

Sample Questions for Pharmacy Students to Ask in Internship & Employment Interviews

Agenda Setting Questions: These questions are broad 'opener' questions, and the best strategy is to respond with a summary of your academic training, professional skills and experience and interest in the position.

1. Can you walk me through your resume?
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. Tell us about you.
4. So, I see you are presently at UCSF.

Skills Key to the Position Questions: After agenda setting question, interviewers will focus on questions that help them understand if you have the required skills to do the job.

Pharmacy Related Clinical skills

1. Can you talk about your range of pharmacy related clinical skills?
2. Describe a clinical intervention that you have made.

Research

1. Tell me about your current research. How did you design your project and what were your outcomes?
2. Can you talk about your experience involving the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, developing data collection instruments and plans, conducting case studies, designing and implementing the analysis and synthesis of data?
3. What statistical methods and data collection instruments are you familiar with?

Project Management

1. This position will require the successful candidate to develop research designs for small-and large-scale research projects. Can you tell me about a time you had to manage a project, from design and implementation to evaluation? How did you approach it, and what were challenges you had to overcome?
2. What example can you give me about a time you had to work independently?

Interpersonal/Communication Skills

1. Tell me about a time you had a disagreement with a colleague or supervisor. How did you handle it?
2. What criteria do you use to tell if you're being understood by your listener?

Clinical based:

1. How would you handle this situation: As the sole pharmacist you find yourself facing three situations: first, an loud and belligerent patient at the window who is having issues with their insurance, a psychiatrist on the phone who is asking for additional information regarding drug interaction between an SSRI and diabetes medication, and a nurse concerned about dosing for a patient crashing on a dopamine drip. In addition to how you order your response, give me some details about how you approach each individual (what questions do you ask, how do you speak with them)

2. What approach would you take in explaining a complex clinical issue with a patient who does not have a clinical background?
3. What are some strategies you employ to successfully work with diverse populations?
4. A patient insists on a particular treatment plan that you do not agree with – how would you address that situation?
5. A new patient is clearly experiencing anxiety, and is becoming loud and belligerent. What steps would you take to alleviate their concerns?
6. A patient is frustrated because she had been kept waiting for her appointment. How would you handle that situation?
7. Imagine that an physician/attending/etc. is suggesting an approach with a patient you have been monitoring, and you disagree with this approach. How do you address it?

Non-Clinical Based

1. The successful candidate will be tasked with preparing technical memoranda and reports, preparing reports intended for a wider audience, and communicating results to clients and other external parties. What is your experience in these areas?
2. Can you specifically discuss a time you have had to share highly technical material in a clear manner to a non-technical audience?)
3. I see you had significant presentation experience. Tell me what criteria you use to gauge whether or not you are giving an excellent presentation.
4. We often collaborate on projects, which have strict deadlines. Talk to be about how you have worked on a project with deadlines. Did you face challenges and how did you address them?

People Management

1. Supervising fellow staff is a key component of this position. Discuss your approach when managing the work of those you supervise.
2. Have you ever had to teach another staff person something new -a new software system or clinical skill, etc.? How did you do it?

Management/Leadership/Initiative

1. Tell me about a time you initiated and implemented a new procedure, program or system, that you are proud of. (It can be employment or volunteer related)

Fears/Curiosity Questions: After determining that you could technically do the job, interviewing often try to tease out why you are interested in the position, and any barriers to you doing the position successfully.

Your learning curve:

1. What will be your learning curve?
2. Now that you have heard about the position, what do you think will be most difficult for you if you are the selected candidate for this position?
3. How would you describe your weaknesses in terms of your clinical skills, and what do you need from us to address/develop those skills?

What motivates you as an intern/employee (which will help an employer determine how to manage and keep you as a long term employee):

1. What areas of pharmacy most interest you?
2. How does this internship fit with your long term goals (internships)
3. How would you describe your work ethic and approach towards pharmacy?
4. What do you think is most enjoyable/rewarding about being in the field of pharmacy?
5. Describe qualities that you think are key to a thriving work environment?
6. What type of work environments do you thrive in/what was your best work situation and why?

7. Where do you see yourself in five years?
8. What are you most proud of to date about your pharmacy career?
9. What clinical/research/writing/management/etc. skills do you wish to develop?
10. Why are you specifically interested in working with our organization?
11. What are your thoughts about the expanding role of pharmacy?
12. What do you think was the most significant drug in the last 20 years? W
13. hat do you think are the effects of the increase of baby boomers on the Pharmacy field?
14. Whom do you admire in the field of Pharmacy?
15. What issue do you think has affected the practice of Pharmacy and why?

How you deal with stress:

1. Tell me about a time that you failed or faced a significant setback. How did you handle it?
2. Tell me about a time that you failed?
3. Tell me about a time your performance was criticized. What happened and how did you respond?
4. Now that you understand more about the position, what strategies do you use using to manage the inevitable stress of the position?

Questions to ask interviewers

1. What qualities or skills do you think the selected candidate will have to possess to succeed in this job?
2. What do you think will be most challenging for the selected candidate in the first 6 months?
3. How have you oriented new staff onto the team at your organization? How have you facilitated training to get them up to speed? (This is a good personal question to ask fellow staff – how they were trained)
4. Approximately how many prescriptions does this pharmacy fill per day?
5. Why did you choose to work in this organization – what is most rewarding?
6. How would you describe the culture, management style and organization here?
7. (To ask a direct supervisor) How would you describe your management style?
8. (To ask colleagues) How would you describe (the position's boss) management style?
9. What is the next step in the hiring process?



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