

Adapted from ExploreHealthCareers.org.

Pharmacist

Overview

According to MONEY magazine, Pharmacist is one of the Top 10 Best Jobs in America.

Pharmacists dispense drugs prescribed by physicians and other health practitioners and monitor patient health. They advise physicians and other health practitioners on the selection, dosages, interactions, and side effects of medications. Pharmacists must understand the use; clinical effects; and composition of drugs, including their chemical, biological, and physical properties. They protect the public by ensuring drug purity and strength. The goal of pharmacy care is to maximize positive health care outcomes and improve patients' quality of life with minimum risk. Most pharmacists work in a community setting, such as a retail drug store, or in a hospital or clinic.

Working Conditions

Pharmacists usually work in clean, well-lit, and well-ventilated areas. Many pharmacists spend most of their workday on their feet. When working with sterile or potentially dangerous pharmaceutical products, pharmacists wear gloves and masks and work with other special protective equipment. Many community and hospital pharmacies are open for extended hours or around the clock, so pharmacists may work evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays. Consultant pharmacists may travel to nursing homes or other facilities to monitor patient's drug therapy. About 1 out of 5 pharmacists worked part time in 2004. Most full-time salaried pharmacists worked about 40 hours a week. Some, including many self-employed pharmacists, worked more than 50 hours a week.

Academic Requirements

In 2007, 103 colleges and schools of pharmacy were recognized by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education. Pharmacy programs grant the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), which requires at least 6 years of postsecondary study and the passing of the licensure examination of a State board of pharmacy. The Pharm.D. is a 4-year program that requires at least 2 years of college study prior to admittance. The majority of pharmacy students enter college with 3 or more years of college. The Pharm.D degree has replaced the Bachelor of Pharmacy (B.Pharm.) degree, which is no longer awarded.

The **Pharmacy College Application Service** makes it easy to apply to multiple schools using a single application.

In the 2006-07 academic year, 65 colleges of pharmacy awarded the master of science degree or the Ph.D. degree. Both the master's and Ph.D. degrees are awarded after completion of a Pharm.D. degree. These degrees are designed for those who want more laboratory and research experience. Many master's and Ph.D. holders work in research for a drug company or teach at a university.

Other options for pharmacy graduates who are interested in further training include 1- or 2-year residency programs or fellowships. Pharmacy residencies are postgraduate training programs in pharmacy practice. Pharmacy fellowships are highly individualized programs designed to prepare participants to work in research laboratories. Some pharmacists who run their own pharmacy obtain a master's degree in business administration (MBA).

To connect with other pharmacy students, check out www.StudentDoctor.net. Another useful resource is the Student National Pharmaceutical Association.

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Professional Associations

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) American Society of Health-System Pharmacists American Pharmacists Association

Source www.drugtopics.com