

Western Health Pharmacy Internship FAQ

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How is the pharmacy intern year structured?

The pharmacy intern roster consists of 13 x three-to-five-week rotations, with pharmacy interns allocated to both the clinical and operational setting throughout the year. Pharmacy interns will spend 60% of the year in a clinical environment.

Operational rotations consist of inpatient dispensary, outpatient dispensary and manufacturing (non-sterile). This split gives pharmacy interns the opportunity to experience a broad range of hospital-based pharmacy practice and provides a variety of ward environments to develop fundamental clinical pharmacy skills. Pharmacy interns are also able to spend time in specialty areas such as Medicines Information, Medication Safety, Outreach Pharmacy and attend an Antimicrobial Stewardship and Acute Pain Management Service ward round during the year to observe multidisciplinary team collaboration.

What clinical rotations are offered during the pharmacy intern year?

We review our pharmacy internship program yearly and make changes based on feedback from the previous year's interns so rotations may vary. Rotations may include respiratory medicine, infectious diseases, general surgery, maternity, coronary care and aged care to name a few.

Can I choose an elective rotation during the pharmacy intern year?

You have the option to choose an elective rotation during the second half of the year. The 2025 pharmacy interns had the option to select from the following: clinical trials, mental health, paediatrics and emergency medicine. However, we review our pharmacy internship program yearly and consider feedback from the previous year's interns and make changes accordingly.

Can pharmacy interns visit other hospital campuses?

Pharmacy interns are primarily based at the Footscray and Sunshine campus (including Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital) throughout the year (approximately 30:70 split).

Are pharmacy interns rostered to weekend shifts?

Yes, pharmacy interns are rostered to Saturday shifts, commencing from February/March, and work one in every seven Saturdays throughout the year at Sunshine Hospital. Shifts are usually from 7:30am to 4:15pm.

How are pharmacy interns orientated?

Pharmacy interns will undergo two full weeks of introduction and general orientation at the start of the year to become familiar with the pharmacy intern program, the pharmacy department and expectations for the year ahead. This includes clinical intensive training to learn the basics of clinical pharmacy prior to their clinical ward rotations.

Do you have a mentor program?

There are 7 intern preceptor pharmacists (in addition to the Senior Education Pharmacist) assigned per pharmacy intern who mentor and provide education and emotional support throughout the year. Intern preceptor pharmacists also support intern orientation, teaching and tutorial delivery.

Are there any practice exams to prepare for the end of year Pharmacy Board oral Exam?

Five to six oral practice exams are provided for each intern throughout the year. Practice exams are conducted under Pharmacy Board of Australia exam conditions with two pharmacists supervising and providing invaluable feedback to prepare interns for the final exam.

Practice exams are reviewed and updated each year to ensure content is up to date.

Is there any preparation for the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) written exam?

We have two full days of study dedicated to the APC written exam. The APC study day is conducted by the Senior Education Pharmacist and intern preceptor pharmacists. Preparations consists of multiple-choice questions, short answer questions and calculation questions.

How often are pharmacy intern tutorials conducted and what topics are covered?

Intern tutorials are scheduled once weekly, every Thursday from 3pm to 5pm throughout the year. Tutorial topics focus on a broad variety clinical disease state (applicable to both hospital and community pharmacy practice), primary care and pharmacy legislation. Tutorials are provided by senior specialised pharmacists and intern preceptors where applicable.

Can I take annual leave during my intern year?

Yes, pharmacy interns are entitled to 5 weeks of annual leave per the current enterprise bargaining agreement however pharmacy interns usually accumulate their leave to ensure they reach their supervised practice hours prior to exams satisfactorily. On average, most interns take a total of one week of leave during internship.

Does Western Health offer the Monash Intern Foundation Program (IFP)?

Yes, Western Health offers the Intern Training Program and Intern Foundation Program, which enables pharmacy interns to obtain a Graduate Certificate in Pharmacy Practice from Monash University by recognising workplace learning.

Are there opportunities to undertake research at Western Health?

Western Health is passionate about research and a research project can be undertaken as part of the Monash Intern Foundation Program.

What are the job prospects like at Western health after my internship?

Western Health usually retain all pharmacy interns on as casual pharmacists until more permanent opportunities open. This varies year to year and there are no guarantees.

What opportunities are there for early career Pharmacists at Western Health?

Western Health is an accredited site for AdPha Pharmacy Resident Training Program.