



# Who am I as a pharmacist in 2024?

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As a pharmacist in industry, I have a different role to play in patient care. My responsibility is ensuring the safety, efficacy and quality of pharmaceuticals from their inception (development of pharmaceuticals) to the finished product.



My experience in the pharmaceutical industry started off on a six-month contract, where I was employed as a Production Pharmacist at one of the manufacturing plants in Cape Town. During this time, I was responsible for ensuring that the raw materials used in manufacturing were of good quality. It was also imperative that I ensured that quality was maintained throughout the entire manufacturing process.

In my current role within the regulatory space, my duties entail (not limited to) the following:

- Evaluating dossiers prior to submission for safety, quality and efficacy. This is done by working with the research and development team to ensure that the product meets all requirements and is suitable for use in our population.
- Maintaining the approved dossier as manufacturing processes could change or new side effects may arise with time. All changes to the dossier are communicated and approved by authority to ensure that the safety, efficacy and quality of pharmaceuticals is maintained.

*Personal Experience:* My transition from a predominantly dispensing role to one that covers the development to registration of a product has been both challenging and rewarding. Working in the pharmaceutical industry has enriched my practice experience immensely.

*Challenges:* Adapting to the regulatory role has come with its challenges, including time constraints and the need for additional training to keep abreast of the latest regulatory requirements and standards, and understand the regulatory environment better. Balancing training with work responsibilities can also be demanding.

*Growth Opportunities:* Embracing rapid changes in the regulatory and pharmaceutical industry environment opens doors for professional growth and development. Continuing education in areas such as drug-development, quality assurance, pharmacovigilance and regulatory enhances competence and confidence in maintaining and registering high standards of pharmaceutical products.

With the pharmacy workforce being saturated I have had to exhibit what makes me different, what makes me unique. These days everybody has a pharmacy degree; some even have a master's degree, and everybody is doing the same short courses. So, the question that I normally ask myself is: "what makes you more employable than the next person?" One answer for sure is embracing the industrial fourth revolution. The regulatory environment is changing rapidly, and we are trying to move in a direction as quickly as the other leading regulatory regions in the world are doing.

Locally, we have already seen several changes by the regulator to improve. We need to ensure that we equip ourselves with the necessary training to upgrade and upskill ourselves to remain abreast with these changes.

I have realised that navigating this evolving role of a pharmacist has required me to embrace change, overcome challenges, and to seize growth opportunities. By leveraging personal experiences, honing skills and fostering interprofessional collaboration, I have no doubt that pharmacists can enhance their contributions to pharmaceutical industry and advance the profession in the current landscape.