s program, describe (in a paragraph) the setting where the clerkship occurred (i.e., “title” or “theme” of the clerkship, name of site, city and state of site), the activities in which you engaged, the name of your preceptor (if you remember), and the total number of hours spent in the experience.
  - List the three most important things you learned during the experience. The description of each should be brief, i.e., 1–2 sentences for each item. Remember to reference your university transcript showing successful completion of the clerkship, and indicate the specific class by course name and number as it is listed on your transcript.
- ❑ *Requests for Clerkship Equivalent Credit Waiver* (use a separate section for each clerkship):
- In general you will:
- Outline each learning experience on a separate piece of paper. Each experience should have a title or theme (e.g., smoking cessation counseling, asthma management, general ambulatory care pharmacotherapy, geriatric pharmacotherapy, nutrition support, continuous quality improvement project), a list of the names of institution(s) at which the learning took place, and a note as to whether the learning experience was a patient-care or non-patient care experience. Also indicate whether you consider this learning experience to be acute pharmaceutical care, ambulatory pharmaceutical care, long-term pharmaceutical care, or other.
  - Include learning experiences that meet most or all of the objectives listed in *Table 1*, or which meet just one or two objectives in great depth.
  - Include a detailed description of the activities performed and the three most important things learned during the experience. Some indication of number of hours spent in the learning experience *must* be made. This description of learning should be accompanied by supporting documentation indexed to text for easy reference.

In order to have an experience qualify as a *learning* experience, you must show evidence of experiential learning that meets or exceeds the learning that would be obtained through a traditional clerkship. In each clerkship, you must demonstrate continued professional growth

through maturation of problem solving skills and initiative in communicating with other health care professionals.

Each learning experience you identify should *demonstrate continued learning*, be *clearly delineated* from other submitted learning experiences, and *be identified* as acute pharmaceutical care, ambulatory pharmaceutical care, long-term pharmaceutical care, or other. For instance, if you have spent the past five years working primarily with cardiac patients and can demonstrate through documentation that you participated in patient monitoring and discharge teaching, you may be awarded the equivalent of one clerkship experience, even if you have spent greater than 160 hours performing these tasks. If you introduced a new service, (e.g., began a cardiovascular pharmacotherapy update journal club) that service may qualify as another learning experience. Additionally, you will need to demonstrate proficiency in each of the overall clerkship learning objectives in order to successfully complete the *program*. These overall clerkship learning experiences are outlined in *Table 1*.

<b>Table 1 Clerkship Learning Objectives</b>	
<b>Pharmaceutical care and clinical problem-solving skills</b>	Gather data and assess patients' drug-related problems Develop pharmaceutical care plans for patients Recommend therapeutic drug monitoring plans, including drug concentration monitoring, and indicators of efficacy and toxicity Assess and modify drug therapy regimens in patients with altered organ function Demonstrate an awareness of the assessment skills in the areas necessary to monitor medication outcome
<b>Communication skills</b>	Communicate drug use information to patients Write patient consult notes in a professional format Provide drug information verbally and in writing
<b>Professional behavior</b>	Demonstrate professional skills, attitude, motivation, ethics, and the ability to collaborate with other health care professionals
<b>Factual information</b>	Demonstrate a fundamental knowledge of pharmacotherapeutics in the areas necessary to provide the service
<b>Organizational awareness</b>	Understand the organized health-care environment in which the clerkship is taking place in order to provide pharmaceutical care

Please note that all learning objectives are not necessarily met in each clerkship; rather a few may be met substantially. However, your overall clerkship experiences should make you well grounded in each of these learning objectives.

Again, you are expected to complete the equivalent of eight (nine after July 1, 2008) clerkship experiences. Some of these have probably been met by undergraduate clinical clerkships, and all but *three* of these clerkships may be waived by demonstrating prior learning. Because the Doctor of Pharmacy degree is indicative of *clinical* learning, most—not necessarily all—of your clerkship experiences should be focused on direct patient care.

### **Portfolio Outline**

To allow us to determine if you have clinical experience comparable to that required by the *program*, you must prepare a detailed outline of your professional experience. The outline should include as much of the following information as possible:

1. Title (or theme) of the experience.
2. Name and location of professional site.
3. Supervisor's name.
4. Hours per week and duration spent in professional activities.

