Note: Prior to beginning the internship program all candidates must be registered with the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP) and have been issued an ACP registration number. Any hours completed prior to registration will not be counted towards the required 1000 internship hours.

Philosophy of the Internship Program

With the emerging philosophy of pharmaceutical care, the practising pharmacist is increasingly expected to utilize his/her professional judgement to ensure safe and appropriate use of drugs by patients. Pharmaceutical care is aimed at optimizing the benefit which patients receive from their medication regimen by identifying, preventing and resolving medication related problems.

The Internship Program has instituted pharmaceutical care at all three levels of internship to help the intern develop a patient-focused practice.

The internship program of the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP) is a learning experience which permits interns to apply previously acquired academic knowledge and skills to a practical setting through observation and participation resulting in the development of professional skills and a growth in self-confidence. This unique exposure not only gives the future pharmacists an opportunity to appreciate more fully the scope of their profession but also allows for the personal development and satisfaction of the individuals involved.

In this instructional model, pharmacists and their support staff at the practice site increase the intern’s awareness of the importance of learning to cope adequately with a constantly changing environment. In order to become worthy professionals, the interns must maximize this learning experience and accept each opportunity it presents as a valuable learning encounter.

It is critical that the interns are fully aware of and appreciate totally the opportunities that are available for them during their internship program. It is also essential that the interns accept the responsibility for acquainting themselves with the goals and objectives of this program.

Goals of the Internship Program

The ACP internship program facilitates the growth and development of the interns so that required knowledge plus practical experience in a supervised setting will permit the interns to confidently join the profession of pharmacy.
Purpose of the Internship Manual

The ACP realizes that it is very unlikely that any two interns will encounter exactly the same experience. This manual outlines major areas which the intern should review and discuss with the preceptor and/or other staff pharmacists. It is intended to provide a general guideline for work experience to accomplish the internship goals. For purposes of supervision and instruction, the learning activities is divided into the three phases, as follows:

Level I - 100 hours  
Level II - 450 hours  
Level III - 450 hours

The activities included are not intended to be totally comprehensive, but are given in order to serve as examples illustrating the various levels of competency which must be achieved in each area. The degree of involvement of the interns in each area depends upon the level of their training and on their previous background, knowledge and experience. An interactive relationship between the intern and preceptor will enhance this involvement.

The relationship between the intern and the preceptor should be viewed as a partnership in learning. In order for the internship experience to be successful, it is important that the intern review the goals and objectives and communicate these to the preceptor prior to the start of the practical training. The preceptor must be aware of the needs of the intern if he or she is to be effective in the training period.

It is solely the intern's responsibility to ensure that each section of this program is adequately covered during the internship program. The onus for assimilating beneficial knowledge and gaining valuable expertise rests entirely with each individual. By maximizing the opportunities available in the process of combining practical and academic knowledge with the course outlined in this manual, interns will automatically improve communication skills and professional judgement to ultimately provide optimal drug therapy.
Structured Practical Training Information

1. Interns are responsible for locating their own preceptors.
2. Any preceptor chosen would be disqualified if in a close personal relationship with the intern being precepted.
3. Internship must be completed in Alberta. ACP will not accept any internship hours completed outside of Alberta.
4. The internship period must be served in a hospital or community pharmacy in Alberta under the supervision of a pharmacist who is licensed to practise and who is practising pharmacy in Alberta.
5. This internship period must be served in a normal work week pattern which consists of an average work week of not less than 20 hours but not more than 40 hours per week or an alternate schedule given prior approval by ACP.
6. Notification of the internship site must be signed by both the intern and the preceptor. The notification sheet must be submitted to ACP either by fax, e-mail attachment or via mail. A notification form must be submitted for each of the three levels. The notification form must be submitted to ACP within 30 days of commencement of each internship level.
7. The Certification of Completion form and the Evaluation of the Intern by the Preceptor must be submitted to ACP at the completion of each level. These documents must be signed by both the preceptor and the intern. These documents must be submitted to ACP within 30 days of completion of each level.
8. Interns may have a maximum of 2 preceptors for each level. This can only be approved if a preceptor has supervised 50% of a level and completed the evaluation of the intern and the completion form for that particular level. The intern can then complete the remaining half of the internship level under a different preceptor and complete the required documentation as stated above (notification form, evaluation of the intern by the preceptor and the completion form).
9. Once registered the intern is placed on the provisional register which allows the intern to work with both direct and indirect supervision.
10. Indirect supervision is defined that the preceptor does not have to be in the immediate vicinity of the intern. The preceptor may be at a different location in the pharmacy or away from the pharmacy but accessible by phone. If the preceptor is away from the pharmacy the preceptor must be able to return to the pharmacy within a reasonable amount of time (less than 30 minutes).
11. Indirect supervision is not a requirement to complete the internship program. An intern may complete the required 1000 hours under direct or indirect supervision.
12. Indirect supervision must be agreed upon by both the intern and preceptor.
13. ACP does not recommend that indirect supervision commence prior to Level III.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERN

