Congratulations - you are on the road to landing the residency you REALLY want! Preparing for your residency interview using these questions will help you stay calm, cool and collected when the pressure is on.

I recommend printing this list of questions and making some notes for each one. I know – this sounds like a lot of work, but it will pay off. After you’ve answered each question, practice, practice, PRACTICE! Be sure to practice out loud. Ask a friend or roommate to play “interviewer” and get feedback on how you can improve. Or, consider recording your answers and re-playing them so you can hear how you sound.

Whatever you do, don’t just *think* about your answer! Trust me, you will sound a lot smarter in your head.

The more you speak your answers, the more professional your answers will sound. Practice will also help you avoid peppering your answers with “ums” and “ahs” and awkward pauses.

There is a right and wrong way to answer each of these questions. Be sure to think through each response. If you need a minute to think during your interview, take it. It’s OK to say something like, “That’s a great question. Before I respond, I’d like to take a minute to collect my thoughts.”

The following list includes 295 common and unconventional questions for maximum preparation potential. The questions have been divided into categories so you can focus on specific areas where you need the most practice. I formatted the list so that you can print it off and fill in your answers, or feel free to copy and paste onto a Word document.

If you need more one-on-one help to boost your confidence, know exactly what to say during the interview, and how to guarantee that your residency directors will rank you FIRST during the match, then send an email to:
rxalexbarker@gmail.com
**Opening Questions**

1. Tell me about yourself, and why you are interested in pharmacy. (Hint: Focus on pharmacy and don’t get too personal. Also, limit your response to two minutes, spending 30 seconds each on your education, your job title or student status, one or two accomplishments or accolades and why you are applying).

2. Can you summarize your CV for me? (Hint: Be sure to explain any gaps in employment or education.)

3. Why are you interested in residency?

4. How did your interest in pharmacy begin?

5. Talk about what you know about our program and why you are interested in applying.

**Short- and Long-Term Goal Questions**

6. What about our program drew you to it?

7. What’s your ideal residency and how does this program fit that vision?

8. Why do you want to do a residency?

9. What do you expect to gain from a pharmacy residency?

10. What are your short-term and long-term goals?

11. What do you plan to do after your residency?

12. What do you see yourself doing in five years? 10 years? What do you see yourself doing in pharmacy in 10-15 years?

13. How will this program help you achieve your long-term goals? What aspects of our program coincide with your long-term career goals?

14. Outside of completing a pharmacy practice residency, what other steps do you feel you need to take to meet your career goals?

15. What specific goals to you have for the next year? (Hint: Discuss things you need to work on or learn more about.)

**Self-Assessment Questions**

16. What will make you a good resident?

17. What do you think makes you the best qualified person for this position?

18. What are a couple traits that you want us to remember about you? What makes you stand out?
19. Where do you see yourself, experience-wise?

20. Are you a team player?

21. How would you evaluate your clinical abilities? Please identify areas needing development.

22. What are some difficulties you had as a student?

23. What was your favorite clinical rotation and why? What was your second most favorite rotation? What was your least favorite?

24. What are your strongest and weakest subjects? (Hint: Expect to be asked case questions on those topics.)

25. What kind of research/teaching have you done?

26. What are your research/teaching interests?

27. What are your thoughts about completing a research project during your residency?

28. What gives you the most satisfaction as a professional?

29. Do you like to write? Rate your grammatical ability on a scale of 1-10.

30. What is your teaching style?

31. What is your teaching philosophy?

32. How do you see yourself fitting into the advancement of the profession?

33. How does your degree prepare you to excel as a pharmacist and have a successful career?

34. How do you feel that your education has prepared you for residency? Do you feel your education thus far has prepared you to succeed in a residency? If not, what could be changed or enhanced?

