

Pharmacy Assistant interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Pharmacy Assistant roles usually mix everyday customer-facing questions with checks on your understanding of compliance and how you'd handle pressure or errors in the dispensary. Expect the pharmacist or pharmacy manager to probe both your practical skills and your judgement around safety.

- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experience handling customers, stock, or busy periods, usually looking for specific examples rather than general statements.
- **Compliance and safety:** Questions checking your awareness of privacy requirements, restricted medicines, and pharmacist supervision boundaries.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical situations, such as a customer asking for advice beyond your scope, testing how you'd respond in the moment.
- **Technical/systems:** Questions about experience with pharmacy software, POS systems, or stock management tools.
- **Customer service:** Questions on handling difficult or distressed customers, given the health-related nature of the setting.

Most pharmacy assistant interviews run 20 to 30 minutes with the pharmacy manager or owner pharmacist. They typically open with your background and availability, move into a handful of scenario or behavioural questions, then cover practical details like software experience, roster flexibility and any Certificate III/IV study. There's often a short opportunity at the end for you to ask about training support or progression toward pharmacy technician work.

1. Walk me through how you'd handle a prescription that comes in with unclear or missing information.

Why they ask

This checks whether you understand your role boundaries and the correct escalation process rather than guessing or assembling an incomplete order.

How to structure your answer

Process walk-through: describe the steps in order, from initial check to escalation to the pharmacist, and the reasoning behind each step.

Example answer

"I'd first check the prescription against our system to see if anything's missing, like dosage or prescriber details. If I can't resolve it from our records, I wouldn't guess or assume, I'd flag it straight to the pharmacist before doing anything with the medication. I'd also let the customer know there might be a short delay so they're not left waiting without explanation."

2. Tell me about a time you caught an error or discrepancy in stock or a customer order.

Why they ask

Attention to detail directly affects patient safety, so employers want evidence you notice and act on problems rather than letting them slide.

How to structure your answer

STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result).

Example answer

"During a weekly stock check, I noticed a batch of a common OTC product was close to its expiry date but had been placed at the front of the shelf. My task was to fix the rotation without disrupting the shopfront. I moved the older stock forward properly and flagged it to the pharmacist so we could consider a markdown before it expired. As a result, we sold through the stock before it needed to be written off and I updated our rotation checklist so it wouldn't happen again."

3. A customer asks you to recommend a medicine for a symptom that sounds like it could be serious. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests judgement about the limits of your advice and when to bring in the pharmacist, which is central to safe practice in this role.

How to structure your answer

Scenario/judgement: state the immediate response, the reasoning, and how you'd handle the customer's expectations.

Example answer

"I'd listen to what they're describing, but if it sounds like it could be more than a minor issue, I wouldn't recommend a product myself. I'd tell the customer I want to get the pharmacist to have a quick word with them, so they get the right advice rather than a guess from me. Most customers are fine with that once I explain it's for their own safety."

4. What experience do you have with pharmacy management software or point-of-sale systems?

Why they ask

Employers want to know how much onboarding time you'll need on their specific tools, such as Medipha or Emonix.

How to structure your answer

Direct technical rundown: name the systems used, what tasks you performed in them, and how quickly you pick up new software.

Example answer

"I've used a pharmacy management system for entering patient details, printing prescription labels and tracking stock levels, along with a standard POS system for transactions and end-of-day reconciliation. I haven't used Medipha specifically, but I've adapted to new systems quickly in the past, usually within a shift or two of guided use."

5. How do you manage a busy period when there are customers waiting, phones ringing and stock to restock at the same time?

Why they ask

Pharmacies often have unpredictable peaks, so this checks prioritisation and composure under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Behavioural, STAR or a brief prioritisation explanation if no direct past example is available.

Example answer

"I focus on whoever's directly in front of me first, since customer safety and service come before restocking. If the phone rings while I'm serving someone, I'll let it go to the pharmacist's line or take a quick message rather than leaving the customer mid-transaction. Restocking gets fitted into quieter moments rather than rushed during a rush, so nothing gets missed or misplaced."

6. What do you understand about the privacy requirements involved in handling patient information?

Why they ask

Pharmacy assistants regularly handle sensitive health records, so employers check basic awareness of the Privacy Act and pharmacy-specific confidentiality practices.

How to structure your answer

Knowledge check: define the requirement briefly, then give a practical example of applying it.

Example answer

“Patient information, including medication history, needs to stay confidential and only be accessed or discussed for legitimate pharmacy purposes. In practice, that means not talking about a customer's medications where others can overhear, keeping screens turned away from view, and only pulling up records when I actually need them for the task at hand.”