

So You Think You Know How to... Write a Recommendation Letter, Interview Someone, and Conduct a Performance Review

Activity No. 0217-0000-11-092-L04-P (Application-Based Activity)

Tuesday, October 18

10:15 a.m.–11:45 a.m.

Convention Center: Rooms 315 & 316



This session is available for elective credit for the ACCP Leadership and Management Certificate Program. For more information, visit the ACCP Web site at www.accp.com/academy.

Moderators: Paul O. Gubbins, Pharm.D., FCCP

Professor & Chair, Department of Pharmacy Practice, College of Pharmacy, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, Arkansas

and

Mitzi Wasik, Pharm.D., BCPS

Regional Director, Clinical Pharmacy, Coventry Healthcare, Downers Grove, Illinois

Agenda

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 10:15 a.m. | So You Think You Know How To Write A Recommendation Letter
<i>Charles T. Taylor, Jr., Pharm.D., BCPS</i>
Senior Associate Dean for Professional Education; Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Care and Health Science, University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy, Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| 10:45 a.m. | So You Thing You Know How To Interview A Candidate
<i>David A. Holdford, Ph.D.</i>
Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science, Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy, Richmond, Virginia |
| 11:15 a.m. | So You Thing You Know How To Conduct A Performance Appraisal
<i>Steven R. Abel, Pharm.D.</i>
Associate Dean for Clinical Programs, College of Pharmacy; Head, Department of Pharmacy Practice; Bucke Professor of Pharmacy Practice, Purdue University, College of Pharmacy, Indianapolis, Indiana |

Faculty Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Steven R. Abel: no conflicts to disclose.

David A. Holdford: no conflicts to disclose.


Charles T. Taylor: no conflicts to disclose.

Learning Objectives


1. Recognize examples of balanced recommendations.
2. Identify potential FERPA and other legal concerns in writing letters of recommendation.
3. Develop strategies to guide students/residents/fellows to the appropriate letter writers (“let them down easy”).
4. Identify best practices when interviewing a candidate, including information on employment.
5. Develop new strategies which avoid the “cookie cutter questions” used in most interviews.
6. Learn to identify strengths and weaknesses of the candidate with an engaging interview.
7. Discuss the rationale for developing an effective performance appraisal system.
8. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the various types of performance appraisal systems.
9. Describe appropriate procedures (including proper documentation) for firing employees.
10. Discuss the implications of employment laws on performance appraisals.


Self-Assessment Questions

Self-assessment questions are available online at www.accp.com/am




So You Think You Know How to...
Write A Recommendation Letter
 Charles Taylor, Pharm.D., BCPS
 October 18, 2011


Conflicts of Interest: None





University of Minnesota

Learning Objectives


- Recognize examples of balanced recommendations
- Identify potential legal concerns in writing letters of recommendations
- Develop strategies to guide students, residents, fellows seeking recommendations



Letters of Recommendation
RELEVANCE


Relevance of Letters


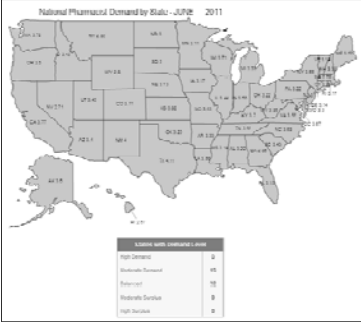
Twenty years ago, Dr. Richard Friedman published an article titled, "Fantasy Land" where he described the 'fantasy land of letters of recommendation' as

"a wondrous place...where people have excellent interpersonal skills and about a tenth of the inhabitants are among the finest I have ever worked with, and almost all are in the upper quarter."

Questionable predictive value of future performance... BUT...

