

Western Health Pharmacy Intern Training Program FAQ

How is the pharmacy intern year structured?

The Western Health pharmacy intern program provides comprehensive training, diverse hospital pharmacy exposure, and dedicated mentoring to build foundational skills and prepare interns for a rewarding early-career pathway.

The pharmacy intern roster mainly consists of core rotations across both clinical wards and dispensary (inpatient and outpatient) settings. Pharmacy interns spend around 70% of the year in clinical environments. A unique feature of the program is the intern-led clinical ward rotation, where pharmacy interns manage a clinical ward with minimal supervision. This experience simulates the responsibilities of a clinical pharmacist and supports the development of independence, confidence, and clinical ward management skills.

Additional learning opportunities are available through rotations and experiences in Manufacturing, Medication Safety, Medicines Information and WesternHealth@Home (pharmacy outreach service). Pharmacy interns are also allocated dedicated time to attend Antimicrobial Stewardship and Acute Pain Management Service ward rounds to observe multidisciplinary team collaboration in specialist areas.

Can I choose the clinical areas of interest during the pharmacy intern year?

Yes, pharmacy interns have the opportunity to select an elective rotation as part of the program. In 2026, the elective options have included emergency medicine, paediatrics, mental health, medical specialties (renal and oncology/haematology), and clinical trials. These electives complement the core clinical rotations, such as general medicine, cardiology, neurology, maternity, and aged care – which are essential for development as an early career pharmacist.

Can pharmacy interns visit other hospital campuses?

Pharmacy interns will gain experience at the newly built Footscray Hospital (opened early 2026), a modern environment with advanced facilities designed to support high quality healthcare. Pharmacy interns will also be rotated to Sunshine Hospital (including Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital) throughout the year.

How are pharmacy interns orientated?

Pharmacy interns complete a comprehensive three-week orientation at the start of the year. The first week focuses on onboarding and general introduction to both the pharmacy department and Western Health. This is followed by two weeks of clinical and dispensary orientation, where interns develop essential foundational clinical pharmacy skills and dispensary processes before commencing ward rotations.

Do you have a mentor program?

Yes. Each pharmacy intern is supported by a mentoring program throughout the year.

Every intern is paired with a dedicated pharmacist mentor who provides ongoing guidance, encouragement, and practical support to help them navigate the internship year and readiness as a pharmacist.

Interns are also allocated a senior pharmacist as a research supervisor, who supports the development and completion of a research project.

What exam preparation is available at Western Health?

Pharmacy interns receive comprehensive exam preparation support throughout the year. This includes several oral examinations conducted under formal exam conditions. The aim of this is to familiarise interns with the format, structure, and questioning style of the Pharmacy Board of Australia (PBA) oral examination. Practice exams are facilitated by Western Health pharmacists, including staff who are Ahpra board examiners.

Pharmacy interns are also allocated two dedicated law study days to support preparation for both the PBA oral and the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) written examinations.

How often are pharmacy intern tutorials conducted and what topics are covered?

Pharmacy intern tutorials are held weekly on Thursday from 3pm to 5pm throughout the year. The tutorials are designed to support development across clinical practice, primary healthcare, research, and exam preparation.

Are pharmacy interns rostered to weekend shifts?

Yes, pharmacy interns are rostered to weekend shifts. This typically involves working one Saturday shift every 7-8 weeks. Weekend shifts generally commence late February to March and are worked in addition to standard weekday hours.

Can I take annual leave during my intern year?

Yes. Pharmacy interns are entitled to five weeks of annual leave in line with the current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

However, interns are generally encouraged to plan leave carefully to ensure they meet the required supervised practice hours set by the PBA. On average, most interns take approximately one week of annual leave during the internship year. Annual leave is encouraged to support rest and wellbeing.

Does Western Health offer the Monash Intern Foundation Program (IFP)?

Yes. Western Health offers the Monash Intern Training Program (ITP) and Intern Foundation Program (IFP). The IFP enables pharmacy interns to complete work-based activities that further develop foundational skills and knowledge in preparation for general registration.

Are there opportunities to undertake research at Western Health?

Western Health is passionate about research, and pharmacy interns can undertake a research project as part of the Monash IFP. This opportunity provides pharmacy interns hands on experience in developing core project and administrative skills specific to conducting research.

What opportunities are available after completing internship at Western Health?

Western Health is strongly committed to developing and retaining pharmacy interns beyond the internship year. Towards completing internship, pharmacy interns can apply for our Foundation Resident Training program. This two-year structured program further supports early career clinical pharmacists in developing their foundational knowledge and skills. Alternatively, pharmacy interns are welcome to apply to join our clinical rotation. We know it can be a big transition, so regardless of the pathway you choose, interns are supported throughout the transition from intern to early career pharmacist.

Western Health provides ample professional development opportunities to support your growth as an early career pharmacist. These opportunities include involvement in research/quality improvement projects, participation on governance committees, education opportunities to pharmacy and nursing/medical staff, as well as mentorship/leadership opportunities.

Where can I find further information about Western Health pharmacy?

Further information about Western Health pharmacy and the pharmacy intern program can be found within the [Pharmacy – Frontline Career](#) website or scan the QR code below:

