ExCPT Candidate Handbook

Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians

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Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians

Mission Statement

The mission of the ExCPT program is to recognize pharmacy technicians who are proficient in the knowledge and skills needed to assist pharmacists to safely, accurately and efficiently prepare and dispense prescriptions and to promote high standards of practice for pharmacy technicians.

In support of this mission, NHA:

- Promotes high standards of practice for pharmacy technicians.
- Promotes safe and effective patient care by encouraging the use of highly qualified pharmacy technicians in all pharmacy practice settings.
- Develops and conducts examinations that evaluate the knowledge and skills associated with the performance of tasks required for professional practice as a pharmacy technician.
- Provides a means for recognizing pharmacy technicians who continue to demonstrate their qualifications by complying with NHA continuing education requirements and adhering to high professional standards.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE EXCPT

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Eligibility	Candidates must be 18 or older with high school degree or GED and have completed a training program or one year's work experience.
Target group for exam	Pharmacy technicians who work in any type of practice site in the United States
Test Sites	More than 500 PSI/LaserGrade Test Centers
Number of times per year that the exam is offered	More than 310 days a year
Deadline for exam registration	Usually less than 48 hours
Deadline for notification change of exam time or location	24 hours
Exam format	Secure computer-based exam
Number of questions	110 multiple-choice questions with choices A through D. (100 questions are scored and the remaining 10 are pretested for possible use on future exams.)
Length of exam	2 hours
QUALITY ASSURANCE	
Exam based on comprehensive practice analysis	Yes (Conducted 2010)
Advice and oversight by a panel of experts	Yes
Committed to following Standards for Education and Psychological Testing published by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and National Council on Measurement in Education.	Yes
Exam items approved by a panel of experts with a wide range of experience in the field	Yes
All exam items pretested	Yes
Complete item analysis conducted for all exams	Yes
EXAM SECURITY	
Eligibility verified at the time of exam	Pre-registration required; approved government-issued photo identification must be shown at the test center.
Procedure for rotating and retiring items	Yes
Procedure for equating multiple versions of the exam to assure that they present equal challenge to candidates	Yes
Proctors thoroughly trained to follow procedure and to handle emergency situations	Yes
Stringent computer encryption programming	Yes
Exams sent to testing site before the day of the exam	No; the exam is sent in a secure, encrypted format and is downloaded at the testing center only after the candidate checks in and identification is verified.
Extra printed exams that must be accounted for and destroyed if not used	No; this is not necessary because the exam is computer based.

SERVICES FOR CANDIDATES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	
Diagnostic report offered to unsuccessful candidates	Yes
Candidates with disabilities accommodated in compliance with ADA	Yes
Website for exam information	www.nationaltechexam.org or www.nhanow.com
Exam results reported to candidates	Immediate notification
Recertification	Required every two years. 20 hours of pharmacy-related continuing education (including at least one hour of law) required.
Exam registration	Only the candidate can register for the exam.
Confidentiality	All data related to candidates is held in strict confidence. Exam scores are released only to candidates. A roster of certified pharmacy technicians is available to stakeholders, but the names of candidates who did not pass is not made available.
Credential verification	Yes; available on the website. There is no charge.

2. PURPOSE OF THE EXCPT

The purpose of the ExCPT is to: (1) evaluate the knowledge and skills associated with the performance of tasks required for professional practice as a pharmacy technician and (2) provide a means for recognizing pharmacy technicians who continue to demonstrate their qualifications by complying with NHA requirements and adhering to high professional standards. This purpose is supported by the NHA Mission Statement published at the front of this Guide.

3. NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

NHA endorses and adheres to the principles of equal opportunity. NHA does not discriminate against any individual because of age, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to take the ExCPT, a candidate must (1) be at least 18 years of age, (2) have a high school diploma or GED, and (3) have successfully completed a training program or one year of work experience within the field.

ExCPT certification, through administration of the ExCPT Pharmacy Technician Exam, is an assessment of each candidate's knowledge base relative to the job functions and responsibilities of a typical pharamacy technician. Please note that considerations related to each candidate's background, including but not limited to criminal history, are deferred to prospective employers and, where applicable, state licensing boards for individual determination.

5. REGISTRATION

A. Completion of registration form. The ExCPT is offered over 310 days per year at PSI/LaserGrade Testing Centers throughout the United States. Candidates may register by completing pre-registration on the website, followed by calling the PSI/LaserGrade toll-free number 1-800-211-2754 to arrange a test date, time and location. By providing a zip code, the candidate will be informed of the closest PSI/LaserGrade Testing Centers. Alternatively, these locations can be found on the Web at http://candidate.psiexams.com. Exams can usually be taken within 24 to 48 hours of contacting PSI.

B. Information Required. Candidates must give their full name, address, telephone number, email address (if applicable) and demographic information such as date of birth and gender. Candidates should also indicate whether they qualify for special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. (See Section E). These data are used to analyze test results and produce reports. Date of birth also helps verify identification at the test center.

C. Payment. The ExCPT costs $105 and is payable by credit card at the time the candidate registers online. Employers or schools may prepay for a specified number of candidates by making arrangements directly with their NHA account manager. Registered candidates who need to change an exam time for any reason must contact the PSI/LaserGrade call center at least 24 hours in advance to reschedule or cancel an exam without penalty.