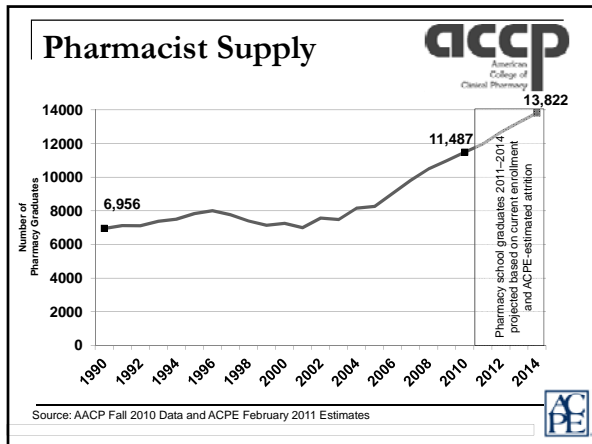
Source: Friedman RB, Fantasy land. N Engl J Med. 1983;308:651-3.

Pharmacist Demand




States with Available Data	
High Demand	0
Medium Demand	16
Low Demand	18
Medium-Low Demand	8
High-Low Demand	0

Source: <http://www.pharmacyanpower.com/usstatemap.jsp>



Pharmacist Supply

Pharmacy Residency Match Day 2011, (as compared to last year)

- 12% increase in candidates seeking PGY1 residencies,
- 2,027 PGY1 positions matched, a 13% increase, and
- 1,097 PGY1 positions unmatched, a 2% decrease

Source: <http://www.natmatch.com/ashprmp/>

Letters of Recommendation

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS THE WRITER

Definitions

- Reference Letter**

A "Reference Letter" is a letter in which the writer makes a general assessment of the qualities, interests, attitude, integrity, community involvement, and personal characteristics of a person.

- "Reference letters" are typically used in situations where an individual's character is being assessed. A reference letter also confirms details about an individual's situation or circumstances.

Definitions


- Recommendation Letter**

A "Recommendation Letter" is a letter in which the writer assesses the qualifications, skills, abilities, and capabilities in terms of that individual's ability to perform a particular task or function.

- "Recommendation Letters" are almost always requested by someone, and are therefore normally specifically addressed to that particular requester. Recommendation letters are typically related to employment, college admissions, etc.

Ethical Context

- Letters can do great good or great harm
- Agreeing to write letter implies willingness to help
- Duty to the profession and public:
 - honesty,
 - explicit, appropriate
 - balanced, complete letters

Golden Rule 


“Write to others the kind of recommendation letter you would like to receive from them.”

- To follow the rule is responsible professional conduct
- Not to follow the rule perpetuates harmful practices


Rule of Thumb:

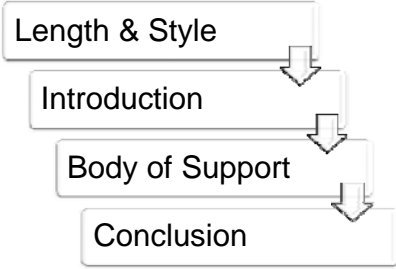
- Praise is measured and exacting
- Superlatives are backed by demonstrative examples
- Statistics are used with consistency and great care

Source: Don't be afraid to say "no" and the Academy: Are We Doing the Right Thing? American Academy of Arts and Sciences: Cambridge, MA, 26 pp.




Letters of Recommendation
PRACTICAL DETAILS


Letter Format 




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graph TD; A[Length & Style] --> B[Introduction]; B --> C[Body of Support]; C --> D[Conclusion];
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Getting Started 


- Determine your employer's rules regarding recommendation letters
- Verify if requestor is a "student" or an "employee"
- Obtain written consent from the requestor
- Generate details for your letter
 - Asking for copies of relevant application or position materials
 - Reviewing a copy of CV or some sample of past work or accomplishments
 - Asking for a copy of academic transcript
 - Interviewing the person to learn about goals, strengths, or interests




The Introduction 

- Address letters to an individual or committee
- Provide context of how you know the applicant
 - Length of relationship
 - Type of relationship (e.g. supervisor, preceptor)
- Establish your credibility (but briefly, subtly)
- Express positive feelings about writing the letter
 - "am pleased to provide a letter for..."
 - "am honored to support her as a candidate for..."





