

"People assume I stick labels on boxes, but there's much more to it than that!"

A week of work experience at a community pharmacy and an interest in science helped Amy decide a career in pharmacy was the right one for her.

Amy Simmons

Lead pharmacist

Employer or university

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Salary range

£40k-£50k

Amy Simmons

How I got into the role

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Because of the experience I had and the subjects I enjoyed, I knew that science was the right fit for me and a degree in pharmacy was perfect.

I completed the four-year Pharmacy Master's and really liked the range of subjects we covered. We had lectures on everything from law and medicinal chemistry to patient consultation, as well as practical classes in the lab and in a mock dispensary.

I then completed the necessary pre-registration year in the trust I'm working at now. After qualifying, I applied for a band 6 role as a rotational pharmacist.

When I tell people I'm a pharmacist, they assume I stick labels on boxes, but there's much more to it than that! I hit the ground running and quickly developed my skills, knowledge and experience in a range of specialties. I progressed from band 6 to a band 7 role after two years and am now lead pharmacist for the admissions unit at the same

trust.

What I do

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My day starts on the busy acute admissions ward where I clinically screen charts and obtain medication histories for newly-admitted patients. More junior pharmacists have more than one ward per day to work on.

I work very closely with clinicians such as consultants, junior doctors, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, dietitians, nurses and healthcare assistants. We work as a team to make sure that the patients receive the most effective treatment.

The best bits and challenges

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I really enjoy meeting new patients every day and using my knowledge and experience to help others.

The main challenge is not being able to spend as much time with patients as I'd like.

Life outside work

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I enjoy travelling and spent some time traveling in South America recently. I also enjoy swimming, keeping fit and going to the theatre.

I am on call ^[1] a lot at work, so it's good to have hobbies outside of work.

Career plans and top tips for others

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Since qualifying, I have achieved a postgraduate diploma in general pharmacy practice and my aim is to become an independent prescriber so I can prescribe medication in addition to my other duties.

A pharmacist needs to be inquisitive, dynamic and patient-focussed. It's always best to try and get some experience to make sure that the role is right for you.

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Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On_call