

## Pharmacist (hospital)

### Job description

The hospital pharmacist is primarily responsible for supplying medicines as efficiently and economically as possible; for their secure and proper storage; and for their distribution throughout the hospital. The pharmacist must closely monitor the quality, safety and use of medicines, which usually entails involvement at ward level. Pharmacists need to keep themselves up to date with the many new or reformulated products being developed by medical and pharmaceutical researchers.

### Work activities

- Liaising with doctors, nurses and other health care professionals to ensure the safe, effective and economic delivery of drug treatment
- Attending ward rounds; involved in selecting treatments for patients with all types of conditions, taking into consideration patients' drug history
- Evaluating interventions to improve prescribing within the health care team
- Discussing the effects, dosage etc of drug treatments with patients and their relatives supervising the storage of medicinal products to ensure freshness and potency
- Manufacturing and quality-checking sterile medicines and medications
- Lecturing nurses and medical students on the action of drugs, dose rates, side effects and related problems
- Playing a vital role in clinical budgeting and on finance committees; acting on the drug therapeutic committees where overall policy is determined in relation to drug usage, new products, clinical trials, infection control, etc
- Managing the purchase of medicines for the whole hospital
- Contributing to research activities.

### Work conditions

Travel: travel during the working day is rare or never.  
Absence from home at night is rare or never.

Working hours: mainly 9 to 5, though some extra hours possible. The job can involve some weekend and evening cover. Some hospitals provide an on-call system.

Location: opportunities exist mainly in towns or cities throughout the country.

Opportunities for self-employment: pharmacists can become self employed in the community sector of the profession, but not in a hospital setting.

### Typical employers

Public and private hospitals

### Career development

Entry is at the basic grade. With experience, the hospital pharmacist can move to senior grade and then either to Chief II or Chief I status. Promotion can normally be achieved in a reasonable time scale. Some pharmacists specialise as consultants in areas such as haematology (blood), nephrology (kidneys), respiratory medicine, cardiology (heart), urology (urinary), diabetes, gastroenterology (stomach and intestines), infectious diseases, paediatrics (children) and care of the elderly.

### Salaries

Republic of Ireland: varies depending on location. Salaries are different from community pharmacy, industry and academia. Approximate salary scales (2010):

- Hospital pharmacists: €35,300–€62,000
- Senior hospital pharmacists: €59,400–€70,000
- Chief II: €66,500–€75,000
- Chief I: €75,700–€86,700.

### Entry requirements and training

Pharmacy education in Ireland is currently under review (2010). Entry requirements during the interim period are:

## Pharmacist (hospital) (continued)

A BSc (Pharmacy) degree: this is a four-year honours Bachelor of Pharmacy degree from Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) or University College Cork (UCC), all accredited by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI).

An M Pharm degree: this is a one-year full-time in-service taught programme provided by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI). 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 Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) with the award of the degree of M Pharm 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 Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) must pass the Professional

Registration Examination. In addition, all health professional are required to be vaccinated against various infectious diseases.

### Training

Hospital pharmacists must complete the National Pharmacy Internship Programme, a period of one year's practical training, under the direct supervision of a practising tutor pharmacist. 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 M Pharm (see above)

### 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 attitude.

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