

## Community/retail pharmacist

### Job description

Community pharmacists supply prescribed and over-the-counter medicines to the general public in a retail pharmacy, such as a local chemist. They advise customers on the safe use of medicines and their possible side effects. In addition they advise on the treatment of minor ailments such as colds or sore throats, and sometimes refer cases to the doctor. They often manage a pharmacy selling a wide range of pharmaceutical, health care, perfume and beauty products. In rural areas, the pharmacy may also sell agricultural, horticultural and veterinary products.

### Work activities

- Helping the public by assessing their conditions and making decisions about which medicines to take
- Dispensing prescriptions and offering practical advice on keeping healthy.
- Undertaking clinical roles traditionally performed by doctors, such as the management of asthma and diabetes as well as blood pressure testing.
- Assisting people to give up smoking, altering their diets to make them healthier and advising on sexual health matters.

### Work conditions

Travel: not normally a regular feature of the job.

Working hours: these depend on the type of pharmacy, although weekend and evening work is common, especially in high-street chains and those located in shopping centres.

Location: mainly in towns or cities throughout the country.

Opportunities for self-employment: highly likely as many pharmacists own their own business.

### Typical employers

- High street pharmacy chains
- Local pharmacies.
- Career development
- Promotion is likely, mainly on merit, to supervisory/management roles.

### Salaries

Republic of Ireland: Pharmacists can earn between €40,000 and €60,000 (with up to three years' experience) and between €50,000 and €100,000 (over three years' experience), although this will vary depending on the employer.

### Entry requirements and training

Pharmacy education in Ireland is currently under review (2010). The following are the arrangements during the interim period.

Entry is restricted to those holding either a four-year Bachelor of Pharmacy honours degree from Trinity College Dublin or the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)'s School of Pharmacy, or University College Cork's BSc (Pharmacy) degree, all of which are accredited by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). In addition, the

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one year full-time in-service taught programme provided by the RCSI with the award of the degree of MPharm must be completed. The MPharm degree is the qualification appropriate for practice and fulfils academic requirements for registration with the PSI.

Pharmacy graduates with a Pass degree can complete a qualifying module prior to entry to the MPharm programme.

### Specific degree subjects required

- Pharmacy.

### Postgraduate study

A one year full-time in-service taught programme provided by the RCSI with the award of the degree of MPharm is essential.

Taught MSc courses are also available in areas such as hospital pharmacy, community pharmacy, clinical pharmacy, industrial pharmaceutical science, pharmaceutical technology and quality systems, pharmaceutical analysis, pharmaceutical technology and pharmaceutical manufacturing technology.

### Specific entry requirements

All those wishing to register with the PSI must pass the Professional Registration Examination. In addition, all health professionals are required to be vaccinated against various infectious diseases.

### Training

The National Pharmacy Internship Programme – a period of one year's practical training under the direct supervision of a practising tutor pharmacist – must also be completed. Pharmacy interns (pre-registration students) may undertake their clinical placement in either a community pharmacy or a hospital pharmacy department. Throughout the placement interns are required to complete an academic programme, delivered principally online, leading to the award of MPharm (see above). The taught programme is designed to help the intern improve their performance in the training establishment.

### Tips for applications

Find part-time or vacation work in a pharmacy or pharmaceutical company.

### Skills and qualities

- Ability to work carefully, methodically and accurately.
- Sharp analytical skills and scientific aptitude.
- Good interpersonal skills and a caring and sympathetic manner.
- Conscientious, motivated and willing to learn.
- Committed and professional in attitude.

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