

Pharmacy assistant Job Description

A free job description template for the Pharmacy industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This pharmacy assistant 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 pharmacy assistant is the front-of-shop face of a community or retail pharmacy. They serve customers, recommend and sell over-the-counter and retail products, operate the register, restock and merchandise shelves, and support the dispensary by receiving prescriptions and preparing them for the pharmacist to check. It is an entry-level role that combines retail service with a caring, health-focused environment.

In Australia, pharmacy assistants are classified under the Pharmacy Industry Award 2020 (MA000012) across Levels 1 to 4, progressing from entry-level retail work to supervisory and dispensary-support duties. Junior rates apply to assistants under 21, stepping up on each birthday.

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

2. Key responsibilities

Customer service

Greeting customers, answering enquiries, advising on over-the-counter and retail health products within scope, and referring health questions to the pharmacist.

Sales and register

Operating the point-of-sale system, processing cash and card payments, handling refunds and promoting current offers and loyalty programs.

Dispensary support

Receiving prescriptions, entering customer details, retrieving and labelling stock and preparing scripts for the pharmacist to check and dispense.

Stock and merchandising

Receiving deliveries, restocking and rotating shelves, checking expiry dates, and maintaining tidy, well-presented retail displays.

Housekeeping

Keeping the retail floor, counters and consultation areas clean, safe and well-organised throughout the day.

Compliance

Following pharmacy procedures for restricted (Schedule 2 and 3) products, privacy of customer information and workplace health and safety.

3. Skills and attributes

- Communication: Warm, clear communication with customers and the ability to know when to refer a query to the pharmacist.
- Customer focus: Genuine care for customer wellbeing, patience and discretion when handling sensitive health purchases.
- Retail aptitude: Confidence with point-of-sale systems, product knowledge and suggestive selling of over-the-counter lines.
- Attention to detail: Accuracy when entering customer details, retrieving stock and checking expiry dates.
- Reliability: Punctuality, flexibility with shifts and consistent attendance across trading hours.
- Teamwork: A collaborative attitude, willingness to help colleagues and support the dispensary during busy periods.

4. Qualifications and requirements

The qualifications for pharmacy assistant positions are entry-level friendly. Some requirements are mandatory, while others are preferred or desirable and can be gained on the job.

- Working rights (required) — Eligibility to work in Australia
- Customer service skills (required) — A friendly, helpful manner and the ability to work in a customer-facing role
- Certificate II/III in Community Pharmacy — A recognised community pharmacy qualification is desirable but can be completed on the job
- Previous retail experience — Experience in retail or customer service is advantageous but not essential
- First aid certificate — Current first aid certification is desirable
- Formal trade qualification — No trade qualification needed — this is an entry-level pathway with on-the-job training

5. Working conditions

- Shift work including evenings, weekends and public holidays for extended-trading pharmacies
- Standing for extended periods on the retail floor and at the counter
- Lifting and carrying stock during deliveries and restocking
- Fast-paced customer service during peak trading periods
- Handling confidential customer and health information with discretion
- Compliance with uniform, grooming and workplace health and safety standards

6. Award information

Pharmacy industry award 2020

Most pharmacy assistant 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.

Pharmacy assistants are classified across Levels 1 to 4, from entry-level retail work up to supervisory and dispensary-support roles. A Level 1 adult assistant is paid around \$27.81 per hour for full-time and part-time work, and about \$34.76 per hour as a casual (including the 25% loading), for FY2026/27. Use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately.

Junior rates and penalties

Junior rates apply to pharmacy assistants under 21 — around 45% of the adult rate under 16, rising to about 90% at age 20 and the full adult rate at 21. Junior rates step up on each birthday, so review them regularly.

Under MA000012, penalties apply on top of the ordinary rate: 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. Check whether an enterprise agreement applies in place of the award.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a pharmacy assistant do?

A pharmacy assistant serves customers on the retail floor, advises on and sells over-the-counter and retail products within scope, operates the register, and restocks and merchandises shelves. They also support the dispensary by receiving prescriptions, entering customer details and preparing scripts for the pharmacist to check. It is an entry-level role that combines retail service with a health-focused environment, always referring clinical questions to the pharmacist.

Q: What award covers pharmacy assistants in Australia?

Most pharmacy assistants are covered by the Pharmacy Industry Award 2020 (MA000012), which sets minimum pay, junior rates, penalty rates and conditions for community and retail pharmacies. Some larger groups run on an enterprise agreement. Always confirm which instrument applies to your business.

Q: What classification level should I use for a pharmacy assistant?

Under the Pharmacy Award, assistants are classified across Levels 1 to 4 — from entry-level retail work up to supervisory and dispensary-support duties. A Level 1 adult assistant is paid around \$27.81 per hour for full-time and part-time work (about \$34.76 casual) for FY2026/27. See our Pharmacy Award pay rates guide for current rates at each level.

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

A pharmacy assistant is primarily front-of-shop, serving customers and supporting the dispensary, and is usually classified at the lower assistant levels. A dispensary technician works mainly in the dispensary preparing and labelling medicines for the pharmacist to check, and is typically classified at a higher assistant level with a dispensary qualification. Both work under the direct supervision of a pharmacist.

Qualifications

Q: Do pharmacy assistants need a qualification?

No formal qualification is required to start as a pharmacy assistant — it is an entry-level pathway with on-the-job training. A Certificate II or III in Community Pharmacy is desirable and can be completed while working. Employers generally look for strong customer service skills, reliability and working rights in Australia.

Q: How do junior pharmacy-assistant rates work?

Pharmacy assistants under 21 are paid a percentage of the adult level rate — around 45% under 16, rising through roughly 50% at 16, 60% at 17, 70% at 18, 80% at 19 and 90% at 20, reaching the full adult rate at 21. Junior rates step up on each birthday, so review them regularly. See the Pharmacy Award pay guide for current figures.

Q: What qualifications should I require vs prefer for a pharmacy assistant?

Mandatory requirements are usually working rights in Australia and good customer service skills. Preferred qualifications include a Certificate II or III in Community Pharmacy, previous retail experience and a first aid certificate. Avoid over-qualifying entry-level positions, as it narrows your candidate pool unnecessarily.

Q: Can I hire pharmacy assistants without experience?

Yes. Pharmacy assistant is an entry-level role and many pharmacies hire and train staff without prior experience. Focus on a warm customer-service manner, reliability and discretion with sensitive purchases. Clear job descriptions help candidates understand the retail and dispensary-support duties and self-select appropriately.

Employment

Q: Should I hire casual or permanent pharmacy assistants?

This depends on your trading pattern. Casual assistants offer flexibility for peak periods and weekends but attract a 25% casual loading under the Pharmacy Award. Permanent part-time or full-time staff provide consistency and stronger retention. Many pharmacies use a mix — permanent staff for core hours and casuals for busy trading and relief.

Q: What penalty rates apply to pharmacy assistants?

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: What is the minimum shift length for a casual pharmacy assistant?

The Pharmacy Award sets a minimum engagement per casual shift, so a casual assistant must be paid for at least that minimum even if sent home early. Confirm the current minimum in the Pharmacy Award pay guide and build shifts around it to avoid underpayment and short, uneconomic engagements.

Q: What should I include in a pharmacy assistant employment contract?

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

Rostering

Q: How far in advance should I provide rosters to pharmacy assistants?

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 rosters software helps ensure compliance and reduces last-minute changes.

Q: How do I balance retail floor and dispensary support coverage?

Roster by area so you have enough front-of-shop assistants for busy trading while keeping dispensary support available for the pharmacist. Use rosters software to see coverage at a glance and match assistants' skills and availability to each area across the day.

Q: How do junior rates affect my pharmacy rosters costs?

Junior assistants are cheaper per hour but must be paid the correct age-based rate, which changes on each birthday. Award-aware rosters software with award interpretation shows live wage cost as you build the roster and applies the right junior and penalty rates automatically.

Q: What breaks are pharmacy assistants entitled to?

Break entitlements are set by the applicable award or agreement and generally include a meal break for shifts beyond a set length. Set clear break policies and ensure staff record their time accurately. Use time and attendance tools to support compliance.