35. How do you envision keeping current and informed once you are established in your career?

36. What accomplishments would you like to achieve by the end of your residency year?

37. What is your definition of pharmaceutical care?

38. What is your philosophy of patient care?

39. What is your definition of a clinical pharmacist? What does the term “Clinical Pharmacist” mean to you?

40. How would you incorporate teaching a student into your busy schedule?

41. How do you facilitate learning for your students as a resident preceptor?
42. What is your ideal preceptor like?
43. What are three things you look for in a residency program?
44. What responsibilities does the residency program have to its residents?
45. What are some issues you perceive in doing a residency here?
46. What do you imagine a typical day as a resident is like?
47. What are some pharmacy technologies you would want to learn more about?
48. What leadership qualities does a pharmacist need? What leadership qualities do you possess and how do you intend to develop the others?
49. How are you with change?
50. What are your expectations do you have regarding spending time with your rotation preceptor?
51. What level of autonomy do you expect during your residency?
52. Define your strengths/weaknesses/shortcomings. Do you have a plan for overcoming your weaknesses or shortcomings?
53. What is one characteristic about yourself that you would change?
54. What makes you stand out amongst other applicants?
55. How are you different from the other candidates?
56. How would you contribute to our organization?
57. How would you characterize your work ethic?
58. What practice areas are you interested in?
59. How do you handle criticism?
60. What makes you angry?
61. What do you worry about?
62. What do you think you can do to influence our program in the future? How will you be remembered?
63. What work- or school-related situations frustrate you?
64. What other programs did you apply to? Why did you apply to them? How many other programs have you interviewed for?
65. If I were to ask preceptor X to describe you, what would he or she say? What would a preceptor say about you?

66. If you had to describe your personality in three words, what would they be?

67. How do you handle stress?

68. How much direction do you need/prefer?

69. If you need to complete a project, do you prefer to work alone or with others? Why?

70. Given the choice, would you prefer to lead a group to achieve a specific goal or be assigned specific tasks to accomplish a goal? Why?

71. Would you have issues taking directions from a female/male?

72. What has surprised you about this residency program now that you are onsite?

73. What was your favorite non-pharmacy job? Why?

74. Teams tend to have individuals with various roles, like leader, facilitator and worker. What role do you find you assume the most and why?

75. What components or traits do you feel are necessary for a team to be most effective?

76. If you get $1, $100, $10,000, $1 million, how would you spend it? (Interviewer will pick denomination of money.)

77. What is something your family says about you that isn’t true?

78. Tell us something unique about yourself that nobody knows.

79. What would your colleagues say about you?

80. How do you define being a leader?

81. If I were to ask your peers to comment about your leadership style, your leadership strengths, and your leadership weaknesses, how would they respond? What would this discussion tell me about you as a leader?

82. Can you describe one challenging life experience that you had to overcome?

83. Did you work as an intern during pharmacy school? If so, what type of training exposure (i.e., retail, hospital, research) did you get?

84. When it comes to the structure of your typical work day, what learning environment do you find is the most effective for you?

85. What do you believe it takes to have a successful career?
86. If you had to live your life over again, what would you change?
87. What is your least favorite aspect of your current job?
88. Have you done anything to improve yourself this past year? If so, please describe.
89. How do you think you’ll be able to balance all the requirements of residency?
90. What three things would you do on your first day at a residency?
91. Who is the most influential person who affected your decision to study pharmacy?
92. What would you implement for the program that we don’t already have? What rationale would you give to support your plan?
93. What types of criticism have you received on your rotations? How have you improved?
94. Are you self-motivated?
95. What are your motivations for succeeding?
96. What does the word “delegate” mean to you?
97. What is one word you would use to describe yourself?

Clinical Questions

98. Talk about one of your journal clubs.
99. Tell me about your presentation on …
100. How can your pharmacy studies be applied at our institution?
101. Prioritize three clinical situations (situations will be provided by the interviewer).
102. If you were in code blue and had another code blue go off, what would you do?
103. A patient comes in with hypotension. What do you do?
104. You have a patient who has been on Lovenox and Warfarin for five days. The patient is still subtherapeutic. What do you do?
105. A patient comes in with hypotension in a community setting. What do you do?
106. You work at a hospital as a pharmacist that serves pediatric and adult patients. There’s a shortage of Docitaxel. You have two week supply and won’t have any more for six months. What do you plan to do with your existing supply?
107. What would you give an elderly woman with COPD/asthma and pneumonia? How would you treat her? What bugs would you worry about?

