

Pharmacist

Six-figure pay after six years. Retail, hospital or industry, and no residency required.

TYPICAL PAY

\$108,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$85k to \$135k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 7 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Community pharmacies, hospitals,
drug companies**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Biology, chemistry, math and English with high marks.
- 2 Pre-pharmacy university courses** 2 to 4 years
Two years of science: chemistry, biology, biochemistry, physics, statistics. Some students finish a full degree first.
- 3 Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)** 4 years
Four years at one of 10 Canadian pharmacy schools. Includes hundreds of hours of placements. Admission is competitive.
- 4 PEBC (Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada) exams** After graduation
The national qualifying exam has a written part and a practical (OSCE, a hands-on skills test) part.
- 5 Provincial licence** A few months
Register with your provincial college, complete a jurisprudence exam and a structured practical training period.

Pros and cons

- + High pay from day one, no residency needed
- + Regular hours compared with other health careers
- + Jobs in every town in Canada
- Expensive degree
- Retail can be high-volume and stressful
- Standing all shift, few breaks at busy stores

Good to know

Pharmacists can prescribe now

As of 2023, pharmacists in Ontario can prescribe for 19 minor ailments like pink eye and urinary tract infections. Alberta pharmacists have had broad prescribing rights since 2007.

Only 10 pharmacy schools

Toronto, Waterloo, UBC (University of British Columbia), Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Dalhousie, Memorial, Montreal and Laval. That is the whole list.

Optional boosts

Hospital pharmacy residency. Board certification (BCPS, BCOP and similar specialty credentials). Injection and prescribing certification. Ownership.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Pharmacists, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Pharmacy Examining Board of Canada: Exam dates and fees
Ontario College of Pharmacists

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/pharmacist>



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