Body of Support 

- Describe incidents or actions unique to your relationship
 - Memorable moments
 - Personal interactions
- Use recent situations as examples; avoid irrelevant information
- Provide details specific and relevant to the position
- Discuss why the person would be a strong candidate
- Place the person in a larger context; remarks of colleagues


Legal Implications 

- Defamation
 - False statements that harm a person's reputation leading to tangible harm such as loss of money, employment, etc.
 - Statements of opinion are defamatory if they are based on unsubstantiated facts.
- Negligent misrepresentation
- E-mail is never confidential




Legal Implications 


- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
 - Students rights to review letters
 - Must obtain the signed, written consent of the student to disclose the student's GPA, grades, or class rank.



Source: <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/writing/recommendation/lettersonline/node/116>



Letters of Recommendation
EXAMPLE



Dear Program Director,


I am pleased to write this letter of recommendation for Dr. ABC, who was first introduced to me when he came to XYZ hospital as a pharmacy student completing his 5-week rotation in Acute Care Medicine.

I found Dr. ABC to be a very hard working, warm, conscientious and delightful individual who showed much interest in learning. He took very good care of patients who were assigned to him and he made sure that all the patient work-up was completed before morning rounds, where he actively participated. His responsibilities included taking histories, writing SOAP notes, providing patient education, and recommending medication therapy management interventions. He has excellent clinical skills and displays them with mature mannerisms.


ABC is a very humble individual who gets along well with his peers and the entire medical team. It is therefore without reservations that I recommend him to you for any residency program that he may be seeking. I am sure he will be a valuable asset to your organization.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.


Sincerely,
PQRST, Pharm.D
XYZ Medical Center Department of Pharmacy




Letters of Recommendation
THE REQUEST


Requesting a Letter 

- Carefully choose someone who...
 - Knows your abilities and personality
 - Understands the organization receiving your letter
 - Comes from various backgrounds and experiences with you
 - Understands the norms of letter writing
- Start early and provide complete information
- Follow-up
 - Reminders and deadlines
 - Outcomes






Letters of Recommendation
QUESTIONS?



So You Think You Know How to Interview Someone
October 19, 2011



Conflicts of Interest

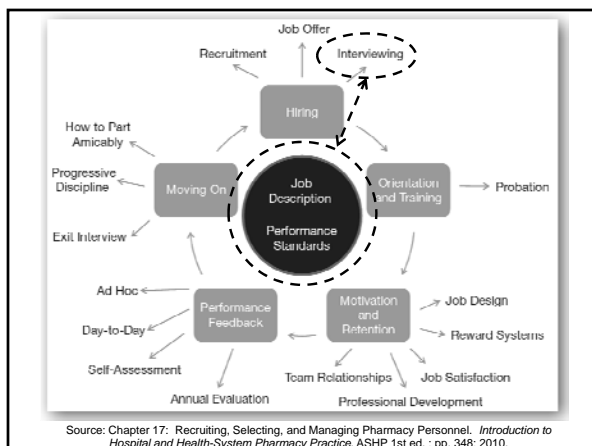


NONE

Learning Objectives

After attending this session, individuals should be able to:

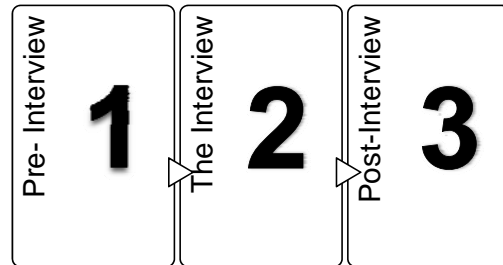
1. Identify best practices when interviewing a candidate, including information on employment laws
2. Develop new strategies which avoid the "cookie cutter questions" used in most interviews.
3. Learn to identify strengths and weaknesses of the candidate with an engaging interview



Interview Steps



Interview Steps



Steps in Preparing for the Interview

- Send info to candidate
- Identify interview objectives
- Review position description & performance standards
 - Develop a list of questions
- Study applications and resumes
 - Note gaps, potential points of discussion
- Alert people whom you want candidate to meet
- Schedule a quiet, uninterrupted interview

Steps in Preparing for the Interview

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Interview Objectives: Things I Want to Know

1. Can X do the basic job?
2. What is X's EQ?
3. Does X solve problems?
4. Will X be enjoyable to work with?
5. What will be X's level of commitment?