D. Cancellation of Scheduled Exam.

1) Notification by Candidate. Candidates who are unable to take the ExCPT at the scheduled time should notify PSI/LaserGrade at least 24 hours in advance to avoid penalties. Refunds are not provided

but credit will be given for a future exam appointment. If an exam appointment is NOT cancelled by the candidate at least 24 hours before taking the exam or the candidate does not arrive during the scheduled time, the exam fee will be forfeited. Cancellation notices will only be accepted from the candidate; employers, family members or other individuals may not request a cancellation on behalf of candidates. An exception to this rule may be made by an employer who originally registered the candidate with PSI/LaserGrade and directly paid the examination fee.

2) Cancellation by PSI/LaserGrade. PSI/LaserGrade Testing Centers may close without notice in the case of inclement weather, a state of emergency or other unforeseen event. In this case, the candidate will be allowed to reschedule at a convenient time and location with the exam fee credited to the future exam appointment. Candidates may verify that the PSI/LaserGrade Test Center is open by calling the center directly before the appointed time.

E. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

1) General Policy. Candidates with documented disabilities (including learning disabilities, reading disabilities, visual impairment, hearing impairment, or other physical or mental disabilities) will be given special accommodations upon request, in conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

2) Procedure for Requesting Special Accommodations. Candidates who have a documented disability may submit an Accommodation Request form (http://www.nhanow.com/forms.aspx) along with the necessary supporting documentation. Accommodations will be granted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 2101§ et.seq.).

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified candidates who have a documented disability to the extent that such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the examination or create an unfair advantage. Approved accommodations which result in excessive cost to NHA shall be paid for by the candidate. Examinations will not be translated into languages other than English, and interpreters or language dictionaries will not be permitted to assist with translation. English as a second language is not considered a disability under the ADA and therefore does not qualify a candidate for special accommodations.

6. EXAM CONTENT

The purpose of the Exam for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians (ExCPT) is to: (1) evaluate the knowledge and skills associated with the performance of tasks required for professional practice as a pharmacy technician who assist pharmacists in the preparation of prescriptions, and (2) to provide a means for recognizing pharmacy technicians who continue to demonstrate their qualifications by complying with NHA continuing education requirements and adhering to high professional standards.

The target group for the ExCPT is pharmacy technicians from all practice settings throughout the United States. Stakeholders include individuals, companies, associations and government agencies that employ, supervise, train, regulate or receive services from pharmacy technicians.

Exam questions fall into three general areas: (1) Regulation and Technician Duties (~25%), (2) Drugs and Drug Products (~23%); and (3) The Dispensing Process (~52%). An updated exam blueprint based on the 2010 job analysis will be effective in August 2011. A copy of the new blueprint follows the ExCPT Content-1 below.

The exam blueprint below is based on the job analysis conducted in 2010. In reviewing the tasks that were assessed through the national survey, the Job Task Analysis Expert Panel rated the cognitive level of each of the tasks for the final outline. Foundational items were those where thinking skills such as identification, recollection, and classification were necessary to effectively demonstrate knowledge of given information. Items assessing critical thinking skills would require interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and explanation to make a judgment regarding a problem or situation. Approximately 30% of the items on the ExCPT are written at the critical thinking level.

REGULATIONS AND TECHNICIAN DUTIES (~25% OF EXAM)
1.1 Overview of technician duties and general information
1.1.1 The role of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians
1.1.2 Functions that a technician may and may not perform
1.1.3 Prescription department layout and workflow
1.1.4 Pharmacy security
1.1.5 Inventory control
1.1.6 Stocking medications
1.1.7 Identifying expired products
1.2 Controlled substances
1.2.1 Difference among the controlled substances schedules
1.2.2 Refills, partial refills, filing, and prescription transfers
1.2.3 Correct procedures for handling Schedule V sales
1.2.4 Controlled Substance Act
1.2.5 DEA numbers
1.3 Other laws and regulations
1.3.1 Federal privacy act
1.3.2 Generic substitution (incl. brand vs. generic products)
1.3.3 Professionals with prescribing authority (and acronyms)
1.3.4 Child-resistant packaging
1.3.5 Role of government agencies (Board of Pharmacy, DEA, FDA, etc.)
1.3.6 Manufacturer drug package labeling
1.3.7 OTC package labeling

DRUGS AND DRUG THERAPY (~23% OF EXAM)
2.1 Drug Classification
2.1.1 Major drug classes (e.g., analgesics, anesthetics, antibiotics, etc.)
2.1.2 Dosage forms (types, characteristics and uses)
2.1.3 Over-the-counter products
2.1.4 NDC number
2.2 Most frequently prescribed medications
2.2.1 Brand and generic names
2.2.2 Basic mechanism of action (pharmacology) and drug classification
2.2.3 Primary indications
2.2.4 Common adverse drug reactions, interactions, & contraindications

DISPENSING PROCESS (~52% OF EXAM)
3.1 Prescription information
3.1.1 Information required on a valid prescription form
3.1.2 Telephoned and faxed prescriptions
3.1.3 Refill requirements
3.1.4 Patient information (age, gender, etc.)
3.1.5 Interpreting prescribers' directions for prescription labels
3.1.6 Recognizing and using common prescription abbreviations
3.2 Preparing/dispensing prescriptions
3.2.1 Avoiding errors (such as sound-alike/look-alike names)
3.2.2 Systems for checking prescriptions
3.2.3 Automated dispensing systems (including quality control)
3.2.4 Procedures for preparing prescriptions and data entry
3.2.5 Labeling prescriptions properly
3.2.6 The purpose and use of patient records
3.2.7 Proper packaging and storage
3.2.8 Managed care prescriptions
3.3 Calculations
3.3.1 Conversions / Systems of measurement used in pharmacy
3.3.2 Calculating the amounts of prescription ingredients
3.3.3 Calculating quantity or days supply to be dispensed
3.3.4 Calculating individual and daily doses
3.3.5 Calculations used in compounding
3.3.6 Calculating dosages and administration rates for IVs
3.3.7 Business calculations (pricing, markup, inventory control)
3.4 Sterile products, unit dose and repackaging
3.4.1 Drug distribution systems used in hospitals and nursing homes
3.4.2 Procedures for repackaging medications
3.4.3 Prescription compliance aids
3.4.4 Aseptic technique and the use of laminar flow hoods
3.4.5 Special procedures for chemotherapy
3.4.6 Routes of administration for parenteral products
3.4.7 Types of sterile products
3.4.8 Correct procedures for maintaining the sterile product environment
3.4.9 Accurate compounding and labeling of sterile product prescriptions

