

Pharmacy Technician interview questions

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What to expect

Pharmacy Technician interviews focus on accuracy under pressure, regulatory knowledge and how you handle patients when something goes wrong. Expect a mix of process questions about dispensing, scenario questions testing judgement, and behavioural questions about past mistakes or near-misses.

- **Process:** Questions asking you to walk through a routine task step by step, such as dispensing a prescription or handling a controlled substance count.
- **Safety and compliance:** Questions checking your understanding of Schedule 8 handling, labelling requirements and TGA regulations.
- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experience, often looking for a specific example of catching an error or resolving a conflict.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations testing judgement, such as an unusual dose or a stock shortage, where there's no single correct answer.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about handling patients who are upset, confused or asking for advice outside your scope.

Most interviews start with a short screen on your certificate and dispensing experience, move into process and compliance questions, then shift to scenario or behavioural questions about handling errors and difficult patients. Some pharmacies add a short practical test on the dispensing software or a basic dose calculation.

1. Walk me through the steps you take when dispensing a prescription, from receipt to handing it to the patient.

Why they ask

This checks whether you follow a consistent, safe process rather than cutting corners under time pressure.

How to structure your answer

Answer as a sequential walk-through: receiving and checking the script, entering it into the dispensing system, checking for interactions, labelling, pharmacist final check, and handover to the patient with any counselling points.

Example answer

"When a prescription comes in, I first check it's complete and legible, then enter it into the pharmacy management system and run an interaction check against the patient's current medications. I prepare the item, label it with dosage instructions and any relevant safety warnings, then pass it to the pharmacist for a final check before it's handed to the patient. If the patient has questions about timing or side effects, I flag that to the pharmacist so they can counsel appropriately."

2. How do you handle Schedule 8 stock counts and what would you do if you found a discrepancy?

Why they ask

Controlled substance handling is a core compliance responsibility and mistakes here have serious consequences.

How to structure your answer

Answer with the regulatory process first, then the escalation step if something doesn't match.

Example answer

"I count Schedule 8 stock against the register at the required intervals and record the count with a witness where our procedures call for it. If I found a discrepancy, I wouldn't try to explain it away myself. I'd recheck the paperwork and physical stock, then report it immediately to the pharmacist in charge so it can be investigated and documented properly, since that's a regulatory requirement, not just good practice."

3. Tell me about a time you caught a potential dispensing error before it reached the patient.

Why they ask

This tests attention to detail and whether you take ownership of mistakes rather than hiding them.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"A prescription came through for a medication strength that didn't match what the patient had been taking previously. The task was to confirm whether it was a genuine dose change or an error. I checked the patient's history and called the prescribing clinic to confirm. It turned out to be a transcription error and the correct strength was lower. The result was we corrected it before dispensing, and I noted it in the patient record so the pharmacist could follow up."

4. A patient's prescription looks correct but the dose seems unusually high for their age. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario checks whether you recognise the limits of your role and escalate appropriately rather than dispensing on autopilot or making a clinical call yourself.

How to structure your answer

Answer by describing your immediate action, who you involve, and how you balance patient wait times against safety.

Example answer

"I wouldn't dispense it as is. I'd flag it to the supervising pharmacist straight away with my specific concern about the dose relative to the patient's age, and let them decide whether to contact the prescriber. I'd explain to the patient there's a short delay while we confirm something with their doctor, so they're not left wondering what's happening."

5. How would you handle a patient who is upset because their medication is out of stock?

Why they ask

Community pharmacy work involves regular contact with frustrated patients, and this checks your customer service approach under pressure.

How to structure your answer

Answer by describing tone, information given, and the practical next step you'd offer.

Example answer

"I'd acknowledge their frustration first rather than jumping straight to solutions. Then I'd check our system for expected restock timing and look at whether a pharmacist can suggest a suitable alternative or a partial supply to tide them over. If neither is possible, I'd help them find another pharmacy nearby that has stock, so they're not leaving without a plan."

6. What experience do you have with pharmacy dispensing software such as PBS claiming systems or CERNER?

Why they ask

Software fluency affects speed and accuracy, and hospitals or larger pharmacies want to know how much training you'll need.

How to structure your answer

Answer by naming the specific systems you've used and what tasks you performed in them.

Example answer

"I've used a pharmacy management system daily for prescription entry, PBS claiming and patient medication history, and I'm comfortable with barcode scanning for stock control. I haven't worked in CERNER specifically, but the underlying logic of dispensing software is similar, so I'd expect to pick it up quickly with some orientation."