

Saint Alphonse Regional Medical Center  
PGY1 Pharmacy Residency Program  
Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why did you pick Saint Alphonse?**
  - **Alex** – I chose Saint Alphonse because of the people. I was initially interested because of the abundant acute care, emergency medicine and critical care learning opportunities, but throughout the interview process I felt like it would be a good fit for me both personally and professionally. Saint Alphonse is also the only level 2 trauma hospital in the area which was important for me. Also, as an added bonus, Boise is a beautiful city with some gorgeous mountains nearby!
  - **Paige**– I chose Saint Alphonse because of the firsthand experience I gained as an intern here. Working alongside the pharmacists, I was able to see the strong culture of collaboration, patient-centered care and supportive learning environment. This experience solidified my desire to pursue a residency, and it became clear to me that this was the environment where I wanted to start my career as a pharmacist.
  
- **Do you feel like you have a good work-life balance? Does your RPD support this?**
  - **Melissa** – I feel like the entire team of Saint Alphonse has created a friendly environment from day one which encourages both professional growth and well-being. Expectations are clear and manageable and there is an open-door culture that makes it easy to communicate any challenges. I've found that the leadership genuinely values balance and actively promotes resources and flexibility to help us succeed both professionally and personally.
  - **Alex** – The Saint Alphonse team is deeply committed to fostering both professional growth and a healthy work-life balance. Recognizing that personal well-being is essential to maximizing one's potential, the team actively supports residents in achieving this balance. By creating an environment that prioritizes both development and wellness, Saint Alphonse empowers residents to thrive throughout their training. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure each resident's success, and promoting a sustainable work-life balance is a key component of that mission.
  
- **How many hours do the residents spend working per week including rotation hours and time spent outside of rotations working on projects?**
  - This varies by time of the year and from resident to resident. Most residents typically spend between 50-60 hours per week on rotation and working on projects combined.

- **Does the residency program work to incorporate the residents' interests into rotations and projects?**
  - Yes! There are a wide variety of electives to choose from and preceptors on required rotations will also work with residents to help focus on areas of improvement or areas of interest to help the resident get the most out of their experience.
  
- **What rotation have you enjoyed (or are looking forward to) the most so far?**
  - **Alex** – I am most looking forward to my acute care and emergency medicine rotations. Any rotation involving direct patient care is pretty exciting for me. I frequently think back to my earlier days when I worked as a certified nursing assistant, and that really solidified my passion for working in the acute care environment. Any opportunity to contribute to a patient's wellbeing and overall health goals is very rewarding for me. Furthermore, I know the preceptors here are extremely knowledgeable in areas such as emergency medicine and critical care, so I will have ample opportunity to grow in these areas and try to learn as much as I possibly can.
  
  - **Danielle**- I enjoyed my medical/surgery rotation. This area allows pharmacists to play an integral role in the patient's interdisciplinary team. Providers are also very pharmacy friendly and welcome input and inquire about interventions often. The pharmacists manage all vancomycin, heparin, warfarin, and TPN dosing through pharmacy consults. The medical/surgery rotation is scheduled for either the first or second clinical block which is great because it provides a baseline understanding of the processes and procedures pharmacists are responsible for.
  
  - The rotations I am looking forward to are the antimicrobial stewardship rotation and the critical care rotation. I already have an interest in infectious disease, and I feel the hospital has a constant desire to keep up to date on infectious disease practices. The hospital consists of three intensive care units specifically for general critical care issues, cardiac intensive care, and neuro intensive care.
  
- **What do you feel like you have gained from your residency experience so far?**
  - **Melissa** – So far, residency has helped me grow significantly in both clinical knowledge and confidence in managing complex patient cases. I've strengthened my communication and critical thinking skills while learning to adapt and prioritize in fast-paced healthcare environment. Overall, it has been valuable experience that shaping me into more well-rounded pharmacist.
  
  - **Paige** – Since the start of residency, I have gained confidence in my clinical decision-making. I have been able to assess patient cases and make evidence-based recommendations to multidisciplinary teams. I have also gained the ability to adapt quickly and learn from feedback.

- **What do your staffing shifts look like? Do you feel well supported while staffing?**
  - Staffing is required every third weekend during which the resident works in the central pharmacy in the first half of the residency and then transition to a satellite for the last quarter(s). Staffing starts with training in the central pharmacy while working to learn the policies, procedures, and processes. Additionally, staff are readily available to help support the residents and to answer questions, particularly in the first few months.
  - **Paige** – Staffing happens every third weekend. At the beginning of residency, we are able to train with experienced pharmacists who provide support and ensure you are comfortable prior to starting to staff on your own. Even after training, all the pharmacists at St. Al's are willing to assist if any questions arise to ensure that you are successful on your staffing shifts.
  - **Danielle** – The staffing shifts at Saint Alphonsus occur every third weekend. Although it is expected to staff independently, this does not occur until several weekend shifts of training. Even when staffing independently, you are never alone because there are multiple pharmacists staffing throughout the hospital. All the pharmacists truly care about the success of the residents and are willing to help if needed.
- **What are resident longitudinal projects like?**
  - The residents' projects are focused on departmental process improvement and institution initiatives. We use a flipped research model where the incoming residents work on project data collection, analyzing and presentation at a National Conference and then during the second half of the year they develop a project and complete the IRB process for the next year's class to finalize.
- **Do the residents have scheduled time outside of rotations to work on projects?**
  - Residents do not have scheduled time outside of rotations to work on projects. However, most rotations offer time to complete project work assigned during that block. For example, both the MUE and monograph are completed during the required Pharmacy Administration rotation.
- **Are there opportunities for residents to precept and teach student pharmacists?**
  - There are opportunities for residents to work with the Idaho State University College of Pharmacy for guest lectures. Residents also have opportunities to precept pharmacy students on APPE rotations at Saint Alphonsus.
- **What types of presentations will be given throughout the year, and what type of audience do you typically present to?**

- There are various opportunities for presentations. All the pharmacy residents from around the Boise area (~20) participate in the Boise Learning and Teaching forum where they present to each other on teaching/learning styles. This forum also helps facilitate additional teaching opportunities with Idaho State University (ISU) and with local pharmacy organization CE events. Presentations are also done at ASHP Midyear and Mountain States Conference. Each rotation may also require smaller presentations. There are also committee presentations required for selecting project work and many informal topic discussions and journal club opportunities with various rotation preceptors.
- **How does the program support residents that want to go on to do a PGY2?**
  - The program is very supportive of residents that want to apply to PGY2 programs. The director and coordinator work with residents to arrange their schedules and choose their projects based on their areas of interest to help them prepare for PGY2 applications. Several past residents have gone on to complete PGY2 programs in areas including oncology, infectious disease, ambulatory care, emergency medicine, and critical care.
- **Are there any changes to the residency program for next year that I should know about?**
  - The Saint Alphonsus residency program is dynamic and always working to incorporate feedback from preceptors and residents. Recent changes include expanding our elective options into our Neurocritical Care Intensive Care Unit, changing the Family Medicine Inpatient rotation to a required rotation and moving more of the program requirements for completion into select rotations (ex. Pharmacy Administration). We continue to assess our growth areas and look forward to expanding our residency into our Nampa Hospital in the coming years.