



American Pharmacists Association[®]
Improving medication use. Advancing patient care.

APhA

APhA Certificate Training Program Certificates of Achievement Guidance Document

Specifically for Cardiovascular, Diabetes, MTM & Travel Health Programs

New Policy

As of March 1, 2015, all Certificates of Achievement issued by the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) for APhA's Cardiovascular, Diabetes, and Medication Therapy Management certificate training programs will include the following text:

Current

The training associated with this APhA Certificate of Achievement is current for 3 years from this date of issue. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to engage in continuing professional development and education to meet the existing standards of practice set by the practitioner's state board of pharmacy and/or the policies and procedures of the organization that employs the practitioner.

Rationale

Due to the large number of pharmacists who use APhA's Certificates of Achievement as proof of training, it is APhA's intent to ensure that practitioners stay current with ongoing changes in the clinical area and maintain their knowledge and skills related to patient care.

Guidance

Following the receipt of an APhA Certificate of Achievement, it is the practitioner's responsibility to apply the knowledge and skills learned and then to keep current with changes to clinical and practice guidelines, new or changing evidence and therapeutic options, and changes in regulatory guidelines.

At the end of the third year following receipt of an APhA Certificate of Achievement, any practitioner who wishes to document his or her continued competency has the following options:

1. The practitioner can provide proof of ongoing continuing professional development or continuing pharmacy education in the specific topic area to assure a third party (e.g., employer, state board of pharmacy, payer) that all knowledge and competencies are current. It is not a requirement that the education be provided by APhA.

2. The practitioner can retake a certificate training program to earn a current Certificate of Achievement. APhA releases new versions of each certificate training program every 3 years in alignment with the expiration of the associated Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) activity numbers.

FAQs

Q: Does this policy mean that my Certificate of Achievement expires or becomes invalid?

A: No, APhA is not expiring or invalidating any certificates. APhA is simply stating that the training is only current for 3 years. Changes in the environment require that practitioners stay current.

Q: In the context of this new statement, what does “current” mean?

A: APhA continually updates the content of these training programs to coincide with significant changes in the environment. Participants need to understand how often the environment is changing and implement a means to stay up-to-date. After three years, the environment may have changed significantly so the practitioner cannot rely on this training to provide the most up-to-date care to their patients. APhA recommends at least an annual update is needed to stay “current.”

Q: Once my Certificate of Achievement is no longer current, do I have to retake an APhA certificate training program?

A: No, APhA does not require any participant to retake one of our training programs. It is up to practitioners to maintain their ongoing continuing professional development within the requirements of their state board of pharmacy and/or employer.

Q: What do you mean by continuing professional development?

A: Continuing professional development (CPD) is a structured approach to learning to help ensure competence to practice, encompassing knowledge, skills, and practical experience. CPD can involve any relevant learning activity, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed.

Q: What are some examples of continuing professional development?

A: On February 4, 2015, ACPE released *Guidance on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the Profession of Pharmacy*. This document provides specific activities that fall under the following categories: Continuing Education, Academic/Professional Study, Scholarly Activities, Teaching and Precepting, Workplace Activities, and Professional/Community Service.

Q: Why is APhA implementing this policy?

A: Due to the large number of pharmacists who use APhA’s Certificates of Achievement as proof of training, it is APhA’s intent to ensure that practitioners stay current with ongoing changes in the clinical area and maintain their skills related to patient care.

Q: Why 3 years?

A: ACPE activity numbers have a maximum duration of 3 years. Since APhA’s certificate training programs are ACPE-accredited practiced-based activities, we decided to stay aligned with that time frame.

Q: Who is going to check to see that I have maintained my education? APhA?

A: APhA will not be checking to ensure that practitioners have maintained their education and skills. Practitioners must be aware of the regulations and guidance provided by their state boards of pharmacy and their employers.

Q: If I took a certificate training program many years ago and I need a reprint of my Certificate of Achievement, will APhA still provide it to me?

A: Yes, APhA will provide reprints of older Certificates of Achievement; however, the reprint will contain the original date that the program was completed along with this statement:

The training associated with this APhA Certificate of Achievement is current for 3 years from this date of issue. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to engage in continuing professional development and education to meet the existing standards of practice set by the practitioner's state board of pharmacy and/or the policies and procedures of the organization that employs the practitioner.

Q: I am a student at a school/college of pharmacy and took this certificate training program as a P1 or P2. Does this mean that the training is not current as soon as I graduate?

A: The clinical environment is changing very quickly and therefore all students and practitioners need to keep current. For students taking a training course early in their education, APhA recommends that the students continue to participate in patient care activities each year where they can utilize the skill sets, participate in annual continuing education updates (even if they do not need CPE credit), and subscribe to newsletters to keep up with current recommendations.

Q: As a student, I am not yet licensed so I cannot claim CPE credit. Does this affect my ability to show that my training is current?

A: Students do not need CPE credit to show they are staying current through literature reviews, education offerings (with or without associated CPE credit), and successfully maintaining their skills through ongoing use.