

What is a pharmacist?

Pharmacists are responsible for dispensing, preparing and providing advice on the proper use of prescription drugs or over the counter medications. Pharmacists in hospitals are actively involved in patient care. As the medicines expert of the patient-care team, Pharmacists contribute to decisions about patients' treatment. Pharmacists advise people, including health professionals, about medicines.

What does a pharmacist do?

Pharmacists in hospitals may perform the following tasks:

- work with Doctors and other hospital staff to ensure quality use of medicines throughout the hospital
- work in specialist areas such as oncology and cardiology
- dispense medicines and formulate special medicines
- educate patients about medicines, including appropriate selection, dosage and drug interactions, potential side effects and therapeutic effects
- prepare individualised medicines required by hospital patients
- liaise with community-based health professionals to achieve continuity in medication management between hospital and home
- be involved in researching new medicines
- participate in patient safety initiatives including drug use evaluation
- help deliver initiatives such as Hospital in the Home to help reduce hospital admissions
- manage pharmacy services.

Can a pharmacist specialise?

The areas of specialisation for pharmacists include:

- **community** – working in a community pharmacy, involved in dispensing prescriptions, providing advice on drug selection and usage to doctors and other health professionals, providing primary healthcare advice and support, and

Is this you?

- interest and ability in science
- careful and methodical
- able to work independently
- good communication skills
- able to deal sensitively with clients' needs.

'I find it really satisfying to help patients and their families understand about medications. I also work with great colleagues who really care. The development program Queensland Health offers, plus the mentoring and support I've enjoyed from my supervisors and colleagues, has really inspired me.'

Jessica Bunker, Pharmacist



educating customers on health promotion, disease prevention and the proper use of medicines

- **Hospital** – within hospitals, operates as part of a healthcare team and is involved in monitoring medication usage, counselling patients, providing drug information and advice to health professionals and the community, conducting clinical trials and preparing products for patient use.
- **Government** – involved with regulatory control of pharmaceutical and medical products, at state, territory or federal level.
- **Industrial** – involved in research and the development, manufacture, testing, analysis and marketing of pharmaceutical and medical products.

Where can pharmacists work in Queensland Health?

Queensland Health offers employment opportunities for hospital pharmacists in clinical or management roles in a range of settings from major hospitals in large cities to smaller hospitals in rural areas. Pharmacists working in a hospital function as part of a team of Pharmacists – it may be a team of two or three or as many as 40 to 50 in larger hospitals.

How do you become a pharmacist?

To become a pharmacist you have to study pharmacy at university and complete pre-registration training under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English, chemistry and mathematics B are normally required. The various universities have different prerequisites and some have flexible entry requirements. Contact the universities you are interested in for more information as requirements may change.

Degree courses

Griffith University – Gold Coast Campus:

- Undergraduate entry: Bachelor of Pharmaceutical Science (three years) + Master of Pharmacy (1.5 years)
- Graduate entry (or those holding a degree in science/health science): Graduate Diploma in Pharmaceutical Science (one year) + Master of Pharmacy (1.5 years)

James Cook University – Townsville Campus:

- Bachelor of Pharmacy, four years full time

Queensland University of Technology – Gardens Point Campus:

- Bachelor of Pharmacy, four years full time

University of Queensland – St Lucia Campus:

- Bachelor of Pharmacy, four years full time

What graduate opportunities are available?

Before graduates can practice pharmacy, they must be registered with the Pharmacy Board of Queensland. To be eligible for registration they must complete 48 weeks service under the control and supervision of a pharmacist following completion of their Bachelor of Pharmacy. Opportunities for pre-registration graduates exist in the Pre-Registration Pharmacy Graduate Program in participating health care facilities all over Queensland.

What scholarships are available?

There are a variety of scholarships and financial assistance available. Check out the respective tertiary institutes' website for details. Also available is the Queensland Health Rural Scholarships Scheme.

Interested in other allied health careers?

Visit the Queensland Health Work For Us website www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus for more **Careers in health** fact sheets – allied health series:

- Occupational therapist
- Radiographer
- Psychologist
- Speech pathologist
- Dietitian
- Physiotherapist
- Social worker
- Podiatrist.

Where can I find out more info?

Pharmacy Board of Queensland

Phone: (07) 3225 2516

Email: pharmacy@healthregboards.qld.gov.au

Website: www.pharmacyboard.qld.gov.au

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (Qld)

Phone: (07) 3844 4900

Website: www.psa.org.au

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia

Phone: (03) 9486 0177

Email: shpa@shpa.org.au

Website: www.shpa.org.au

Griffith University

School of Pharmacy

Phone: (07) 5552 8313

Email: pharmacy@griffith.edu.au

Website: www.griffith.edu.au/health/school-pharmacy

James Cook University

Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Science

Phone: (07) 47814343

Website: www.jcu.edu.au/school/pms

Queensland University of Technology

School of Life Sciences

Phone: (07) 3138 2152

Email: sci-enquiries@qut.edu.au

Website: www.sci.qut.edu.au

The University of Queensland

School of Pharmacy

Phone: (07) 3365 2017

Email: enquiries@pharmacy.uq.edu.au

Website: www.uq.edu.au/pharmacy

The QTAC website has a list of universities and tertiary institutions with links to universities and courses offered. Go to www.qtac.edu.au and select Institutions.

To find out more about the exciting career opportunities Queensland Health can offer you go to www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus

Do great things every day