1. Obtain an internship site.
2. Ensure the chosen preceptor is not in a close personal relationship with the intern.
3. Set up a meeting with the preceptor to discuss goals and objectives of each level of internship.
4. Complete a self-assessment and set goals prior to commencing internship level.
5. Be aware of and adhere to policies and procedures of the pharmacy site.
6. Acquire knowledge and develop new skills by observing, asking questions, researching information, being open-minded, willing to co-operate and undertaking a variety of tasks.
7. Apply acquired knowledge and skills in practice situations.
8. Complete recommended internship activities and discuss them with the preceptor.
9. Ensure that proper instruction is given and supervision is provided in all procedures.
10. Make professional decisions or judgement **ONLY** under direct or indirect supervision of the preceptor or another pharmacist.
11. Endeavour to integrate internship activities with job-related responsibilities.
12. Respect all confidences relating to patients, preceptors and the pharmacy site.
13. Seek regular consultation with the preceptor to obtain feedback on performance and advice on areas requiring improvement.
14. Act in accordance with the Health Professions Act, Code of Ethics, Standards for Pharmacist Practice and Standards for Operating Licensed Pharmacies.
15. Be cognizant of the development of life-long learning skills: self-assessment, self-directed learning, etc.
17. Approach internship with a deep commitment to all learning experiences.
18. Provide ACP with documentation sheets within required time line. This includes Notification of Preceptor Site, Certification of Completion of each internship level, and the Evaluation of the Intern by the Preceptor for each Level.
19. Exhibit a professional appearance in both manner and dress.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRECEPTOR

1. Become knowledgeable of the goals and objectives of the internship program.
2. Ensure intern is not in a close personal relationship with the preceptor.
3. Help the intern establish learning objectives for the training period, taking into consideration the intern's academic background and previous experience in a pharmacy and also available learning resources at the internship site.
4. Be aware of the expected level of knowledge and skills of the intern.
5. Act as a role model in the development of the intern's professional and ethical values and attitudes.
6. Encourage active participation and try to involve the intern in appropriate decision making situations (legal and ethical principles to be followed) under direct or indirect supervision.
7. Provide time for discussions with the intern.
8. Provide instruction and demonstrate desired skills before the intern is expected to undertake new tasks or skills.
9. Make the intern feel at home by including them in informal discussions and any social functions.
10. Encourage critical thinking and problem solving by frequently posing problems to the intern and asking him/her to formulate an answer.
11. Supervise the intern and provide constructive feedback to assist in the further development of his/her skills and competencies.
12. Provide feedback/assessment at mid-point of internship level to determine if training program is progressing to meet objectives.
13. Consider the role of preceptor as a learning experience and be open to entertain new ideas and suggestions.
14. Discuss questions, criticisms or disagreements in private.
15. Seek feedback from the intern in order to assess his/her contributions as a preceptor.
16. Discuss the intern's accomplishments and areas needing improvement and provide a written assessment of such.
17. **Ensure that interns have completed the goals and objectives of each level before proceeding on to the next level.**

If you have any questions or require clarification of any of the above information please contact the ACP office at 780-990-0321 or registrationinfo@pharmacists.ab.ca