

# ASHP CERTIFIED PHARMACY EXECUTIVE LEADER (CPEL<sup>SM</sup>)



CANDIDATE  
HANDBOOK



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## ABOUT THE CPEL

ASHP's Certified Pharmacy Executive Leader (CPEL) credential acknowledges the unique expertise of pharmacy executive leaders to current and future employers, healthcare administrators, colleagues, and other health care professionals.

The CPEL credential provides recognition of core leadership [competencies](#) in professionalism, leading self, leading people, leading within the organization and leading across complex health care systems. The CPEL also demonstrates a commitment to achieving and maintaining excellence in pharmacy leadership.

To apply for the CPEL credential, candidates must meet the eligibility criteria and complete the online application. Applications are reviewed and approved by the [ASHP Pharmacy Practice Accreditation Commission](#). Approved candidates are required to participate in a multi-day, in-person capstone at ASHP. Upon successful completion of the capstone, candidates are awarded the CPEL credential for 7 years.

ASHP does not require passing a standardized exam or completion of any of our own training, courses, or educational programs to apply for or achieve the CPEL credential.

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) administers the Certified Pharmacy Executive Leader (CPEL) program.

## TARGET CPEL CANDIDATES

Leading hospitals and health systems must have strategic and innovative pharmacy executives who plan and oversee the design and operation of complex medication-use services or processes that lead to clinical interventions that improve patient outcomes. Leadership experience in the context of the CPEL credential is defined as an individual who is responsible for actively leading and participating in the pharmacy enterprise's and health system's strategic planning and decision-making processes at senior levels. The target practitioner may lead operational aspects of pharmacy practice and/or clinical services. Essential to the CPEL roles are the abilities to:

- Ensure the enterprise's strategic planning leverages pharmacy services across the continuum of care to improve health outcomes.
- Optimize formulary management with an emphasis on procurement that is driven by clinical efficacy, patient outcomes, and total cost of care.
- Collaborate with executives within and external to the health system to build cross-functional relationships and align services with initiatives such as quality metrics and financial performance.
- Advance patient care services through the promotion of pharmacy best practices by the creation and adoption of emerging technologies and innovative services.
- Lead a culture that is conducive to the highest levels of patient care, employee retention, training and recruitment.
- Ensure a workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment and supportive of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as employee growth, wellness, and resilience.

Certified Pharmacy Executive Leaders must demonstrate achievement of professional and leadership competencies for leading oneself, people, and the organization. CPELs possess broad-based competencies in professionalism, communication, mentoring, advocacy, systems thinking, critical thinking and synthesis, and leading a healthy work environment.



## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The eligibility requirements have been established to ensure that individuals certified by ASHP as a CPEL have the required level of knowledge and skills in core professional and leadership competencies. In establishing these requirements, ASHP acknowledges that a combination of both work experience and demonstrated competencies are essential for individuals earning the CPEL credential.

An individual who meets eligibility requirements, is approved by the Pharmacy Practice Accreditation Commission (PPAC), and successfully completes the in-person capstone will receive the Certified Pharmacy Executive Leader (CPEL) credential for 7 years.

To apply for the CPEL, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Current ASHP member at the time of application (with sustained membership throughout certification).
- A valid and unrestricted license to practice pharmacy in the U.S. or other jurisdiction.
- Graduation from a pharmacy program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) or a program outside the U.S. that qualifies the individual to practice in the jurisdiction.
- Completion of an ASHP-accredited pharmacy residency or documentation of equal experience and qualifications. Candidates who have not completed a residency will respond to additional questions in the application to document their qualifications.
- Current executive leadership position with a minimum of 5 years of progressive and sustained leadership experience including significant managerial oversight in a healthcare organization resulting in advancing pharmacy practice and positive patient outcomes. Candidates who do not currently work in a health system but have within the last 3 years, are still eligible to apply.
- Achievement of the CPEL competencies (candidates will respond to questions in the online application to document competencies). Candidates will also be assessed on demonstrated achievement of competencies during the capstone.
- Two (2) references ideally one from a senior health system executive affirming CPEL experience/oversight requirements.
- Documentation of current (within past 2 years) volunteerism in healthcare-related organizations including any charitable organization or for a professional organization where your contribution was not compensated. Preceptor roles are not considered volunteer activities.

