

# Exploring PGY1 Residency Non-completion: Program Directors' Perspectives

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## Introduction

- PGY1 training builds upon prior education to refine knowledge and skills through a variety of leadership and educational experiences to prepare candidates for advanced patient care positions.<sup>1</sup>
- Successful completion of PGY1 depends upon meeting educational objectives, licensure within 120 days of starting, and other specific program criteria.<sup>1</sup>
- There is limited data available to fully understand the factors that may contribute to resident non-completion.

## Objectives

- To identify common themes residency directors (RPD) have observed as reasons for non-completion of PGY1 training
- To provide a better understanding of how residency programs and professional organizations can best support the newest generation of pharmacy postgraduates

## Methods

- The University of Georgia's Ambulatory Care Collaborative (AC2) collaborated with ASHP to disseminate an electronic Qualtrics survey to all PGY1 RPDs of ASHP accredited programs. The survey was sent to 1,449 RPDs, 428 RPDs responded (29.5%).
- The survey included required and optional response questions regarding baseline demographics, program characteristics, and RPD perceptions about non-completion of PGY1 residency programs.
- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative survey data.
- ATLAS.ti® was utilized to complete a thematic analysis on open response comments. A two-cycle inductive coding process was utilized.

## Results

Table 1a. Respondent Demographics

Residents that Did Not Complete PGY1 in the Last Five Years	n	%
Yes	214	51%
No	202	48%
I Don't Know	4	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>100%</b>

RPD Experience (years as RPD)	n	%
<1 year	52	12.2%
1 - 5 years	211	49.6%
6 - 10 years	86	20.2%
11 - 15 years	38	9%
More than 15 years	38	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100%</b>

Total Residents	n	%
5 or less	292	69.9%
6 - 10	62	14.8%
11 - 20	41	9.8%
21 or more	23	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>100%</b>