EXCPT CERTIFIED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN (CPHT) TEST SPECIFICATIONS BASED ON 2010 JOB ANALYSIS (EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2011) 100 SCORED ITEMS, 30 OF WHICH MUST BE AT THE CRITICAL THINKING LEVEL. 10 PRETEST ITEMS DISTRIBUTED PROPORTIONALLY FOR A TOTAL OF 110 ITEMS.	# OF ITEMS
1. Regulations and Pharmacy Duties	35
A. Overview of technician duties and general information	14
1. Ensure all work performed by the technician is checked by the pharmacist. 2. Identify medication prescribing and/or use patterns requiring pharmacist intervention. 3. Differentiate between tasks that may be performed by a pharmacy technician and those that must be performed by a pharmacist. 4. Comply with rules and regulations when filling prescriptions. 5. Follow policies and procedures with regard to pharmacy workflow. 6. Maintain a clean work environment in the pharmacy and patient care areas. 7. Maintain pharmacy security by following proper procedures (e.g., alarms, personnel admitted, restricted areas). 8. Remove recalled, discontinued, and overstocked products from inventory. 9. Assist the pharmacist in managing inventory by placing, receiving, verifying, and stocking orders. 10. Communicate to staff, healthcare professionals, and patients any changes in product availability (e.g. new, discontinued, back-ordered, and recalled products). 11. Maintain proper supplies of prescription vials, caps, bottles, and other supplies. 12. Identify expired products in a pharmacy's inventory. 13. Dispose of drugs using proper procedures.	
B.Controlled substances	10
1. Properly file all classes of prescriptions. 2. Differentiate among the controlled substances schedules and the products within them. 3. Comply with rules and regulations when refilling prescriptions. 4. Follow the proper rules and regulations regarding the transfer of prescriptions between pharmacies. 5. Follow the proper rules and regulations for non-controlled substances when handling refills and/or partial filling of prescriptions. 6. Follow the correct procedures for handling requests for pseudoephedrine. 7. Comply with laws that pertain to handling sales of Schedule V and regulated non-prescription products. 8. Follow laws and regulations of the Controlled Substance Act with regard to ordering, storage, inventory, and dispensing. 9. Differentiate between legitimate versus illegitimate DEA numbers.	
C. Other laws and regulations	11
1. Maintain HIPAA compliance while communicating with patients. 2. Maintain HIPAA compliance while communicating with healthcare professionals. 3. Comply with HIPAA requirements regarding collection, storage, and disclosure of patient information. 4. Comply with laws and regulations regarding generic substitution. 5. Identify the practitioners who are authorized to prescribe specific medications. 6. Interpret prescriber identifier numbers (e.g. DEA, NPI, UPIN). 7. Properly package prescription medications in child-resistant containers or other approved containers as required. 8. Comply with professional, state, and federal laws and regulations. 9. Use information found on medication stock bottles, such as drug name and strength, expiration date, and lot number. 10. Inform patients of the different types of information they can find on an OTC package label.	

EXCPT CERTIFIED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN (CPHT) TEST SPECIFICATIONS BASED ON 2010 JOB ANALYSIS (EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2011) 100 SCORED ITEMS, 30 OF WHICH MUST BE AT THE CRITICAL THINKING LEVEL. 10 PRETEST ITEMS DISTRIBUTED PROPORTIONALLY FOR A TOTAL OF 110 ITEMS.	# OF ITEMS
2. Drugs and Drug Therapy	11
A. Drug classification	4
1. Differentiate among different therapeutic classes of drugs. 2. Differentiate among various dosage forms (e.g. tablets versus capsules, ointments versus creams, controlled-release versus immediate-release, parenteral versus oral). 3. Match commonly used over-the-counter products with their most common indications. 4. Interpret what is represented by each of the three components of an NDC number.	
B. Most frequently prescribed medications	7
1. Interpret basic medical terminology commonly used in the pharmacy in order to effectively assist the pharmacist. 2. Match brand and generic names of commonly used prescription drugs. 3. Contrast generic and brand-name medications with regard to cost and effectiveness. 4. Match commonly used prescription drugs with their most common indications. 5. Recognize common and serious adverse drug reactions, contraindications, and drug interactions. 6. Recognize physical interactions and incompatibilities in the preparation of compounded and parenteral medications.	
3. Dispensing Process	54
A. Prescription information	8
1. Analyze a prescription form for completeness and gather any information that is missing. 2. Properly process telephone, facsimile, and electronic prescription orders. 3. Obtain prescription refill authorization requests from prescribers. 4. Obtain information from patients pertaining to demographics, medication history, health conditions, allergies, and third-party payers. 5. Correctly translate a prescriber's directions for use into accurate and complete directions for the patient. 6. Interpret abbreviations used on prescriptions. 7. Avoid common misinterpretations of prescription abbreviations.	
B. Preparing/dispensing prescriptions	29
1. Maintain and calibrate sterile compounding equipment. 2. Identify drugs that require special handling procedures. 3. Communicate appropriately and professionally with patients. 4. Communicate appropriately and professionally with healthcare professionals. 5. Follow proper record-keeping procedures pertaining to the pharmacy. 6. Follow the pharmacy's quality assurance policies and procedures. 7. Follow proper procedures to avoid medication errors. 8. Take proper corrective action after detecting potential medication errors. 9. Prevent mix-ups between look-alike, sound-alike products. 10. Follow proper procedures to assure delivery of the correct prescriptions to patients. 11. Properly use automated dispensing devices or other devices used in the dispensing process. 12. Maintain, calibrate, and stock automated dispensing systems. 13. Accurately enter prescription information into the computer. 14. Properly and accurately prepare prescription labels. 15. Prepare printed patient information leaflets. 16. Use the proper DAW code when entering prescription data into the computer. 17. Take proper action when receiving computerized messages, such as compliance alerts or interaction alerts, while entering data for a prescription. 18. Use auxiliary labels properly. 19. Properly label drug products packaged in approved containers or, when appropriate, in original packages. 20. Properly enter, update, and maintain electronic patient profiles 21. Properly package and ship medications. 22. Answer patients' questions about their third-party prescription coverage. 23. Interpret third-party payer identifier numbers (e.g. BIN, PCN). 24. Complete claim forms properly. 25. Properly process third-party prescriptions. 26. Contact third-party payers and/or prescribers with regard to rejected claims.	

