

How to get your prereg job

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Sooner or later you will have to think about getting a preregistration place. Hopefully, you will start sooner, so here are a few thoughts to help you on your way.

Before the application

As with most things in life, preparation is the most important thing. You will need to think carefully about what you want because a lot depends on which sector you move into. Not only that, but the application process will vary considerably. For the more adventurous, there are still a few joint placements with the pharmaceutical industry available and many health boards and primary care trusts are looking to build elements of primary care pharmacy into the prereg year. Be careful here because application processes will vary considerably. You might want to contact the Society or your PCT to see if there are any placements in your area.

Whatever you decide, there will be the opportunity to attend presentations given by the major employers at your school of pharmacy. Go along and ask questions of the executives and recently qualified pharmacists who will be there. This is the time to find out about training days, study time, rotations, working hours, etc. It really is too late to ask these questions when the time comes to consider offers.

Why not consider a couple of visits to a community or hospital pharmacy? This will give you an idea what your year might be like or some inspiration for questions at the presentation.

Application form

Wherever you apply the fundamental principles are the same. In most cases the application form will be used to screen candidates for interview. There are simple things you can do to make sure your form does not go straight in the bin.

Read the whole form and any notes before you write anything. Space may be

limited so think about what you want to write. Consider photocopying the form so you can have a practice run. Check the spelling of anything you are unsure about — you wouldn't want to miss a job because you made the same simple mistake all through the form. If possible, type on the form to avoid any problems with handwriting. If you are applying online, do not send it straight away; save it, print it, take it away and make any adjustments before you submit it.

When it comes to the content of the application form think carefully about the job you are applying for. Tailor your answers to the skills, knowledge and experience the employer wants. Be clear and concise, employers see hundreds of forms and they don't want to plough through pages of waffle. Give examples of how your actions had a positive result. If you organised a speaker at a meeting or event in your school of pharmacy emphasise the skills involved (planning, organisation, budgeting) and how your involvement made the event better (made more money, more people attended, gained press coverage, etc). This will mirror your professional career when you will have to demonstrate effectively that your involvement has led to improvements in patient care.

You may be asked about geographical areas in which you are prepared to work. The more flexible you are the more places are open to you. You may be asked if you are prepared to relocate. If you are not prepared to move then you should make this clear. There are pharmacies in the Shetland Isles that need pharmacists!

Deciding on your final place.

You may receive more than one offer. The important thing in this situation is to know how long you have to make a decision. If you are worried about accepting or rejecting an offer then talk to the employer as soon as possible. They will be as flexible as they can and if they really want you they will try to fit you in.

Good luck ✌