## CPEL FEES

### CPEL Certification Fees

| Action                          | Fee           | Details                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <b>Application Fee</b>          | \$0           | There is no fee to apply.                     |
| <b>Capstone Fee</b>             | \$500.00      | For initial certification only.               |
| <b>Annual Certification Fee</b> | \$150.00/year | Annually during the 7-year certification term |
| <b>Recertification Fee</b>      | \$600.00      | Every 7 years to renew certification          |

### Capstone Tuition: \$500

The capstone is the final required step for candidates to earn the CPEL credential. During this multi-day in-person program at ASHP, candidates will engage in facilitated discussions with peers based on the CPEL professional and leadership competencies. Upon successful completion of the capstone, candidates will be awarded CPEL certification for 7 years.

The capstone tuition fee is only required for initial certification. Capstone fees are subject to cancellation policies. If you must cancel participation in a confirmed capstone, your tuition payment can be applied to a future session provided cancellation is received at least 10 days prior to the capstone. Cancellations received within 10 days of the capstone will be charged a \$100 processing fee.



### **Capstone Travel Expenses**

Candidates are responsible for coordinating and paying for their own travel, accommodation, and incidentals to participate in the capstone. ASHP will provide a list of local hotels offering a special room rate for capstone participants. Lunches and beverages will be provided during the capstone as part of the tuition fee. Capstone participants are responsible for breakfasts and dinners. ASHP will schedule and fill capstones on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Annual Fees: \$150**

CPELs are required to pay a \$150 annual certification fee. ASHP will send an invoice every year during the certification cycle including the first year. Payment is due within 60 days of notification.

### **Recertification Fee: \$600**

Each CPEL will recertify once every seven (7) years by paying the recertification fee and submitting a portfolio that affirms their eligibility and CPEL recertification activities.

## **THE APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **APPLICATION**

All applications must be submitted online. An application is considered incomplete if any of the requested information is missing, illegible, or the appropriate documentation is not included. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and capstones will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **ONLINE APPLICATION**

To apply, follow the instructions and complete an online application at [ashp.org/cpel](https://ashp.org/cpel).

Ensure that your ASHP membership is current prior to online application. Be prepared to upload electronic versions/photos of your license, CV, and document other eligibility requirements as part of your online application.

#### **Steps to Apply:**

1. Provide personal and professional information, including ASHP membership ID and BPS certification (if applicable).
2. Upload current CV documenting leadership experience. Roles must include a minimum of 5 years (post-residency) progressive and sustained leadership experience including significant managerial oversight in a healthcare organization resulting in advancing pharmacy practice and positive patient outcomes.
3. Upload a photo of your current pharmacy license.
4. Provide information about your pharmacy training including residency if applicable. If you have not completed a residency, you will document equal experience and qualifications.
5. Document completion of the ASHP Pharmacy Leadership Academy (PLA) and/or master's degree, if applicable. These activities support your application but are not required to apply.
6. Document your achievement of CPEL competencies. Be prepared to provide examples of key accomplishments and your roles leading the pharmacy enterprise in the overall health care organization.
7. Upload 2 letters of reference, ideally one from a senior health-system executive in your organization attesting to your leadership roles and experience.
  - » On official letterhead and signed by endorser
  - » Mention relation to applicant
  - » Include dates of employment and current position
  - » Attests to your leadership experience and managerial oversight touching on the following criteria if possible



- Participating in the pharmacy enterprise's and health system's strategic planning and decision-making processes at the most senior levels.
  - Collaborating with executives within and external to the health system to build cross-functional relationships and align services with initiatives such as quality metrics and financial performance.
  - Advancing patient care services through the promotion of pharmacy best practices by the creation and adoption of emerging technologies and innovative services.
8. Upload documentation within past 2 years of volunteerism in healthcare-related organizations such as a community, charitable or professional organization where your contribution was not compensated. Volunteer roles must not be part of your role/responsibility in your profession such as precepting residents or mentoring.

ASHP will review applications for completeness and will send a confirmation notice to the email provided in your application.

## STATEMENT OF IMPARTIALITY

ASHP and its employees, volunteers and contractors understand the importance of impartiality and the consideration of any potential conflicts of interest in carrying out its certification activities. ASHP shall manage conflicts of interest and ensure the objectivity of its certification activities. ASHP shall act impartially in relation to its applicants, candidates, and certified persons. Decisions on certification programs shall be made in accordance with established policies and procedures. Policies and procedures affecting applicants, candidates, and certified persons shall be made public and shall fairly and accurately convey information about the certification program. Certification of individuals is based on objective evidence obtained by ASHP through a fair, valid and reliable assessment process which is not influenced by other interests or parties. ASHP is committed to identifying and assessing risks in all related certification activities which may result in a conflict of interest or pose a threat to impartiality.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

ASHP does not discriminate among candidates based on race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual preference, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, family status, pregnancy status, parenthood status, political affiliation, veteran's status, disability or other protected status.