EXCPT CERTIFIED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN (CPHT) TEST SPECIFICATIONS BASED ON 2010 JOB ANALYSIS (EFFECTIVE AUGUST 2011) 100 SCORED ITEMS, 30 OF WHICH MUST BE AT THE CRITICAL THINKING LEVEL. 10 PRETEST ITEMS DISTRIBUTED PROPORTIONALLY FOR A TOTAL OF 110 ITEMS.	# OF ITEMS
C. Calculations	7
1. Convert within and between each of the systems of measurement. 2. Calculate the quantities of prescription medications to be dispensed. 3. Correctly calculate the days' supply for prescriptions. 4. Properly calculate individual and daily dosages. 5. Correctly perform compounding calculations (e.g. ratio strength, w/w%, w/v%, v/v%, dilution/concentration, mEq). 6. Perform basic pharmacy business calculations (e.g. pricing and inventory control).	
D. Sterile products, unit dose and repackaging	10
1. Follow proper compounding procedures for non-sterile products. 2. Properly label and dispense medications when using multi-dose vials, punch cards, or unit-dose packaging. 3. Properly repackage and label unit-of-use products. 4. Properly calculate expiration dates for repackaged products. 5. Help patients interpret available manufacturer information regarding the use of various compliance aids and devices. 6. Differentiate among the various routes of administration for parenteral products. 7. Differentiate among the various types of sterile products. 8. Follow correct procedures for maintaining the environment for the sterile product compounding area. 9. Compound and label sterile products accurately.	

7. TESTING PROCEDURES

A. Examination Rules of Conduct and Confidentiality. Passing the ExCPT is a big step in a pharmacy technician's career. Understandably, candidates will want to take advantage of all available resources when preparing for this important examination. It is illegal and unethical to recall (memorize) and share questions that are on the exam or to solicit questions that are on the exam from candidates who have taken the exam. Items from the examination are not to be recalled for any purpose.

Soliciting recalled questions from candidates who have previously taken the examination is unethical for several reasons. The first is obvious; candidates are expected to pass the test based on their own merit without assistance. The members of the public who will entrust certified technicians with their well-being expect that that they are trustworthy and competent individuals. Secondly, the purpose of the exam is to protect the public by ensuring that candidates for licensure have achieved entry-level competence. By asking previous test takers to share questions, candidates are undermining the very purpose of the examination. Lastly, soliciting questions from previous test takers who have agreed to the Candidate Attestation would be encouraging candidates to commit illegal acts. Items from the examination are not to be solicited by candidates for any purpose.

NHA will actively prosecute individuals who violate the Attestation Agreement. The Institute will also report any incidents of students requesting questions or sharing questions to their licensing jurisdiction. Candidates who are prosecuted by NHA or who are reported to a licensing jurisdiction for soliciting or sharing questions may severely damage their chances of achieving certification. Before candidates begin taking the exam at a PSI/LaserGrade Testing Center, they will be provided a copy of the candidate attestation on the computer screen. Candidates must agree to comply with the terms of this attestation before they can proceed with the exam. A copy of the attestation is available on the NHA website's for inspection (Eligibility Section).

B. Preparing for the ExCPT exam.

Unless specified otherwise by an employer or by a given state board of pharmacy, candidates are not required to participate in a specific pharmacy technician training program in order to take the exam. There are several excellent pharmacy technician courses and manuals available. NHA does not endorse any particular course or manual. The following list represents publications that are often used by pharmacy technicians:

- American Pharmacists Association, The Pharmacy Technician Workbook and Certification Review, Third Edition (Englewood, CO: Morton Publishing, 2007).

- Lile JM, Miller DE and Rybicki AL, Pharmacy Certified Technician Training Manual, Tenth Edition, (Lansing, MI: Michigan Pharmacists Association, 2006).
- Posey LM, APhA's Complete Review for the Pharmacy Technician, Second Editon, (Washington, DC: American Pharmaceutical Association, 2007).
- Reifman N, Certification Review for Pharmacy Technicians, Seventh Edition (Golden, CO: Ark Pharmaceutical Consultants, 2004).
- Schafermeyer KW and Williams, Brandon, The National Pharmacy Technician Training Program, 7th Edition (St. Charles, MO: Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians, 2009).

