



EMPLOYER BASED QUALIFIED PHARMACY TECHNICIAN EXAMS GUIDANCE

Thank you for your interest in creating an Employer Based Qualified Pharmacy Technician (QPT) exam. These are the **minimum exam suggestions** for an exam to be considered as acceptable by the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy. Additionally, information about types of questions and sections of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) are listed to assist you in getting ideas for your questions. When referring to the OAC, remember that we generally are not looking to test on the content of the law, but merely to give a reference point to direct you to when formulating questions.

This is for *guidance only* and therefore is NOT to be inferred that if you “check all the boxes” on this guide that your test will be approved. It is merely the minimum suggested guidelines.

Board reviewers use a significant amount of professionally based judgment to ensure the test has enough substance to meet our expectations.

Reviewers look for questions that have sufficient depth and breadth of rule 4729-4-02 to clearly address the competencies required to practice as a qualified pharmacy technician. QPT status is required for packaging, labeling, and compounding medications; it is important the quality of the questions test their knowledge of “how to” perform those specific functions. Think about the functions expected of QPTs that are different from general pharmacy technicians.

Reviewers look for *application* of processes and knowledge, not merely memorization of pharmacy laws and rules.

- A.** At least 6 questions in each of the following categories unless otherwise noted. Pharmacy terminology and Basic drug information must have at least 25 questions combined between the two categories.

1. Packaging a drug (if selected above):

- a) Suggest some of the questions be “how to” questions.
- b) In order for a question to be considered for the category “Packaging a Drug”, it should be testing the knowledge of a qualified pharmacy technician on how to safely and accurately package a prescription medication in preparation for the pharmacist to perform the dispensing function. Some examples of questions could include the



process of HOW to add a drug to a prescription vial, HOW to select an appropriate size or type of prescription bottle, how to add a drug to a unit dose system, what information is required on a repackaging record, packaging considerations for drugs such as penicillin or oral methotrexate as to prevent cross contamination, HOW to use equipment in order to package or label a drug, or HOW to measure volume for a liquid product such as a cough syrup.

2. Labeling a drug (if selected above):

- a) Suggest some of the questions be "how to" questions.
- b) Examples of questions could include what is required on a label, what types of auxiliary labels may be used on a certain drug product or drug package, or what information should not be covered up when labeling a prescription using a manufacturer stock bottle (i.e. HOW to label a prescription container). Recommend looking at rule 4729-5-16, 4729-9-20, and 4729-17-10 for question ideas.

3. Non-Sterile Compounding (if selected above):

- a) Suggest some of the questions be "how to" questions.
- b) Some examples of questions could include: HOW to compound items such as reconstitution of oral antibiotics (tapping bottle to loosen powder, where on label to read amount of water to be added, how to measure the water, add distilled water in two portions, and mix thoroughly)
- c) HOW to weigh powders by using the scale, HOW to thoroughly mix two creams, HOW to accurately use some of the equipment used in your pharmacy to compound, or even give a recipe/formula and have the technician write a short essay of what they would do (in detail) to correctly make the product.

4. Sterile Compounding (if selected above):

- a) With pharmacy technicians compounding sterile products in a hospital setting, there should be enough questions to address the depth of their sterile compounding knowledge to become a qualified pharmacy technician. Recommend that you review rules 4729-9-21 and 4729-19-04 for question ideas.
- b) Suggest several "how to" questions. For example, on HOW to compound a sterile (i.e. when to use a filter needle; how to slowly swirl vial while adding diluent to dissolve powder; what top/ports to swab with an alcohol pad; what to do when you core a product; have a picture of a syringe drawn back to a certain volume and ask the tech to tell you what volume it is; or final inspection of drug product for cores, floaters, or cloudiness, etc...).

5. Pharmacy terminology:

- a) Suggest including questions about reading/translating standard pharmaceutical sigs into instructions provided to a patient. "Sig codes" that you use in your particular pharmacy software are internal practices and not something that tests if a candidate is "qualified" to be a QPT.

6. Basic drug information:

- a) Suggest including questions about brand/generic names
- b) Suggest including questions about drug classes (i.e. antibiotic, cardiovascular, etc)
- c) Drug/side effects are a good source of questions
- d) Matching type questions are a good way to cover a lot of information

7. Basic calculations:

- a) Include at least a couple of 2-step questions (for example: dose of a drug is given in mg/kg/day but the weight of patient is given in pounds. Technician would then calculate either mg dose or total daily dose)... Questions that are merely basic math (i.e. what is 10% of 100) will not be counted. Suggestions include being given a sample prescription and calculating day supply based on quantities and sigs. Also, dosage calculations based on weight, aliquots in IV calculations.

8. Quality control procedures:

- a) Suggest including questions specific to medication error prevention
- b) Institutional: Recommend that you review rules 4729-5-27, 4729-9-02, 4729-9-17, 4729-9-20, and 4729-19-04 for question ideas or ask questions about safety checks related to processing a prescription in your pharmacy.
- c) Retail: Recommend that you review rules 4729-5-27 and 4729-9-17 for question ideas or ask questions about safety checks related to processing a prescription in your pharmacy.
- d) In order for a question to be considered for the category of "quality control procedures", it should be testing the knowledge of a qualified pharmacy technician on quality control procedures necessary for the safe and accurate dispensing of medications within the pharmacy. Some examples of questions could include procedures used within your practice setting such as scanning of bar codes, NDC number matches to the prescription label, expiration date checking procedures, or other internal procedures such as verifying patient name and date of birth (or address) when picking up a prescription or special labeling on shelves to assist technicians in pulling high alert medications. Questions can come from any internal procedures performed at your pharmacy that serve as a safety net to make sure the

right drug gets to the right patient (in the right quantity, with the right directions, etc...).

