

CAREERS IN PHARMACY

Contrary to popular perception, a career in pharmacy is not only challenging but lucrative as well says Dr. U.B. Hadkar

Traditionally a qualification in Pharmacy was associated with a lifetime career as a chemist. Knowledge and training in Pharmaceutics offers a wide array of career options to the students. The programme is no longer confined to the laboratories or classrooms and goes beyond the curriculum. The career options after the programme are also immense.

Says Mehul Oka, B Pharm student at [MET Institute of Pharmacy](#), "The B Pharm programme gave me an in-depth insight into the subject matter related to pharmaceutical industry. I had an opportunity to interact with the people in industry while undergoing the in-plant training that is a part of the curriculum. Today, at the end of four-years, I have a sound knowledge of drug therapy that would be beneficial to his family and the society." Mehul is thus excited to join the world of Pharmaceutics.

Career options after completing B Pharm or M Pharm

1. **Teaching** - B Pharm - First Class students are eligible to teach as lecturers in the D Pharm programme, where as M Pharm, First Class students can get a lecturer's job in pharmacy degree colleges. It takes about 5 years to reach the grade of Sr. lecturer and about 10 years to become Assistant Professor and about 12 years to become Professor or a Principal of a college. While in teaching profession they can do research in pharmaceutical field and strive to become a well-known Research Scientist.
2. **Pharmacist** - Being in the health-related field, the B Pharm graduate can be Health-system Pharmacist or Hospital Pharmacist or Community Pharmacist.

3. **Quality Assurance Health Manager** - The Pharmacy graduate can play an important role in the development of clinical care plans, can investigate adverse medication events and in some cases can suggest preventive measures. He can play a key role in spreading awareness amongst the people about AIDS and the preventive measures to be taken.
4. **Medical Transcription** - The B Pharm graduate can work with medical practitioners to maintain the patient treatment history, the drug to which he/she is allergic etc.
5. **Analytical Chemist of Quality Control Manager** - The pharmacy graduate can play a crucial role in controlling product quality. The drug and the Cosmetics Act (1945), Rules 71(1) and 76(1) says that the manufacturing activity should be taken up under the supervision of a technical man whose qualification should be B Pharm, B Sc, B Tech or medicine with Bio-Chemistry.
6. **Sales and Marketing** - Ambitious achievers with pleasant personality and good communication skills can opt for the job of Medical Sales Representative. The companies prefer pharmacy graduates for this job, as they have a good knowledge about the drug molecules, their therapeutic effects and the drug - drug interactions.
7. **Clinical Research** - B Pharm/ M Pharm degree holders can take up career in clinical research. The human testing phase is called the clinical trial. A pharmacist can work as clinical research associate or clinical pharmacist and can rise to the position of project manager. The clinical research associate plays an important role of monitoring and overseeing the conducts of clinical trials, which are conducted on healthy human volunteers. They have to see that the trials meet the international guidelines and the national regulatory requirements.

8. **Data Manager** - A pharmacist can seek employment as "Data Manager" to store the data in the computer and process it using software developed for the purpose.
9. **Regulatory Manager** - A pharmacy graduate can work as "Regulatory Manager"(RM) in companies and contract research organisation. As an RM he has to oversee regulatory documentation such as Clinical trial approval permission, marketing approval permission etc.
10. **Career in Regulatory bodies** - A Pharmacist can be absorbed in the Regulatory bodies like Food and Drug Administration. Pharmacist having experience in clinical trial centres can also work as an inspector to inspect the clinical trial process. For these government jobs the student needs to appear and pass the MPSC examination.
11. Biotechnology is a fast growing branch and the B Pharm graduates can opt for post graduate diploma programme in Bioinformatics.
12. They can handle the job of monitoring the conduct of clinical trials that are conducted on human volunteers. It is their responsibility to see that the clinical trials are carried out as per the international guidelines.
13. The B Pharm Science programme is considered as a paramedical programme. The B Pharm Science graduates can therefore work in hospitals as hospital pharmacist or community pharmacist.
14. Since they have a good knowledge of therapeutic effects of drugs and that of drug-drug interaction, they are more suitable for a job in clinical research. They can opt for the post of clinical pharmacist or clinical research associate in a clinical research laboratory.

Further studies in India:

To improve the job opportunity and for better placement, the value-added and career-focused programmes offered by the different institutes are as under: -

1. [MET Institute of Medical Sciences](#)

Programmes: Post Graduate Diploma in Technical and Analytical Chemistry and Post Graduate Diploma Pharmaceutical Business Management

Tel: +91 22 26440096 /57

Toll free: 1800-22-0234

email: communications@met.edu

This is the only government-recognised programme in Mumbai and till date it has recorded 100% success in placements at prominent corporates.

2. Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Pune

Website: <http://www.pharmadiplomas.com>

3. Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (Deemed University)

Website: www.nmims.edu

Further studies abroad:

One may even consider venturing into pursuing higher studies abroad in order to make their careers even more lucrative and challenging.

1. **USA** - One may consider opting for pursuing higher studies abroad. After graduation from a recognised university, the students can appear for their GRE (Graduate Record Examination) and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) for entry into foreign universities. US universities offer assistance-ship for undergraduate programmes. Students have to apply well in advance since visa procedure also takes time; The US visa takes around four weeks and a visa to Australia takes around six weeks. In USA they can give "Pharmacy Equivalent Examinations." For example FPGEE (Foreign Pharmacist Licensure Examination) followed by internship and then finally NAPLEX (North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination) both these examination can be cleared in

about one year and there one can practice retail pharmacies, which are expanding very fast in USA. In USA M Pharm plus Ph.D. is essential to enter industry or academic institution

2. **Australia** - Indian students know most of the universities in USA. Very few know and try for the postgraduate studies in Australia. University of the South Australia is the largest university in the South Australia. There are about 300 programmes and about 10,000 International students are studying in Univ. SA. It offers Degree in medical radiation, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, environmental toxicology, etc. It is top ranking university for innovative research linked to industry.
3. **Ireland** - Ireland is another ideal destination for students. There are about 400 students for postgraduate studies. The standard of universities in Ireland is similar to UK universities Ireland is a gateway to Europe with no racism problems. Cost of the education is much less than in UK & US. Ireland is amongst the top five producers of pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals.

Contrary to popular perception, a career in pharmacy is not only challenging but lucrative as well. No longer in a D Pharm/ B Pharm qualification looked at as a “fall-back” option for MBBS rejects, instead, one can witness a breed of young, ambitious minds that wishes to reach newer heights in the field of Pharmaceuticals.

Where to look for more information?

One can download a handbook on Careers in Pharmacy created by Pfizer. The URL is <http://www.pfizercareerguides.com/pdfs/pharmacy.pdf>. The handbook provides complete information on international careers in pharmacy right from resume building to career profiles.

Dr. U.B. Hadkar, Director – MET Institute of Pharmacy has authored this article