Candidates are strongly encouraged to prepare for their exam in advance. Applicants may choose to purchase the appropriate ATI Allied Health certification preparation materials including study guides and online practice tests. Study materials may be found at: http://www.atialliedhealth.com/student/certification.aspx.[1]

In addition, candidates are encouraged to review and be familiar with the appropriate detailed test plan and sample questions for the exam they will be sitting for which can be found on NHA's website at www.nhanow.com, in addition to utilizing other study materials that may be available under separate cover.

C. Taking the Exam

1) Test Administration Method. The ExCPT is a secure, computer-based exam offered during business hours and some evenings and weekends at one of the PSI/LaserGrade Testing Centers located throughout the United States. Candidates may register by completing pre-registration on the website followed by calling PSI/LaserGrade's toll-free number, 1-800-733-9267 to arrange a date, time, and location. Candidate identification is verified at the PSI/LaserGrade Testing Center at the time of the test.

Candidates have two hours to answer 110 multiple-choice questions. Each question has four choices. One question is presented on the screen at a time. Candidates may mark the answers or they can skip questions and come back later. Final answers are submitted when the candidate indicates that he or she is finished. The exam is graded by the PSI/LaserGrade computer system and the candidate is given results immediately. A demonstration of the computer format used for exams administered by PSI/LaserGrade is shown on the PSI/LaserGrade website (http://candidate.psiexams.com). A brief practice/ demonstration session is available for candidates to practice on the computer before the exam actually starts.

Candidates are given an opportunity to comment on any item that they believe is ambiguous, inaccurate or deficient. Candidates are also asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the exam to rate the exam registration procedures, the testing facility and the testing experience. This information is reviewed by the NHA staff and referred to the ExCPT Certification Governing Committee.

2) PSI/LaserGrade Testing Centers. PSI/LaserGrade is a computer-based public testing network with headquarters in Burbank, California and Vancouver, Washington, and can be found on the Web at http://candidate.psiexams.com. The PSI network consists of secure and supervised testing centers located throughout North America and overseas at colleges, training schools, and certification-related locations. PSI/LaserGrade currently delivers nearly 200,000 exams per year through their national testing network.

PSI/LaserGrade's function in the market is purely test administration. They do not provide training or item bank development. PSI/LaserGrade provides proctored, secured testing at more than 500 testing locations in the US, Canada, and overseas, along with central candidate registration services.

PSI/LaserGrade is one of only two computer-based testing companies in the world authorized to administer all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airman Knowledge Tests. As such, many of their test facilities are located at local or regional airport locations and have the highest test security available.

3) Identification Required. In order to take the exam at a PSI/LaserGrade Testing Center, candidates are required to present government-issued photo identification, such as a valid passport, driver's license, US Armed Forces photo identification or a non-driver's identification issued by a state department of motor vehicles. The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change should be

[1] PLEASE NOTE: The purchase of ATI Allied Health certification preparation materials is not required in order to become eligible to sit for an NHA exam, and does not guarantee a passing score on an examination.

provided. If the address on the government-issued photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.

4) Prohibited Items. Candidates may not bring any paper, books, cell phones, calculators, pagers, scanners, cameras or PDAs with them into the examining room. Candidates may be inspected for such materials prior to the exam. All purses, brief cases and other personal items will be securely locked up during the exam. The testing session may be videotaped for additional security.

5) Questions. No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the testing period.

6) Comments. Candidates will be given the opportunity to comment on any question that they believe is ambiguous, inaccurate or deficient. A comment section for this purpose is provided at the end of the exam. All comments submitted will be reviewed by the NHA ExCPT Expert Panel. Responses are not provided to individual comments. Candidates will also be asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the exam to rate the exam registration procedures, the testing facility and general satisfaction with the testing experience.

D. Scoring Exams and Reporting Results

1) Exam Results for Successful Candidates. The exam is scored immediately and successful candidates are given an official report by PSI/LaserGrade indicating whether or not they passed the ExCPT immediately upon completion. Candidates may use this report to provide evidence to employers or regulatory boards that they passed.

2) Exam Results for Unsuccessful Candidates. The purpose of the exam is to provide summative assessment (i.e., to determine whether an individual has achieved a certain level of competency). It is not designed for formative assessment (i.e., to give the candidate feedback). NHA does, however, provide diagnostic reports to help unsuccessful candidates focus their study time so they can successfully retake the exam. This diagnostic report will indicate how the candidate performed on each the major sections of the exam. A description of the specific content from each section of the exam can be found in The "Exam Content" section of this Guide.

3) Scoring. The passing score is established by the NHA ExCPT Expert Panel based on a standard of performance that experts in the profession have determined are acceptable for this certification program. With this method, each exam item is independently assessed by each panel member in terms of how likely minimally adequate or competent candidates (i.e., those who would barely meet mastery standards) would correctly answer that item. The panelists' ratings are averaged to determine the passing score (also known as the "cut score"). The overall passing score is the mean of the individual ratings adjusted for the standard error of measurement and converted to a scaled score. The passing score for the ExCPT is a scaled score of 390 out of 500 possible.

4) Recognition of Certification. Pharmacy technicians who successfully pass the ExCPT are considered Certified Pharmacy Technicians and may use the designation "CPhT." Within four weeks of passing the exam, Certified Pharmacy Technicians will receive a certificate suitable for framing, which will indicate the certification number and expiration date.

