



SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Office of Professional Pharmacy Education

# Assessing First-Year Student Pharmacists' Perceptions Regarding Usefulness of the APhA Career Pathways Tool for Career Exploration

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## OBJECTIVES

The objective of this project was to better understand incoming first-year pharmacy students' (PY1) perceptions of the usefulness of the APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program for Pharmacy Professionals (Career Pathways) as a tool to explore pharmacy careers and specializations.

## METHODS

All PY1 students completed the Career Pathways assessment as part of pre-work for the introductory Profession of Pharmacy course in autumn 2017 prior to arriving on campus for orientation. Students were asked to complete a brief survey after reviewing their results from the assessment; 97 students (92% of the cohort) responded. A mid-quarter workshop to discuss assessment results and the use of the tool was held for all students, following the close of the survey.

## RESULTS

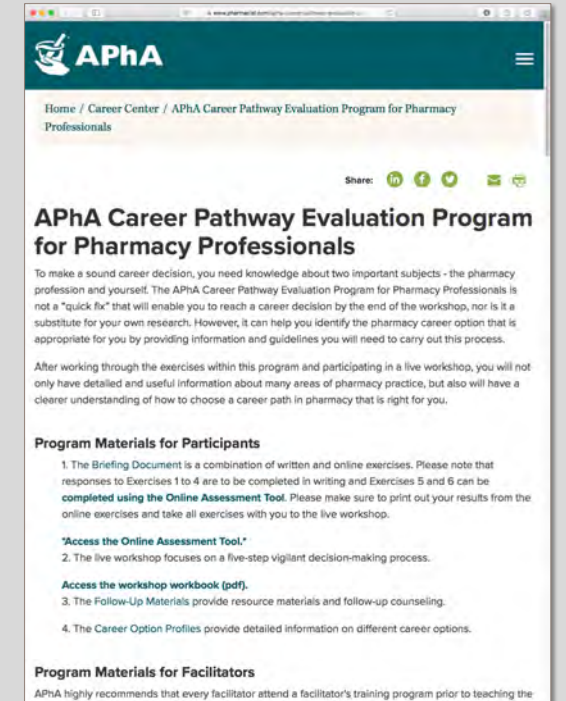
Most respondents (86%) agreed that the Career Pathways tool was useful for them in beginning to think about potential career prospects in pharmacy. The majority of respondents (77%) indicated they were initially surprised by one or more of their results; the same number also agreed that they could see how their results list matched their preferences after reviewing the career profiles provided by APhA. When asked whether they expect to use their results to explore pharmacy career opportunities while in pharmacy school, 86% of respondents agreed.

## STUDENT RESPONSES

Statement (n = 97)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I found the Career Pathways tool to be useful in helping me think about career prospects in pharmacy.	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	13 (13%)	51 (53%)	32 (33%)
I was surprised by one or more of my results.	0 (0%)	7 (7%)	15 (16%)	51 (53%)	24 (24%)
After reviewing the career profiles, I can see how my results seem to match with my stated preferences.	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	19 (20%)	51 (53%)	24 (24%)
I can see myself using my results to explore areas of pharmacy practice and specialties that I may wish to pursue following graduation.	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	13 (13%)	44 (46%)	39 (40%)

## DISCUSSION

Students' initial reactions to the Career Pathways tool, process, and results indicate that students found the assessment useful and expect to make use of it as they explore pharmacy careers. Some students (8%) also specifically cited Career Pathways as a significant learning activity in their post-course reflections. This supports the continued use of the tool with first-year students, and may suggest value in continuing to engage students in reviewing their results or even re-taking the assessment at various points during the course of the degree program.



The APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program for Pharmacy Professionals is designed to provide students and practicing pharmacists with information on various areas in which pharmacists practice and with a process that can be used to choose the appropriate career path in pharmacy.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup><https://www.pharmacist.com/apha-career-pathway-evaluation-program-pharmacy-professionals/>