



***Residency Guide:
Preparation for Phase II of the Match***

Phase II of the Match

Preparation Guide for Applicants

Rank list submitted? Don't just sit and wait.

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Developed by members of the ASHP New Practitioners Forum Resident Advancement Advisory Group.

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Prepare for Phase II Prior to Match Day

March can feel like a long month when applying for residency. At the beginning of the month, you submit your final rank list and wait weeks for that day called “Match Day.” Despite its name, approximately 25% of applicants may not match. Applicants might feel embarrassed, disappointed, or confused. These are all emotions candidates are expected to process quickly so they can move onto preparation for Phase II. This document has been created to help all candidates prepare for this time prior to Match Day to ensure they have the time necessary to be fully prepared for Phase II.

Pre-Match Reflection

- Take time to consider all of the elements that lead up to Match Day before it is here.
- Reflect on your additional rotations and interview experiences you’ve completed since submitting your applications
- Has your perspective on your ideal residency or your future career goals changed at all and how will that impact your decisions during Phase II of the Match?
- Consider the following:
 - Application—what were your areas of strength and areas of weakness?
 - Interviews—what went well and what can you improve?
 - References – do you need to reevaluate who wrote these and is there time for references to be updated?
 - Career goals – what is your ultimate goal and are there other paths to achieve it?

Create a Plan

- Create a specific Phase II plan after Phase I rankings are submitted so you are prepared regardless of the results.
 - Talk to friends, family, and mentors about a backup plan
 - Consider what other options are available if you do not match
 - Is Phase II right for you?
 - If you are considering Phase II, what approach will you take?
 - Should you consider pursuing a job instead of a residency?
 - Should you consider pursuing a [gap year](#) and reapplying next year?
 - If you are considering pursuing a job, what type of practice setting do you see yourself in?
 - Have a few different plans in place so that you are not panicked if plan A does not work out and you can easily move to plan B

Timeline for Residency Preparations

Key Resources for Phase I and Phase II

- ASHP Residency Directory: <https://accreditation.ashp.org/directory/#/program/residency>
- Student Residency Resource Center: <https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/residency-information/student-residency-resource-center>
- Register for the Match: [National Matching Services \(NMS\)](#) if you have not done so already
- Applicants must register for the Match to send applications to residency programs
- Register for the [Pharmacy Online Residency Centralized Application Service \(PhORCAS\)](#)

March

- Develop and submit rank list in the NMS Match System for Phase I
- Develop a wellness and resiliency plan for getting through Phase I, Phase II, and the transition period between pharmacy school and residency
- Receive results of Phase I of the Match
- Participate in Phase II Match if necessary: Candidates who did not match for Phase I to utilize PhORCAS to submit residency applications for Phase II Match & prepare for Phase II interview

April

- Review Post-Match Resources
 - <https://www.ashp.org/professional-development/residency-information/match-day-resources>
- Prepare for Phase II interviews and ranking of the Match, if necessary
 - Phase II rank list due
 - Receive results of Phase II Match
- For more information on the full schedule of dates and deadlines each year, refer to [PhORCAS National Matching Services](#)

Reflections of Phase I

Are you preparing for Phase II? Now is the time to reflect on your experiences leading up to Phase I and identify aspects of your application that can be easily and quickly improved. Consider the following to jumpstart your self-evaluation:

- How do you think your interviews went?
- Is there someone you trust who was present at your interview(s), such as a mentor, who can assist in re-evaluating your performance (e.g., body language, answers to questions)?
- Review criteria used to apply to programs in Phase I of the Match (location, residency type, rotations offered) and consider expanding your search.
- What does your “gut” instinct tell you? Is there something you think you would have changed if you had a second chance?
- Talk to a mentor and use the [Phase II and Scramble Discussion Guide](#) to help review options for next steps.

