

Academia: Pharmaceutical Sciences Holland Code: ISC

Background

Academia is an attractive option for pharmacists who enjoy working with students while also 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.

Pharmaceutical sciences faculty often work with other health care professionals in a consultative capacity or as a consultant for government and industry research endeavors. Therefore, these 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, pharmacists in this area also hold academic positions in medical, veterinary, dental, and other health care-related educational institutions. Positions may range from the dean of a college of pharmacy to an entry-level teaching/research position. In addition, pharmaceutical sciences faculty have expertise in a variety of areas including but not limited to: anatomy, physical/chemical sciences, pharmacology, toxicology, cell and molecular biology, biochemistry, immunology, formulation, biological sciences, and pharmaceuticals.

Duties of pharmaceutical sciences faculty 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-nine individuals responded to the 2012 *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program* survey in this career area. Seventy-two percent of the respondents had an entry-level degree in pharmacy, with 24% having earned a PharmD degree. Twenty-nine percent of respondents had a residency or fellowship. Seventy-four percent reported an advanced degree (PhD). An additional 11% indicated certificate training of some kind. Respondents' average age was 51 years old. More than half (63%) of respondents were male.

Income data show that over half (56%) earn over \$110,000 per year, with 17% earning greater than \$150,000. These salary figures include consultative fees that are received. The average time worked per week was 50.5 hours. The majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their work, with 57% indicating "extremely satisfied" and 34% indicating "somewhat satisfied." On a similar scale, respondents said

that they felt their work was challenging, with 54% indicating “extremely challenging” and 40% indicating “somewhat challenging.”

One Ohio respondent summed up the thoughts of others regarding satisfaction for the position, stating the most appealing aspects of the job are: “The interaction with students [and] the ability to work on projects that you truly enjoy and are interested in.”

Insider’s Perspective

What aspects of the job are most appealing?

Thirty-five percent of the respondents said the most appealing aspect of their work was “working with students.” The second highest ranked item was “research,” cited by 24% of the respondents. One respondent indicated that appealing aspects of the position included “presenting science information for pharmaceutical application.” Working on clinical trials, academic freedom, and flexibility were cited in comments as positive aspects of the position.

What aspects of the job are least appealing?

Among the least appealing aspects for these faculty members included committee work and meetings, administrative work, grant writing, and a heavy workload. Working within a large organization, such as a university, usually requires a considerable administrative workload in addition to teaching and research responsibilities.

What advice should students and practitioners consider when selecting the option of academia in the pharmaceutical sciences?

One respondent wrote: “This aspect of pharmacy is only for those that love learning, love people, and want to work hard to make a difference for everyone.”

Adapted from the American Pharmacists Association