

Pharmacist

Pharmacists provide expert advice on the use and supply of medicines and medical appliances.

ANNUAL SALARY

£31,365 to £44,503

Average UK salary in 2020 was £30,378
(source Office for National Statistics)

WORKING HOURS

37.5 to 40 a week



You could work: evenings / weekends / bank holidays; on a rota

+6%

FUTURE EMPLOYMENT

There will be 6% more Pharmacist jobs in 2025.
[In your local area](#)

What's it all about?

What you'll do

Day to day tasks

Your tasks will depend on which area of pharmacy you work in. In this role you could:

- dispense medicines in a community pharmacy, hospital or a GP practice clinic
- give healthcare advice about prescription and over-the-counter medicines
- advise on drug dosages and risks, to the public, patients, GPs and nurses
- run screening programmes for diabetes, cholesterol or blood pressure
- visit care homes or hospital wards to advise on the use and storage of medications
- order and controlling stock
- run a business, including supervising and training staff
- produce medicines when ready-made ones aren't available, for example, cancer treatments
- buy, quality test and distribute medicines throughout a hospital
- supervise trainees and junior pharmacists

In education or industry, you could:

- do research into new medicines
- run clinical trials

Skills and Knowledge

You'll need:

- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- the ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure
- sensitivity and understanding
- customer service skills
- patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- maths knowledge
- excellent verbal communication skills
- the ability to read English
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently

Working environment

You could work at a store, in an NHS or private hospital or at an adult care home.

Entry requirements

You can get into this job through:

- a university course

University

You'll need to complete:

- a 4-year Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree approved by the [General Pharmaceutical Council](#)
- a one year [pre-registration training course in pharmacy](#)

If you do not have the qualifications to get onto a MPharm degree, you could do a 2-year pharmacy foundation degree. You would then take a job as a pharmacy assistant or technician and apply for the MPharm degree in your second year.

Entry requirements

You'll usually need:

- at least 1 A level, or equivalent, for a foundation degree
- 2 or 3 A levels, or equivalent, including chemistry

For more information

- [equivalent entry requirements](#)
- [student finance for fees and living costs](#)
- [university courses and entry requirements](#)

Requirements and restrictions

You'll need to:

- pass [enhanced background checks](#)

More information

Further information

You'll find more on pharmacy careers and training from [Health Careers](#) and the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society](#).

Employment by region

Region	Jobs
Yorkshire and the Humber	4,599
London	14,470
South West	4,374
South East	8,573
Wales	2,787
Scotland	5,352
West Midlands	7,281
North West	5,184
North East	1,448
East of England	6,206
Northern Ireland	2,269
East Midlands	3,693

Career path and progression

There's a formal career structure in the NHS, so with experience you could progress to team manager or pharmacy consultant. You could also work in GPs' surgeries or health centres.

Promotion opportunities can be good if you're working for one of the larger pharmacy chains where you can apply for regional or national management positions. With experience, you could set up your own community pharmacy business.

After further training, you could go on to teach pharmacy students at university.

Another option is to move into related areas like scientific journalism or publishing.

To do research, you'll need a further postgraduate qualification in a subject like toxicology or pharmacology.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society offers professional support services.

Other useful information

You'll find more on pharmacy careers and training from [Health Careers](#) and the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society](#).