- e) Some examples of questions could include procedures used within your practice setting such as: routine inspection of drug stock for outdates, special labeling on shelves to assist technicians in pulling high alert medications (ex. identification of sound/look alike drugs, tall man letters, etc.), five rights on drug orders and/or NDC matches for drugs to the prescription label, double counts on controlled substances, routine maintenance/cleaning of special equipment, and scanning of bar codes (as part of your double/triple check procedures). Questions can come from any internal procedures performed at your pharmacy that serve as a safety net to make sure the right drug gets to the right patient (in the right quantity, with the right directions, etc...).

9. Legal - Qualified pharmacy technician duties:

- a) Include questions specific to what a QPT is allowed to do (packaging, labeling, compounding)
- b) include qualifications/criteria to be a QPT
- c) may wish to consider functions an intern may perform but not a technician (i.e. technician's limits)

10. Legal - Pharmacist duties:

- a) Include at least one question about a function that ONLY a pharmacist may perform.
- b) review law 4729.01 of the Revised Code for question ideas

11. Legal - Pharmacy intern duties:

- a) Include questions that involve responsibilities an intern may fulfil but a technician may not.
- b) Review rule 4729-5-08 for question ideas.

12. Legal - Prescription or drug order processing requirements:

- a) Suggest including questions regarding processing of both controlled and non-controlled medications.
- b) Review rules 4729-5-09, 4729-5-13, 4729-5-21, 4729-5-26, 4729-5-30, 4729-9-04

(LTC only), and 4729-17-09 for question ideas. Included in this category are questions about completeness of a prescription, validity of a prescription or medication order, how long a prescription is valid, time/refill limits.

13. Legal - Drug record keeping requirements:

- a) Include at least one question about record retention.
- b) Retail: Recommend you review rules 4729-5-27, 4729-9-14, and 4729-9-22 for question ideas.
- c) Institutional: Recommend that you review rules 4729-5-27, 4729-9-14, 4729-9-20, 4729-9-22, and 4729-17-04 for question ideas.
- d) In order for a question to be considered for the category of "Legal: Drug record keeping requirements", it should be testing the knowledge of a qualified pharmacy technician on legal requirements for the retention of any drug record. Some examples of questions could include DEA rule for record retention (2 years - see CFR 1304.04), DEA biennial inventory requirements, OSBP rule for record retention (3 years - see OAC 4729-5-27, 4729-9-06, 4729-9-14, and 4729-9-22), or any of your typical insurance providers such as Medicare or Medicaid as well as questions related to what are considered drug documents (such as receipts of purchases, prescriptions, dispensing records, compounding records, counseling logs, drug returns, drug destructions, etc...). You can also ask questions about how prescription records are stored including the three file system and how records must be readily retrievable.

14. Legal - Patient confidentiality

- a) Review rule 4729-5-29 and HIPAA for question ideas

15. Legal - Security requirements:

- a) Include questions regarding access to a pharmacy
- b) Review rules 4729-9-05, 4729-9-11, and 4729-17-03 for question ideas

16. Legal - Storage requirements:

- a) Questions may cover topics such as temperature control, how to handle outdated medications
- b) Review rules 4729-9-02, 4729-9-17, and 4729-17-08 for question ideas. You may also ask questions related to storage of controlled substances within your pharmacy, temperature ranges for storage of drugs, or where to find certain drugs

within your pharmacy (whether they would be stored at room temperature, refrigerator, or freezer), storage of medications that are adulterated.

B. All questions must be grammatically correct with correctly spelled drug names. Brand name drugs are capitalized, generic drug names are in lower case. Errors in spelling or grammar will be returned.

C. Drugs used in questions must be currently available.

D. Exam format:

1. It is suggested that multiple choice questions should have at least 4 answer options per question. The “wrong” answers on each question must be wrong, but plausible enough to make the test taker have to think about the response. There must be only one, uniquely correct answer.
2. Matching questions (brand to generic, drug to drug class) are a good way to test a lot of knowledge.
3. True/False questions are allowed, but will not count in your total, nor will they count on an individual category.
4. Essay questions are acceptable (though not required) and may allow a vehicle by which to access knowledge of a multi-step/how-to question.
5. While some questions may be used for internal procedures, a bulk of the questions on these topics needs to come from pharmacy practice, federal/state rules and laws.
6. *Needs to include enough questions to adequately cover the depth and breadth of what a pharmacy technician is expected to know.* Most tests contain at least 125 questions. It is strongly recommended that you consider creating a second examination in anticipation that a person does not pass the examination the first time. A minimum score of 75% is required to pass. A person cannot take the same examination since they are not allowed to know the questions in advance pursuant to rule 4720-4-02.

E. When making revisions based on the reviewers’ recommendations, keep the questions numbers the same. If we tell you to delete a question, use that question number to add NEW questions in areas that were previously lacking. Keeping the numbering system the same helps expedite reviewing revised exams.

F. With each submission of a test, new or revised, please complete a NEW examination question breakdown form. Reviewers may have you move questions from one category to another, and the question number on the form must match the question number on the test and be in the appropriate category.

G. When submitting the revised exam, please identify which question numbers are the ones to be reviewed, so we only have to look at those questions and not the entire test. This will help expedite processing the test and getting it approved.

Remember, the Board is looking for the following:

1. depth and breadth
2. a level of knowledge/functional ability expected of a qualified pharmacy technician on how to perform those functions a QPT does
3. questions that separate qualified pharmacy technicians from general pharmacy technicians.