108. Discuss opioid use for cancer pain when a patient is concerned about addiction.

109. Discuss use of anti-coag (10mg Warfarin) for a frail elderly woman on Amiodarone.

110. Be prepared to receive a list of medications a “patient” is on and identify any issues.

111. Tell me everything you know about heart failure.

112. What would you do if you received an order for 0.45% HCl IV?

113. A hypokalemia patient has K = 3. What do you do? When do you start an IV drip?

114. Patient is taking Fluoxetine, birth control pills, Saint John's Wort and has an Amox Rx. Do you fill it?

115. What are some concerns about switching between two drugs in the same class?

116. It is July 5th and patient comes in to the outpatient clinic for checkup (INR = 4.7). What do you tell him?

117. Be prepared to answer several medication reconciliation questions.

118. Be prepared to identify drugs that need to be dose-adjusted renally (interviewer will provide a list).

119. What are five drugs to avoid in the elderly? What are five factors that influence PT?

120. Can you give me the pros and cons of using a PTT vs. factor 10a to monitor heparin use?

121. What can cause QT prolongation, other than drugs?

122. HTN - identify four lifestyle modifications and discuss goal BP values in the general population vs. a DM patient.

123. CHF – describe drugs and treatments.

124. Counsel a patient on Warfarin.

125. Be prepared to receive a written ”Pharmacist Competency Exam.” For example, such an exam may include a case study on a patient with DM, seizure disorder and asthma. Questions may be included on Phenytoin level, nausea, diabetes medications and asthma medications.

126. Be prepared to receive written questions asking you to match the infectious organism with the antibiotic of choice.

127. Be prepared to receive written calculation questions. For example, convert % into mcg/mL or Dobutamine drip calculation.
128. CAP – discuss etiology, case-study, select drugs and counseling points evolving into HAP.

129. DM patient – discuss treatment, goals of lipids, monitoring and counseling.

130. Discuss the use of Linezolid for a renally insufficient patient to treat MRSA cellulites. Name cephalosporins and coverage.

131. Discuss Heparin, HIT, Xigris, Nessirtide and anti-coagulation.

132. Talk about Febrile Neutropenia and Amphotericin.

133. Talk about the antibiotic spectrum.

134. What is Gentamicin’s goal peak and trough?

135. What do you think about Vioxx?

136. Give recommendations on how to prevent ADRs and medication errors in the outpatient and inpatient settings.

137. How would you set up an ambulatory clinic for diabetes or any other long-term diseases?

138. How much time did you spend making IVs?

139. If you were asked to fill a dose for a baby that is 100x its regular dose and the fellow has proof that it’s okay, would you do it?

140. What would you do if you were faced with a medication error where the patient is given the wrong medication?

**Interpersonal Relations Questions**

141. How do you handle different types of personalities?

142. What steps do you take to build an understanding and show empathy with your patients?

143. How do you motivate people?

144. What do you feel is the most effective form of communication (written, oral, both, etc.) to provide drug information to a group of healthcare providers? Why?

145. How do you deal with people you don’t get along with?

146. What do you do when someone you work with disagrees with you?

147. How do you deal with a student who does not trust or respect you?

148. What would you do if your team did not accept your recommendation? If it was a life threatening situation, you did your research, and they still don’t accept it – what then?
149. Would you say you’re a leader or a follower?
150. Do you see yourself working as part of a team?
151. What is your role in your current rotation?
152. How do you deal with an uncomfortable situation?
153. Suppose you had an unmotivated student. As the preceptor, what would you do?
154. What leadership skills that you think pharmacists need and why? (Hint: ability to communicate, address conflict and work in teams probably should be on the list.)

