

## **Academia: Clinical Practice Holland Code: ISC**

### **Background**

Academia is an attractive option for pharmacists who enjoy working with students while engaging in clinical practice and/or in clinical research. With the increase in the diversity of academic positions, it can no longer be said that an academicians' career is confined to the laboratory or classroom.

Clinical practice academicians often work with other health care professionals in a consultative capacity to select medication and develop therapeutic regimens for patients. In addition, many are involved with medication therapy management programs and services. Therefore, academicians have both a direct and an indirect impact on patient care.

The "Academia" category may be loosely defined as belonging to a university faculty, usually that of a college of pharmacy. However, clinical practice pharmacists may also hold academic positions in medical, veterinary, and other health care-related educational institutions. Positions may range from the dean of a college of pharmacy to a teaching clinical pharmacy position at an off-campus site or to a classroom setting.

Duties of an academic pharmacist may include administrative activities, scientific research, teaching professional student pharmacists, supervising research and teaching graduate students, speaking and/or publishing in scientific venues, student advising, and teaching student pharmacists through experiential practice sites.

### **Characteristics**

Two hundred thirteen respondents to the 2012 *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program* survey identified themselves as practicing in this area. Ninety-three percent of the respondents had a PharmD degree with 55% of them being earned as an entry level degree.

This is a change from the 2007 survey results where a majority of the respondents had earned their PharmD post BS. Sixty-eight percent of respondents had a residency with 11% having a fellowship. Twenty-nine percent reported an advanced degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, other); this is up from 17% in 2007. An additional 40% indicated certificate training of some kind and 40% also reported having earned a Board of Pharmacy Specialties Certification.

Respondents' average age was 42 years old. Two thirds (67%) of respondents were female. Income data show that nearly half (48%) earn less than \$100,000 (includes

respondents who held a residency for half of the year and consisted of 8% of respondents), while 50% earn \$100,000 or more per year. The average time worked per week was 47.8 hours.

A majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their job, with 51% indicating “extremely satisfied” and 42% indicating “somewhat satisfied.” On a similar scale, respondents said that they felt the job was challenging, with 45% indicating “extremely challenging” and 51% indicating “somewhat challenging.”

## **Insider’s Perspective**

### **What aspects of the job are most appealing?**

Reflecting the different type of activities involved in academia, 35% of respondents said the most appealing aspect of their work was its “flexibility” or “variety.” Many respondents said that working with students and patients was most appealing.

### **What aspects of the job are least appealing?**

Working within a large organization like a university necessarily involves a considerable administrative load. Wearing “five hats at once,” reported by one respondent, makes “work life balance difficult.” Several respondents noted that the politics of academia can make the job frustrating at times.

### **What advice should students and practitioners consider when selecting the option of Academia?**

Several respondents cautioned that you should make sure to have clear expectations at the outset of this career. Since time is split between both teaching and practice, it needs to be clear to the employee and the employer(s) (often both the university and a clinical setting) how much time should be spent on each activity. Many also advised that gaining clinical practice experience is highly valuable before pursuing a career in academia.

Adapted from the American Pharmacists Association