
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WRHA PHARMACY PRACTICE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

What is a typical WRHA pharmacy residency day like?

Past and current residents will tell you that there are no typical days in a residency program! Approximately once every three to four weeks a resident's "job description" will change, according to the change in rotations for that resident's plan of study. For example, over a four months period a resident could go from answering drug information questions in a regional Drug Info Service, to providing integrated clinical/distributive service for Adult Intensive Care patients, to providing pharmaceutical care to ambulatory patients at a Hemodialysis Unit, then collecting and analyzing data for a residency project. Days are often long and busy. Residents must learn to adapt to frequent changes and be open to trying new things.

Are WRHA pharmacy residents required to work in the drug distribution system?

No. Although we know that for most practicing pharmacists, drug distribution service remains a reality, we know that our residents get enough experience over the course of the residency that they are able to proficiently integrate all pharmacy services roles – including drug distribution, into their pharmacy practice. For that reason, WRHA residents complete a Medication Use System Orientation, but residents are not required to provide a defined number of service hours in an assigned practice area over the balance of the residency year. Instead, residents use their constantly increasing knowledge about the interplay of drug distribution service and clinical service in required clinical rotations, culminating in a Clinical Practice V (Capstone) rotation that occurs in the last quarter of the residency program. During the Capstone Rotation, residents assume responsibility for drug order review, limited order entry, drug distribution problem solving as well as provision of direct patient care services for at least 50% of a pharmacist's regular caseload on a patient care service that is already familiar to them. Another pharmacist is there to provide assistance, feedback, and coaching as required. Past residents have expressed strong support for the requirement to obtain a license to practice pharmacy so that they can fully take on the role of a pharmacist while enrolled in the residency program.

Do WRHA pharmacy residents get paid?

Yes. WRHA pharmacy residents are offered a training stipend and benefits. In addition, a limited number of tuition relief grants may be available. Extra monetary support may be available in the form of casual hours of work.

Do I have to pay tuition or student fees to do a WRHA pharmacy residency?

There are no tuition charges or student fees for individuals enrolled in the WRHA Pharmacy Practice Residency Program. Although our program is affiliated with the University of Manitoba, it is not available for university credit.

How does conference leave work?

All residents receive financial support to attend one Canadian regional or national pharmacy meeting of their choice. In addition, many past residents have elected to present a residency project poster at a meeting, for which partial financial support has been provided. Residents receive at least five days of conference leave, which is credited toward residency attendance.

Why are WRHA pharmacy residents required to complete two Project rotations?

The WRHA Residency Program adopted the split project method after observing its use in American pharmacy graduate programs. It is a time-tested, efficient and logical method for residents to develop and/or refine research skills. Using the split project method means that residents have the opportunity to participate in a project and acquire substantial practice experience before they are required to develop an idea of their own. It has also meant that all WRHA residents have completed their residency project requirement on time, and had an opportunity to present the results in poster format while still enrolled in the residency program!

What should a resident expect from a residency that uses the split project method? In the first project rotation, usually completed in the first half of the residency program, a resident completes data collection, analysis and presentation of results for a project that was proposed, developed and defended by a resident in the previous residency year. In the second project rotation, usually done during the second half of the residency program, a resident develops a new project idea by writing and defending a project proposal and protocol. A resident in the succeeding year's program then completes this project. By the end of a residency year, each resident has completed the equivalent of one full residency project but has participated in two projects (developing one, completing another).

How are residents assessed?

Residents are often provided with feedback from preceptors and co-workers with respect to work ethic, professionalism, clinical knowledge, written and verbal communication, and problem-solving skill. At the end of the rotation, both the resident and the preceptor evaluate each other, as well as themselves, using written and verbal methods. The WRHA Residency Program does not assess its residents using examinations or tests.

Will I get hired at the end of the residency program?

The WRHA makes every effort to employ its pharmacy residents upon completion of the residency program. Some residents take advantage of tuition relief programs that have an associated agreement to provide service as a licensed pharmacist upon completion of the residency program. Opportunities for tuition relief awards and pharmacist employment in the WRHA Pharmacy Program vary from year to year. If you have questions about employment opportunities in pharmacies of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, please contact the Residency Program Director or Coordinator and they'll be pleased to assist you.