

Area of Concentration in Pharmacy Business Administration (ARCO-PBA) in the Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) Program

Purpose

The purpose of the Area of Concentration in Pharmacy Business Administration (ARCO-PBA) is to allow students to pursue an area of emphasis within management consistent with their professional interests and expose students to an area of pharmacy practice that may best suit their career development. Student leaders and informal organizers may discover that pharmacy leadership provides an energizing career path.

Description

Pharmacists are increasingly relied upon to assume leadership roles in patient care and health care organizations. Regardless of their title or formal position in the organization, pharmacists have the opportunity to lead, manage and affect change. The primary objective of the ARCO-PBA is to introduce pharmacy students to key elements of leadership. The ARCO-PBA is not intended to provide all of the necessary training needed to become an effective leader, but rather provide an introductory exposure to the principles of effective leadership and management.

The ARCO-PBA in the University of Pittsburgh PharmD curriculum does not require students to take additional credits beyond what is required for the PharmD degree, but rather is a mechanism for students to organize their classroom-based and experiential-based electives and experiences, and a special project in a focused way. As such, the credits satisfy requirements for both the ARCO-PBA and the PharmD degree. The ARCO-PBA is available only to students enrolled in the PharmD curriculum.

Students successfully completing the ARCO-PBA will receive special recognition at the School of Pharmacy hooding ceremony and a corresponding notation on their official academic transcript.

The low student/faculty ratio and tailored curriculum of the ARCO-PBA offers a special opportunity for students to acquire an important skill set. While new skills may be acquired throughout the School's curriculum, the ARCO-PBA offers an advanced exposure to critical leadership and management theories and skills. The unique electives, rotations, and projects allow students to apply these skills and to generate evidence supporting their achievement of administration and leadership outcomes.

Skills that students may acquire include the following:

Leadership	Development of leadership qualities and skills to become an innovative, entrepreneurial, and successful professional with effective organizational and communication skills.
Health Policy	An understanding of the structure of the health care system and policy development and decision-making.
Health Finance	The ability to apply economic theory and finance principles as a basis for decision-making in the provision of patient-centered, pharmaceutical care.
Marketing	The ability to apply the principles of marketing to advance the interests of the profession.

Medication Safety	The ability to utilize data, outcome analysis, published evidence, and medication use evaluation to improve patient care.
Process Improvement	The ability to apply the principles, theory, and application of quality improvement to improve medication use systems and design.
Decision Analysis	An understanding of the complexity of health care issues and challenges and the ability to apply analytical tools to improve decision-making.
Information Management	An ability to undertake database development and management including the use of large health-related databases to answer health questions.
Management Theory	An ability to apply the processes for budgeting and financing, as well as the methods for output analysis, quality control, human resource development, program marketing, and management policy development.

Academic Requirements

The ARCO-PBA consists of six credits of approved elective classroom-based courses, two Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPEs) in management, and an approved project conducted under the guidance of an advisor. A minimum of 16 credit hours of coursework and rotations in the ARCO-PBA are required. The approved project may be a Special Topics Elective, or it may be co-curricular as a voluntary student project effort.

Coursework

Within the School of Pharmacy, courses have been approved for inclusion in the ARCO-PBA. Additional courses outside the School of Pharmacy have also been approved. Students may select any combination of approved courses to fulfill the requirements. Additional courses outside the School of Pharmacy may also be accepted on a case-by-case basis with prior approval of the ARCO-PBA oversight group, the course director, and the School of Pharmacy Curriculum Committee. If a student desires to have another course approved for inclusion in ARCO-PBA, he or she must submit a request to the ARCO-PBA coordinator with the course description and intended outcomes that will be fulfilled by the course to begin the review and approval process.

Approved School of Pharmacy courses include:

- Executive Boardroom (PHARM 2510) 1 credit
- Community Pharmacy Management (PHARM 5805) 3 credits
- Implementing Health Care Innovation (PHARM 5812) 1.5 credits
- Concepts of Managed Care (PHARM 5815) 2 credits
- Special Topics (PHARM 5851-5858) 1 to 3 credits

Approved Professional Electives Outside the School of Pharmacy:

- Health Program Evaluation (BCHS 2558) 3 credits
- Introduction to Management (BUSERV 1915) 3 credits
- Organizational Communication (COMMRC 1102) 3 credits
- Small Group Communication (COMMRC 1106) 3 credits
- Database Management in Health Care (HRS 2424) 3 credits
- Financial Management in Health Care (HRS 2435) 3 credits
- Global Health Care (NUR 1900) 2 credits