Interview Objectives: Things I Want to Achieve

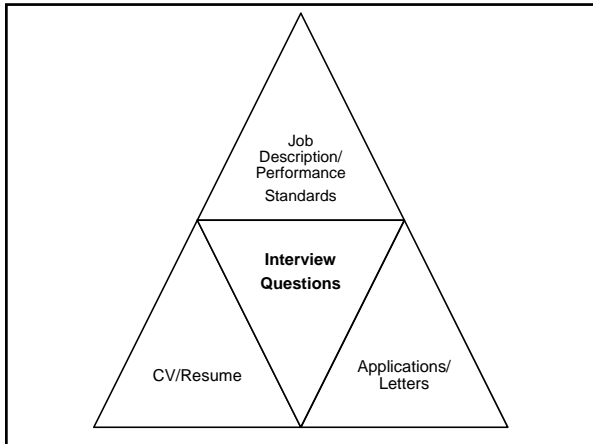
1. Judge acceptability of candidate
2. Collect enough information to differentiate candidate from others
3. Sell candidate on position/organization
4. Communicate expectations

Steps in Preparing for the Interview

- Send info to candidate
- Identify interview objectives
- Review position description & performance standards

Develop a list of questions

- Study applications and resumes
- Note gaps, potential points of discussion
- Alert people whom you want candidate to meet
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Job Description Components

- Job title and classification
- Duties, essential job functions, and responsibilities of the position
- Education, training, experience, and licensure required
- Knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the assigned duties
- Reporting and coordinating relationships
- Scope of authority
- Other specifications of the position required by law or the organization

Job Title: Pharmacy Clinical Coordinator	
Job Code: 0178	FLSA/Grade: Exempt / 000

Job Summary

Provides accurate, safe, efficient and cost effective pharmaceutical care, either directly or indirectly through the supervised efforts of support staff, to the patients of the University Hospital and Clinics. Acts as specialist in an assigned area of expertise, engages in education and researches projects, and provides clinical practice direction to other staff members.

Qualifications

A practice degree in Pharmacy; Utah State licensure to practice pharmacy and to dispense controlled substances; and an advanced degree (Pharm D. or M.S.) and completion of a residency with a minimum of two years post-graduate clinical practice experience or equivalency required. Must be eligible to become an approved Preceptor for student interns as described by the Utah State Board of Pharmacy; and be qualified for a faculty appointment at the Clinical Assistant Professor level at the College of Pharmacy, University of Utah. A Basic Life Support Health Care Provider card; and demonstrated human relation, effective communication, and computer literacy skills are also required.

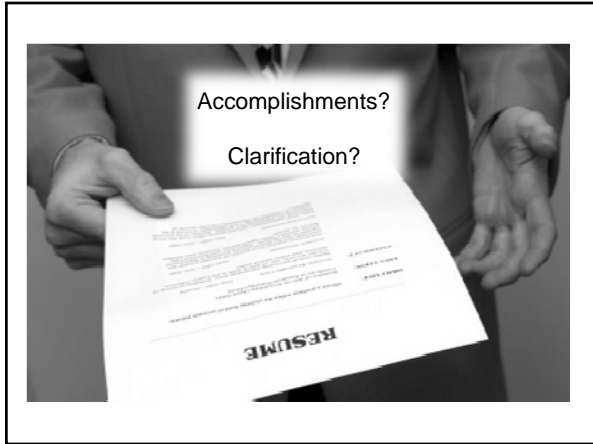
An Advanced Cardiac Life Support card, and active membership in both state and national pharmacy organizations are preferred.

The State Board of Pharmacy requires two years of experience as a Licensed Pharmacist to become a Preceptor.

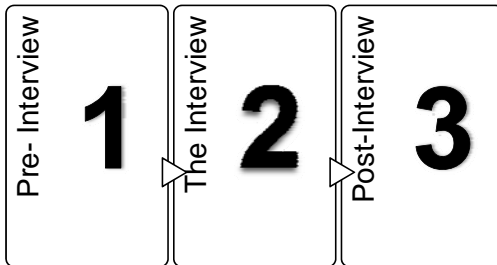
Disclaimer

This job description has been designed to indicate the general nature and level of work performed by employees within this classification. It is not designed to contain or be interpreted as a comprehensive inventory of all duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of employees assigned to the job.

