Pharmacists

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia
1. Working as a Pharmacist

Job Description

As a Pharmacist you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Check patients’ medical histories and fill their prescriptions
- Tell patients how and when to take medications
- Inform patients of any side effects and answer their questions
- Supervise pharmacy technicians as they prepare and dispense medications

As an Industrial Pharmacist you will perform some or all of the following duties:

- Research, development, and manufacture of pharmaceutical products
- Promotion of pharmaceutical products
- Development of informational materials.


Industry Overview

There is a shortage of pharmacists in British Columbia and a significant number of job openings are expected in response to new job creation and the need to replace retiring workers. Rural and smaller communities are short of both community and hospital pharmacists.

As a result of the current shortage of pharmacists, trained pharmacy technicians now prepare and dispense most medications, while pharmacists focus on disease assessment and management of patient care.

Source: Work BC, [https://www.workbc.ca/](https://www.workbc.ca/) [search NOC 3131]
Job Outlook in BC

Pharmacists

1.5% Expected annual demand growth
2,330 Job openings (2014-2024)

Occupation Outlook for B.C.:

| % of job openings from replacement | 64% |
| % of job openings from expansion   | 36% |
| Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024) | 1.5% |
| Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024) | 2,330 |

Chart from Work BC

The Employment Outlook for BC provides job openings projections for pharmacists within BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2010 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>2015 Estimated Employment</th>
<th>Avg Annual % Change, 5 Years, 2010 to 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland / Southwest</td>
<td>2,670</td>
<td>2,930</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson-Okanagan</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kootenay</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Coast &amp; Nechako</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


You can learn more about working in BC from the following source:

- WorkBC Career Profiles
  http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/ [search Pharmacists or NOC 3131]
Types of Employers

- Hospitals
- Universities
- Government
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Retail pharmacies, which include privately-owned and operated pharmacies, national chains, and pharmacies located in super markets and big box stores.

Salary

In BC, the average annual salary for pharmacists is between $95,000 and $125,000. In addition to their salaries, pharmacists who work full-time usually receive benefits such as dental coverage and paid sick leave and vacation time. Some pharmacists can also earn bonuses or participate in profit-sharing programs.

Depending on the work place, pharmacists may belong to a union. This means wages and benefits are negotiated by union representatives on their behalf.

From Career Cruising database (Profile for Pharmacist). Available from the VPL Online Articles, Encyclopedias & More page: http://www.vpl.ca/electronic_databases/alpha/c

Job Bank Canada provides annual wages for Pharmacists in BC regions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>60,129</td>
<td>95,455</td>
<td>126,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</td>
<td>59,045</td>
<td>89,836</td>
<td>120,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson--Okanagan Region</td>
<td>83,620</td>
<td>106,298</td>
<td>145,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island and Coast Region</td>
<td>75,862</td>
<td>101,854</td>
<td>128,638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Working Hours

Most pharmacists work approximately 40 to 50 hours per week. Working in community pharmacies may require evening and weekend work. Pharmacists working in hospitals may work rotating shifts.
2. Skills, Education and Experience

Skills

- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Good manual dexterity
- Good mathematical and computer skills
- Strong ethical sense
- Enjoy personal interaction

Source: http://www.workbc.ca/Careers/ [search 3131]

Education and Experience

Pharmacists require:

- Bachelor of science degree in pharmacy
- Pass a board examination, Pharmacy Examination Board of Canada
- Practical training under the supervision of a pharmacist
- Registration with the College of Pharmacists of BC
- New pharmacists must pass an English Language Fluency exam

Qualifications

Pharmacist is a regulated profession in BC

Licensing Requirements for Pharmacists

For more information on licensing and registration as a pharmacist in BC see:
http://www.bcparmacists.org/registration_licensure/pharmacist.php

- College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
  200-1765 West 8th Avenue
  Vancouver, BC V6J 5C6
  Tel: 604.733.2440 or 800.663.1940
  Fax: 604.733.2493 or 800.377.8129
  E-mail: info@bcparmacists.org
International Applicants:

There are a number of steps for international pharmacy graduates to follow in order to become registered to practise pharmacy in BC.

**Step 1  **Register with the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada

All applicants need to complete the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada (PEBC) evaluating examination BEFORE starting the College registration process

Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada

Tel: 416-979-2431
Email: pebcinfo@pebc.ca
Web: www.pebc.ca

**Step 2  **Register as an applicant with the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia

Complete and submit an “International Pharmacy Graduate – application for registration”

**Step 3  **Successfully complete the English Language Proficiency requirements set by the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia

**Step 4  **Successfully complete the jurisprudence examination

Based on the information contained in the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia’s *BC Pharmacy Practice Manual*

**Step 5  **Successfully complete the Structured Practical Training Program

**Step 6  **Successfully complete the Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada qualifying exam – Part I and Part II

**Step 7  **Complete the “Application for Full Pharmacist Registration”
For further information on the above steps see the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia’s site:

- **Information on Becoming a Pharmacist in British Columbia:**
  

The College of Pharmacists of British Columbia has partnered with the University of British Columbia to provide the **Canadian Pharmacy Practice Programme** (CPPP). The CPPP focuses on courses relevant to international graduates who already have a pharmacy degree in order to help them meet Canadian practice standards and licensing requirements.

