

Who is a Pharmacist?

Pharmacists supply, dispense and manufacture medicines and drugs in hospitals and community pharmacies, and advise on their appropriate use. They also conduct research into the formulation, production, storage, quality control and distribution of medicines and drugs.

Hospital Pharmacists work to optimise patient outcomes by working to achieve the best quality use of medicines.

They work in the pharmacy located within the hospital and provide as service to inpatients and outpatients from associated clinics

Roles of a Pharmacist

- Dispensing prescriptions
- Providing drug information
- Reviewing medication charts
- Counselling patients on medication
- Monitoring drug therapy
- Preventing, assessing and managing drug interactions
- Help design & run trials to evaluate new medication
- Advise on selection of new medications for the hospital
- Liaise with Community Service Providers (Nursing Homes, Hostels, GP's & Retail Chemists) to ensure continuation of treatment after discharge.

Specialisations

Pharmacists perform a variety of tasks depending on their area of specialisation.

Community Pharmacist

A community pharmacist is involved in dispensing prescriptions, providing advice on drug selection and usage to doctors and other health professionals, providing primary healthcare advice and support, and educating customers on health promotion, disease prevention and the proper use of medicines. They usually have a high level of contact with the public.

Consultant Pharmacist

A consultant pharmacist is either employed by community pharmacies or hospitals, or who is self-employed and contracts with community pharmacies to provide medication reviews for residential care or ambulatory care patients and/or other medication- related cognitive services.

Government Pharmacist

A government pharmacist is involved with regulatory control of pharmaceutical and medical products, at state, territory or federal level.

Hospital Pharmacist

A hospital pharmacist operates as part of a healthcare team and is involved in monitoring medication usage, counselling patients, providing drug information and advice to health professionals and the community, conducting clinical trials and preparing products for patient use. They usually have a lot of contact with other health professionals and members of the public.

An industrial pharmacist is involved in research and the development, manufacture, testing, analysis and marketing of pharmaceutical and medical products.

Career Opportunities

Most pharmacists work in community pharmacies, with some owning their own practice or partnership. They also work in hospital pharmacies providing services to patients. A number are employed by pharmaceutical companies in drug research, marketing and design, or by universities and TAFEs.

As there is a skills shortage for pharmacists in rural and regional areas, prospects are very good, although there can be strong competition for available jobs.

- Grade 1,2 & 3 Pharmacist
- Deputy Director of Pharmacy
- Director of Pharmacy

Qualifications Required

To become a pharmacist you usually have to study pharmacy at university and complete pre-registration training under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics are normally required.

- Bachelor of Pharmacy
- Registration with the Pharmacy Board of NSW

Supervision Provided

Graduate training year under supervision of a registered pharmacist. A comprehensive orientation program is provided for all new staff members with ongoing support.

- Good at working autonomously and in a team situation
- Enthusiastic and self motivated
- Caring
- Patient
- Tolerant
- Non-judgemental

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Adapted from Australian Government Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations Job Guide <http://www.jobguide.thegoodguides.com.au/> and reviewed by SWSLHD staff

Personal Skills required of a Pharmacist

- Able to prioritise
- careful and methodical and able to give good attention to detail
- Able to work independently
- Good communication skills
- Able to deal sensitively with the clients needs