1. Conceptualizes, designs, demonstrates, and documents pharmaceutical care
2. Develops, implements, and evaluates treatment guidelines that address cost effective and appropriate drug therapy.
3. Participates in interdisciplinary groups to enhance patient care.
4. Precepts and coordinates the precepting of pharmacy students and residents; serves as a role model to pharmacy students and residents; and acts as a project advisor in area of expertise or as assigned by the Program Director.
5. Develops, evaluates, reports, and otherwise participates in Continuous Quality Improvement, Drug Utilization Evaluation, Adverse Drug Reaction reporting, Medication Use, and other projects as assigned.
6. Provides, coordinates, and evaluates staff development opportunities for practicing pharmacists.
7. Evaluates clinical skills of pharmacists and provides performance review input.
8. Conducts and participates in clinical research.
9. Provides accurate, efficient and appropriate pharmaceutical distribution services to patients by properly interpreting physicians' drug orders, entering orders into the department's computer system, and dispensing the appropriate medications utilizing the accepted departmental programs for these activities.
10. Identifies, resolves, and prevents potential and actual drug-related problems by obtaining and evaluating medical data including patient history, laboratory data, and reviews patient profiles for drug interactions, allergies, contraindications, adverse drug reactions to determine and implement optimal drug therapy.
11. Communicates directly with physicians, nurses, and other health care providers to relate information regarding patient drug therapy.
12. Communicates and documents drug information given to patients and/or patient representatives.
13. Monitors all patient drug therapy for cost effectiveness and communicates all possible cost saving recommendations to patient's physician(s).
14. Maintains and updates personal drug knowledge database to ensure accurate provision of pharmaceutical care for general disease states as well as specialized knowledge in the assigned area of expertise; maintains advanced practice base through the avenues of publications, presentations, educational boards, and professional consultation, association leadership, and certification.
15. Maintains current knowledge of state and federal regulations and statutes regarding the practice of pharmacy and the distribution of approved drugs, controlled substances, and investigational agents; conducts personal practice in accordance with those requirements.
16. Supervises support personnel according to state law to ensure accurate preparation and dispensing of pharmaceuticals. Assumes total responsibility for the delivery of pharmaceutical and clinical services provided by any personnel under the position's direct supervision.



Interview Steps



Laws and Regulations Influencing HRM

Federal Civil Rights Act (1964) - prohibits discrimination in employment hiring, promotion, compensation, & treatment of protected employee groups

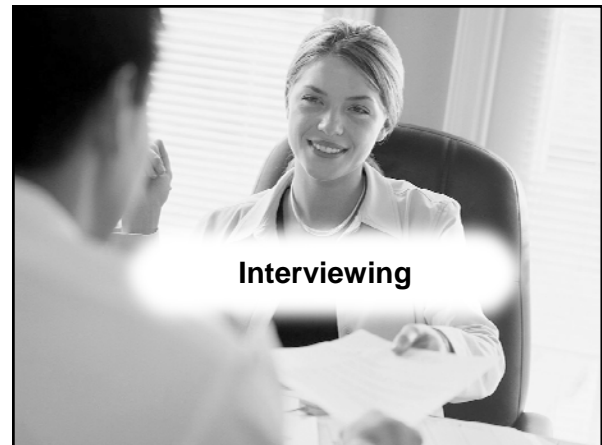
Protected groups - those who might be discriminated against based upon gender, race, age, religion, sexual preference, height, weight, arrest record, national origin, financial status, military record, or disability

Rules of

Consult HR office

Stick to questions about job

Think first, but don't be afraid to ask



Traditional interviews

Tell me a little about yourself?