## THE CAPSTONE

The capstone is the final requirement for candidates to earn the CPEL credential. The capstone is an intensive in-person demonstration of your pharmacy leadership competencies, replacing a standardized exam used to certify candidates in specialized areas of knowledge. The capstone is not intended as training where knowledge is imparted but rather a validation of your earned leadership competencies.

During this multi-day in-person program at ASHP, candidates will engage in facilitated case discussions with peers based on the CPEL professional and leadership competencies. Upon successful completion of the capstone, candidates will receive their CPEL certification for 7 years.

### Capstone Withdrawal and Cancellation Policy

Candidates who are approved by the ASHP Pharmacy Practice Accreditation Commission (PPAC) for the capstone must reserve their place in their selected capstone and pay the tuition fee of \$500 to continue in the process to receive CPEL certification. Capstone fees are subject to cancellation policies. If you must cancel participation in a confirmed capstone, your tuition payment can be applied to a future session provided cancellation is received at least 10 days prior to the capstone. Cancellations received within 10 days of the capstone will be charged a \$100 processing fee.

## REQUEST FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

ASHP complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and strives to ensure that no individual with a disability is deprived of the opportunity to participate solely by reason of that disability. ASHP will provide reasonable accommodation for a candidate with a disability who requests accommodation.



## CONFIDENTIALITY

Information about an individual's application status, personal applicant/certificant information, and capstone assessments are considered confidential. Subject to the terms of the "Aggregate Data" provision below, all application information is confidential and will not be shared with any party other than ASHP and members of the ASHP Pharmacy Practice Accreditation Commission. Information about a candidate/ certificant will only be released to that applicant/certificant unless release of the information is authorized in writing by the individual or is required by law.

## INFORMATION FOR THE NEW CERTIFICANT

### MAINTENANCE OF CPEL CERTIFICATION

CPELs must maintain a valid and unrestricted license to practice pharmacy and ASHP membership in good standing throughout their certification term.

CPELs must also pay an annual fee of \$150 each year during the 7-year certification term.

CPELs must also participate in approved recertification activities to recertify. Refer to the CPEL Recertification Handbook for additional information about recertification activities and processes.

## ADHERING TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

ASHP is responsible to its candidates, certificants, employers, the profession and the public for ensuring the integrity of all processes and products of its certification programs. As such, certificants will be expected to adhere to the ASHP-endorsed [Code of Ethics for Pharmacists](#).

### PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

A certificant who is awarded certification by ASHP agrees to conduct himself / herself in an ethical and professional manner. This includes demonstrating practice-related behavior that is indicative of professional integrity. By accepting certification, the certificant agrees to:

- Maintain professional competence;
- Demonstrate work behavior that exemplifies ability to perform safely, competently and with good judgment;
- Conduct professional activities with honesty and integrity;
- Avoid discriminating against any individual based on age, gender, race, color, religion, national origin, disability or marital status or any other protected characteristic;
- Avoid conflicts of interest;
- Abide by the laws, rules and regulations of duly authorized agencies regulating the profession; and
- Abide by rules and regulations governing programs conducted by ASHP.

Infraction of these professional standards of conduct is misconduct for which granting of a certification or renewal of a certification may be delayed or denied, or for which a certification may be revoked by the ASHP.

### POLICY ON SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATION

ASHP is responsible for suspending, withdrawing, or changing the scope of certification. The certification of an individual may be suspended for:

- Failure to complete or fulfill requirements for recertification.
- Failure to maintain a valid and unrestricted license to practice pharmacy.
- Failure to maintain ASHP membership in good standing throughout certification term.
- Determination that certification or recertification was improperly granted.



- Misrepresentation or misstatement of facts submitted for application or recertification.
- Violation of the Code of Ethics for Pharmacists.

## CERTIFICATION VERIFICATION

An individual's certification status is not considered confidential. The names of certified individuals are not considered confidential and may be published by ASHP. ASHP will provide confirmation of certification status to anyone who requests the information. Verification of certification status will include the individual's name, current certification status, and current expiration date.

## AGGREGATE DATA

ASHP reserves the right to use information supplied by or on behalf of a candidate. Studies and reports concerning candidates contain no information identifiable with any candidate, unless authorized by the candidate. Demographic information about a candidate is shared only in cases where the candidate may benefit.

## VALIDATION OF COMPETENCIES

ASHP will continually assess the CPEL domains and competencies. Certificants may be asked to participate in future ASHP activities designed to validate and update the leadership competencies for the CPEL program.

## NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGE

Please [update your account](#) to ensure timely receipt of all CPEL communications.