Questions on Values, Background, Interests and Perspective

155. Tell me about the last non-academic book you read.
156. What do you do in your free time?
157. What do you do for fun?
158. What do you think about our mission statement?
159. If you were not in pharmacy, what would you do?
160. Who do you admire and why? Who do you admire the most of all of your preceptors?
161. What’s the worst thing you did and got away with?
162. What is your cooking specialty?
163. How much hospital/retail experience have you had?
164. What is your most important/significant clinical intervention during your rotation experience? Why was it meaningful to you?
165. What is your most prized possession?
166. If you were a drug, which drug would you be and why?
167. If you were an animal, which animal would you be and why?
168. What makes you a better applicant than others?
169. What do professional organizations do?
170. Do you think grades have anything to do with how well you perform in clerkships?
171. Do you think grades have anything to do with how well you perform in your career?
172. If you were stuck on Mars, what two drugs would you bring?
173. Is there anything we have not talked about that you would like to discuss?
174. Talk about your commitment to the profession.
175. Talk about your understanding of the profession.
176. What was the last pharmacy-related article that you read?
177. What do you do outside of school to learn and contribute to the profession of pharmacy?
178. What are the implications of the Medicare Modernization Act that took effect in 2006?
179. What is one interesting issue facing pharmacy today?
180. What do you think is a major problem facing the profession?
181. How do you see the profession of pharmacy evolving over the next 10 years?
182. What are the most significant trends affecting pharmacy?
183. While residency is a busy year, we believe everyone should have a life outside of pharmacy. How do you approach work from the standpoint of balancing career with personal life?
184. If you could do anything different in your education, what would you do? Why?
185. Have you read something that’s changed your life?
186. Some of your preceptors will not have PharmD degrees. Do you have any issues taking directions from someone with a lesser degree?
187. If you were stranded on an island, what three drugs would you want to have with you and why?
188. If you could make any drug, what would it do and what would you call it?
189. If you don’t find this residency program to be a good fit, what would you do the following year?
190. What journals do you routinely read? What was the last great article you read? Who was the author?
191. What contributions can you make to our program?
192. Describe a mentor.
193. Do you have any outside commitments that would prohibit a flexible or rotating schedule?
194. You are going to be working with other residents next year. What qualities would you like them to have?
195. What do you think are the greatest barriers to the growth of the pharmacy profession today?
196. Do you have any concerns about the residency?
197. What is one fear you have about a residency?
198. If you were CEO of a company and could select anyone to sit on your board, who would it be and why?
199. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
200. Fast forward to your retirement party. What would you want your colleagues to remember about you?
201. Why did you attend pharmacy school?
202. Why did you pick your particular pharmacy school?
203. Do you have any specific areas of interest?

**Situational Questions**
204. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
205. How would you deal with an irate customer?
206. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully move someone to your point of view.
207. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
208. Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
209. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
210. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
211. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
212. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
213. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split-second decision.
214. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
215. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
216. Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.

217. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.

218. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.

219. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.

220. Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.

221. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.

222. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.

223. Tell me about a time you had to fire a friend.

224. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

225. Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation and how you coped with the problem.

226. Give me an example of your typical way of dealing with conflict.

227. Tell me about a time when you faced a conflict. How did you handle it? Would you do it differently if given the chance?

228. Tell me about a time you worked with a team to accomplish a goal. Describe the process and the outcome.

229. Tell me about a process or system you implemented.

230. Tell me about the last conference you attended. What did you gain from it? What did you learn?

231. Tell me about some community service you have done.

232. Tell me about a difficult situation and how you dealt with it.

233. Tell me about a time you had to work through a recommendation with a physician (for example, a time you made a recommendation and what happened).

234. Tell me about a time when you were asked a clinical question and you did not know the answer. How did you handle the situation?

235. You are educating a patient on a brand new medication and have only 15 minutes before you have to run to a meeting. How would you deal with the patient if he/she has a lot of questions for you?

236. You are a resident staffing the weekend shift. You notice a serious error in an order that was entered earlier that day by one of your fellow residents. You are good friends with this resident and has confided in you that he/she is having a tough time managing time and preceptors. Staff
beginning to notice his/her struggles. In addition to correcting the order, how would you handle this situation?

237. Organizations are continually improving policies and procedures to incorporate feedback and meet departmental needs. Tell me about a time when you’ve had to adjust to a situation that wasn’t what you expected. How did you deal with it? What made the situation difficult? What could have made it easier?
238. Tell me about the things that happen in the work environment that cause you the greatest frustration. How do you handle these?

239. Tell about a time you took the initiative to promote diversity?
240. Describe your ideal working environment.
241. Describe your ideal supervisor.
242. Talk about challenges/programs you are proud of.
243. There was a class on your transcript that you didn’t do as well in. Can you talk about that session?
244. Describe a situation in which you found that your team’s results were not up to your professor’s or supervisor’s expectations. What happened? What action did you take?

245. Tell me about a time you worked in a team and other team members weren’t pulling their weight. How did you handle the situation?

246. Give me an example of a time that required you to use your leadership skills in a way that was challenging.
247. Describe a situation in which the leadership demonstrated could have been better. How, as a leader, would you have handled that situation differently?

