Pharmacy

History

In 1821, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, the first school of its kind in the United States, was founded. The American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA) followed 30 years later in 1852. APhA today represents more than 60,000 practicing pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and others in the profession. Dedicated to helping all pharmacists improve medication use and advance patient care, APhA is largest association of pharmacists in the United States. Three academies comprise the APhA—Pharmacy Practice and Management, Pharmaceutical Research and Science and Student Pharmacists.

Virtually every pharmacy specialty organization traces its roots to APhA and the many sections and interest groups it has served over the years, including the National Community Pharmacy Association (founded in 1898 as the National Association of Retail Druggists), the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (founded in 1900 as the American Conference on Pharmaceutical Faculties) and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (founded in 1942 as the American Society of Hospital Pharmacists).

Pharmacy as a Career Today

Pharmacists distribute prescription drugs to individuals. They also advise their patients, as well as physicians and other health practitioners, on the selection, dosages, interactions and side effects of medications. Pharmacists monitor the health and progress of patients to ensure the safe and effective use of medication. Compounding, the actual mixing of ingredients to form medications, is a small part of a pharmacist’s practice. The pharmaceutical companies usually compound the medicines before they reach the pharmacy. Most pharmacists work in a community setting, such as a retail drugstore, or in a health care facility, such as a hospital, nursing home, mental health institution, or neighborhood health clinic.

Pharmacists typically work in clean, well-lit and well-ventilated areas. Many pharmacists spend most of their workday on their feet. When working with sterile or dangerous pharmaceutical products, pharmacists wear gloves, masks and other protective equipment.

Most full-time salaried pharmacists work approximately 40 hours a week, and about 10 percent work more than 50 hours. Many community and hospital pharmacies are open for extended hours or around the clock, so pharmacists may be required to work nights, weekends and holidays. Consultant pharmacists may travel to nursing homes or other facilities to monitor patients’ drug therapy.
### Aptitude

The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) has an excellent web page entitled, “Is Pharmacy for You?” AACP also has other resources such as a booklet, “Shall I Study Pharmacy?” This excerpt summarizes the aptitude for a career in pharmacy:

As you think about your place in pharmacy, you must also think about your qualifications to meet pharmacy’s demands for judgment, dependability and conscientious performance. You must be good at detail and willing to check and double check your own work. As with others on the health care team, your decisions and actions involve human life and well-being. Your need for careful attention to your work, your decisions, and the results of your actions cannot be over-emphasized. Since pharmacists, by law, are entrusted with the proper storage, handling and dispensing of dangerous and habit-forming drug substances, they must be absolutely scrupulous in handling them. Their ethical standards must be high, and they must use fact and good judgment in answering the questions people ask them. As experts in drugs and chemicals, it follows that pharmacists need a good education with an emphasis on science and should possess a curiosity and a desire and willingness to learn. The pharmacist needs background in the principles of management and the ability to maintain the records, legal and otherwise, required for pharmacy practice. Most importantly, pharmacists must enjoy working with people, be comfortable meeting them and be willing to serve them in a variety of circumstances.

### Education

Pharmacists must earn a Pharm.D. degree from an accredited college or school of pharmacy. The Pharm.D. degree has replaced the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree, which is no longer awarded. To be admitted to a Pharm.D. program, an applicant must have completed at least two years of postsecondary study, although most applicants have completed three or more years. Other entry requirements usually include courses in mathematics and natural sciences, such as chemistry, biology and physics as well as courses in the humanities and social sciences. About 70 percent of Pharm.D. programs require applicants to take the Pharmacy College Admissions Test (PCAT).

### Pharmacy Programs in Louisiana

University of Louisiana at Monroe College of Pharmacy, Monroe, LA; for further information, visit ulm.edu/pharmacy
Scholarship Opportunities

Scholarships for Tomorrow's Chain Pharmacy Leaders (nacdsfoundation.org)

The goal of the **NACDS Foundation Pharmacy Student Scholarship Program** is to support the development of future leaders in chain community pharmacy and to recognize pharmacy students who have a strong interest in pursuing a career in chain community pharmacy.

The program also awards named scholarships recognizing gifts made to this fund by organizations or individuals to support educational development. The Robert J. Bolger Scholarship and Taro Research Foundation Scholarship were created as part of the NACDS Foundation Pharmacy Student Scholarship Program to support pharmacy student scholarships. Exceptional students of the highest achievement will receive named scholarships.

**Scholarship Awards:** A *minimum* of 45 $2,000 scholarships will be awarded. In addition, select recipients will receive named scholarships in the amount of $2,500.

**Eligibility:**

- The student applicant must be enrolled as a full-time pharmacy student in an accredited U.S. college or school of pharmacy studying to obtain a doctor of pharmacy degree (Pharm.D.).
- Student applicants must have completed at least one professional year of pharmacy school to apply. First year pharmacy students are not eligible to apply.
- The student applicant must have experience in chain community pharmacy, as well as the desire to pursue a career in chain community pharmacy. Experience may be current or recent employment in a chain community pharmacy. A chain community pharmacy is defined as a community retail pharmacy company operating four or more pharmacies.
- The student applicant must have a minimum "C" grade point average.
- Previous NACDS Foundation Pharmacy Student Scholarship recipients are not eligible to apply; however, previous applicants are welcome to reapply.
- Family members of the NACDS Foundation Board of Directors or Officers are not eligible to apply.
Other Scholarship Opportunities

- American College of Apothecaries Research Education Foundation
- American Pharmacists Association Awards and Scholarships
- American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Awards and Scholarships
- Health Alliance Scholarships
- National Association of Chain Drug Stores Scholarships, Loans Grants, and Awards
- National Community Pharmacists Association Scholarships and Student Loans
- PhRMA Foundation Fellowships and Grants
- Rite Aid Scholarships and Internships
- Tylenol Scholarship Program

Salaries

Median annual of wage-and-salary pharmacists in May 2006 were $94,520. The middle 50 percent earned between $83,180 and $108,140 per year. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $67,860, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $119,480 a year. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of pharmacists in May 2006 were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Median Earnings</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department stores</td>
<td>$99,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grocery stores</td>
<td>95,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacies and drug stores</td>
<td>94,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General medical and surgical hospitals</td>
<td>93,640</td>
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</tbody>
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Professional Associations

- Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
  http://www.acpe-accredit.org
- American Pharmacists Association
  http://www.pharmacist.com/am/template.cfm?Section=Home2
- National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
  http://www.nabp.net
- National Association of Chain Drug Stores
  http://www.nacds.org

Additional Web Resources

- http://www.pharmacists.com/
- http://www.lshp.org
- http://aaccp.org