## USE OF THE CERTIFICATION MARK AND BADGE

After receiving notification of CPEL designation, the credential may be used as long as certification remains valid and in good standing. Individuals may not use the CPEL credential until they have received specific written notification that they have successfully completed all requirements, including the capstone. Certificants must comply with all recertification requirements to maintain use of the credential.

Candidates are encouraged to use the credential in all correspondence, public profiles, and professional relations. The credential is typically listed after your name following any academic degrees and other certifications (e.g., Jane Smith, Pharm.D., BCPS, CPEL).

Certification is a non-transferable, revocable, limited, non-exclusive license to use the certification designation "CPEL," subject to compliance with the policies and procedures, as may be revised from time to time.

The certification mark(s) may be used only as long as certification is valid.

## DIGITAL CERTIFICATION BADGE

ASHP has partnered with Credly to provide a digital representation of your CPEL badge. This digital badge contains information describing your credential and will allow you to easily validate your credential and share your achievement on LinkedIn and other platforms.

## THE RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

CPEL certification demonstrates your initial achievement of validated CPEL professional and leadership competencies in professionalism, leading self, leading people, leading within the organization and leading across complex health care systems. Renewal of the certification is required to maintain certified status. Initial certification or renewal of certification is valid for seven (7) years.





## PURPOSE & RATIONALE OF RECERTIFICATION

ASHP supports the ongoing leadership professional development of CPELs. The recertification process provides CPELs with the opportunity to demonstrate their continued CPEL professional and leadership competencies and commitment to maintaining excellence in pharmacy leadership.

- Recertification also provides encouragement of, acknowledgement for, and participation in ongoing professional and leadership development activities.
- Participation in live in-person and live virtual activities are essential opportunities to learn with and from other members of the CPEL community, while enabling CPELs to grow their peer network for sharing and problem-solving.
- Participation in volunteer activities is essential to supporting the communities leaders serve.

To support this purpose, recertification activities include a variety of leadership professional development, peer-to-peer networking, and volunteerism.

## CPEL RECERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ASHP member
- Current valid and unrestricted pharmacy license in the U.S. or another jurisdiction is required for recertification. An individual whose pharmacy license expires or is revoked is not authorized to use the CPEL credential and may not represent themselves as being certified by ASHP.
- Application documenting
  - » Four (4) volunteer activities since last certification
  - » Key accomplishments during certification term
  - » Mentoring during certification term
- Completion of leadership professional development including
  - » 60 points of CPEL-designated continuous professional development including a minimum of 30 points from live in person or live virtual activities
- Payment of recertification fee (\$600).

Recertification activities will be provided by ASHP and other approved organizations. We recommend CPELs complete approximately 8-10 points annually to meet the total requirement of 60 points in seven years.

## POINTS SYSTEM

ASHP uses a points system for reporting CPEL recertification activities. Refer to the CPEL Recertification Handbook or the points scoring tool, including minimum and maximum points for approved activities.

Ensure that activities occurred between the beginning and end dates of your recertification cycle. An activity must be completed before it can be reported. Entering activities into your portal throughout your recertification term such as annually, rather than waiting until the end, is recommended.

## FAILING TO RENEW

A CPEL who fails to renew certification by the deadline and/or contact ASHP about recertification status is no longer considered certified. The CPEL credential in professional communications, such as on letterhead, stationery, and business cards, in directory listings and in signature may no longer be used. To regain certification after a lapse of 6 months, the individual must re-apply, pay the application and capstone fees, and successfully complete the capstone.

If any areas of non-compliance are identified during the any review of a recertification application the individual will have 30 days to submit any required information. If the required information is not provided the individual's certification will expire at the end of the 30 days or on the normal expiration date (whichever comes last).



## APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

A candidate who believes he/she was unjustly denied eligibility for the CPEL or who believes he/she was unjustly denied renewal of certification may request reconsideration of the decision by submitting a written appeal.

The candidate for certification or renewal of certification must provide convincing evidence that a severe disadvantage was afforded the candidate during processing of an application for certification or renewal of certification. The appeal must be made within 45 days of receipt of the adverse decision (for example, official correspondence related to certification or renewal of certification from the ASHP). The written appeal must also indicate the specific relief requested.

Complete copies of the appeals policies are available upon request from ASHP.

All complaints and requests for reconsideration should be submitted via email to [cpel@ashp.org](mailto:cpel@ashp.org). The sender will receive an acknowledgment of the submission. The submission will be reviewed, and the outcome will be communicated within 45 days.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)  
4500 East-West Highway, Suite 900  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
[ashp.org](http://ashp.org)

### **CPEL Website**

[ashp.org/cpel](http://ashp.org/cpel)

### **Email**

[cpel@ashp.org](mailto:cpel@ashp.org)