Reevaluate your Personal and Professional Goals

- Take time to reflect on your personal and professional goals
- Focus on why you want to complete a residency
- Decide if completing a residency is necessary to reach your career goals or if you should begin searching for alternative career paths
- Consider the key components you are looking for in a residency program to achieve your personal and professional goals
- Determine which factors are negotiable and which are required
- Use these components to determine which positions to apply to during Phase II of the Match
- Use the SMART method to evaluate career goals: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound
 - It will help you identify what you want to accomplish, how you will measure success, evaluate the goals for attainability, how they align with your interests and values, and when you expect achievement
- Use the SWOT method to create career goals: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
 - It will help you evaluate the areas you are excelling in and areas that could be improved upon, which can then be used to set realistic goals

Utilize your Mentor

Not matching in Phase I can be an isolating experience and your mentors can provide the reassurance you deserve and owe yourself during this time. Examples of mentors include faculty members, work mentors (manager or pharmacist you work closely with), and rotation preceptors. Ask mentors in advance to set aside time on Match Day or the following weekend to be available to meet in the event you don't match. Consider asking your mentors and recommendation writers' questions such as:

- Do you know of other pharmacists that failed to match but were successful in Phase II and/or the Scramble? If so, can you describe the steps they took to navigate the post -Match process?
- Even if your mentor doesn't know a pharmacist personally, consider reading some of the ASHP blogs listed in [Additional Resources](#) for perspectives and guidance
- Can you provide some perspective on not matching?
- What personal qualities and experiences do you think I can emphasize going into Phase II of the Match?
- Do you think there is any aspect of my personality that may have contributed to not matching (e.g., over-confidence, quiet nature, unprofessional commentary, informal attire/attitude) that I can work on improving?

Network with Others

You've probably heard it before but remember that pharmacy is a small world. Take the time to learn more about your preceptors' and/or professors' education and training if they are willing to share. This information can become a huge asset during Phase II of the Match. By networking with them, you can have a quick resource to discuss strategies for pursuing Phase II and other possible career opportunities they may be aware of within their professional network. Also, if they are well networked they might know someone at a program that you want to know more about. Nothing is better than a personal perspective for the short period of time you have to evaluate programs in Phase II of the Match.

Social media is becoming a popular method of expanding one's network. Examples include professional networks such as [ASHP Connect](#), career building networks such as LinkedIn, and sites such as Instagram, Twitter ("X"), and Facebook that can serve a multitude of purposes. Digital business cards can now be created, allowing your resumé or curriculum vitae to be even more easily shareable.

Update your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Make sure to update your CV to reflect changes that occur throughout your rotations.
 - Update your list of completed rotations, teaching experiences, presentations delivered, any additional certifications you might have acquired, or anything you completed you may have previously forgotten
 - Review your format, content, and appearance
 - It may be necessary to delete content as well. In most cases, experience outside of pharmacy school is not always relevant to the residency search. That being said, a long-term career prior to pharmacy or a unique experience that speaks to your character may be worth leaving on your CV
- Check the [ASHP CV Development Resources](#) for various CV resources on formatting recommendations and minimum expectations for individual section content.
- Components of a CV:
 - Personal Information: Name and credentials, contact information
 - If you include social media links, ensure these social media pages are professional and updated
 - Educational Experience: Name and location of institution, dates attended, type of degree
 - Professional Experience: Name and location, dates employed, type of role
 - APPE/IPPE Rotation: Type of rotation, institution/preceptor
 - Research Experience: Projects, title, principal investigator, your role
 - Teaching Experience: Lectures, preceptorships, mentorships, classes taught
 - Publications: Professional/Peer-Reviewed/Journal, local or National Newsletter
 - Presentations: Title, organization, location
 - Professional Memberships: Organization, positions held, committees
 - Service: Professional or Community, volunteering
 - Grants/Awards: Name of grants/awards, sponsoring organization, location
 - Licensure and Certification: Pharmacy licenses, pharmacy-related certifications (organization affiliated with)
- Does your format highlight those experiences that align with your goals?
- List sections you want to highlight closer to the beginning of your CV
- Submit your CV as a .pdf file to ensure formatting is consistent!
- Examples to consider:
 - Have multiple people review your CV. You will receive feedback you have not heard before and avoid typos that were overlooked
 - Consider taking out experiences that are no longer relevant
 - If you submitted your CV for review to the spring cycle of the [ASHP CV Review Program](#), consider reaching out to your assigned reviewers to request an abbreviated timeline for feedback. Be polite and professional in your interactions, as

reviewers are not obligated to accommodate such requests. Always remember to say thank you in all interactions with your reviewers!

- Everything on your CV is fair game for questions during the interview
- Revise, revise, revise!