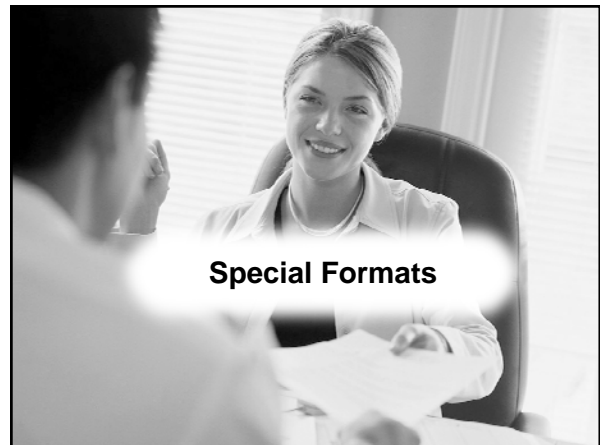
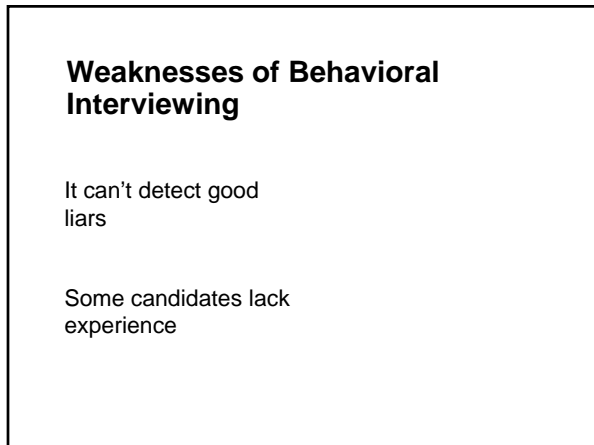
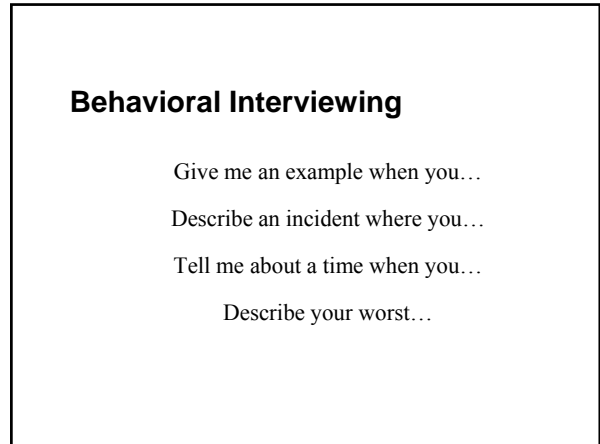
What are your strengths & weaknesses?

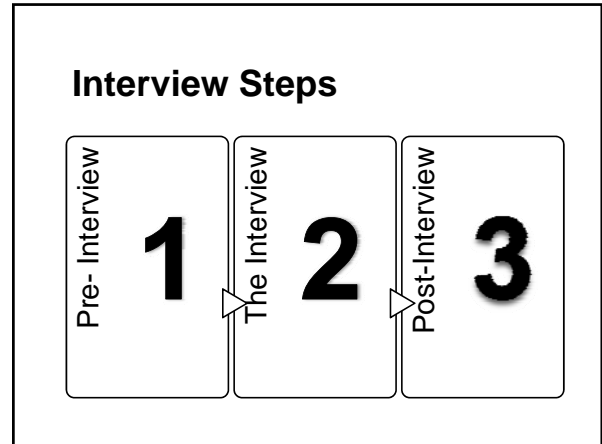
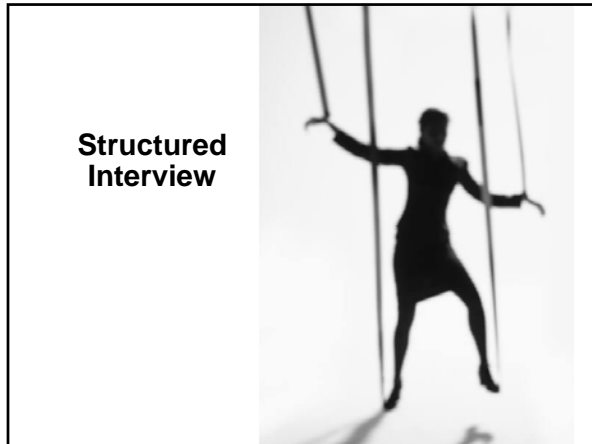
What are you looking for in a job?

