



What is PPS?

Please Note: Members of the ASHP New Practitioners Forum Career Development Advisory Group prepared this document to assist all current and aspiring pharmacists in their PPS preparation.

Personnel Placement Service (PPS) is the industry's largest and most widely attended national pharmacy recruitment event held annually at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting. PPS is a chance for applicants and employers to interview one another and participate in critical networking before a formal application and on-site interview.

The system will open in the fall to allow candidates and programs to register and participate in the PPS program. Once the system goes live, applicants can request interviews with employers and vice versa. These are typically 30-minute, 1:1 interviews, but depending on the position you are interviewing for, these sessions can be longer and involve multiple interviewers or group sessions. During the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting, PPS is typically available Sunday – Wednesday 7:30am – 5:00pm.

Employers often have different goals for their participation in PPS, and it is best to be prepared for all types of interview situations, which may range from very casual with questions and answers led by the candidate to very formal, behavioral-based interview questions. Whether you are looking for a residency position, fellowship, or full time job, this guide will help you navigate the sometimes seemingly scary world of PPS and prepare you to land the onsite interview.

For more information:

- [PPS Candidates Website](#)

Participation Checklist

Before PPS

- Talk to other people and learn their own “PPS tips” – use your pharmacy community!
- Schedule interviews
 - Check out: *Scheduling Tips and Tricks*
 - Confirm interview dates, times, and locations
- Prepare for interviews
 - Check out: *Interview Guidance*
 - Research the program, institution, or company
 - Prepare questions for the employer
 - Practice answering interview questions
- Finalize and print your curriculum vitae (CV)
 - Check out: *CV Guidance*
 - Seek CV feedback from peers and mentors
- Familiarize yourself with the room layout and map out your interview booth locations

At Midyear/PPS

- Dress professionally and comfortably
- Consider bringing:
 - Interview schedule
 - Questions for the program
 - Padfolio, notebook, or tablet for writing notes about the program
 - Writing utensils
 - CV
 - Business cards
 - Nourishments (food, drink, mints)
- Silence or turn-off your phone
- Smile and relax – you got this!

After PPS

- Send thank you emails, cards, or letters
- Submit applications

Scheduling Tips and Tricks

Registration

- Registration for PPS typically opens in mid-September for both candidates and employers; all jobs and CVs will remain private during this period
 - During this time, candidates should set up their PPS profile and ensure their CV is updated
- Beginning in mid-October, candidates, employers and jobs will become visible
 - During this time, candidates will be able to request interviews with employers and employers will be able to view the CV database and contact candidates
 - It is highly recommended that candidates request interviews prior to the Midyear Clinical Meeting

Personal Schedule Planning

- Note that PPS will only be open during specified times at the Midyear Clinical Meeting
- Candidates should determine their availabilities during the open PPS time frame
 - Create a schedule of personal and institutional events (if applicable) that you are required to attend
 - Use caution and plan ahead for travel when personal commitments are not located in the same location as PPS

Requesting an Interview

- Use the PPS website on ASHP for all interview scheduling unless otherwise directed by PPS vendors
 - Be sure to have a professional email address on file with PPS as this may be a way for employers to contact candidates
- Some employers have limited availability so do not delay requesting an interview
 - It is recommended that candidates look at all available opportunities in their area of interest prior to narrowing down PPS interview options
- Since PPS is an initial introduction, use this session to narrow your list of interested locations
 - Candidates may schedule as many interviews as they would like
 - Be cognizant of your schedule and do not overbook yourself to avoid fatigue and burnout

- Candidates should create a standard template for requesting PPS interviews that can be modified to individual programs
 - This can be a quick introduction or a full cover letter if preferred
 - Candidates should always introduce themselves via the PPS website when requesting an interview
- Candidates must make sure their PPS profiles are updated with the most current information from their CV; employers will use this profile as a quick reference to a candidate's achievements

Confirming Interview Dates and Times

- Interviews can be confirmed through the PPS messaging system or via the email candidates provide on their profile
- Candidates should ensure they leave enough time between interviews to avoid multiple consecutive sessions as some vendors may run behind schedule
 - 30 minutes between each interview is recommended
 - To avoid “burnout” during PPS, a total of 8-10 interviews is recommended
 - You may prefer more or less interviews depending on your individual goals for PPS and availability
- Booth numbers for institutions should be obtained and noted prior to the day of PPS to eliminate confusion and stress
- Candidates can block out time that they are not available on the PPS scheduling tool
 - This blocked out time shows up in the same spot where scheduled interviews from employers are displayed

Interview Guidance

Gather Information Prior to the Interview

- Do your research – investigate the institution and position that you are pursuing
 - Consider creating an outline including responsibilities for the position you are interviewing
- Prepare questions for the employer
 - Consider preparing different questions for different groups of people (peers, supervisors, upper management, etc.)
- To help you stay organized, you may bring your outline and interview questions with you to the interview to make sure all of your important questions get answered
 - Keep in mind that some PPS interviewers will use their 30-minute time slot solely to answer your questions; it helps to be prepared and have questions written down

Practice your Interviewing Skills

- Be prepared to discuss:
 - Why you are pursuing this position
 - Your short and long-term goals
 - Your strengths and weaknesses
 - Your past experiences listed on your CV
- Familiarize yourself with performance based interview (PBI) questions, which are scenario-based questions highlighting your past actions and experiences
 - When answering PBI questions, remember the STAR method to help structure your response:
 - S = Situation
 - T = Task
 - A = Action
 - R = Result
- Practice your responses in a mock interview with a friend or mentor and get feedback on your responses as well as on your nonverbal communication

At the Interview

- Dress professionally
- Arrive 5 – 15 minutes early
- Relax and be yourself; remember that you are interviewing the program/institution to decide if it is a right fit for you
- Collect business cards or contact information at the end of the interview so you can follow-up after the interview to thank the interviewer
- Take notes after the interview to remember how you felt right after the interview when it is fresh in your mind.

Additional Resources:

- [Interview Questions with Follow-Ups \(Sara White Blog\)](#)
- [Sample of PBI Questions](#)

Curriculum Vitae (CV) Guidance

CV Development

- Start early!
- Have your CV reviewed multiple times and collect feedback from preceptors, colleagues, mentors, directors, and more
 - Utilize ASHP CV Review Program which occurs in the spring and fall
 - Consider reaching out to your local state affiliate to see if they also provide a CV review program
 - Remember that a CV is very subjective and that it is ultimately a reflection of you; do not feel obligated to implement all suggestions

Additional Resources:

- [ASHP CV Resource Center](#)

CV etiquette specific to PPS

- Save your CV with an appropriate name
- It is not imperative to completely recreate your CV within your PPS profile, but keep in mind that programs may perform keyword searches in the PPS profile system to identify interview candidates
- When requesting an interview with a program, be sure to attach your CV as a **PDF file** which ensures that your CV is delivered in the format you intended
 - It is likely that when you request the interview, the employer may only look at your CV
- Remember to always portray yourself professionally – this is your first impression with your potential next employer.

On-site PPS Interview

- The big question every candidate asks: Do you bring CVs to the interview?
 - To be safe, plan to have a few copies available
 - You never know a program's philosophy on hard copy CVs
 - Consider bringing hard copy CVs on professional paper
 - If you are looking at a residency position, it is likely that the employer will not want a hard copy of your CV as they will receive an updated version with your PhORCAS application
 - If this is your first position out of residency, the employer may want a hard copy CV
- Don't forget your business cards
 - Many programs and employers take business cards instead of a full CV and will then request an electronic version from you