Continued Professional Development

- Optimize the time between completing interviews and the results of Phase I of the Match to enhance your CV in preparation for Phase II of the Match
- Are there additional experiences you can gain on your rotations or at work that will improve your application for Phase II of the Match?
- Does your preceptor or boss have a task they need help with? This can provide an opportunity for you to gain experience while reducing their workload
- Are there available certificate programs, webinars, or continuing education in your area of interest that you can complete during this time frame?
- Consider volunteering with local pharmacy organizations or organizing an event
- Even spending a bit more time reviewing material for patient cases in your interview can help you gain confidence in those clinical skills that shines through in your interview!
- Ask friends and/or faculty if they'd be willing to practice interviewing with you to identify any gaps that can be filled just by spending a bit of time considering your answer prior to your interviews

Rethink your References

Evaluate Phase I Recommenders

- Did you ask your Phase I references to write you a favorable recommendation?
- Does the person who wrote you a recommendation know you well? Can they speak to the skills you would offer as a pharmacy resident?
 - Conversely, does another person who might not fit the mold of a typical reference writer know you and your pharmacy potential better than some of your references? Think outside the box here: advisors, coaches, and a new APPE preceptor
- Did you provide your CV and/or letter of intent to your letter of recommendation writers?
- A reference from the Dean of the College of Pharmacy may say you are a very involved student, a lab researcher may speak to your great skills in benchtop research, or a philosophy teacher may state you are an insightful person. These may be good qualities, but

these references do not necessarily provide direct information on your abilities to be a successful resident or your clinical skills.

- Did you have a well-balanced set of references? Consider including a boss or someone who has known you for a long time, a preceptor or co-worker who can speak to your clinical skills, and then another preceptor or faculty member
 - As in Phase I, consider what the programs require of their applicants' recommenders. If a program requires your reference to speak about a specific quality and yours does not, that could harm your application package
 - Some programs have specific requirements for letter writers, make sure your references align with these requirements

Pick More Relevant Recommenders

- You had to submit your application in January, and now it is March. You have probably had another rotation or two. Did you do an outstanding job on one of these rotations? Are they more relevant to the position you are applying for?
 - E.g., BB is applying for residencies at children's hospitals and he did not have his pediatric rotation until February. He was so engaged that he received the highest mark at the end of the rotation. BB should consider adding this preceptor as a reference
- Due to a short turn-around time for references to be submitted, it is important to have conversations with these potential new references before Match Day in case their reference is needed

Approach to a New Phase II Recommender

- If you are interested in having a new reference, talk to the reference. Do not have them write anything yet but create the dialogue. "If I don't match in Phase I, would you mind writing me a reference for Phase II? If so, I would need this within a short time frame. Is this feasible for you?"
- By notifying them in advance, this reference can discuss your career goals and get your CV (note: another person to review your CV) so they have everything they need to write a good recommendation quickly
- Check out these other [tips for securing a letter of recommendation](#)

Update your Letter of Intent (LOI)

- A letter of intent should be brief, yet sincere and engaging, which can be a difficult balance for many applicants to obtain. In general, a letter of intent should not exceed one page (two at the most), and should lay out for the program the following information:
 - Your objective
 - Why you are interested in the program
 - Your specific past experiences that will allow you to excel within that particular program
 - How specific aspects of the residency align with your short & long-term career goals
- Ensure your cover letter is written for the specific residency program, avoid using generic statements that could apply to any residency program
 - If you have attended any program-specific events or connected with current residents or preceptors, mention these experiences
 - Highlight any specific clinical areas or specialties you are particularly interested in
 - Does your cover letter discuss how interested you are in taking care of children and neonates? If so, is this a letter you submitted to adult only hospitals?
 - As with your CV, have multiple people review your LOI and proofread carefully

For example letters of intent for various practice settings, refer to [Additional Resources](#)

Letter of Intent Do's		
Be direct	Be brief	Be genuine
Be specific	Use active rather than passive voice	Be aggressive in the editing process

Letter of Intent Do Not's		
Use jargon or slang	Use abbreviations	Use flowery language
Use a blanket letter for applying to all programs	Use example LOIs available as your own	Provide vague examples