5. Knowledge and skills required to perform professional activities.
  6. Whether you consider the experience largely acute pharmaceutical care, ambulatory pharmaceutical care, long-term pharmaceutical care, or other.
  7. A description of the learning experience:
    - a. When the learning took place (dates if possible);
    - b. Where the learning took place;
    - c. What the setting was;
    - d. Which, if any, of the required experiences does it fulfill:
      - A general medicine acute care experience,
      - A health system administration or a second hospital experience,
      - A clinic-based ambulatory care experience,
      - A community pharmacy ambulatory care experience;
    - e. Your role(s) in the experience;
    - f. How you grew professionally (including at least three things you learned);
    - g. How you have applied what you know;
    - h. What additional reading and research you did in connection with the experience; and
    - i. Specific examples demonstrating the outcomes of your learning experience.
  8. Each patient care experience should include one or more copies of a chart note (with patient name and ID information removed) or descriptions of your role in the care of a specific patient.
  9. In cases where the documentation of successful learning was a team effort (e.g., a series of patient education brochures), include a brief description of your specific contribution.
  9. Evidence (documentation) of learning (see section *How to Document Areas of Learning* on the next page).
- Each portfolio should be as complete as possible. Evaluation of a revised portfolio may incur a fee.

### **Portfolio Submission**

Portfolios must be typed. Elaborate binders or covers are not needed and are discouraged. Each page (beginning with the table of contents) should be numbered consecutively including the documentation. The cost of assessment is \$440, regardless of whether you are requesting waivers.

The portfolio is due when you begin to plan your clerkships. If you need us to review your portfolio before then—for a Phase I course for example—submit that portion separately. The portfolio development process is designed to help you uncover your specific learning requirements. The Portfolio Review Committee will complete an evaluation for each clerkship waiver requested; along with an academic transcript review. As part of the review process, the Committee may request an interview with you. A note about when we review the portfolio—this is a time consuming process for us. We tend to review the portfolio just before we need the information. If you need us to review your portfolio before then please indicate that on the cover page and by email.

Your portfolio will remain on file at the *program* office and will be serve as a baseline against which your learning while in the *program* can be evaluated. Remember to keep material pertinent to your professional career advancement as you move through the program. A portfolio update is a graduation requirement.

***Where to Mail the Portfolio***

One copy of the portfolio along with a check for \$440 (for the Phase 2 assessment, no payment is necessary for assessment of only Phase I courses) made out to the *University of Washington* should be mailed to:

Monica Sahn Joint External Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Program Box 357631 1959 NE Pacific Street H362 Health Sciences Center Seattle, Washington 98195-7631
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## Hints and Suggestions for Preparing a Portfolio

### Identify Areas of Learning

The preparation of your portfolio involves determining which experiences meet course—especially clerkship—objectives. Learning is different from experience, and it is important to demonstrate *professional growth* and *practice innovation* rather than repetition of the same activity.

### How to Document Areas of Learning

Different kinds of learning will require different kinds of documentation verifying the experiences and the knowledge and skills you claim. Documentation can support your portfolio and request for waiver in two ways:

1. It can measure your learning by providing direct information about the experiences; for example, sample notes or letters to prescribers outlining problem identification and proposed solution, accompanied by evidence of solution adoption and improved patient outcome.
2. It can measure your learning by providing indirect information about your experiences; for example, a letter from your job supervisor.

The information in *Table 2* outlines some possible forms of documentation.

<b>Types of Experience</b>	<b>Documentation</b>
<b>Professional Experience</b>	Job description, awards, letters of verification, correspondence, promotion letters, samples of work produced, job performance reports, evidence of suggestions adopted, sample consult notes, sample entries from a patient-specific database, same therapeutic assessment plan, audio or videotape of patient interaction
<b>Professional Education</b>	Certificates or Board Certification

Some portfolios used for professional licensing purposes have contained:

<b>Component</b>	<b>Measurement/Documentation Ideas</b>
<i>Clinical Activities</i>	Interventions—log of prescriptions, actions taken Consultations—log of information requests, Drug Use Reviews, Med reviews, etc.
<i>Recognition</i>	Letters Awards
<i>Professional Involvement</i>	College activities Other professional organization activities
<i>Continuing Education</i>	Program participation credits Presentations to health professional, and patient groups Published professional articles/reviews Reading/reviewing references, journals, computer or video professional educational materials
<i>Teaching and Training</i>	Students precepted Peer (study group, journal clubs, etc.) Other health professional, e.g., inservices Patients and community presentations
<i>Quality Improvement Initiatives, Projects</i>	Improvements Problems identified and proposed solutions Errors, corrective, and preventive actions, recommendations

**Portfolio Development Guidelines**

When preparing such documentation, please follow these guidelines:

