



## PHARMACIST JOBS AND CAREERS: PHARMACIST JOBS DESCRIPTION

Pharmacists engage in a wide variety of activities, and all of them revolve around medicines and drugs. Sixty percent of pharmacists fit the profession's stereotype, dispensing drugs to customers from a local drugstore or from the prescriptions window at a local supermarket. Many, however, are employed by large health-care institutions such as hospitals or nursing services. Pharmacists can work in any field which deals with drugs, whether it be in law enforcement as a narcotics investigator, in public health as a safety researcher, or in a pharmaceutical company in research, management, or sales, but a large majority work in pharmacies or for hospitals and health care providers.

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Life in the profession depends greatly on which of these tracks is pursued. Drugstore pharmacists spend their time preparing prescriptions, advising customers about prescription and non-prescription drugs, and running the business of their pharmacy or pharmaceutical department. Their lives resemble those of a small-store or department manager. The products may require professional training to handle safely, but business skills are also important in the career. Approximately one in six pharmacies is actually owned by the pharmacist who manages it.

Pharmacists in the other sectors of the profession generally lead lives that resemble those of health-care professionals. Hospital and nursing pharmacists make rounds, overseeing the administration of medication, and consult with physicians on courses of treatment and developments in pharmacology. The studies conducted by research pharmacists are similar to those conducted by other medical researchers, and pharmaceutical companies frequently employ teams of pharmacists, doctors and biologists working side by side to develop new drugs. Though it requires similar training, this career track is quite different from that of the pharmacist employed in a pharmacy, and it is ideal for those who desire the rewards, and accept the stress, of treating patients and developing cures.

### Paying Your Dues (Major Employers)

Specialized training is required to become a practicing pharmacist. A bachelor's degree in pharmacy, which usually requires five years of post-high school study, is the minimum. Some colleges of pharmacy admit students directly from high school; the majority, however, require one to two years of college level study in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. While the bachelor's degree is sufficient to practice in the average pharmacy, a growing number of hospitals require their pharmacists to have doctorates, which require an additional one to two years of study. The Doctorate of Pharmacy is also usually a requirement for pharmacists who want to work as researchers or teachers. In addition, pharmacists must take state board examinations, and most states require that pharmacists serve a one-year internship before being allowed to practice; some require a two-year internship for pharmacists who wish to practice in hospitals.

### Associated Careers (Who You'll Work With)

Some pharmacists leave to become patent attorneys, specializing in pharmaceuticals. Others who work for pharmaceutical companies end up concentrating on the business and manufacturing, rather than the pharmaceutical, aspects of the work and leave to take managerial positions in other fields. Some pharmacists in hospitals or nursing services cease the pharmaceutical practices and become health care administrators. On the whole, however, the profession is quite stable.

### Past And Future (Major Associations)

Pharmacy dates back to the ancient Greeks, whose "pharmakons" mixed drugs, much like the pharmacists of today. The modern profession in the United States dates to the 1821 founding of the first American pharmaceutical college, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, but a pharmacist of 1821 would have a difficult time recognizing the profession today. As modern science has produced an increasing number of drugs, pharmacists have become increasingly important to the practice of medicine, and the profession is moving in the direction of specialization, with pharmacists who work in research or health care institutions becoming experts in particular categories of drugs. This trend will likely continue, and it is likely that this increasing medical complexity, combined with the increasing average age of the U.S. population, will cause demand for pharmacists to remain strong for the foreseeable future.

### Quality of Life

#### Two Years Out

At this stage, pharmacists have just completed their apprenticeship and training. The majority work as the junior of two or three pharmacists in a community pharmacy; some work as junior researchers for a pharmaceutical company or as junior staff pharmacists in a hospital or health care facility. In general, hospital and research pharmacists at this point work closely with more experienced professionals and are carefully supervised. In a community pharmacy, the work of these pharmacists--advising customers about medication and dispensing drugs--more closely resembles the work of their senior colleagues.

#### Five Years Out

Established professionals by this point, pharmacists in private pharmacies will begin to take on managerial responsibilities, while hospital and research pharmacists now have full-fledged professional status and begin to take supervisory responsibility for their junior colleagues. Some will stop practicing pharmaceuticals but will stay within the profession as managerial and sales employees of pharmaceutical companies.

#### Ten Years Out

Some pharmacists who work in private pharmacies establish their own practices around this time; approximately 10 percent of all pharmacists end up owning their own pharmacies. Others will become more senior-salaried employees, with increased pay and responsibility for the business operations of their pharmacies. Those who work for hospitals may have risen to the position of chief pharmacist, supervising a staff of pharmacists and having considerable administrative and medical responsibility for the hospitals medication policies. Research pharmacists also take on increasing administrative duties, becoming responsible for research projects and often working with management to identify long term research and business goals.

### Professional Profile

<b># of people in profession:</b>	<b>163,000</b>
<b>% male:</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>% female:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>average hours per week:</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>average starting salary:</b>	<b>\$25,500</b>
<b>average salary after 5 years:</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>average salary 10 to 15 years:</b>	<b>\$53,000</b>

### Professionals Read

US Pharmacist  
Pharmacy Times  
Drugstore News

### Books, Films and TV Shows Featuring the Profession

*Watching the Store*  
*Chemical Breakdown*  
*All Night*

### Major Employers

Genovese  
80 Marcus Drive CVS Rite Aid

Meville, NY 11747 1773 Grand Avenue 144-29 North Boulevard  
Tel: 516-420-1900 Baldwin, NY 11710 Flushing, NY 11354  
Fax: 516-845-8476 Tel: 516-378-7556 Tel: 718-886-1515  
Contact: Personnel

**You'll Have Contact With**

Insurance Executives  
Lab Technicians  
Pharmaceutical Salesmen  
Physicians

**Major Associations**

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy 311 West Superior Street  
1426 Prince Street Suite 512  
Alexandria, VA 22314 Chicago, IL 60610  
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Contact: Daniel A. Nona

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