

Dispensary technician Job Description

A free job description template for the Pharmacy industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This dispensary technician job description template is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and pharmacy industry practices at the time of publication. Confirm the applicable modern award for your business and ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws.

1. Position overview

A dispensary technician (also known as a senior dispensary assistant) works alongside the pharmacist to prepare, label and package prescriptions ready for the pharmacist's final check. They enter prescription details, manage dispensary stock and cold-chain items, process PBS and safety-net claims, prepare dose administration aids, and keep the dispensary running smoothly and compliantly. The pharmacist retains legal responsibility for the final clinical check and hand-out.

In Australia, dispensary technicians are classified under the Pharmacy Industry Award 2020 (MA000012), typically at the higher pharmacy-assistant levels (Level 3 to Level 4) reflecting their dispensary skills, a relevant dispensary certificate and, often, supervisory duties over junior assistants.

This template provides a foundation for creating clear, compliant job descriptions that attract skilled dispensary staff while setting appropriate expectations for the role. Once hired, manage your team efficiently with pharmacy rostering software.

2. Key responsibilities

Prescription preparation

Entering prescription details accurately, selecting and counting stock, and labelling and packaging medicines ready for the pharmacist's final check.

PBS and claiming

Processing PBS, safety-net and private claims correctly, resolving pricing and eligibility queries and keeping accurate dispensing records.

Dispensary stock control

Ordering, receiving and rotating dispensary stock, managing cold-chain storage, checking expiries and handling recalls and returns.

Dose administration aids

Preparing dose administration aids (such as blister packs) accurately for the pharmacist to check, and maintaining associated records.

Controlled drugs support

Assisting with Schedule 8 and controlled-drug register entries and secure storage under the pharmacist's supervision and pharmacy procedures.

Workflow and supervision

Keeping the dispensary organised, managing script workflow during peak periods and mentoring junior pharmacy assistants.

3. Skills and attributes

- Accuracy: Exceptional attention to detail when entering, selecting, counting and labelling medicines for pharmacist checking.
- Systems knowledge: Confidence with dispensing software, PBS claiming and pharmacy point-of-sale and inventory systems.
- Compliance: Understanding of poisons handling, controlled-drug procedures and privacy of confidential patient information.
- Time management: Ability to manage script workflow and prioritise under pressure during busy dispensary periods.
- Communication: Clear communication with the pharmacist, customers and prescribers, and the judgement to escalate clinical questions.
- Teamwork: A collaborative approach and the ability to guide and support junior pharmacy assistants.

4. Qualifications and requirements

Dispensary technician positions build on pharmacy-assistant experience and usually require a dispensary qualification. Some requirements are mandatory, while others are preferred or desirable.

- Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy Dispensary — A recognised dispensary qualification is strongly preferred and can be completed on the job
- Dispensary experience (required) — Prior experience preparing prescriptions and using dispensing software
- Working rights (required) — Eligibility to work in Australia
- Certificate III in Community Pharmacy — A pharmacy assistant qualification is a useful foundation
- First aid certificate — Current first aid certification is desirable
- Attention to accuracy (required) — Demonstrated accuracy and care when handling medicines and records

5. Working conditions

- Shift work including evenings, weekends and public holidays for extended-trading pharmacies
- Standing and detailed close work in the dispensary for extended periods
- Fast-paced script workflow during peak dispensing periods
- Handling of medicines, cold-chain stock and controlled drugs under supervision
- Responsibility for confidential patient information and accurate records
- Compliance with poisons legislation and workplace health and safety requirements

6. Award information

Pharmacy industry award 2020

Dispensary technician positions are covered by the Pharmacy Industry Award 2020 (MA000012). This modern award sets minimum pay rates, penalty rates, allowances and conditions for pharmacy employees. View current Pharmacy Award pay rates.

A dispensary technician is typically classified at the higher pharmacy-assistant levels (Level 3 to Level 4) to reflect dispensary skills, a relevant qualification and any supervisory duties. Rates rise with each level above the Level 1 base of around \$27.81 per hour for FY2026/27, with casuals receiving a 25% loading. Use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately.

Penalty rates and time bands

Under MA000012, penalties apply on top of the ordinary rate based on the time of day and day of week: evening (Mon–Fri 7pm–9pm) and Saturday (8am–6pm) at 125%, Sunday (7am–9pm) at 150% and public holidays at 225% for full-time and part-time staff, with casual rates higher again. Narrower morning and late-evening bands attract higher rates.

Overtime is generally paid at 150% for the first two hours then 200%. Because a dispensary shift can span several time bands, use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately, and check whether an enterprise agreement applies in place of the award.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a dispensary technician do?

A dispensary technician prepares, labels and packages prescriptions for the pharmacist to check, enters prescription details, manages dispensary stock and cold-chain items, processes PBS and safety-net claims, and prepares dose administration aids. They keep the dispensary running smoothly and compliantly under the pharmacist's supervision, who retains legal responsibility for the final clinical check and hand-out.