5) Appeals and Rescoring. For security reasons, candidates will not be able to review their exam or obtain information on particular test questions. Although it is highly unlikely that a rescoring will result in a change of scores, any candidate who feels that there was an error in exam grading and wants his/her exam rescored by hand must submit a written request with reasoning. There will be an additional fee of $25.00 (payable with Money Order) assessed for rescoring. Within 60 days of the examination date, the candidate must send the written request to: National Healthcareer Association, Attn: Processing Dept., 11161 Overbrook Road, Leawood KS 66211.

Letters must be signed by the candidate and include:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (Address, Phone, Email)
- Exam taken (in this case, the ExCPT exam)
- Date taken
- Location taken

- Reason for rescoring request
- Payment in full ($25 — money order or check made payable to National Healthcareer Association)

6) Requests for Duplicate Certificates. Candidates who need a duplicate certificate may obtain one for a nominal charge by ordering online on the NHA web site. Individuals requesting a name change must provide notarized proof of the name change. This information must be faxed or mailed with the certificate request order. A copy of the Duplicate Certificate Order Form is available on the website.

7) Re-examination. Candidates must re-register and pay the full exam price. Candidates will initially be allowed 3 attempts to successfully pass the exam with a waiting period of 30 days between each failed administration. For each repeated failure after the 3rd attempt, candidate will be required to wait an additional year to sit for the exam.

E. Services to Boards of Pharmacy

1) Reporting and Maintaining Results. Unless required by law, exam scores and other confidential information are not available without specific authorization of the candidates. Candidate credentials can be verified by any member of the public through the website (https:certportal.nhanow.com/certification verification/). Candidate verification will require the candidate's last name, certification number and expiration date.

2) Reciprocity. Boards of pharmacy can use the secure website to verify certification the current status of all ExCPT-certified pharmacy technicians for purposes of reciprocity.

8. REVOCATION POLICY

NHA may revoke the certification of a pharmacy technician for any of the following reasons:

- Submission of false or misleading information in connection with certification or recertification
- Violation of any of NHA's policies on exam cheating or exam confidentiality or failure to cooperate with NHA in the investigation of any such incident by another candidate
- Documented violation of the Pharmacy Technician Code of Ethics.

The certificant may appeal the decision to the NHA ExCPT Appeals Committee, whose decision will be final. The appeal must state the grounds for the appeal and provide evidence supporting the petitioner's case. Individuals who have had their certification revoked may appeal to the NHA ExCPT Appeals Committee after two years for permission to retake the exam and earn certification again. The Appeals Committee will determine whether the candidate is worthy to be reinstated through examination and the terms under which this will be granted. A complete description of the Code of Ethics and disciplinary policies are available on request from the NHA office.

9. RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of recertification is to promote high standards of practice for pharmacy technicians, to encourage their participation in continuing education in order to promote safe and effective patient care. Recertification also provides a means for recognizing pharmacy technicians who continue to demonstrate their qualifications by complying with NHA continuing education requirements and adhering to high professional standards.

A. Application. Because of the rapid changes in health care, new drug treatments and technology, pharmacy technicians must keep up to date. Therefore, the ExCPT Certification Governing Committee has determined that certification must be renewed every two years. During the two-year period prior to recertification, certified pharmacy technicians must participate in at least 20 hours of continuing education (CE), including at least one hour of pharmacy law. To recertify, technicians must use the NHA ExCPT Recertification Application Form, which is available on the website, and send it to NHA along with full payment by the postmark deadline.

Applications may be filed by one of four ways:

- online at www.nhanow.com
- by fax at 1-913-661-6214
- by regular mail: NHA, 11161 Overbrook Road, Leawood KS, 66211
- by email at continuingeducation@nhanow.com.

B. Application Fee. The recertification fee is $40. The fee may be paid by check or credit card. Certified technicians will be allowed to recertify up to 90 days after expiration of their certification but cannot include CE credit earned during this grace period. After this 90-day grace period, technicians will lose their certification status. Certified technicians who fail to recertify on time may be able to have their certification reinstated within 12 months of their expiration date. Please see the following section on reinstatement. Checks returned for insufficient funds will be charged a $25 administrative fee.

C. Address Corrections and Name Changes. Certified technicians will receive a new NHA certificate by mail approximately 30 days after NHA has received the recertification materials and approved the application. Name or address changes should be sent to NHA so that we may send a recertification application approximately 60 days prior to the expiration date. It is the Certified Technician's responsibility to apply for certification on time. NHA sends renewal notices as a courtesy.

NHA must be notified of all name changes. Name change notification must include full name and appropriate documentation, such as a court order, marriage license, divorce decree, etc.

D. Continuing Education. Continuing education is necessary to maintain a high level of knowledge and skills in pharmacy practice. During the two-year period prior to recertification, certified pharmacy technicians must participate in at least 20 hours of continuing education (CE), including at least one hour of pharmacy law. Additional CE credits earned cannot be carried over to the next recertification period.

1) Acceptable Topics. To be approved, CE credit must be related to pharmacy technician practice and must include at least one hour of pharmacy law per two-year certification period. NHA reserves the right to reject credits not deemed applicable to pharmacy technician practice.

