

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the SHPA Victorian hospital pharmacy intern program?**

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) coordinates the application process for government-subsidised (and some hospital self-funded) Victorian public hospital pharmacy intern placements. Our aim is to efficiently, transparently and fairly match candidates for internship to hospitals with intern positions.

### **How many positions are available?**

A total of 89 (80 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funded & 9 hospital self-funded) Victorian public hospital pharmacy intern training positions will be available through the SHPA matching process in 2018.

### **Am I eligible to apply for the positions?**

Australian and New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who have completed, or will complete a registrable pharmacy degree in 2017, are eligible to apply for the positions. Graduates from Victorian universities will be considered for the first round of matching, and the second, if required. Interstate graduates who are Australian or New Zealand citizens or permanent residents are considered after two rounds of matching.

### **Why is there no information on Round 2 or 3?**

The SHPA expects that the procedure will result in very few, if any, positions remaining after the first match. Last year all but 5 positions were filled in the first round of matching.

### **Why is SHPA employing a match procedure?**

SHPA matches student ranked lists against those of the health services using a published standard algorithm. The algorithm matches each student with their most preferred available position, provided the candidate is also preferred by the health service.

Similar procedures are used to match graduates to training programs of numerous other health professionals, including doctors, nurses and radiographers both in Australia and abroad.

### **How does the matching procedure work?**

SHPA sends your application to the two hospitals listed as your two equal first preference hospitals. Students may have an application sent to a third hospital from their other higher ranked preferences, in the case where a hospital has an insufficient number of applications.

If a student receives a third application they will be informed of this prior to the transfer of information to hospitals. They will be given 24 hours to supply a third cover letter to the SHPA.

Hospital pharmacy departments receive the applications. The hospital pharmacy screen and rank candidates.

After the screening process, hospitals return a ranked list of their preferred candidates to the SHPA.

Concurrently, students will receive a notification from the SHPA to return to their online application portal and submit a final ranked list of their preferred hospitals.

Students and pharmacy departments should be aware that ranking a health service or student respectively may result in a match.

SHPA matches student ranked preference lists against those of the health services using a published standard algorithm. The algorithm matches each student with their most preferred available position, provided the candidate is also preferred by the health service.

After the matching process is complete, students will be notified of their match outcome and pharmacy departments of the students who matched to their program.

The US National Residency Matching Program (“The MATCH”) has a detailed explanation of how the process is employed, available [here](#).

### **How do I apply? When do applications open and close?**

Applications are collected online from the SHPA website.

- Students will be required to supply a cover letter & CV for their two equal first preference hospitals in their online application

Online applications open at 9am on the 26th of July and close at 5pm on the 9th of August 2017.

### **When is the screening process undertaken?**

Hospitals will screen and select candidates between the 14th of August and the 11th of September 2017. They can use any legal method they choose to do this, including CVs, cover letters, interviews or a combination of these and other methods.

### **I have a placement, exam or other commitment during the selection period. What can I do?**

If you are contacted by a hospital, make sure you advise them of dates you will not be available.

**Do I need to contact hospitals?**

Students should not contact hospitals directly regarding the application process. Applications for the intern positions are managed through the SHPA match procedure. Please direct any questions to [vicintern@shpa.org.au](mailto:vicintern@shpa.org.au).

**How many hospitals will be sent my application?**

SHPA sends your application to the two hospitals listed as your two equal first preference hospitals. Students may have an application sent to a third hospital from their other higher ranked preferences, in the case where a hospital has an insufficient number of applications.

You can rank as many hospitals as you like. You should rank the hospitals in your preferred order.

**What if I don't want to work at a particular hospital(s)?**

Do not rank them.

**Does this program include private hospital intern placements?**

No. Private hospitals may also have intern positions available, however, these positions are advertised on their individual website or on the SHPA [jobs board](#).

**What will SHPA do with my application?**

SHPA sends your application to the two hospitals listed as your two equal first preference hospitals. Students may have an application sent to a third hospital from their other higher ranked preferences, in the case where a hospital has an insufficient number of applications.

If a student receives a third application they will be informed of this prior to the transfer of information to hospitals. They will be given 24 hours to supply a third cover letter to the SHPA.

**How many applications will I get?**

All students will have their application sent to at least two hospitals, possibly three in the case where a hospital has an insufficient number of applications.

**My application has been sent to more than two hospitals. Will they know where I ranked them?**

No, hospitals will not be informed of your preferences.

**Will I definitely get an interview at my two equal first preference hospitals?**

SHPA does not decide how hospitals screen and rank candidates. They can use any legal method they choose to do this, including CVs, cover letters, interviews or a combination of these and other methods.

**Does the final preference list need to be the same as my application list?**

No. You will receive an email notification from the SHPA asking you to submit a final ranked list of your preferred hospitals by the 12th of September 2017.

SHPA matches the final student ranked preference lists against those of the health services using a published standard algorithm. The algorithm matches each student with their most preferred available position, provided the candidate is also preferred by the health service.

**Does a hospital know where I ranked it?**

No. Your preference list is submitted to the SHPA and is not shared with the hospitals.

You should not disclose your hospital preference list with anyone other than the SHPA, nor should you enquire about hospitals preference lists during the application process. If you have any concerns regarding your preference list, please email [vicintern@shpa.org.au](mailto:vicintern@shpa.org.au).

**Can I receive a job offer at more than one hospital?**

No. If more than one hospital includes you on their preferred candidates list, you will only receive an offer at the hospital you ranked highest in your final preference list.

**If a hospital includes me on their preferred candidate list, and I have them ranked first, will I definitely be matched there?**

Not necessarily. Hospitals' preferred candidates list will generally be longer than the number of positions available. For example, if a hospital has five available internships, it is possible that you were ranked 10th on that hospital's preferred candidate list, but missed out on a position because five students ranked more highly than you matched with that hospital.

**If a hospital ranks me first, will I obtain that position?**

If a hospital ranks you first then you WILL be offered that position UNLESS you also receive an offer from a hospital ranked higher on your final preference list.

**If I receive a job offer, can I defer and take a gap year?**

No, you cannot defer the position. If you wish to undertake your hospital internship in 2019, you must reapply next year.

**When will I know if I have been matched to an intern program?**

The SHPA will aim to make students aware of their match result by the 22nd of September 2017.

**I have been matched to a hospital, but I wish to refuse this match because I believe that there are other positions available which I prefer. Can I do this?**

No. You will only be matched once. If you wish to change your preferences, you must do this by the 12th of September 2017.

**What strategy should I use to increase my chances of a match?**

When completing your application:

- Think about the experiences you are looking for to enhance your pharmacy career?
  - ie. Big or small hospital; city or regional; cancer care or indigenous health etc
- How will an internship at your preferred hospitals support your pharmacy career?
- Competition is very strong; how will you stand out from the crowd?

With respect to the final ranking and match, ***the only strategy that benefits you as a student is to rank hospitals in your preferred order.*** This has been demonstrated numerous times with other matching systems.

If you have any further questions in regards to the 2018 SHPA Victorian hospital pharmacy intern program, please feel free to contact SHPA at [vicintern@shpa.org.au](mailto:vicintern@shpa.org.au).