Prepare for Phase II Interviews

- Based on your Phase I interview experiences, if you felt interview skills were an area where you needed to improve, consider scheduling a mock interview with a mentor or preceptor
- Reflect on interview questions that may have stumped you during the first round and consider how you could have better answered the question
- You may even want to write a list of difficult interview questions after each interview during Phase I so you have a new list of interview questions to review prior to Phase II
- Search and review more [sample interview questions](#) to help prepare
- Use the [ASHP Interview Prep Platform](#) to record yourself answering sample interview questions. Review the recording to identify areas where you can improve your responses, tone, or body language
- Maintaining the mindset of “Always Be Interviewing” during casual or informal settings, such as lunch with residents, is crucial. Even when in relaxed environments, you should be mindful of the professional image you project
- Prepare for different styles of interviews during Phase II of the Match (face to face, one on one, phone call, group conference call, Zoom, FaceTime, Microsoft Teams)
- Consider asking for time off from rotation to prepare and complete Phase II interviews
- Interview duration may be much shorter compared to Phase I, so use your time wisely and have your questions prepared
- Be adaptable to the interview environment. If the conversation takes a more relaxed turn, follow the lead of the interviewers while maintaining professionalism
- Prepare thoughtful questions to ask. Avoid asking questions that can be easily answered by reading the program’s website or materials
- Consider emailing thank you notes in follow-up as the short timeline likely will not allow for handwritten thank you notes to reach your interviewers in time
- For more information on how to best prepare for an interview refer to [Additional Resources](#)
- Have a list of experiences that can be applied to different situational questions, such as:

Topics for Situational Questions		
Conflict	Patient impact	Recommendations accepted
Recommendation not accepted	Working with a group	Leadership
Time management	Going above and beyond expectations	Stressful situation

- Questions about these situations may be phrased similar to these examples:
 - Tell us about a patient encounter you learned something from. Is there an example you are the most proud of?
 - Give an example of a time you were a part of a great team. What was your role and what did you learn from that experience?
 - Describe a time you encountered an upset or difficult patient or hospital staff member. How did you handle the situation?
 - Name a time you completed a difficult task or a time there was a problem. How did you resolve it?
- Keep a positive mindset and enjoy the process:
 - Understand that nobody is perfect. Embrace your imperfections and acknowledge areas for growth while describing how you are working on these areas
 - View the interview as a chance to showcase your skills again and learn more about the residency program
 - Enjoying the process can help alleviate stress and foster a positive attitude

PGY2 Resources

- Keep in mind the quick turnaround time between Phase I and Phase II
 - Pay attention to your PTO and/or interview allowance and speak with your RPD if you think you may need to adjust your rotation or staffing schedule to allow for time for interviews or interview preparation
 - Recognize that you and your schedule will need to be flexible and you may need to decline an interview if it isn't the right one for you
- Consider applying to related specialties that may expose you to the same patient population
 - E.g., internal medicine at a heart center may see a lot of cardiology patients; emergency medicine or critical care may be able to satisfy similar needs in a program depending on what is right for you
- You have likely completed several rotations since you completed your applications and interviews for Phase I
 - Would any of these preceptors make better reference writers?
 - Do any of these rotation specialties speak to you as another career option?
- Similar to the PGY1 Phase II experience, be willing to expand your geographic profile!
 - This year could be the adventure you didn't know you needed