For more information see:

- **Canadian Pharmacy Practice Programme**
  

- **Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials**
  
  [http://www.cicic.ca/2/home.canada](http://www.cicic.ca/2/home.canada)
3. Finding Jobs

You’ll find job advertisements in local newspapers, trade journals, and electronic sources, as well as through professional associations’ publications.

Local Newspapers

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun* & *The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and in *The Province* on Sundays.

Job White Pages

- Available in print at the Central Library or online at http://jobfreeway.com/memberdocs/vpl-home.htm

**NOTE:** You can only access this database from the Central Library or VPL branch libraries. Access is NOT available from home or outside the Library.

Online Job Postings

- **HealthMatchBC**
  http://www.healthmatchbc.org/Allied-Health.aspx
  Hospital pharmacist recruitment service funded by the Government of British Columbia.

- **PharmacyJobsCanada**
  http://www.pharmacyjobscanada.ca/

- **Provincial Health Services Authority**
  http://careers.phsa.ca/
  Operates nine agencies that provide province-wide health care services.

- **Indeed.ca**
  http://www.indeed.ca/
  Find jobs posted on a multitude of company career sites and job boards
Professional Associations’ Career Resources

- **Pharmacy Jobs.ca – Canadian Pharmacists Association**
  [http://www.pharmacy-jobs.ca/pharmacy-jobs/index_en.htm](http://www.pharmacy-jobs.ca/pharmacy-jobs/index_en.htm)

- **Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns**
  [http://capsi.ca/resources/internship](http://capsi.ca/resources/internship)

**Identifying the Right Position**

When you browse job advertisements, you’ll find a range of different job titles that are relevant.

For pharmacists, look for these related job titles (from NOC 3131):

- Clinical Pharmacist
- Community Pharmacist
- Dispensary Department Supervisor
- Druggist
- Pharmacist Consultant
- Registered Pharmacist
- Retail Pharmacist
Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of pharmacies in Vancouver or the Lower Mainland. Contact them directly to find out if they’re hiring.

- **Canadian Pharmacy Directory**
  Available at the Central Library, 615.105 C212

- **Directory of Retail Chains in Canada**
  Available at the Central Library, C380 D5983
  See listings under “General Merchandise: Drugs/Health & Beauty Aids” for chain drugstores.

- **Reference Canada**
  [https://www.vpl.ca/electronic_databases/alpha/r](https://www.vpl.ca/electronic_databases/alpha/r)
  Go to the "Reference Canada" database, choose the "Custom Search" button, and select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "pharmacies" and click LOOKUP. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.
  Available from the VPL Online Articles, Encyclopedias & More page

**Note:** You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).
4. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume (curriculum vitae) and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your relevant experience.

Use the library catalogue, http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/ to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

To learn about applying for jobs in Canada, use the following pathfinders which are available in print at the Central Library or online at http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/.

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**
  Go to http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca
  [Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**
  Go to http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca
  [Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

- **Networking for Employment**
  Go to http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca
  [Search Networking for Employment]

- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**
  Go to http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca
  [Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]
5. Getting Help from Industry Sources

**Industry Associations**

Associations for pharmacists in BC and Canada provide assistance to individuals. Registration and fees are required for membership.

- **British Columbia Pharmacy Association**
  [http://www.bcpharmacy.ca](http://www.bcpharmacy.ca)

- **College of Pharmacists of British Columbia**

- **Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists – BC Branch**
  [http://www.cshp-bc.com](http://www.cshp-bc.com)
  BC Branch of the national voluntary organization of hospital pharmacists

- **Canadian Association of Pharmacy Students and Interns**
  [http://capsi.ca/](http://capsi.ca/)
  An association of pharmacy students, pharmacy interns, and undergraduate pharmacy organizations across Canada.
Industry Journals

Search the Vancouver Public Library catalogue for journals related to your profession. Examples at the Central Library:

- **Drugstore Canada (formerly Pharmacy Post)** / Rogers Pub. Ltd
  Available at Central Library 338.47 P536D

- **Canadian Pharmacists Journal (CPJ/RPC)**
  Available at Central Library 338.47 C2121D
  And online at [http://cph.sagepub.com/](http://cph.sagepub.com/)

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Branch, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at [http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/](http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/).*