Pharmacy Technician

Posted by livingintx - 2011/07/23 12:35

I am very interested in becoming a Pharmacy Technician and was entertaining the idea of enrolling in the online course offered by NPTA (National Pharmacy Technician Association). I was fortunate enough to come across the GetEducated.com website and all it's valuable information and found that this school is NOT mentioned anywhere! Did I miss something or is it possible that this school is a scam or is simply not worth mentioning? They (NPTA) state on their website that their program is not a certification program and that it is a comprehensive career training program that is accredited by the ACPE. I also don't recall reading anything about accreditation from the ACPE at GetEducated.com.

Furthermore, I also wanted to know your input in reference to the same program from Penn Foster. I found they Pharmacy Tech program to be very affordable, as opposed to NPTA's program, Of course my immediate reaction was to think that Penn Foster's program may not be as good in preparing the student with the knowledge needed to be able to get certification with the PTCB (required in TX).

I will not be seeking further education after getting certified as a Pharmacy Tech by the PTCB, so if I am understanding this correctly, it really does NOT matter in my situation if the school is Regionally or Nationally accredited...correct?

Thank you for any and all facts that you can offer me in making my decision of finding an online school that offers this program 100% online.

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Re:Pharmacy Technician

Posted by VickyPhillips - 2011/07/24 11:51

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livingintx wrote:
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Hello LivingInTexas,

This is a very good question because it brings up the crucial difference between an online certificate as part of an academic degree program Vs. a professional career certification.

You are NOT looking for a college degree or to earn credits that could be applied to a college degree so you are correct in assuming that regional and national online college accreditation ,which are crucial for degree-granting universities, is not an issue for you.

In this case you are NOT looking to earn a degree BUT to meet the specific state and professional education requirements required to take the exam to
become a pharmacy tech in Texas. You also want to make sure that whatever education you take be recognized by local pharmacy employers.

The truth: You need NO formal education beyond a high school diploma or GED to sit for the PTCB certification examination.

Below are the requirements as taken from the PTCB certification exam website for taking the PTCB exam.

Eligibility Requirements to Sit for PTCB Exam

The Pharmacy Technician Certification Board's (PTCB) eligibility requirements for a candidate to take the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board Examination are as follows:

Requirements

High school diploma or its equivalent (e.g., a GED or foreign diploma).
No felony conviction.

No drug or pharmacy related convictions, including misdemeanors. These violations must be disclosed to PTCB.

No denial, suspension, revocation, or restriction of registration or licensure, consent order or other restriction by any State Board of Pharmacy. No admission of misconduct or violation of regulations of any State Board of Pharmacy.

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If you do take formal education, here is what I would look for:
the best online courses to prepare you to take and pass that private certification exam.

This is called test prep education, and it has no relationship to the process of seeking an academic degree.

The purpose of the online education you are looking for is to teach you the specific knowledge you will need to pass some private certification exam -- in this case the PTCB.

WHICH ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSES?

The National Pharmacy Technician Association is a private, non-profit trade association

The NPTA does offer comprehensive test prep of distance learning self-study courses.

Here is a VERY IMPORTANT point:

The NPTA training SUGGESTS a PHARMACY EXTERNSHIP -- this means that you MUST work in a pharmacy under a licensed pharmacy staff for at least 120 hours of applied pharmacy work ALONG WITH your courses.

MOST medical training will require you to meet this type of ON-THE-JOB-TRAINING as well as to complete courses.

Do you have such an EXTERNSHIP???
Can the NPTA reliably assist you in obtaining such a local work placement???

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In summary:

Don't look at just cost.

Cheaper online certification courses won't help you IF the courses don't meet your career goals of getting certified PLUS getting employed in a local pharmacy!

Compare ALL online course providers on these 3 issues:

1) How well do the courses match or teach the exam content?;
2) Is an externship required; and is the training provided by the online school RESPECTED by local pharmacy professionals or ACCEPTED by them as valid job prep?; (Call hiring agents at local pharmacies to double check on this crucial issue!)
3) What is the PTCB exam pass rate for each school?
The exam pass rate will give you a good idea of the quality and match of the exam prep course provider. If any school can't tell you the pass rate of their alumni I'd be suspicious of them.

I am personally liking the NPTA because they seem a solid professional association AND they provide lifelong CEU training and pro career development for pharmacists. (BUT you must check this out with pharmacists or professionals in your state!)

NPTA provides continuing online education training (CEUs) (aka: continuing education units) to meet the PTB's ed requirements that once certified as a CPHt professional one must take at least 20 hours of CEU (continuing education unit) courses to keep one's certification current.

You will find that most medical professions require on-going continuing education to keep professional certifications current.

The NPTA work EXTERNSHIP is a solid suggestion also; you may find that most pharmacies may require you to have completed an externship along with the certification before they will employ you.

If you are not familiar with pharmacy practices now it may be very difficult for you to learn about this without a career placement
where you can learn daily practice and procedure.

I'd be very curious to know who actual pharmacists and pharmacies in Texas RESPECT and TRUST

when it comes to online pharmacy training.

Ask them before you enroll!

Good Luck Out There!
Vicky Phillips
Get Educated Founder

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