Acceptable topics include, but are not limited to:

- drug distribution
- managed health care
- therapeutic issues
- communications
- pharmacy operations
- calculations
- drug repackaging
- inventory control
- drug products
- patient interaction
- interpersonal skills
- prescription compounding
- pharmacy law (at least one hour required)
- preparation of sterile products

2) Certificates of Participation. Certificates of Participation must be obtained for each CE program. This certificate must include:

- participant's name
- date of the program
- name of the sponsor*
- program title
- number of contact hours
- signature of a person responsible for the program

If the continuing education provider is accredited by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education (ACPE), the ACPE program number should also be included. ACPE accreditation of the program provider is not mandatory to receive continuing education credit.

*Note: ACPE accredits CE providers; it is not a CE provider and should not be listed as the name of the sponsor.

It is necessary that you retain your continuing education Certificates of Participation during your two-year certification period plus one more year following your recertification application. Send photocopies of your Certificates of Participation to NHA only if requested as part of an audit. (See "Audit" below.)

3) ExCPT Continuing Education Form. The ExCPT Continuing Education Form, which is available on the NHA website, can be used to document your completion of in-service training programs or projects.

In-service training programs may be:

- CE programs for which you do not have a Certificate of Participation,
- other training or projects completed under the supervision of a pharmacist in which you developed new knowledge or skills to improve your abilities as a pharmacy technician.

Your supervising pharmacist must complete and sign the ExCPT Continuing Education Form for you to receive credit. A maximum of 10 hours of CE is allowed using the ExCPT Continuing Education Form.

4) College Courses. Any college course in mathematics, life sciences or pharmaceutical sciences will also be accepted. Applicable college courses with a grade of "C" or better will also be eligible for CE credit at the rate of 15 CE hours for each a 3 credit-hour course offered on a semester basis (i.e., three hours a week for 15 weeks). Courses offered on a quarter basis will be credited for 15 hours for a 4 credit-hour course (i.e., four hours per week for approximately 11 weeks). The maximum number of CE credits earned through college courses during a two-year period is 15. A college transcript is considered as the Certificate of Participation.

5) Continuing Education Providers. There are many ways to complete your continuing education requirements for recertification. CE programs offered by national and state pharmacy associations and pharmacy technician associations will generally be acceptable if related to pharmacy technician practice. NHA recommends CE courses offered by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) and the National Community Pharmacists Association.

For NACDS programs, go to: http://nacds.rxschool.com.

For NCPA programs, go to www.ncpanet.org.

CE programs are also available from other national and state pharmacy associations and private providers such as Powerpak (http://www.powerpak.com).

All of the following are acceptable:

- live presentations
- Internet courses
- correspondence courses
- workshops
- in-service training programs
- computer-assisted instruction
- journal articles with a CE test
- audio or video recordings with a CE test

6) Audits. Certified Pharmacy Technicians are randomly selected for an audit of continuing education credits at the discretion of NHA. If you are notified that you were randomly selected for audit, you will need to list all continuing education hours on the audit application (that will be sent to you) and send photocopies of the continuing education Certificates of Participation and/or the ExCPT Continuing Education Form(s). NHA does not charge certificants a fee for being audited. Audit applications not completed correctly, however, will be returned and will require a $10 reapplication fee. NHA recommends that you keep copies of your continuing education Certificates of Participation for at least 1 year after your certification expiration date.

10. REINSTATEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Pharmacy technician certification must be renewed every two years. If you have not recertified within the 90-day grace period following the expiration date on your certificate, you are no longer certified. You may, however, be eligible to have your recertification status reinstated if you do so within 12 months of the expiration date. Reinstated certification will expire on the same date that it would have expired had you recertified on time - there is no extension of the expiration date.

To reinstate your certification status, you must complete at least 30 hours of continuing education (CE), including at least one hour of pharmacy law. All CE requirements are the same as for recertification. To recertify, technicians must use the NHA Reinstatement Form, which is available on the NHA website, and send it to NHA along with full payment by the postmark deadline. The fee for reinstatement is $80 and applies to those individuals in which certification has been expired for more than 12 months.

11. APPEALS POLICY

Pharmacy technicians may appeal certain decisions involving eligibility. All appeals will be handled by an Appeals Committee, which shall be comprised of the chairperson of the Certification Governing Committee and two members appointed by the chair. Candidates requesting an appeal must state their case in a timely manner in writing. Appeals will not be accepted by telephone, or email. Candidates must go to NHA's website at nhanow.com to complete the appeals form. The appeal must include the candidate's name, address, telephone number, email address (if available), a description of the reason for the appeal and other information that may be relevant to the case. The NHA ExCPT Appeals Committee will investigate and resolve issues as expeditiously as possible. The decision of the Appeals Committee is final.

APPENDIX

Pharmacy Technician Tasks Ranked by Order of Importance

Practice Analysis for Pharmacy Technicians, August 2010

1. Comply with rules and regulations when filling prescriptions.

2. Follow proper procedures to avoid medication errors.

3. Comply with professional, state, and federal laws and regulations.

4. Accurately enter prescription information into the computer.

5. Follow proper procedures to assure delivery of the correct prescriptions to patients.

6. Prevent mix-ups between look-alike, sound-alike products.

7. Ensure all work performed by the technician is checked by the pharmacist.

8. Properly and accurately prepare prescription labels.

9. Take proper corrective action after detecting potential medication errors.

10. Comply with rules and regulations when refilling prescriptions.

11. Comply with HIPAA requirements regarding collection, storage, and disclosure of patient information.

12. Maintain HIPAA compliance while communicating with patients.

13. Correctly translate a prescriber's directions for use into accurate and complete directions for the patient.

14. Interpret abbreviations used on prescriptions.

15. Avoid common misinterpretations of prescription abbreviations.

16. Follow proper procedures for preparing chemotherapeutic medications.

17. Follow laws and regulations of the Controlled Substance Act with regard to ordering, storage, inventory, and dispensing.