Why should I choose you?

Situation (role play) interviews

What would you do if...?






After the Interview

- Update your notes
- Keep in touch
- Promote a positive image
- Remember what it was like for you

Selection Criteria

Candidate	Experience	Qualifications	Interpersonal Skills	Recommendations
X	2	1	3	2
Y	2	0 – Lacks board certification	3	3
Z	2	1	2	3

Rating: Not acceptable = 0, Acceptable = 1, Good = 2, Exceptional = 3



Summary

- A good process is more likely to result in a good outcome
- Be humble
- The interview is the first step in a journey that may last decades

Steps to Prepare for an Interview

1. All interviewees should be sent information about the position including the job description and standards for performance, the institution, local information about the city and state (if an out-of-town candidate), travel directions, and clarification about reimbursement for expenses incurred during the interview. This helps candidates prepare for the interview.
2. Objectives for the interview should be established. Objectives may vary depending on the immediate needs of the organization. If the pharmacy has acute, immediate needs, only those candidates who are immediately available might be considered. In other situations, the pharmacy may be willing to wait for an excellent candidate to graduate from pharmacy school or complete a commitment made to another employer.
3. The position description and performance standards should be reviewed. These documents will form the basis of many interview questions.
4. Applications, letters, and resumes should be explored for accomplishments and credentials upon which to question the candidate. Key concerns should also be noted including frequent job changes, gaps in employment, demotions, inconsistencies in history, or incomplete information on references.
5. A list of interview questions should then be developed that attempt to assess the candidate's ability to achieve job requirements specified in the performance standards. Examples of questions can be found in a variety of sources.³¹¹⁻³¹³ Human resources departments are also helpful in crafting questions.
6. It is often desirable to ask a core group of standard questions of all candidates to allow interviewers to compare candidate responses. Those standard questions should then be supplemented with questions specific to the candidates' responses and unique qualifications for the position.
7. A quiet, uninterrupted interview time and place should be scheduled.
8. Coworkers should be scheduled to meet and interview the candidate.

Source: *Introduction to Hospital and Health-System Pharmacy Practice*, ASHP 1st ed., pp. 363; 2010.

So you think you know how to conduct a performance appraisal . . .

Steven R. Abel, Pharm.D., FASHP
Purdue University College of Pharmacy

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the rationale for developing an effective performance appraisal system
- Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the various types of performance appraisal systems
- Describe appropriate procedures for firing employees
- Discuss the implications of employment laws on performance appraisals

Overview

Adapted from Theodore H. (Terry) Curry, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President, Academic Human Resources, Michigan State University

- Humans are a critically important resource
- Employee functions must be balanced with the mission and vision of the unit
- Employees should participate in setting and clarifying expectations
- Employees deserve feedback
- Employees should be active participants in the process of appraisal and development

Overview (cont.)

- Career development is ongoing and integrated with the performance appraisal process
- The performance appraisal is part of a larger picture of career growth and development
- Merit pay decisions require an effective performance appraisal
- Merit and performance appraisal discussions should be separated

Types of Performance Appraisals

Individual Appraiser

Confidential Reports

- ◎ Pros
 - Prepared by immediate superior
 - Highlights strengths and weaknesses in performance over past year
- ◎ Cons
 - No employee interaction regarding the report
 - No employee input into the report
 - All reports kept in a confidential file for use by upper level management

Critical Incident Technique

- ◎ Pros
 - Prepared by immediate supervisor
 - Studies employee's best and worst incidents of behavior over one year
- ◎ Cons
 - Focus is on best and worst versus consistency over time
 - Context of best and worst is subjective
 - Records may not be consistent throughout the evaluation period

Checklist/Weighted Checklist Technique

- ◎ Pros
 - Prepared by immediate supervisor
 - Utilizes objective checklist with required performance standards and a "yes" or "no" scale to rank employee performance related to the standard
- ◎ Cons
 - Usually focuses on a single point of evaluation reflecting the entire performance appraisal time frame
 - Context of "yes" and "no" is subjective

