

Pharmacy Assistant

Overview

A pharmacy assistant works with the pharmacist for preparation of drugs, provides customer service and answers to the customer in the store or over phone, manages the inventory, updates and follow-up patient files with medicine information, and manages insurance claims and other billings.

This job requires both clerical skills, customer service, and certain pharmaceutical knowledge and technical skills. A pharmacy technician needs understand doctor’s prescription, calculate the dosages, preparation of compound drugs, communication between doctors, pharmacists, and patients often over phones, and explaining the medicinal products to the patients/customers. They basically mix and prepare ointments, creams, lotions, make pills/tablets or suspensions from powdered drug, and other medications under the supervision of pharmacists.

Difference between pharmacy technician and assistant:

Unlike technicians, pharmacy assistants do not have the authority of signing on new prescriptions and refills.

Pharmacy assistants do not need to be certified by respective provincial college of pharmacists (Alberta College of Pharmacists, Ontario College of Pharmacists etc.) following exam. Usually a certificate/diploma program is sufficient to become pharmacy assistants.

The length of the pharmacy assistant programs (~6 months) are shorter than pharmacy technician ones (~1 year)

NOC Code	Other assisting occupations in support of health services (3414)
Alias Job Titles	Dispensary assistant; Drugstore dispensing assistant; Drugstore side room attendant; Pharmacy aide; Pharmacy side room attendant; Pharmacy supply assistant;
Qualifications Required	A certificate or diploma from a training program approved by the provincial college of pharmacists is required.

Salary Range	Average hourly	Range hourly	Average yearly	Range yearly
	\$22.95	\$14 - \$25.28	\$44,743	\$27,300 - \$49,296
Job Demand	<p>High</p> <p>Employment outlook is mostly good across provinces. More information is available here.</p>			
Growth Opportunity	<p>With obtaining further education and license one can become pharmacy technician.</p>			
Years' Experience Required	<p>350 hours or completion of a 2-month practicum</p>			
Training Options (if available)	<p>Programs for pharmacy assistants, SAIT, CDI College, Robertson College etc.</p> <p>Accredited programs across Canada</p>			
Personal Qualities	<p>Communication skills; ability to work independently; flexibility; interpersonal skills</p>			
Notes/Other Information	<p>Pharmacy assistants find employment in hospitals, community, retail, medical clinics, and long-term care pharmacy practice settings</p> <p>Most positions are part-time. Full-time opportunities are limited.</p>			
Steps towards capacity building to become competitive for this job	<p>To become competent for getting a job as a pharmacy assistant usually any of the following steps can be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain a pharmacy assistant certificate from a college that offers practicum 2. Seek volunteering opportunity at any local (non-franchise) pharmacy (preferably, if it is possible to connect with a pharmacy owner/pharmacist personally). Then learning and gathering experience from there one can obtain apply to any pharmacies for such position. 			

**References and
resources**

- i. [Alberta Learning Information Service](#)
- ii. [Job Bank Canada](#)
- iii. [National Occupation Classification ESDC](#)
- iv. [Neuvoo](#)
- v. [Indeed](#)