

companies. Spend time on the company's website. Look into their products (which you will probably be familiar with anyway as a pharmacist). Try to make contact with someone working in the company already to gain greater insights. Taking a pro-active interest in the company will be viewed positively at interview.

Research the position

Know the ins and outs of the job you are applying for and be sure that you are qualified for the role. Try to speak with someone working in the same role either in the company you are interviewing with or another pharmaceutical company. Use networks like LinkedIn to put you in contact with relevant people.

Practice makes perfect

Prepare well in advance for your interview. Behavioural interviewing is commonly used in the industry. This approach views past performance as a good predictor of future performance. You should prepare by thinking of specific examples that demonstrate your competence in core behaviours such as teamwork, problem-solving, communication skills, innovation and flexibility. You should structure your examples by replying in terms of the particular situation, the task, what action you took, and what the outcome was. It is likely that you will be interviewed by a panel of people including someone from Human Resources.

Write out a list of questions and ask someone else to conduct a mock interview with you (e.g. someone from a recruitment company, someone working in the industry already).

Pre-empt questions that each interviewer on the panel may ask from their individual perspective.

Interviewing for a scientific/technical position

It is likely that you will be asked direct questions about your technical experience and knowledge with laboratory/manufacturing equipment and techniques. There will also be questions regarding how you prioritise tasks, with and without supervision, and your ability to work within a cross-functional team.

Interviewing for a promotional position

In addition to the basics listed above, people interested in a promotional role such as medical representative or MSL must be well versed in the products marketed by the company. This is vital for a successful interview. Be prepared to answer questions about why you chose to apply to the particular company and your interest in a sales role. Also be prepared to talk about the sales skills you could bring to the company

and be ready to show actual examples of past sales experience and successes. Dress well, and remember: a successful sales career is as much about selling yourself as it is about the product. The first interview is a very good place in which to demonstrate this.

Interviewing for a clinical/medical position

Clinical or medical positions often require previous experience within the pharmaceutical industry or a higher qualification such as a PhD. This can make interviewing for them feel like a catch-22 for a pharmacist without such experience or qualifications. Without appropriate experience, you may have to consider an entry level position in another area and then work up to a higher level position. It is important for the pharmacist applicant to differentiate from other graduates by leveraging their expertise in patient care and expert knowledge in medicines to secure a role in this area. Regardless of experience, be prepared to answer questions about your ability to work as part of a cross-functional team, time management skills, and your understanding of Good Clinical Practice (GCP).

Presentations

It's not unusual when recruiting for some roles in the industry where presentations are going to be part of the job (e.g. sales, marketing, MSL) for the candidate to be asked to make a presentation as part of the interview.

Preparing your presentation

Know your audience. Find out how many people are on the interview panel and their roles. This information will help you to pitch your presentation at the right level and ensure that you have enough supporting materials (e.g. handouts) to hand.

Some Useful Links

Royal Pharmaceutical Society www.rpharms.com

Academy of Pharmaceutical Sciences (APS)

www.apsqb.org

European Industrial Pharmacist Group (EIPG)

www.eipg.eu

ABPI

www.abpi.org.uk

UK & Ireland Controlled Release Society (UKICRS)

www.ukicrs.org

TOPRA (The Organisation for Professionals in Regulatory Affairs)

www.topra.org



Industrial Pharmacy Forum

Goals

- To advise and influence the governing bodies of the pharmacy profession in their policy development and on developments in the pharmaceutical industry that may affect the future of the profession.
- To promote careers in the pharmaceutical industry to students, graduates and pharmacists and to promote the value of pharmacists to industrial employers in order to increase the talent pool of industrial pharmacists.
- To influence curriculum and competent development programmes to ensure graduates and pharmacists have the necessary skills and knowledge for successful careers within the industry.
- To support industrial pharmacists throughout their careers by ensuring the provision of high quality development opportunities and forums for net-working and practice sharing.

Membership

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) currently has approximately 1600 industrial pharmacists amongst the 27,500 total pharmacist memberships. Since the introduction of the pharmaceutical scientist membership category there are now more than 80 Scientist members.

Involvement in Policy

The national governing body has an Industrial Pharmacy representative, and industrial pharmacists are represented in the RPS Expert Advisory Panels for Science and Education. Industrial pharmacist input was given in discussions on the set up of the RPS Faculty.

Schools Involvement

Visits to Schools of Pharmacy remains a focus of activity for the IPF and can be part of a careers fair, half day visit by a team of pharmacists working in the Industry or as part of the Professional Body visits. An enthusiastic response is the usual reaction from students

The Same Degree-Many Career Options

While the knowledge and skills gained in an undergraduate Pharmacy degree tend to focus on preparing the graduate for a career in patient facing roles, the degree is ideally suited and relevant for pharmacists seeking rewarding careers in the wider pharmaceutical and medical device industries. Although the impact on patient care may not be immediately apparent, pharmacists working in industry contribute by bringing an enhanced patient focus at all stages of the life-cycle of a medicine or medical device.