248. Tell me about a project that you handled well and one in which you were not successful. What did you learn from each one?
249. Tell me about a time when you had competing priorities. How did you approach the situation, and what was the final outcome?

250. Describe a time when you had to overcome an obstacle in a creative manner.
251. Describe an experience where you were able to teach someone something new.

252. You are the only pharmacist in the pharmacy. On the phone is a nurse wanting to know the dosing for a dopamine drip for a patient who is crashing. At the window is a doctor who is ranting and raving about an Enoxaparin order that wasn’t approved. On the other line is a nurse calling about a patient with a Vancomycin level of 15. In what order do you handle these problems?

253. Describe a time you had to motivate yourself to do something you didn’t want to do.
254. At one time or another, all of us are misunderstood by others. Give me an example of a time when this has happened to you. How did you respond?

255. Give an example of when you were able to successfully apply information technology in order to identify a solution to a clinical question or problem.

256. Tell me about your most successful presentation. Who was the audience? What made it so successful?

257. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a decision by your boss, preceptor or co-worker. Why did you disagree? What did you do about it?

258. Describe a situation where you had to arrive at a compromise or guide others to a compromise.

259. Describe a situation in which you experienced exemplary leadership being demonstrated. What did you learn from that situation?

260. We all have downtime in our jobs. Tell me about a downtime at work or during a rotation, why you had it, and what you did with that time.

261. Describe a situation where you were forced to make a quick decision. In hindsight, would you have made the same decision? If not, how would it be different now?

262. Tell me about a time when you created agreement and shared purpose from a situation in which all parties originally differed in opinion, approach, and objectives.

263. Describe a negative experience you had with either a co-worker or a patient. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?

264. Give an example of when you were able to make an impactful contribution to a team, committee or group.

265. Describe a time where you anticipated potential problems in a patient’s medication plan and were able to make appropriate interventions.

266. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with someone despite difficult circumstances.

267. Sometimes we can identify a small problem and address it before it becomes a much bigger problem. Can you provide an example of how you have done this?

268. Tell me about a situation where patient care was impacted (either positively or negatively) by a team’s ability to work together.

269. Have you ever had a major conflict with a doctor/patient? If so, how did you handle it?

270. Describe the most significant contribution you made to a patient’s care this past year.

271. Tell me about the hardest job you have had to perform.
272. Tell me about a time you did work you didn’t find valuable and how you dealt with this.

273. Tell me about a time when your carefully laid plans were ruined. How did you react? What happened?

274. Describe how you scheduled your time on an unusually hectic day. Give a specific example.

275. Give me an example of a leadership project or position you have been in.

276. We all have to bend the rules at one time or another. Give me an example of when you had to bend the rules and how you handled the situation.

277. Describe the different types of preceptors you have experienced, including the pros and cons of each and which you prefer.

278. Tell me about a time when you faced an ethical dilemma and how you handled it.

279. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.

280. Describe a time you demonstrated creativity or innovation.

281. Describe a situation when you received constructive feedback about your work.

282. Describe a time when you were responsible for helping a group of people understand a new way of thinking about problems and opportunities.

283. Describe a time when you feel you made a difference in a patient’s care.

284. Describe your time-management skills.

285. Describe a leadership role that you had.

286. Tell me about another healthcare provider (non-pharmacist) that has positively influenced your professional development.

287. You are in your third month of residency. You are on a busy rotation and your preceptor is clearly being pulled in many directions. You feel, however, that you are not receiving the guidance you desire. How do you handle the situation?

288. Tell me about a difficult situation you encountered with a doctor. How did it end?

289. Tell me about one hardship you faced during a clinical rotation and how you handled it.

290. Describe a hasty (and perhaps incorrect) decision you made, and how you handled it.

291. Describe a time when you were overwhelmed and how you overcame it.

292. Discuss one of your most significant clinical interventions during your rotation experience.
293. Tell me a horror story about working community pharmacy. (Hint: Of your 3-minute answer, only 30 seconds should be used to describe the situation – the rest should focus on what you thought about it, how you handled it, or what you learned from the experience.)

294. Describe an accomplishment you are proud of.

295. Tell me about the worst teacher you’ve ever had. If you look back, is there anything you might have done to change that bad experience?