Wellbeing & Resilience During Phase II

- Consider getting yourself a Match day present regardless of the outcome: it can be as small as your favorite ice cream ready to go in the freezer or going to see a movie! Set it up ahead of time so that you have something to look forward to on the day whether or not you match
- Phase I was a long and emotional process, so it should come as no surprise that Phase II will be just as emotional in a shortened period of time. It can be really hard to come back from that disappointment, fear, and anxiety after not matching during Phase II. Be sure to take care of yourself during this time
 - That first weekend after Match will be a busy time revising your application, but be sure to take some time to sit with your feelings and process them
 - Reach out to mentors or friends to remind yourself of your purpose in pharmacy and your worth as a human being
 - Note: At first, it may be easier to reach out to non-pharmacy friends or friends not participating in the Match. It is okay to tell your pharmacy friends that you need a few moments to process your results and work towards the next steps
- Although you will be busy that weekend after Match, you have enough time to take an hour-long walk to process your feelings. Plus, endorphins will give you more motivation to power through once you return!
- Maintain good sleep hygiene. This can help you manage your emotions over the next several weeks – that means turning off your screens before bed!
- It is okay to feel negative emotions - accept that it is completely normal to be upset by rejection or not achieving one's goals and normal to feel sadness or disappointment by it. It is important to allow yourself to feel these emotions briefly in order to move out of a negative emotional space and into a positive, goal driven mindset. Take this time to focus on your mental health and well-being by avoiding situations that could trigger a negative emotional response, such as social media.
- Ask and review feedback - reflect on the Phase I application process as a whole including your letter of intent and interviews. Ask yourself what aspects do you feel you could have done better? Reach out to your mentors for their professional input and advice. Be honest regarding your application experience.
- Avoid over-analyzing and focus on the normalcy - while reflection is important, avoid over-analyzing not matching. As mentioned above, spend time thinking back on the interviews, but avoid dwelling on the past. Understand you are not the only prospective candidate who did not match during the application cycle. This is not a reflection of your overall suitability as a pharmacist in the future!

- For more wellbeing and resilience resources, listen to the podcast [Prioritizing Well-being Throughout the Residency Application Process](#) and visit the [ASHP Wellbeing & Resilience Resource Center](#)

Additional Resources

- General Residency Preparation Resources
 - [ASHP Match Day Resources webpage](#)
 - [ASHP Student Residency Resource Center](#)
 - ASHP Publication: [Get the Residency: ASHP’s Guide to Residency Interviews and Preparation](#)
 - [ASHP Career Transitions Page](#)
 - [New Practitioner Interview and CV Resources](#)
 - [Tips for Securing a Letter of Recommendation](#)
- Phase II of the Match Specific Resources
 - [Readjust and Refocus: Experiences with the Phase II Match](#) (ASHP Podcast)
 - [Navigating and Thriving in Phase II and “Scramble”](#)(ASHP Podcast)
 - [Phase II and Scramble Candidate Discussion Guide](#)
 - [Establishing a Phase II Command Center](#)
 - [Round 2: The Second Match Phase and You](#) (PSHP News Article)
 - [Riche DM, Douglas KS, Sewell J. Implications of ASHP’s phase II Match process. Am J Health Syst Pharm. 2016;73\(21\):1720-21. \(AJHP Publication\)](#)
 - [Did Not Match Action Kit](#)
 - [Coaching Learners Who Didn’t Match](#) (ASHP Podcast)
- ASHP Connect Blogs on Residency and The Match
 - [Phase II of the Match](#)
 - [What I want to say to students who did not match](#)
 - [The Match, The Scramble, The Residency](#)
 - [Residency interviews](#)
 - [Preparing for residency interviews the second time around](#)

- Letter of Intent Resources
 - [ASHP Professional Pearl](#)
 - [Tips for writing pharmacy residency letters of intent \(AJHP article\)](#)
 - [Better letter of intent for pharmacy residency applications \(AJHP article\)](#)
 - [Best practices for PGY1 letters of intent: Recommendations from a modified Delphi process \(AJHP article\)](#)
 - [UC San Francisco](#)
 - [University of New Mexico](#)
- Interview Resources
 - [ASHP Residency Resource Center](#) including tips on interviews and thank you letters
 - [ASHP Match Day Resources](#)
 - [ASHP Interview Skills Packet for Residency Candidates](#)
 - [Interview Prep](#): ASHP's mock interview platform
 - [Tips for a Successful Virtual Interview Infographic](#)
 - [Video and Phone Interview Best Practices](#)
 - [New Practitioner Interview and CV Resources](#)
 - [Tips and Tricks to Nail the Interview: Advice from the New Practitioners Forum \(podcast\)](#)
 - [Tips for Acing Your Residency Interview Presentations \(podcast\)](#)
- *AJHP* Publications
 - [Tips for succeeding at pharmacy residency phone interviews](#)
 - [Getting the most from residency interviews](#)
 - [Strategies for successfully navigating the pharmacy residency interview process](#)
 - [Understanding and preparing for pharmacy practice residency interviews](#)
 - [Preparing for postgraduate year 1 pharmacy residency interviews: A focus on clinical knowledge and problem-solving assessments](#)
 - [A new practitioner's guide to a successful interview](#)