

Yerevan State Medical University named after M. Heratsi

Quality Assessment and Assurance Center

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Strategic Analysis of Employer Feedback Regarding Graduates of the YSMU "Pharmacy" Academic Program

1. Research Objective

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the achievement of intended learning outcomes within the YSMU Pharmacy academic program and to identify strategic opportunities to further enhance the efficacy and targeted alignment of pre-diploma and post-diploma education.

2. Methodology and Demographics

The research was conducted via an online survey utilizing a structured questionnaire. The survey comprised twelve questions designed to evaluate the fulfillment of program learning outcomes among newly graduated professionals (defined as alumni from the past five academic years).

Participants included 12 major employer organizations within the pharmaceutical sector (e.g., "Liquor" CJSC, "CleanChoice" LLC, Arpimed LLC, Gedeon Richter Pharmacy Enterprise LLC, Alfa Pharm CJSC, etc.). In the participating organizations, YSMU specialists who graduated within the last five years constitute a substantial portion of the workforce, ranging between 7% and 50% of total employees.

3. Key Findings & Data Analysis

3.1. General Professional Readiness

- ☐ The overall perception of our graduates is highly positive: approximately 85% of the survey respondents evaluated the professional readiness of newly graduated specialists at the time of hiring as "good" and "satisfactory".
- ☐ A significant majority of employers (75%) commended the graduates' strong theoretical knowledge as a primary asset, providing a robust foundation upon which to build further practical competencies (highlighted as an initial strength by 8%).

3.2. Initial Labor Market Integration Survey results indicate that graduates enter the workforce ready to learn and grow. Employers noted that standard onboarding, mentoring, and a probationary period are valuable for helping graduates transition smoothly into independent roles.

Table 1: Graduate Competency Assessment During the Initial Employment Period

Indicator: During the initial employment period, the newly graduated specialists...	Yes (%)	No (%)
Made independent decisions / worked independently	41	59
Thrived with workplace supervision and mentoring	100	-
Were fully prepared for the job upon hiring	-	100
Benefited from a short probationary period upon hiring	100	-
Participated in additional targeted training	90	10
Were involved in scientific research	33	67

3.3. Evaluation of Program Learning Outcomes Employers were asked to assess the presence of specific intended learning outcomes (ILOs) among recent graduates. The research demonstrates that employers are, on average, partially satisfied with the achievement of these outcomes, noting a strong theoretical base while highlighting valuable opportunities for programmatic expansion. Specifically, employers identified the following areas as excellent avenues for future curriculum enhancement:

- ❑ Expanding practical training in the storage and management of herbal raw materials.
- ❑ Deepening hands-on applications for pharmaceutical and pharmacognostic analyses.
- ❑ Integrating modules on pharmaceutical business operations, planning, financing, and marketing research.

3.4. Skill Acquisition vs. Evolving Job Requirements

- ❑ 75% of employers observed that newly graduated specialists arrive with an estimated 25-50% of the advanced, role-specific skills required for the modern profession. This provides a clear roadmap for where applied training can be further expanded.
- ❑ Recognizing the rapid evolution of the pharmaceutical industry, about half of the participating organizations noted that while foundational expectations are met, there is room to exceed them through structural enhancements, particularly at the Master's degree level.

3.5. A Collaborative Future: Employer Engagement in Quality Assurance

A highly encouraging finding is the strong willingness of employers to actively partner with the university. When asked how they envision their future participation in program enhancement, employers prioritized:

- ❑ Collaborating within professional associations to help develop and validate academic learning outcomes.
- ❑ Engaging directly with students through regular industry-academia networking events.
- ❑ Assisting the faculty in updating the requirements for professional qualifications to match current market trends.

4. Emerging Industry Needs & Areas for Growth

Employers were asked to identify specific competencies that are increasingly critical for organizational operations. To ensure our graduates remain highly competitive, employers recommended increasing the curriculum's focus on:

- ❑ Applied Laboratory Practice: Enhancing hands-on laboratory experiences and equipment operation.
- ❑ Business Acumen: Expanding knowledge of organizational workflows and business operations.
- ❑ Regulatory Compliance: Increasing exposure to modern field-specific regulatory guidelines, quality oversight protocols, and standardization methods.
- ❑ Soft Skills & Tech Literacy: Fostering computer literacy, adaptability, and professional communication skills.

5. Conclusion

The research findings affirm that YSMU graduates enter the labor market equipped with an excellent theoretical foundation and are generally viewed favorably by major employers. The data also provides valuable, constructive insights for continuous quality improvement. By transitioning certain learning outcomes from theoretical concepts to hands-on applications, the program can further bridge the gap between academic preparation and independent professional practice. Crucially, the local pharmaceutical industry has demonstrated a strong readiness to actively collaborate with YSMU to achieve these enhancements.

6. Strategic Recommendations

To elevate the sustained competitiveness of our graduates and align with international standards, the following strategic actions are recommended:

1. Collaborative Program Review: Initiate a forward-looking revision of the academic program, integrating international best practices and direct insights from our industry partners.
2. Outcome Mapping: Execute formal mapping and matrixing of intended learning outcomes to create clear, measurable pathways for student competency achievement.
3. Experiential Learning: Revise course syllabi to increase the proportion of applied, practical components and experiential learning.
4. Infrastructure Modernization: Continue to invest in modernizing laboratory equipment, reagents, and didactic materials to ensure students train in an environment that reflects contemporary industry standards.