Rating Scales

- ◎ Pros
 - Easy to understand and use
 - Most commonly used
 - Permits tabulation of employee scores
 - Assessment ranges from unsatisfactory through outstanding
 - Behaviorally anchored scales give greater weight to key functions
- ◎ Cons
 - May be arbitrary and/or subjective assessment
 - With graphic rating, each component is equal

Multiple Appraisers

360-Degree

- ◎ Pros
 - Involves multiple stakeholders including immediate supervisor, other supervisors, subordinates
 - 360 degrees of working style analyzed
- ◎ Cons
 - May include input from those far removed from employee
 - Credence given to feedback may be based on level of individual providing input

Paired Comparison

- ⊙ Pros
 - Prepared by immediate supervisor
 - Compares employee with others on team or with similar function
 - Based on key criteria and traits required for success
- ⊙ Cons
 - Compares each individual to others on a best to worst or worst to best scale
 - Key criteria and traits may be subjective

Management by Objectives

- ⊙ Pros
 - Emphasizes tangible and measurable goals related to key result areas
 - Supervisor informs team of key result areas and results expected
 - Based on delegated work and assigned responsibility
- ⊙ Cons
 - Could be improved by team determination of goals as well as key result areas

Performance Appraisals

- ⊙ Should be signed and dated by the employee and individual administering the evaluation
- ⊙ Does not necessarily require agreement from either party – simply that the evaluation is understood
- ⊙ Should include a space for the employee to express any pertinent feelings, in writing
- ⊙ Should include a developmental plan if performance requires immediate improvement

Bias

- ⊙ Halo/horns effect
- ⊙ Leniency tendency
- ⊙ Myopic tendency

Characteristics of an ideal performance appraisal tool

- ⊙ Easy and efficient
- ⊙ Clear purpose
- ⊙ Facilitates opportunities for self-assessment and review
- ⊙ Facilitates ongoing performance improvement
- ⊙ Facilitates strategic identification of educational needs

Sample Appraisal

- ⊙ Key position functions
 - Serve as a clinical practice role model and advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE) preceptor for PharmD students (20%)
 - Optimize medication use and safety resulting in improved patient health status and quality of life with minimized cost (50%)
 - Provide creative didactic and experiential education (20%)
 - Demonstrate scholarship associated with practice and learning (10%)

Appraisal Process

- ◎ 360 degree feedback method
- ◎ Multidisciplinary evaluation
 - Great per collaboration
 - Significant impact on patient care
 - Sometimes direct and condescending when interacting with learners
- ◎ Patient care
 - Significant contributions toward enhanced care with minimized cost
 - Sometimes slightly misses deadlines

Appraisal Process

- ◎ Teaching
 - Classroom presentations organized
 - Content anchored in best practice and practical
 - Slide sets and information presented frequently exceeds allowable time
 - Perceived as competent but condescending in experiential settings
- ◎ Scholarship
 - Two published articles with a third under development
 - Reflects practice and teaching

Feedback

- ◎ Continue to enhance patient care and interdisciplinary collaboration
- ◎ Participate in teaching workshops focused on classroom and experiential teaching
- ◎ Conduct focus groups with students to better understand learning enhancements
- ◎ Overall ranking – 70% above average with 30% needing improvement

Legal Issues



- Adverse personnel decision
- Disciplinary action
- Defamation action

Legal Issues



- Written reviews may be accessible under FOIA or other statutes
- The truth, supported by evidence, is the best defense
- Be objective versus subjective in your choice of words
- Include support

Written Reviews Should Support That:

- ◎ The employee received clear communication regarding expectations
- ◎ Expectations were fair and consistent with company guidelines
- ◎ Where improvement is needed, communication about it is clear
- ◎ Consequences are included where warranted
- ◎ The process is fair and consistent with company policies

Progressive Discipline

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Specific action plan with timeline
- Suspension
- Termination
- Assure each step is documented in writing

Questions/Comments?

