A career in regulatory affairs will see you working on the development of new scientific and pharmaceutical products, ensuring that they are developed safely and in a manner that will allow them to secure the licenses necessary to secure commercial distribution.

It can take a number of years for a product to go from initial development to successful launch, and as such any regulatory affairs related project a company employs you to work on is likely to be viewed as incredibly important, as any mistakes made have the potential to undo years of hard work. As a result, an ability to show incredibly high levels of concentration is vital. Different sections of teams working on a project are often required to submit evidence to external regulatory authorities simultaneously, and this means that there are a large number of deadlines that need to be met when working in the sector.

While working in regulatory affairs can at times be challenging, it can also be an interesting and stimulating environment to work in, giving you the opportunity to use scientific research skills developed during your studies. Some knowledge around data analysis is also important to demonstrate to employers, as are effective communication skills, given the constant need to liaise with both clients and regulators.

The levels of recruitment by companies operating in the sector vary, but as with most sectors, relevant experience is useful. This handout seeks to provide further information about a career in Regulatory Affairs, as well as providing sources of further information and vacancies.

**Commercial Awareness**

Make sure that you have a good awareness of how the drug development process and the regulatory affairs industry works before you start applying for vacancies. Given the complex nature of the regulatory affairs sector you clearly won’t be expected to be an expert on every aspect of it, but candidates will be expected to display some knowledge of it during the application process, sometimes as early as the initial application form. Some knowledge of the legislative process necessary for products to gain approval from authorising bodies is particularly useful.

There are a number of easy ways of gaining such commercial awareness. Joining a professional organisation associated with regulatory affairs allows you to attend conferences and events which they put on, which will not only give you an insight into the sector but may give you the opportunity to network with professionals already working in the area, which could prove to be useful when you’re looking for your first graduate job, or some work experience. If nothing else, joining such organisations will show potential employers that you’ve got a genuine interest in the industry and have taken steps to learn more about it. Many organisations also offer heavily subsidised student membership fees.

**TOPRA (The Organisation of Professionals in Regulatory Affairs)**

[www.topra.org](http://www.topra.org)

The largest regulatory professional affairs organisation in the UK. Annual student membership of TOPRA is £25, which allows you to attend various courses and conferences, as well as a 30 minute careers consultation with an industry expert. Their website also has useful careers information and a jobs board.

Another excellent way of developing your commercial awareness is to peruse issues of specialist industry publications:

**The Pharmaceutical Journal**


A Royal Pharmaceutical Society publication

**The Regulatory Rapporteur**

[http://www.topra.org/TOPRA/TOPRA_Member/Regulatory_Rapporteur.aspx](http://www.topra.org/TOPRA/TOPRA_Member/Regulatory_Rapporteur.aspx)

Member’s magazine for TOPRA (The Organisation of Professionals in Regulatory Affairs)

**SCRIP Regulatory Affairs**


SCRIP Regulatory Affairs are providers of news, analysis, comment and guidance for the regulatory affairs sector. Offer a free trial period on their website.

While not crucial, language skills can also be a very useful addition to your CV, given the very international legislative environment these organisations work within.

**Postgraduate Study**

Postgraduate study isn’t a pre-requisite to entry into the sector, with many in the industry just holding an honours degree. Around half of TOPRA members hold a postgraduate...
qualification though, and as a result it’s worth considering postgraduate study if you’re serious about a career in Regulatory Affairs.

It is relatively commonplace for this to be undertaken part-time whilst working. TOPRA runs part-time MScs in both Regulatory Affairs, and Medical Technologies Regulatory Affairs, with these being validated by the University of Hertfordshire and Cranfield University respectively (http://www.topra.org/TOPRA_Member/Events/Qualifications.aspx?hkey=8276015e-2d4e-b3f6-19a85e289f5e).

TOPRA also run a series of one-day Basis of Regulatory Affairs courses (http://www.topra.org/TOPRA/TOPRA_Member/courses/types/Basics_of_regulatory_affairs.aspx) These are for very new recruits and people interested in breaking into the sector, and cover the basics of Regulatory Affairs in areas such as veterinary sciences, pharmaceuticals and paediatrics. These courses can also be completed online at your own pace.

Though there is a discount for those in full-time education, there is a fee attached to these courses, so make sure you think carefully about whether you’re serious about entering this profession before committing to these courses.

**Information sources**

**ABPI (Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry)**

http://careers.abpi.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx

A useful website for information about a range of careers in the Pharmaceutical sector, including regulatory affairs. The website has different pages for undergraduates and postgraduates, as well as information on tailoring your CV and cover letter for the industry, getting experience and a number of case studies.

**Prospects**

http://www.prospects.ac.uk/regulatory_affairs_officer_job_description.htm

Prospects is an online graduate careers information site, and this page takes you to a profile of a Regulatory Affairs Officer. Contains detailed information about the typical day-to-day activities of someone working in regulatory affairs, entry requirements, and how your career and salary could progress.

**TARGETjobs**

https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions/728827-regulatory-affairs-officer-job-description

Like Prospects, TARGETjobs is an online graduate careers information site. The above link also takes you to a profile of a Regulatory Affairs Officer, and whilst not as detailed as the Prospects one, it’s worth looking at to get a further idea of both the role’s activities and the competencies employers in the sector will expect you to have.

**Sources of vacancies & internships**

Listed below are a number of places in which organisations may advertise opportunities to work in regulatory affairs, or related areas. Not all the sites listed below will advertise just at graduate level, so you’ll need to bear that in mind and filter out the jobs you’re unlikely to be qualified for at this stage.

**Pharmiweb**

http://www.pharmiweb.com/jobs/Regulatory.asp

Pharmiweb is an industry website for the pharmaceutical sector. Their jobs board has a specific section for jobs in regulatory affairs, which is linked to above.

EMD Careers

http://www.emedcareers.com/

EMD Careers is a jobs board for vacancies in the pharmaceutical sector. You can tailor your search to look for jobs in regulatory affairs.

**European Medicines Agency**


The EMA is a decentralised agency of the EU responsible for the evaluation of pharmaceutical medicines and products. As well as offering permanent positions, they also accept applications for temporary assignments (though at 1-5 years, they’re not that temporary) as well as running around 40 one year trainee programmes per year for recent graduates - http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/about_us/general/general_content_000321.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac0580029405

**Regulatory Professionals**

http://www.regulatoryprofessionals.com/

Regulatory Professionals is a specialist recruitment agency for the Regulatory Affairs sector, advertising roles across Europe.

**Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency**


The MHRA is an executive government agency, sponsored by the Department of Health, who advertise regulatory affairs roles within the department. You can find these by using the advanced search on the Civil Service’s jobs page, and selecting the department from the “Departments” section - https://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi?pageclass=Jobs&pageaction=selectbyadvanced

**Wiley Job Network**

http://www.wileyjobnetwork.com/jobs/regulatory-affairs/

Online pharmaceutical jobs board, with separate filter for regulatory affairs positions.

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