



Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy

Guiding Principles for Post-licensure Credentialing of Pharmacists

The Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy (CCP) provides leadership, guidance, public information, and coordination for the pharmacy profession's credentialing programs.

Credentials serve to document the knowledge, skills, and experience of pharmacists and are part of a comprehensive professional portfolio that includes professional education, licensure, formal post-licensure training, practice experience, and certification.^{1,2} To ensure optimal patient outcomes, specific post-licensure credentials are required of some pharmacists based on the complexity of the care they provide and/or to obtain specific patient care privileges.

For the purposes of this document, definitions for key terms are provided as follows:

- **Credential:** Documentation of professional qualifications. Academic degrees, state licensure, residency certificates, and board certification are all examples of credentials.
- **Credentialing:** a) The process of granting a credential (a designation that indicates qualifications in a subject or area) by an entity (i.e., a credential-granting entity/organization), or b) The process by which an organization, institution, or payer obtains, verifies, and assesses an individual's qualifications to provide patient care services.
- **Privileging:** The process by which a health care organization, having reviewed an individual health care provider's credentials and performance and found them satisfactory, authorizes that person to perform a specific scope of patient care services within that organization.

CCP believes that structured processes provided by employers and payers for the credentialing and privileging of pharmacists should be aligned with those of other health care providers. Credentialing and privileging can contribute to the safe and effective delivery of patient care. The following CCP Guiding Principles are offered to achieve this goal.

1. **Licensure.** Licensure of pharmacists should assure entry-level knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values for the provision of patient-centered care and information regarding medications and their proper use. Post-licensure credentials, training, and experience should build on this foundation.
2. **Granting of Credentials.** To ensure sustained program quality and viability over time and to protect the public and credential holders, credentials should be established through an efficient and effective profession-wide, consensus-building process. The justification for a credential should be based on demonstrated patient/societal need, anticipated/sustained demand, and the availability of appropriate education and training programs to support attaining and maintaining the credential.
3. **Accreditation of Organizations and Programs.** All organizations that grant credentials should be accredited by an appropriate, recognized national or international accrediting body, when such a body exists. . Postgraduate education and training programs that involve structured activities should meet established professional standards and be accredited.³

4. Assessment. All postgraduate education, training and other credentialing programs should include assessments that measure the knowledge and skills gained from these programs and/or provide evidence that holders of a credential have achieved the required level of competence. These assessments serve to document and assure ongoing program quality for all stakeholders within the health care system.
5. Credential Verification. For all practice settings, employers and payers should be encouraged to adopt and implement credentialing processes (see definition above) that include credential verification and assessment of a pharmacist's qualifications to provide patient care services. The credentials required by employers and payers can vary. Credentialing processes for pharmacists should be consistent with those applied to other health care providers. Employers use credentialing processes, including credential verification, to ensure that practitioners possess the required credentials and experience to perform patient care services for the organization. Payers require a credentialing process, including credential verification, to enroll providers in their networks for payment.
6. Privileging. Due to the variability in complexity of care and increasing differentiation of pharmacy practice, CCP believes that pharmacists—like many other patient care providers— should be expected to participate in institutional/organizational privileging processes. These processes should be aligned with those applied to other health care providers and ensure that the necessary competencies are attained and maintained.
7. Alignment. As outlined in the “CCP Framework for Credentialing in Pharmacy Practice,”⁴ pharmacist credentialing should be aligned with the patient populations served, required competencies, and relevant practice domains.

CCP supports planned, coordinated efforts by the pharmacy profession to educate pharmacists, other health professionals, employers, payers, and the public about all credentials held by pharmacists and their value to patients and the health care system.

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References:

1. Credentialing in Pharmacy. November 2010. Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy, Washington, DC. <http://www.pharmacycredentialing.org/Files/CCPWhitePaper2010.pdf>
2. Guiding Principles for Certification of Individuals in Pharmacy. January 2006. Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy, Washington, DC. <http://www.pharmacycredentialing.org/ccp/Files/CCP%20Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Certification%20Adopted%20January%202006.pdf>
3. Guiding Principles for Accreditation of Organizations, Sites or Programs in Pharmacy. January 2006. Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy, Washington, DC. <http://www.pharmacycredentialing.org/ccp/Files/CCP%20Guiding%20Principles%20for%20Accreditation%20Adopted%20January%202006.pdf>
4. Appendix E in Scope of Contemporary Pharmacy Practice: Roles, Responsibilities, and Functions of Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians, February 2009. Council on Credentialing in Pharmacy, Washington, DC. http://www.pharmacycredentialing.org/Contemporary_Pharmacy_Practice.pdf