The following is an outline of some of the roles that pharmacists can hold within the wider pharmaceutical supply chain. Many of these same roles would also be available in the medical device industry. The list is not exhaustive.

Formulation

Formulation or Pharmaceutical Scientists assist in the development of stable formulations in a range of dosage forms such as solid, inhaled, intravenous and liquid from early to late stage development.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing Scientists plan, schedule and budget for the production of clinical trial supplies and the commercial manufacture of a range of dosage forms including oral, inhaled and sterile injectable products.

Technical Support Scientists provide specialist technical support to development and clinical manufacturing campaigns (e.g. protocols for analytical testing, process validation).

Clinical Trials

The Clinical Research Associate (CRA) monitors clinical trials in accordance with Good Clinical Practice (ICH GCP) guidelines. A CRA may work directly with the sponsor company of a clinical trial or for a Contract Research Organization (CRO). The CRA ensures compliance with the clinical trial protocol, checks study centre activities, makes on-site visits, reviews Case Report Forms (CRFs) and communicates with clinical research investigators.

Regulatory

Regulatory Affairs professionals' dual role is to interpret and communicate regulatory requirements to the drug development team and to effectively transfer knowledge and scientific information about the product to regulatory agencies. They are involved in the creation of submission documents from early phase manufacturing and clinical submissions through to marketing applications to the regulatory agencies including the European Medicines

Agency (EMA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the UK Medicines and Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Regulatory Scientists support the global management of product labelling throughout the product life cycle including the development of core safety information and global datasheets.

Pharmaceutical Assessors work with the regulatory agencies conducting scientific evaluation of submissions from pharmaceutical companies in support of a Marketing Authorisation or clinical trial application.

Quality

Quality Assurance (QA) Specialists are involved in control procedures and the review of batch records for the release of material. They also undertake internal and external supplier audits to ensure that Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) guidelines are implemented all along the supply chain. The Qualified Person (QP) is responsible in EU law for documentation sign off and product release of each individual batch of commercial or clinical trial material. In many countries only pharmacists can act as QPs (e.g. France), but this is not the case in the UK. The QP holds a key role in ensuring that medicines are made according to their specifications.

Market Access

Market Access is a relatively new role in the pharmaceutical industry. In the past decade, the environment for the pricing and reimbursement of new medicines has become increasingly challenging as more expensive biotech medicines come to market. Along with demonstrating the safety, efficacy and manufacturing quality of a medicine, the manufacturer must now also demonstrate the cost-effectiveness as a further requirement to secure market access in the NHS. A role in market access is about presenting clinical and cost-effectiveness data to demonstrate to the payer (i.e. Department of Health/NHS) that the new medicine is worth reimbursing.

Wholesaling

Pharmaceutical wholesalers are required to appoint a Responsible Person (RP) who is responsible for the quality of the products in their care in compliance with MHRA and EU Regulations.

Sales & Marketing

Pharmaceutical companies actively promote their medicines to healthcare professionals and patients (if deregulated). The marketer develops brand and disease awareness

campaigns in line with local legal requirements (e.g. APBI Code of Practice).

Pharmaceutical companies employ sales personnel (medical representatives) to promote their medicines personally to physicians and other healthcare professionals such as nurses and pharmacists.

Medical

The Medical Advisor or Medical Science Liaison (MSL) is a specific role within the pharmaceutical and medical device industries. They work throughout a product's lifecycle, developing relationships with key opinion leaders (KOLs), helping to organise clinical trials at the early stages of development and act as the scientific expert internally. The MSL role tends to concentrate on more complex diseases (e.g. haematology, inflammatory disease, oncology). In recent years, many companies have recruited MSLs with a background in frontline medicine, nursing or pharmacy as more complex biotech medicines come to market.

Pharmacovigilance

Patient safety is a fundamental principle for those working in the pharmaceutical industry. Companies must continuously evaluate the benefit/risk profile of medicines post securing a marketing authorisation (MA). Information on adverse events (possible side effects) must be recorded in global safety databases and investigated by clinical and pharmacovigilance teams. Regular safety updates (Period Safety Update Report (PSUR)) must be submitted to the regulatory agencies.

Adapted from 'Pre-registration Pharmacist Information Pack' available on the RPS Student online forum www.rpharms.com

Tips for CV and Cover Letter when looking for a job in the Industry

Preparing for Interview

The rules and expectations of an industrial interview can be very different from one in community or hospital pharmacy. Nevertheless, interviewing is a skill and there are a number of commonalities across all sectors. However, if you're interested in working in a specific field, it is helpful to have a good idea of what to expect from the interview process before it begins. Here are some general tips to help you prepare for an interview in the industry.

Research the company

Read up all about the company interviewing you. There is a wealth of information available on the internet about most