

Pharmacist: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Pharmacist: Alternative Careers

In BC, pharmacists prepare and dispense prescribed drugs. They also provide consultations on medications to both clients and health care providers. They work in hospitals, universities, government, pharmaceutical companies, and retail pharmacies.

You may find that your international training and experience as a pharmacist are not immediately accepted in B.C. The skills you have acquired as a pharmacist (strong ethical sense, strong mathematical, computer, written and verbal communication skills, and good manual dexterity) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Pharmacy Assistant (NOC 3414)
- Pharmacy Technician (NOC 3219)
- Technical Sales Specialist (NOC 6221)

Alternative Careers:

Pharmacy Assistant (NOC 3414)

Also look for these job titles: *pharmacy aide, pharmacy supply assistant, pharmacy technical assistant*

You help pharmacists with the day-to-day needs of running a pharmacy. You may work for retail, hospital or clinic pharmacies.

Duties include:

- help pharmacists by preparing, packaging and labelling pharmaceutical products
- help maintain prescription records and inventories of medications and pharmaceutical products

Requirements:

- secondary school graduation; workplace training provided

Skills:

- excellent customer service skills
- professional sales experience
- highly organized with excellent problem solving skills
- detail oriented
- manual dexterity

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$20.00

<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3414>

Pharmacy Technician (NOC 3219)

You have independent authority and responsibility to prepare prescriptions under the direction of a pharmacist. You may work for retail, hospital or clinic pharmacies.

Duties include:

- prepare medications for clients
- maintain inventories of medications and prescription records of pharmaceutical products
- ensure the information on prescriptions is accurate
- enter client information in databases
- bill third party insurers

Requirements:

- completion of a pharmacy technician program that has been accredited by the [Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs](#) (CCAPP)
- registration with the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia (CPBC) as a Pharmacy Technician

Skills:

- detail oriented
- computer skills
- manual dexterity
- work well as part of a team

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$20.00

Sources:

- WorkBC <http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3219>
- Career Cruising database (Profile for "Pharmacy Technician")
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising>

Technical Sales Specialist (NOC 6221)

Also look for these job titles: pharmaceutical representative, sales support specialist

You are employed by pharmaceutical companies to promote and educate health care workers about pharmaceutical products. You may enjoy this job if you like marketing and have a good knowledge of body systems, pharmacology and strategic business planning.

You may sell a range of scientific and industrial products to governments and to commercial establishments in Canada and internationally.

Duties include:

- promote sales to existing clients; identify and solicit potential clients
- assess clients' needs and recommend the appropriate goods or services
- provide input into product design where goods or services must be tailored to suit clients' needs
- estimate costs of installing and maintaining equipment or service
- prepare and manage sales contracts

Requirements:

- usually four-year college or university program in a relevant field
- experience in sales or in a technical occupation related to the product or service may be required

Skills:

- speak, write and read English
- listen well and be able to explain and/or sell your product
- monitor trends and changes in pharmacology and marketing
- be accountable, attentive to detail, professional and punctual

Wages:

- median hourly wage: \$23.32

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6221>

2. Employment Outlook

Canada's aging population has increased the demand for prescriptions being filled by pharmacists. Many jobs will be created in retail pharmacies as more supermarkets and general merchandisers open pharmacies in their stores.

Pharmacy Assistant (NOC 3414)

Job Openings Outlook in BC

% of job openings from replacement	55%
% of job openings from expansion	45%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.9%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	1,990

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/>

Pharmacy Technician (NOC 3219)

Job Openings Outlook in BC

% of job openings from replacement	57%
% of job openings from expansion	43%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.5%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	2,190

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/>

Technical Sales Specialist (NOC 6221)

Job Openings Outlook in BC

% of job openings from replacement	72%
% of job openings from expansion	28%
Average annual growth rate of employment (2014-2024)	1.3%
Expected cumulative job openings (2014-2024)	4,180

Source: <http://www.workbc.ca/>

3. Retraining

You may want to consider upgrading your skills to increase your employment options in this field. The following courses may improve your current skills:

Vancouver Community College, Pharmacy Technician Program

30 weeks, full time certificate program, including practicum in the community
<http://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/health-sciences/pharmacy-technician/>

Kwantlen Polytechnic University: Professional Communications for Internationally Educated Health Professionals (IEHP)

Improve your communication in order to gain employment in the Canadian health care system.

http://www.kpu.ca/_shared/assets/IEHP_Brochure_June_201326208.pdf

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Open Learning: *Medical English*

Strengthen your understanding of medical terminology as it is used in a Canadian health care context. 30 week program, web-based instruction

<http://www.tru.ca/distance/courses/hlth1061.html>

4. Searching for Jobs

B.C. Health Authorities

Regional services including publicly funded hospitals and residential care facilities
www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/ (select link for each region and then go to 'Careers')

B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority Job Postings

Lists jobs available in specialty institutions such as BC Transplant, Women's Hospital, BC Children's Hospital
<http://jobs.phsa.ca/>

Providence Health Care

www.providencehealthcare.org/careers

Health Match BC

A free health professional recruitment service funded by the Government of British Columbia
<http://www.healthmatchbc.org/>

Indeed.ca

www.indeed.ca

Neuvoo

<https://neuvoo.ca/>

5. Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering can help you to explore a new career and learn more about the health care system in BC. You will meet new people and build a network of contacts that can lead to information on job openings and inside connections with potential employers.

Canadian Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.ca/where-we-work/in-canada/british-columbia-and-yukon>

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

<http://www.vch.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>

Fraser Health Authority

<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/volunteer/>

Providence Health Care

www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers

Volunteer BC

www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/

6. Helpful Resources

Pharmacists Gateway Canada for International Pharmacists

<http://www.pharmacistsgatewaycanada.ca>

BC Pharmacy Association

<http://www.bcpharmacy.ca/>

College of Pharmacists of BC

<http://www.bcpharmacists.org/>

Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians

<http://www.capt.ca/>

Click on 'Job Search Resources' at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca> for help on:

- resumes & cover letters
- getting Canadian work experience
- networking for employment
- online social networks
- Canadian workplace culture

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, 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/>.