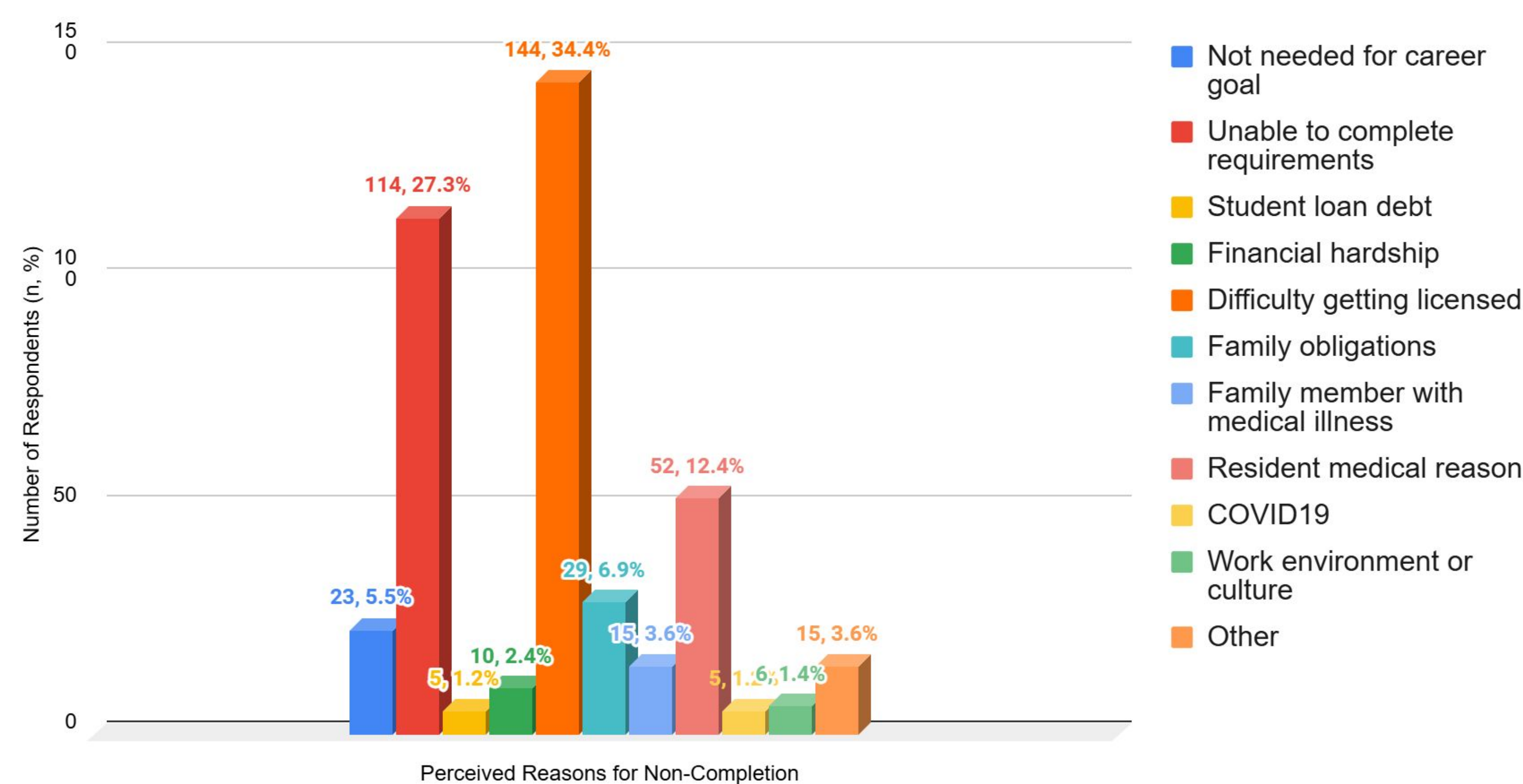
Figure 2. Thematic Analysis

Theme	Definition	Freq	Quotes
<b>Difficulty passing licensure exams and/or obtaining licensure</b> <i>Sub-theme (n):</i> Difficulty passing Naplex (25) Difficulty passing MPJE (22)	Difficulty with passing or scheduling of pharmacist licensure examinations	71	"we have had 2/3 of our most recent residents require multiple exam attempts" "I have had 2 residents fail NAPLEX and came very close to not meeting the licensure deadline. We also have a problem with timeliness of testing dates, since COVID our residents cannot obtain test dates until mid to late August"
<b>Change in resident's career goals or value placed on residency training</b>	Following the start of residency, resident(s) experienced career goal change (either within pharmacy or to another profession) or change in value placed on residency training	14	"During their residency, they realize there are positions available that do not require residency training" "stopped trying when she realized she didn't really want to be a clinical pharmacist and no interest" "Determined completing a PGY1 was not what he wanted to do"
<b>Lack of resident preparedness or ability to complete residency program requirements</b>	Resident challenges with feedback incorporation, time management, clinical knowledge, professionalism, and overall residency progression. Additionally noted as a general decrease in the preparedness of incoming residents and availability of qualified candidates, especially following the COVID19 pandemic	61	"Concerns with clinical knowledge, time management, and responsibility" "the resident at the time repeatedly failed to meet the professional standards set for residency conduct" "I have seen an overall increase in the amount of educational remediations on an annual basis, as incoming residents do not seem as prepared for the workload of residency as they once did"
<b>Financial barriers</b>	General financial hardship or resident found salary would be higher with a job that didn't require residency training	4	"Debt load was substantial causing extreme stress" "Concern about wasting money on failed pharmacy board exams and future failing and added financial hardship."
<b>Resident health concerns and social stressors</b>	Resident experienced a major stressor related to mental health, family/social concerns, medical reason, or their work environment	44	"Mental health concerns requiring professional support" "Residency sometimes stresses relationships with spouses or significant others that can lead residents to leave." "resident was new parent and could not meet demands of residency"

Table 1b. Respondent Demographics (Continued)

Institution (n, %)	
Community Hospital (196, 47.2%)	Managed Care (14, 3.4%)
Academic Medical Center (120, 29%)	University/College of Pharmacy (1, 0.2%)
Veterans Affairs (38, 9.2%)	Other (0,0%)
Community Pharmacy/Retail (25, 6%)	
Ambulatory Clinic (21, 5%)	<b>Total (415)</b>

Figure 1. Perceived Reasons for PGY1 Non-completion



## Discussion

- Of the 420 RPDs respondents, 51% reported one or more of their resident(s) did not complete their PGY1 in the last five years.
- Findings suggest potential difficulty for PGY1 residents to obtain pharmacist licensure and complete overall residency requirements.
- RPD open responses indicate that failure to pass licensing exams after several attempts may contribute to additional barriers resulting in non-completion, such as financial hardship due to extra costs of licensing or added stress levels.
- Potential limitations to the study include the survey being largely perception based in nature, limiting potential generalizability.

## Conclusion

- The findings suggest that providing additional support to help obtain pharmacist licensure and complete required residency components may facilitate overall PGY1 residency completion.
- Additional emphasis on overall resident preparedness may also be necessary.
- Further analysis of survey completed by PGY1 residents may support these findings and help determine next steps to reduce PGY1 non-completion.

## References

- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP Accreditation Standard for Postgraduate Residency Programs. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Published 2025. <https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/professional-development/residencies/docs/examples/ASHP-Accreditation-Standard-for-Postgraduate-Residency-Programs.pdf>

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