

## **Academia: Economic, Social, and Administrative Sciences Holland Code: ISC**

### **Background**

Academia is an attractive option for pharmacists who enjoy working with students while having opportunities to engage in research. With the increase in the diversity of academic positions, it can no longer be said that an academician's career is confined to the laboratory or classroom.

Economic, Social, and Administrative Science (ESAS) academicians often work with other health care professionals in a consultative capacity or as a lead investigator in research. Moreover, the opinions of ESAS academicians are frequently solicited by the pharmaceutical industry and the government before making policy decisions. Therefore, ESAS academicians have 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, ESAS academicians also hold academic positions in medical, veterinary, public health, public policy, marketing, 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 or remote hospital to a classroom professor.

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

### **Characteristics**

Sixty-four individuals responded to the 2012 *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program* survey in this career area. Seventy percent of the respondents had an entry-level degree in pharmacy, with 16% having earned a PharmD degree. Eighteen percent of respondents had a residency or fellowship. Seventy-three percent reported an advanced degree (PhD) with an additional 13% holding an MBA. An additional 11% indicated certificate training of some kind.

Respondents' average age was 45 years old. Slightly less than two thirds (61%) of respondents were male. Income data show over one third (36%) earn between \$80,000–\$100,000, while 45% earn \$100,000 or more per year. Consultative fees are included in the income figures. The average time worked per week was 50.7 hours, among the highest of all job areas surveyed. Respondents represented 30 states.

A large majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their job, with 69% indicating “extremely satisfied” and 28% indicating “somewhat satisfied.” On a similar scale, respondents said that they felt the job was challenging, with 72% indicating “extremely challenging” and 28% indicating “somewhat challenging.”

## **Insider’s Perspective**

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

Reflecting the different types of activities involved in ESAS, 25% of respondents said the most appealing aspect of their work was its “flexibility.” “Working with students,” was cited by 16% of the respondents with “freedom” listed by 10% of the respondents. “Freedom to do what you like—teaching, research, service” was one Minnesota respondent’s message of the most appealing aspect of the position. Independence, teaching student pharmacists, and working with graduate students were cited in comments, indicating the satisfaction level previously noted.

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

Among the least appealing aspects of an academic position was a 14% response for both “bureaucracy” with “administrative activities.”

Working within a large organization, like a university, usually requires a considerable administrative workload in addition to teaching and research responsibilities. “Bureaucratic and political concerns, along with not always working with like-minded folks,” was noted by one Washington respondent. Another stated, “Sometimes I feel my group’s work is not considered important by the remainder of pharmacy.” Just under 8% indicated their concerns for low salaries and long hours as least appealing aspects.

### **What advice should students and practitioners consider when selecting the option of academia in economic, social, and administrative sciences?**

The ability to work independently was the most frequent factor cited by respondents, as 12% indicated this need. One respondent from Arizona wrote that pharmacists need the “ability to self-motivate, ability to manage time among multiple responsibilities, and be project oriented.” Other respondents included the thoughts of looking at the “larger issues confronting pharmacy and health care.”

Adapted from the American Pharmacists Association