Q: What award covers dispensary technicians in Australia?

Dispensary technicians are covered by the Pharmacy Industry Award 2020 (MA000012), usually at the higher pharmacy-assistant levels. Some larger pharmacy groups run on an enterprise agreement. Always confirm which instrument applies to your business before setting pay.

Q: What classification level should I use for a dispensary technician?

A dispensary technician is typically classified at Level 3 to Level 4 under the Pharmacy Award to reflect dispensary skills, a relevant qualification and any supervisory duties. Rates rise with each level above the Level 1 assistant base of around \$27.81 per hour for FY2026/27. See our Pharmacy Award pay rates guide for current rates at each level.

Q: What is the difference between a dispensary technician and a pharmacy assistant?

A pharmacy assistant is primarily front-of-shop, serving customers and supporting the dispensary at the lower assistant levels. A dispensary technician works mainly in the dispensary preparing and labelling medicines and processing claims, is usually higher-classified with a dispensary certificate, and may supervise junior assistants. Both work under the direct supervision of a pharmacist.

Qualifications

Q: What qualifications does a dispensary technician need?

A Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy Dispensary is strongly preferred and can often be completed on the job, building on a Certificate III in Community Pharmacy. Prior dispensary experience with dispensing software is usually essential, along with working rights in Australia. A dispensary technician works under the pharmacist's supervision and does not require AHPRA registration.

Q: Does a dispensary technician need to be registered?

No. Unlike pharmacists and interns, dispensary technicians do not require AHPRA registration because they work under the direct supervision of a pharmacist, who retains legal responsibility for the final clinical check. A recognised dispensary qualification is the key credential rather than registration.

Q: What qualifications should I require vs prefer for a dispensary technician?

Mandatory requirements usually include prior dispensary experience, demonstrated accuracy and working rights in Australia. Preferred qualifications include a Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy Dispensary, a Certificate III in Community Pharmacy and a first aid certificate. Tailor these to your dispensary volume and the systems you use.

Q: Can I train a pharmacy assistant into a dispensary technician role?

Yes. Many dispensary technicians start as pharmacy assistants and progress by gaining dispensary experience and completing a Certificate IV in Community Pharmacy Dispensary. Reflect the higher skills and responsibility with the correct assistant classification level under the Pharmacy Award, and update their employment contract accordingly.

Employment

Q: Should I hire casual or permanent dispensary technicians?

This depends on your dispensing volume. Casual technicians offer flexibility for peak periods and leave cover but attract a 25% casual loading under the Pharmacy Award. Permanent part-time or full-time technicians provide continuity and stronger retention in a skilled role. Many pharmacies use a mix — permanent technicians for core hours and casuals for relief.

Q: What penalty rates apply to dispensary technicians?

Under the Pharmacy Award (MA000012), for full-time and part-time staff: evening (Mon–Fri 7pm–9pm) and Saturday (8am–6pm) are paid at 125%, Sunday (7am–9pm) at 150% and public holidays at 225% of the ordinary rate. Casual rates are higher again because the loading is added to the penalty. Use award interpretation software to calculate rates accurately.

Q: How do the Pharmacy Award time bands affect dispensary technician pay?

The Pharmacy Award sets penalties by time of day as well as day of week, with narrower morning and late-evening bands attracting higher rates. Because a dispensary shift can span several bands, manual calculation is error-prone. Recording exact start and finish times with time and attendance and applying award interpretation keeps pay accurate.

Q: What should I include in a dispensary technician employment contract?

Key elements include: position title and classification level, employment type, hourly rate, applicable award, reporting structure, main dispensary duties and any qualification or supervisory expectations. For casuals, include the 25% casual loading. Use our digital employment contracts to simplify this process.

Rostering

Q: How do I roster dispensary technicians around dispensing peaks?

Match dispensary technician shifts to your busiest scripting periods so the pharmacist always has support during peak workflow. Use rostering software to see coverage across the day and ensure a technician is on when script volume is highest, reducing wait times and errors.

Q: How far in advance should I provide rosters to dispensary technicians?

Award and agreement rules vary, so confirm the notice period that applies to your business. As a general practice, providing rosters at least 7 days in advance gives staff visibility of their shifts. Using rostering software helps ensure compliance and reduces last-minute changes.

Q: How do I track qualifications and certificates for dispensary staff?

Use HR software to store each technician's dispensary certificate, first aid and other credentials, with expiry reminders. Linking qualifications to rostering means you can ensure suitably skilled staff are scheduled for dispensary shifts.

Q: What breaks are dispensary technicians entitled to?

Break entitlements are set by the applicable award or agreement and generally include a meal break for shifts beyond a set length. Plan cover so dispensary workflow continues when a technician takes a break. Use time and attendance tools to record breaks accurately and support compliance.