

# Essential Characteristics of Student Pharmacists

The Essential Characteristics of Student Pharmacists (“Essential Characteristics”) identified below are drawn from a number of different resources that govern the professional expectations of pharmacists, including but not limited to the national Pharmacy Code of Ethics, the Oath of a Pharmacist, and the Pledge of Professionalism. The Essential Characteristics are intended to ensure that student pharmacists and pharmacists educated at the College of Pharmacy have the capacity to meet federal and state regulations and policies that pertain to pharmacy, and to meet or exceed expectations that the public has for professional competence and behavior among pharmacy professionals.

Academic and professional environments present different challenges, but the Essential Characteristics required to succeed in pharmacy are common to both settings. Students in the College must observe and fulfill the Essential Characteristics, which have been divided into the following relevant categories:

Intellectual Ability, Empathetic and Collegial Communication Skills, Psychomotor Skills, Respect for Diversity, High Ethical Standards, and Behavioral and Social Expectations.

Under each category are examples that describe and clarify these Essential Characteristics.

## **Intellectual Ability**

- Comprehend, interpret and analyze new information
- Reason and carry out evidence-based decision making
- Use critical thinking skills and problem solving to evaluate information from multiple sources and synthesize a plan of action
- Thrive in a rigorous foundational and clinical science-based curriculum
- Participate in self- and programmatic-assessment intended to sustain a continual improvement process
- Be curious and pursue life-long learning

## **Empathetic and Collegial Communication Skills**

- Formulate concise, accurate synopses of essential information
- Contribute in a meaningful and collaborative manner in group discussions
- Interact constructively with other members of a health care team
- Communicate difficult concepts orally and in writing at an appropriate level for specific patients or audiences
- Listen empathetically and develop rapport
- Appropriately display, and interpret, non-verbal communication signals
- Communicate fluently in English
- Effectively utilize resources to communicate in non-English languages

## **Psychomotor Skills\***

- Participate effectively in preparation and distribution of sterile and nonsterile drug products
- Utilize and analyze information from varied sensory inputs
- Participate in drug administration, including injections
- Carry out tasks required for objective and subjective assessment of patient health
- Discern critical elements of a problem through observation

## **Respect for Diversity**

- Communicate in a manner that respects all individuals
- Proactively seek ways to provide an inclusive environment that addresses unique patient needs
- Provide care without judgment of a patients' personal choices or situation
- Individualize care with consideration of cultural norms for the patient
- Individualize care with consideration of unique therapeutic needs or challenges

## **High Ethical Standards**

- Maintain confidentiality
- Act with compassion, empathy and altruism
- Accept responsibility and provide leadership
- Abstain from illicit drug use
- Act with integrity and expect the same of professional colleagues

## **Behavioral and Social Expectations**

- Demonstrate a history of appropriate behavior in personal actions
- Perform effectively and display sound judgment while under stress
- Perform appropriately in academic or professional settings
- Address disagreements with tact and avoid public altercations
- Exhibit the capacity to adapt to change readily and adjust responses in dynamic, unpredictable situations
- Accept constructive criticism and adapt behavior

*\*Students may be able to be admitted and progress to graduation while not possessing selected psychomotor skills. In the instance of a documented disability, the College will work to provide reasonable accommodation. The absence of some skills, however, may limit the variety of settings in which a pharmacist can work.*

# Oath of a Pharmacist

At this time, I vow to devote my professional life to the service of all humankind through the profession of pharmacy.

- I will consider the welfare of humanity and relief of human suffering my primary concerns.
- I will apply my knowledge, experience, and skills to the best of my ability to assure optimal drug therapy outcomes for the patients I serve.
- I will keep abreast of developments and maintain professional competency in my profession of pharmacy.
- I will maintain the highest principles of moral, ethical, and legal conduct.
- I will embrace and advocate change in the profession of pharmacy that improves patient care.

I take these vows voluntarily with the full realization of the responsibility with which I am entrusted by the public.

