

PURSuing AN INDUSTRY FELLOWSHIP

Applying for Post-PharmD Fellowships

PREFACE

There are over 20,000 PharmDs working in the US-based pharmaceutical industry, and career opportunities for industry pharmacists have never been better. Correspondingly, fellowship programs for PharmDs continue to expand. Today many hundreds of PharmDs participate in these programs at 100+ different sponsors, and there are over 5,000 fellowship program alumni working in the pharmaceutical industry. The growth, appeal, and value of these programs has become very clear.

Student pharmacists often report a lack of pharmaceutical industry and fellowship education from their schools. We need to be mindful that a relatively small percentage of pharmacists ever work in industry, so most pharmacy schools cannot justify a dedicated curricular track for an industry-focused career path. Additionally, the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) is placing ever-increasing demands on ACPE-accredited pharmacy schools, making it challenging to deliver even the core curriculum that supports the most common clinical pharmacy roles. As a result, the gaps in industry awareness, understanding, and experiential opportunities are as prevalent today as they have ever been.

There are other significant challenges for pharmacists who want to work in industry. Most notably, even entry-level roles for industry pharmacists often require prior experience and/or skill sets that most graduating pharmacists

don't have! As a result, pharmaceutical industry employers aren't knocking down the doors of pharmacy schools to hire new graduates. PharmDs with clinical knowledge have an outstanding foundation to work in industry, especially given the exponential growth of specialty pharmaceuticals, biologics, managed care, evidence-based/value-based medicine, and the Medical Science Liaison (MSL) role that employs thousands of pharmacists in the US alone. Still, pharmacists almost always need "something else" in order to get into industry after earning their Doctor of Pharmacy degree. This experience gap has helped to fuel the growth of fellowship programs at a dramatic rate. Thanks to highly successful outcomes over several decades, these programs have demonstrated that they can deliver the necessary experience and training to transform high potential, newly minted pharmacists into outstanding contributors and leaders in industry. Seemingly every industry employer now wants PharmD fellows, and fellowship sponsors are now training fellows in multiple different functions within their corporate structure. Large employers like Pfizer, Sanofi, Novartis, Bristol-Myers Squibb, and others currently employ hundreds of PharmD industry fellowship alumni at each company, including many who have reached senior decision-making levels in the company.

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Despite the growth of fellowship programs, the application process remains very competitive. More students than ever are seeking alternatives to traditional pharmacy practice roles and they are highly attracted to the professional promise that these fellowship programs offer. Today, about 80% of fellowship applicants do not successfully secure a position. Due to increasing competition and decreasing success rates, candidates are doing everything possible to learn more about what makes an ideal fellowship candidate, secure hard-to-find experiential opportunities, and develop strategies that can i) meet the basics expected of fellowship applicants and ii) help them stand out among the crowd of talented, qualified candidates.

This book demystifies the fellowship program enterprise and provides the help and advice that student pharmacists need to present a competitive candidacy for these programs. We provide detailed suggestions for you that range from strategies to follow upon first entering pharmacy school, to later stage tips on navigating the fellowship application, interviewing, and offer processes. We hope that you will find our perspectives helpful, as well as the collection of employer perspectives and shared stories from fellowship applicants' triumphs and failures that are interspersed throughout the book. Enjoy your journey and good luck in securing a fellowship position!



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