Experiential Rotations

Selected APPE rotations are designated as meeting the requirements for the ARCO-PBA. In addition to these rotations, students may also arrange new rotations as long as these rotations facilitate the development of the ARCO-PBA skills. Rotation experiences can include, but are not limited to, the following areas: quality improvement, information technology, leadership, clinical/operational oversight, staff development, pharmacoeconomic-decision making, innovation in practice, formulary management, consulting, or inventory management. For previously unapproved rotations, an application must be submitted with a written overview of the site, expected learning outcomes, anticipated experiences, and approval from the rotation preceptor, to the School of Pharmacy Director of Experiential Learning. Approval of new rotations to fulfill requirements for the ARCO-PBA is at the discretion of the Director of Experiential Education and the ARCO-PBA coordinator or oversight group.

Project

Students must complete a project under the supervision of a faculty member. Once accepted into the ARCO-PBA, students will meet with the ARCO-PBA coordinator to discuss suitable project ideas and identify faculty mentors. Once a student has decided upon a project for completion, a project form sheet should be submitted to the ARCO-PBA coordinator. Students may elect to work on the project for credit by enrolling in the Special Topics course; however, completing the project for credit is not necessary. Students should consult the School of Pharmacy registrar for enrollment information for Special Topics courses. To enroll in a Special Topics course, students must receive approval from the chair of the Curriculum Committee. Project topics may include, but are not limited to, quality improvement or information technology implementation, staff development, application of innovation in practice, or quality and practice improvement. While there is no specific timeline of requirements for the project, it should be completed by the end of the fall semester of the student's P4 year, allowing time to present the results and poster, if required.

Students are expected to create a poster to present their project and project results. This poster should include the following:

Introduction: Start with general research objectives, then provide a few lines about the content of the work, and end with a clear statement of predictions tested.

Methods: Provide essentials about the subjects, site, and protocol of your work.

Results: Describe what was found in text or graphical form.

Discussion/Conclusion/Significance: Give the take-home message or most important points to remember.

Acknowledgements/References: List sources of information.

Portfolio

To provide evidence of meeting the learning objectives set forth above, students will be required to document their learning as a part of their professional portfolio. A strong emphasis should be placed on the project completed for the ARCO-PBA.

An image of the final poster summary should be included in the portfolio and should be accompanied by a brief reflection of how the project helped the student meet desired objectives of the ARCO-PBA. Additional pieces of evidence from the project should be submitted at the discretion of the student. These may include annotated bibliographies, data collected, interviews with participants, rough drafts with edits from faculty mentor, and diagrams. To complete the portfolio requirements of the ARCO-PBA, a minimum of one piece of evidence must be submitted from each class and rotation taken as credit toward the ARCO-PBA. This should include projects, presentation, papers, and/or reflections completed during the class or rotation. After completion of all aspects of the ARCO-PBA, an overall reflection should be written to describe how the ARCO-PBA curriculum has contributed to accomplishing each of the learning objectives and how these lessons will be applied to the student's future practice. This final reflection should be tailored to how completion of the ARCO-PBA will be an asset to future employers.

Student Application Process

The ARCO-PBA is not able to accommodate all interested students due to resource limitations. As a result, enrollment in the ARCO-PBA is not guaranteed and is open to only six (6) students per class. Students interested in pursuing this concentration are required to apply to the program. The application process requires a(an):

- Letter of intent, including a discussion of the anticipated value of the ARCO to desired career
- Professional portfolio, including résumé or curriculum vitae
- Permission for the oversight group to review the applicant's University of Pittsburgh academic transcript
- Interview with at least one member of the oversight group, if requested by the oversight group

Within the PharmD curriculum, classroom-based elective courses are taken in the P3 year. To facilitate selection of targeted courses and research rotations, the deadline for applications is during the P2 year. Students will be notified regarding the status of their application prior to registration for the fall term of the P3 year. Complete applications will be screened by a minimum of two members of the ARCO-PBA oversight group. Although students may apply to multiple ARCO programs, due to the rigorous expectations of this ARCO (and the other available ARCO programs), students will be accepted into one ARCO program for their P3 year.

If the ARCO-PBA program is not at full enrollment capacity following a given application period, the ARCO director/coordinator may elect, at a later date, to consider acceptance of students who come to career goals later in his/her academic career but are committed to the specific career path and who submit the required materials (see above). Acceptance is possible only if students can successfully achieve program requirements in the remaining academic periods.

Members of the ARCO-PBA oversight group are available to answer questions and discuss the ARCO-PBA program. Contact information is provided below.

ARCO-PBA Oversight Group

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