

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pharmacy Technicians are part of a group of workers known as the Pharmacy Support Staff, who include dispensing/pharmacy assistants and medicine counter assistants. They tend to work in hospitals, community retail outlets and for pharmaceutical companies.

Pharmacy Technicians assist in the preparation and assembly of medicines, and in dealing with patients and customers. Their work is conducted under the supervision of a registered Pharmacist.

INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

It is a requirement that anyone working in a pharmacy that is involved in the assembly of a prescription must be trained to a minimum NVQ/SVQ Level 2 in Pharmacy Services, or equivalent.

As a trainee Pharmacy Technician, a candidate will usually receive on-the-job training from their employer. Many technicians combine this training with studying, on a distance learning course or on a day release basis, for a relevant qualification.

REGISTRATION WITH A PROFESSIONAL BODY

No registration is currently required.

However, in January 2005, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) introduced voluntary registration for Pharmacy Technicians. Voluntary registration is dependent upon a candidate possessing a qualification equivalent to the NVQ/SVQ Level 3 in Pharmacy Services ([Annex 1](#) provides a list of acceptable equivalent qualifications).

CASEWORKER TREATMENT

B&C

Higher Level Pharmacy Technicians working at Band 5, or above, meet the skills criteria. See [Annex 2](#) for a list of duties/responsibilities for a Pharmacy Technician working at Band 5.

Additionally, in the case of the private sector, the post meets the skills criteria when the duties and responsibilities involved are at a sufficiently advanced level, so that 3 years previous experience working at NVQ Level 3 is required. See [Annex 3](#) for a list of what skills a caseworker would expect to see in a job description for a Pharmacy Technician at NVQ Level 3.

TWES

Training

This occupation is not suitable for TWES training.

Work Experience

This occupation is suitable if the work experience is at a standard equivalent to, or above, that required for the NVQ Level 3 in Pharmacy Services (see [Annex 3](#)), and if the TWES work experience criteria is satisfied.

SALARY

Job title	Band	Salary
Pharmacy Technician	Band 4	£16,853 - £20,216
Pharmacy Technician Higher Level	Band 5	£19,683 - £25,424
Pharmacy Technician Specialist	Band 6	£23,458 - £31,779
Pharmacy Technician Team Manager	Band 7	£28,313 - £37,326

Pharmacy Technicians working in the NHS are paid according to the Agenda for Change pay scales. Additional allowances may be paid regionally.

Salaries in the private sector are broadly comparable with those in the public sector.

Community Pharmacy Technicians: There are no national salary scales for Pharmacy Technicians working in community pharmacies. Different employers have different rates of pay. The salaries above should be used as a guide.

ADVERTISING

Currently Pharmacy Technicians Higher Level (Band 5 and above) are on the National Shortage Occupation List. Subsequently, applications for Higher Level Pharmacy Technicians working at Band 5, or above, should be treated under Tier 1.

Copies of the Job Description/Advertisement should be requested if it isn't clear that the post is at Band 5.

To view the latest shortage occupation list, click on the link below –

http://www.workingintheuk.gov.uk/working_in_the_uk/en/homepage/work_per_mits0/applying_for_a_work/business_and_commercial/shortage_occupations.html

FURTHER INFORMATION

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB)
1 Lambeth High Street
London

SE1 7JN
Tel: 0207 735 9141
Fax: 0207 735 7629
E-Mail: enquires@rpsgb.org
Website: www.rpsgb.org

Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK)

4th Floor
1 Mabledon Place
London
WC1H 9AJ
Tel: 0207 551 1551
Fax: 020 7551 1354
E-mail: aptukconference2007@googlemail.com
Website: www.aptuk.org

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

73 University Street
Belfast
BT7 1HL
Tel: 028 9032 6927
Fax: 028 9043 991
Website: www.psni.org.uk

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA)

Mallinson House
38-42 St Peter's Street
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL1 3NP
Tel: 01727 832161
Fax: 01727 840858
E-Mail: npa@npa.com
Website: www.npa.co.uk

Annex 1

Qualifications acceptable to RSPGB for voluntary registration from January 2005, prior to statutory regulation being introduced in 2009:

NVQ/SVQ Level 3 in Pharmacy Services (without underpinning knowledge accreditation)

BTEC National Certificate in Science (pharmaceutical)

BTEC National Certificate in Applied Science (pharmaceutical)

BTEC National Certificate in Pharmacy Services

SCOTEC National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Services

SCOTVEC National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Services

SQA National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science

City & Guilds of London Institute, Dispensing Technicians Certificate

Certificate of the Society of Apothecaries

Dispensing Certificate of the Royal Army Medical Corps or the Royal Air Force

NPA 2 year Dispensing Technicians correspondence course (prior to 1998)

Boots 2 year dispenser training programme (completed prior to 1993)

Annex 2

Below is a description of band 4-7 Pharmacy Technicians as defined by the NHS job evaluation scheme (The National Profiles where produced to locate where different NHS professions should fall with in the AfC pay bands). AfC Pay band 5-7 meet the work permits skills criteria.

Job title	AfC Pay Band	Duties
Pharmacy technician	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispenses and issues prescriptions; undertakes duties in relation to the manufacture of pharmacy products • Provides straightforward advice to patients/carers on pharmaceutical products and further supplies • Supervises, trains, coaches pharmacy support workers, student technicians
Pharmacy Technician Higher Level Pharmacy	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispenses and issues prescriptions • Provides straight forward advice to patients/carers on pharmaceutical products and further supplies • Undertakes day to day supervision of pharmacy technicians, support workers • May hold accreditation for checking dispensed prescriptions of others
Pharmacy Technician Higher Level Primary Care (health care focused on the point at which a patient ideally first seeks assistance from the medical care system).	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works as peripatetic technician to provide prescribing support to GP practices • Provides advice and training in changes to prescribing to GP practice staff, patients; may recommend changes to prescribing practices • Trains less experienced PCT staff to deliver prescribing support
Pharmacy Technician Specialist	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides and co-ordinates technical pharmacy services to a specialist area or service • Trains and assesses technical support staff; may manage team or service • Checks dispensed prescriptions, pharmaceutical production
Pharmacy Technician Team	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the provision of a technical pharmacy service

Manager		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages staff, resources, activity and information• May develop specialist technical services within the pharmacy department
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Annex 3

City & Guilds Level 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services

To gain the full NVQ all **four** mandatory units plus **four** optional units must be achieved.

Mandatory units:

Dispense medicines and products
Control stock of pharmaceutical materials and equipment
Providing pharmaceutical information and advice
Ensure your own actions reduce the risk to health and safety

Optional units:

Manage your work and development
Provide an effective pharmacy service for customers
Support the use of pharmacy information technology
Manufacture and assemble sterile and non-sterile batch medicine products
Prepare pharmaceutical products aseptically
Assist in the sale of OTC Medicines and provide information
Assist in the provision of community specialist activities
Facilitate learning through demonstration and instruction