

Pharmacist – a career of choice

What is a Pharmacist – A pharmacist is an expert in medicines and their use. Their knowledge of medicines and the effect they have on the human body is critical to the management of every type of medical condition. Pharmacists are responsible for the quality of medicines supplied to a patient, advising patients about medicines, responding to symptoms in the pharmacy and giving appropriate advice and recommending treatments or referral, and provide services to patients such as stop smoking, blood pressure monitoring and cholesterol management. Being a Pharmacist is being a Professional registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council.

What is the difference between pharmacy and pharmacology? Watch here-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4EpLCHMvKX4&feature=youtu.be>

What does a pharmacist do?

- Works closely with GPs, nurses and other healthcare professionals to give advice on how to choose medicines for patients and how to use them safely
- ensure that new medicines are safe to use with other medication
- advise on dosage and suggest the most appropriate form of medication such as tablet, injection, ointment or inhaler
- make sure that patients use their medicines safely
- provide information to patients on how get the maximum benefit from the medicines they are prescribed
- advise on the most effective treatments for a particular condition including those for sale without prescription
- help patients manage long term conditions eg asthma, blood pressure and diabetes
- recommend changes to prescriptions and give advice on prescribing
- provide information about potential side effects
- monitor the effects of treatment to ensure that it is safe and effective
- many offer services in the community pharmacy eg blood pressure testing, flu vaccination, travel vaccination, emergency hormonal contraception service

Pharmacists are also involved in manufacturing medicines when ready-made preparations are not available. For example, certain cancer treatments and intravenous feeding solutions need to be tailor made under sterile conditions for individual patients.

Where do Pharmacists work? Pharmacists work as part of healthcare teams in hospitals, GP surgeries or community pharmacies. Some work in retail pharmacies in supermarkets or on the high street, or for other employers that provide NHS services. Community pharmacists are based in health centres or pharmacies, but they may spend time visiting patients at home or in residential homes. There are also opportunities to work in the pharmaceutical industry, prison settings, in teaching and research and in veterinary pharmacy.

University Entry Requirements – In Scotland you can study for a Masters degree in Pharmacy at Strathclyde University or Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen.

Strathclyde entry requirements - <https://digital.ucas.com/coursedisplay/courses/b88e7e65-4017-9bad-63e0-6262a750d7f0>

RGU entry requirements - <https://www.rgu.ac.uk/study/courses/883-mpharm-pharmacy#:~:text=Standard%20Entry%20Requirements&text=GCE%20A%20Level%3A%20BBB%2FBC,not%20held%20at%20A%20Level.>

Five Reasons to become a Pharmacist

1. I want to help people to get well and work directly with patients
2. I can enjoy a wide range of career opportunities
3. I want to be an important member of the healthcare team
4. I can have job mobility, stability and flexibility
5. I would like to be a highly respected member of my community

Skills and personal characteristics needed

- accurate and methodical with strong numerical skills
- able to understand and apply the law
- responsible and of the highest integrity
- interested in people's health
- professional
- able to apply the highest levels of integrity
- willing to supervise others and show great leadership skills
- interpersonal and communication and social skills including listening
- an ability to multi-task and prioritise

What salary can I expect?

As a pre-registration pharmacist (this is your year of practice under supervision before your final professional exam) £23,113 (2020)

In community pharmacy newly qualified pharmacist salary is in the region of £33,000 pa

In a hospital or GP setting the newly qualified pharmacist salary is in the region of £31,400pa

Senior pharmacist salaries can be upwards of £50,000pa

What career opportunities are there with a Masters in Pharmacy degree?

Some pharmacists choose to specialise in particular clinical areas and you can become an Independent Prescriber in both hospital and community pharmacy settings. There are opportunities to work in other areas including veterinary medicine, drugs trial, medicine development, and medicine regulation and governance.

Some Pharmacists choose to move into leadership roles managing teams of people and financial budgets.

Have a look at these website for more information: www.cps.scot www.thecca.org.uk
www.npa.co.uk