- Your portfolio is not the place to be modest about your learning. You must demonstrate in writing what you have learned to an evaluator who does not know you. The more specific information you provide and the better you document your learning, the easier it will be for the evaluator to make a judgment. Neither is it useful to provide too much information. A portfolio *thicker than one inch is probably too big*, and should be appropriately edited.
- Document professional growth. Delineating how you have evolved your pharmacy practice is crucial.
- Clearly illustrate the increased level of competence the experience helped you to achieve.
- Avoid excessive documentation. Eliminate items that do not directly support your learning. Once you have made your point, move on.
- Realize that your organization's policies, procedures, and job descriptions do not necessarily indicate what you've learned, but just what you do.
- Remove patient names from confidential records or correspondence. Only include prescriber names if you have written permission from the prescriber to do so.
- Include letters from supervisors or colleagues that *verify* your experience. These letters of verification are different from letters of recommendation and generally address the questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how long. They should also contain information about the level of performance you demonstrated in that particular experience. More specifically:
  - a. The verification letters should be written by someone who has observed your work directly.
  - b. One person may verify more than one of your experiences. Each letter written should provide distinct and direct information about each experience your reference has observed. More than one letter of verification may assist the committee in evaluating your learning, but will not increase the number of clinical rotations that will be waived for you.
  - c. The letters should verify the information in your description of the experience (i.e., it should verify what you wrote in your portfolio).
  - d. The writer should identify his or her relationship to you during the experience, qualifications for commenting on the experience, intention to verify your experience, and activities observed directly.
  - e. The letter should be written on official letterhead of the organization.

A sample letter outlining the responsibilities of an evaluation is included in the *Appendix*.

**Check Portfolio for Completeness**

After completing this check list, submit *one copy* of the portfolio.

*Title page*

- Does it include your name, address, email address, and submission date?
- Does it indicate whether you are board certified in a specialty?

*Career objectives*

- Did you include your Career Objectives?

*Table of contents* (including pages numbered consecutively)*Requests for recognition of learning fulfilling prerequisite courses* (optional)

- Have you identified and described your academic coursework equivalent to that required in the External Doctor of Pharmacy Degree program?

*Requests for recognition of learning fulfilling clinical clerkship courses*

- Does it identify undergraduate clerkships, describe the experience, list the name of your preceptors, and indicate the time involved?
- Do you list which of the required experiences (general medicine acute care experience, health system administration or a second hospital experience, clinic-based ambulatory care experience, or a community pharmacy ambulatory care experience) it fulfills?
- Have you identified at least three important things you learned during each experience?

*Requests for clerkship waivers*

- Does each clerkship waiver request have a title or theme, and do you describe each experience: the institution, whether direct patient care or not, whether acute care, ambulatory care, long-term care, or other, etc.?
- Did you include descriptions of *learning*? Have you identified at least three important things you learned during each experience?
- Does each clerkship equivalent request describe which specific learning objectives you met during that specific clerkship?

*Documentation*

- Is there documentation in support of each course and clerkship waiver request?
- Have you included copies, rather than the originals? You should retain the originals.
- Does your documentation verify, rather than recommend?

## **Career Objectives**

To assist us in helping you plan your clerkship experiences for your external Doctor of Pharmacy degree, please answer the following questions and include them in your portfolio.

1. What specialty, if any, describes your current practice?
2. What, if any, specialty or specialized learning or skills would you like to acquire during clerkship training?
3. List any clerkship sites you know about that could accommodate your interests.
4. Describe any other information you think we should have to assist in planning your clerkships.

**Appendix****Example Form Letter for Request of Verification**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The Joint External Doctor of Pharmacy Degree Program of the University of Washington and Washington State University will recognize learning gained outside of the classroom that is of a level and standard that can be judged as worthy of university credit waiver. I am requesting a letter of *verification* or *evaluation* in support of my waiver request.

Your letter will provide evidence regarding the nature and quality of my learning experience. In your response, please be thorough, professional, objective, and most especially, candid. I encourage you to observe the following guidelines as you attempt to verify and evaluate my learning.

1. Send your written response on letterhead stationary where possible. Where letterhead is not available, it is essential that you spell out clearly who you are, your standing in the observed situation, and the nature of your relationship and association with me.
2. Include a description of your present position, and experiences that qualify you to write this letter of evaluation.
3. Define the situation in which you observed me, the length of that observation, and dates.
4. State clearly and specifically the skills, knowledge and competencies that you are discussing and that you feel capable of evaluating (I have enclosed my description of the learning for your reference).
5. To the extent that you can, please verify that I held the position and fulfilled the responsibilities claimed.

If you have any questions, please contact me. Your letter should be returned to me for inclusion in my portfolio. Thank you for taking the time to provide a thoughtful, candid assessment for me.

Sincerely,