18. Use information found on medication stock bottles, such as drug name and strength, expiration date, and lot number.

19. Communicate appropriately and professionally with patients.

20. Follow the pharmacy's quality assurance policies and procedures.

21. Communicate appropriately and professionally with healthcare professionals.

22. Compound and label sterile products accurately.

23. Correctly calculate the days' supply for prescriptions.

24. Follow correct procedures for maintaining the environment for the sterile product compounding area.

25. Follow proper record-keeping procedures pertaining to the pharmacy.

26. Maintain HIPAA compliance while communicating with healthcare professionals.

27. Calculate the quantities of prescription medications to be dispensed.

28. Properly process telephone, facsimile and electronic prescription orders.

29. Properly calculate individual and daily dosages.

30. Identify expired products in a pharmacy's inventory.

31. Properly use automated dispensing devices or other devices used in the dispensing process.

32. Properly label and dispense medications when using multidose vials, punch cards, or unit-dose packaging.

33. Differentiate between tasks that may be performed by a pharmacy technician and those that must be performed by a pharmacist.

34. Properly label drug products packaged in approved containers or, when appropriate, in original packages.

35. Properly repackage and label unit-of-use products.

36. Follow the proper rules and regulations for non-controlled substances when handling refills and/or partial filling of prescriptions.

37. Take proper action when receiving computerized messages, such as compliance alerts or interaction alerts, while entering data for a prescription.

38. Analyze a prescription form for completeness and gather any information that is missing.

39. Follow policies and procedures with regard to pharmacy workflow.

40. Obtain information from patients pertaining to demographics, medication history, health conditions, allergies, and third-party payers.

41. Properly process third-party prescriptions.

42. Comply with laws that pertain to handling sales of Schedule V and regulated non-prescription products.

43. Properly calculate expiration dates for repackaged products.

44. Maintain a clean work environment in the pharmacy and patient care areas.

45. Remove recalled, discontinued, and overstocked products from inventory.

46. Follow the correct procedures for handling requests for pseudoephedrine.

47. Follow the proper rules and regulations regarding the transfer of prescriptions between pharmacies.

48. Dispose of drugs using proper procedures.

49. Properly enter, update, and maintain electronic patient profiles.

50. Use the proper DAW code when entering prescription data into the computer.

51. Obtain prescription refill authorization requests from prescribers.

52. Maintain, calibrate, and stock automated dispensing systems.

53. Properly package and ship medications.

54. Maintain pharmacy security by following proper procedures (e.g., alarms, personnel admitted, restricted areas).

55. Properly package prescription medications in child-resistant containers or other approved containers as required.

56. Follow proper compounding procedures for non-sterile products.

57. Comply with laws and regulations regarding generic substitution.

58. Properly file all classes of prescriptions.

59. Differentiate between legitimate versus illegitimate DEA numbers.

60. Differentiate among the controlled substances schedules and the products within them.

61. Calculate dosages and administration rates for IV medications.

62 Interpret third-party payer identifier numbers (e.g., BIN, PCN).

63. Differentiate among the various routes of administration for parenteral products.

64. Complete claim forms properly.

65. Contact third-party payers and/or prescribers with regard to rejected claims.

66. Differentiate among the various types of sterile products.

67. Match brand and generic names of commonly used prescription drugs.

68. Identify drugs that require special handling procedures.

69. Interpret basic medical terminology used in the pharmacy in order to effectively assist the pharmacist.

70. Identify medication prescribing and/or use patterns requiring pharmacist intervention.

71. Correctly perform compounding calculations (e.g., ratio strength, w/w%, w/v%, v/v%, dilution/concentration, mEq).

72. Convert within and between each of the systems of measurement.

73. Assist the pharmacist in managing inventory by placing, receiving, verifying, and stocking orders.

74. Maintain and calibrate sterile compounding equipment.

75. Use auxiliary labels properly.

76. Identify the practitioners who are authorized to prescribe specific medications.

77. Differentiate among various dosage forms (e.g., tablets versus capsules, ointments versus creams, controlled-release versus immediate-release, parenteral versus oral).

78. Maintain proper supplies of prescription vials, caps, bottles, and other supplies.

79. Perform basic pharmacy business calculations (e.g., pricing and inventory control).

80. Communicate to staff, healthcare professionals, and patients any changes in product availability (e.g., new, discontinued, back ordered, and recalled products).

81 Interpret prescriber identifier numbers (e.g., DEA, NPI, UPIN).

82. Answer patients' questions about their third-party prescription coverage.

83. Prepare printed patient information leaflets.

84. Recognize physical interactions and incompatibilities in the preparation of compounded and parenteral medications.

85. Recognize common and serious adverse drug reactions, contraindications, and drug interactions.

86. Contrast generic and brand-name medications with regard to cost and effectiveness.

87. Help patients interpret available manufacturer information regarding the use of various compliance aids and devices.

88. Differentiate among different therapeutic classes of drugs.

89. Match commonly used prescription drugs with their most common indications.

90. Collect and record patient-specific data properly (e.g., BP, blood glucose, serum drug levels, immunizations).

91. Interpret what is represented by each of the three components of an NDC number.

92. Match commonly used over-the-counter products with their most common indications.

93. Inform patients of the different types of information they can find on an OTC package label.

94. Differentiate among common disease states and conditions with regard to etiologies, risk factors, symptoms, signs, and complications.

95. Apply the concepts of basic pharmacology for commonly used medications (e.g., absorption, distribution, metabolism, and elimination).