*Developed by the American Pharmaceutical Association Academy of Students of Pharmacy and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Council of Deans Task Force on Professionalism, June 26, 1994.*

# Code of Ethics

## Preamble

Pharmacists are health professionals who assist individuals in making the best use of medications. This code, prepared and supported by pharmacists, is intended to state publicly the principles that form the fundamental basis of the roles and responsibilities of pharmacists. These principles, based on moral obligations and virtues, are established to guide pharmacists in relationships with patients, health professionals, and society.

## **A Pharmacist respects the covenantal relationship between the patient and pharmacist.**

Considering the patient-pharmacist relationship as a covenant means that a pharmacist has moral obligations in response to the gift of trust received from society. In return for this gift, a pharmacist promises to help individual achieve optimum benefit from their medications, to be committed to their welfare, and to maintain their trust.

## **A Pharmacist promotes the good of every patient in a caring, compassionate, and confidential manner.**

A pharmacist places concern for the well-being of the patient at the center of professional practice. In doing so, a pharmacist considers needs stated by the patient as well as those defined by health science. A pharmacist is dedicated to protecting the dignity of the patient. With a caring attitude and a compassionate spirit, a pharmacist focuses on serving the patient in a private and confidential manner.

## **A Pharmacist respects the autonomy and dignity of each patient.**

A pharmacist promotes the right of self-determination and recognizes individual self-worth by encouraging patients to participate in decisions about their health. A pharmacist communicates with patients in terms that are understandable. In all cases, a pharmacist respects personal and cultural differences among patients.

## **A Pharmacist acts with honesty and integrity in professional relationships.**

A pharmacist has a duty to tell the truth and to act with conviction of conscience. A pharmacist avoids discriminatory practices, behavior or work conditions that impair professional judgment, and actions that compromise dedication to the best interest of patients.

## **A Pharmacist maintains professional competence.**

A pharmacist has a duty to maintain knowledge and abilities as new medications, devices, and technologies become available and as health information advances.

## **A Pharmacist respects the values and abilities of colleagues and other health professionals.**

When appropriate, a pharmacist asks for the consultation of colleagues or other health professionals or refers the patient. A pharmacist acknowledges that colleagues and other health professionals may differ in the beliefs and values they apply to the care of the patient.

## **A Pharmacist serves individual, community, and societal needs.**

The primary obligation of a pharmacist is to individual patients. However, the obligations of a pharmacist may at times extend beyond the individual to the community and society. In these situations, the pharmacist recognizes the responsibilities that accompany these obligations and acts accordingly.

## **A Pharmacist seeks justice in the distribution of health resources.**

When health resources are allocated, a pharmacist is fair and equitable, balancing the needs of patients and society.

*Developed by the American Pharmaceutical Association Academy of Students of Pharmacy and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Council of Deans Task Force on Professionalism, June 26, 2004.*

# Pledge of Professionalism

As a student of pharmacy, I believe there is a need to build and reinforce a professional identity founded on integrity, ethical behavior, and honor. This development, a vital process in my education, will help to ensure that I am true to the professional relationship I establish between myself and society as I become a member of the pharmacy community. Integrity will be an essential part of my everyday life, and I will pursue all academic and professional endeavors with honesty and commitment to service. To accomplish this goal of professional development, as a student of pharmacy I will:

- **DEVELOP** a sense of loyalty and duty to the profession by contribution to the well-being of others and by enthusiastically accepting responsibility and accountability for membership in the profession.
- **FOSTER** professional competency through lifelong learning. I will strive for high ideals, teamwork, and unity within the profession in order to provide optimal patient care.
- **SUPPORT** my colleagues by actively encouraging personal commitment to the Oath of a Pharmacist and the Code of Ethics as set forth by the profession.
- **DEDICATE** my life and practice to excellence. This will require an ongoing reassessment of personal and professional values.
- **MAINTAIN** the highest ideals and professional attributes to ensure and facilitate the covenantal relationship required of the pharmaceutical caregiver.

The profession of pharmacy is one that demands adherence to a set of ethical principles. These high ideals are necessary to ensure the quality of care extended to the patients I serve. As a student of pharmacy, I believe this does not start with graduation; rather, it begins with my membership in this professional college community. Therefore, I will strive to uphold this pledge as I advance toward full membership in the profession. I voluntarily make this pledge of professionalism.