



**Trainee Review of Pre-registration Training  
Questionnaire 2010-2011**

**Peter McKee  
Pre-registration Lead**

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## **Introduction**

## **Method**

## **Results**

**Section 1: Personal experiences**

**Section 2: Structure of training**

**Section 3: Support available**

**Section 4: Pre-registration manual issues**

**Section 5: In-practice training assessment and registration examination**

**Section 6: Portfolio**

**Section 7: Compulsory training**

**Section 8: Optional training events**

**Section 9: Premises standards for pre-registration training**

**Section 10: About yourself**

**Section 11: Additional comments**

## **Discussion**

## **Recommendations**

## **References**

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 - Trainee Review Questionnaire**

**Appendices 2 to 11 - Additional comments received from trainees**

## Introduction

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland has a responsibility to quality assure pre-registration training in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>. The quality assurance is multi-faceted and designed to allow triangulation of information from multiple sources. Elements of the quality assurance include:

- Post course evaluation of all compulsory live trainee events.
- Post course evaluation of Tutor Training Events.
- Tutor learning needs analysis conducted 2010.
- An evaluation of tutor skills by means of a trainee questionnaire.
- Review of all aspects of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland pre-registration training programme, and in particular the processes associated with the Registration Examination, by an external examiner.
- A trainee review of training questionnaire, the results of which are discussed in this document.

The trainee review of training questionnaire is designed to collect information on a wide range of aspects of pre-registration training and is divided into ten separate sections:

- Section 1: Personal experiences
- Section 2: Structure of training
- Section 3: Support available
- Section 4: Pre-registration manual issues
- Section 5: In-practice training assessment and registration examination
- Section 6: Portfolio
- Section 7: Compulsory training
- Section 8: Optional training events
- Section 9: Premises standards for pre-registration training
- Section 10: About yourself

The purpose of the questionnaire is to assist in assuring that all aspects of pre-registration training of relevance to the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland are fit for purpose and to assess compliance with any relevant standards. The questionnaire also provides opportunity for trainees to provide commentary on their personal experiences of pre-registration training.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland has been collecting this data for at least eight years. Where appropriate, the information obtained is compared year on year to identify trends and issues of concern. The questions evolve as pre-registration training in Northern Ireland develops and /or additional standards apply.

## **Method**

A total of 206 trainees undertook pre-registration training in 2010-2011. The questionnaire was distributed by post to trainees with their registration documentation. The trainees were asked to return the questionnaire with their registration documentation. The questionnaire is completed anonymously. It is returned to the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland with the trainee's registration documentation but is separated within the Society from those documents on receipt to maintain anonymity.

A total of 195 trainees had returned questionnaires at the time of data analysis. Four trainees had yet to complete their training and seven trainees did not pass the registration examination process and their responses have not been taken into consideration.

## Results

In each section the results obtained for the whole trainee cohort are shown compared with previous years. The results for the 2010-2011 cohort are displayed. At the end of each section of the questionnaire the trainees have the opportunity to add additional comments. For each section any themes have been extracted from the comments and are shown in the results section of this report. The actual comments made by the trainees are shown in appendices 2-11.

### Section 1: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

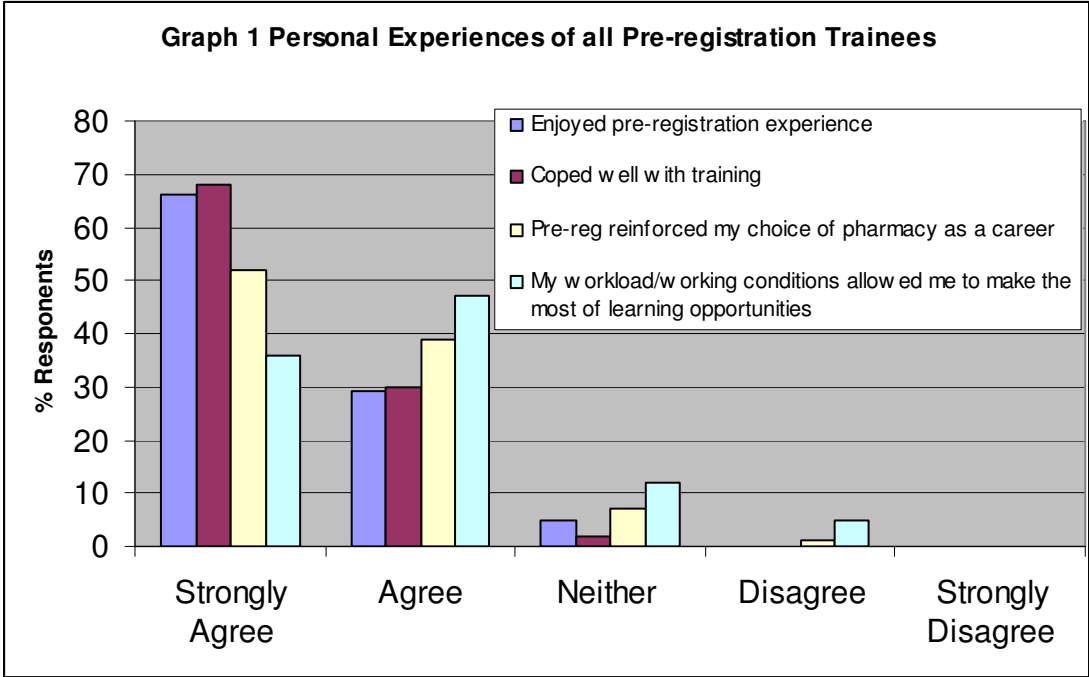
The trainees are asked in Section 1 about their own personal experiences of their pre-registration training. The results for the 2010-2011 trainees are shown in Table 1 below alongside comparisons from previous years. An additional question was asked of this cohort to explore whether workload/working conditions allowed the trainee to make the most of learning opportunities.

**Table 1: Personal experience of pre-registration trainees**

	% Strongly Agree or Agree						
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06	04-05
Enjoyed pre-registration experience	94	96	94	96	96	91	94
Coped well with training	98	100	94	99	98	97	97
Reinforced choice of career	92	92	99	91	93	89	90
My workload/working conditions allowed me to make the most of learning opportunities*	83	98	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Question asked in 09-10/10-11 only.

Graph 1 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-11 cohort.



**Additional comments**

The additional comments made by trainees are shown in Appendix 2. The main theme from the comments is that some trainees find the combination of study, training and working in the pharmacy a challenge.

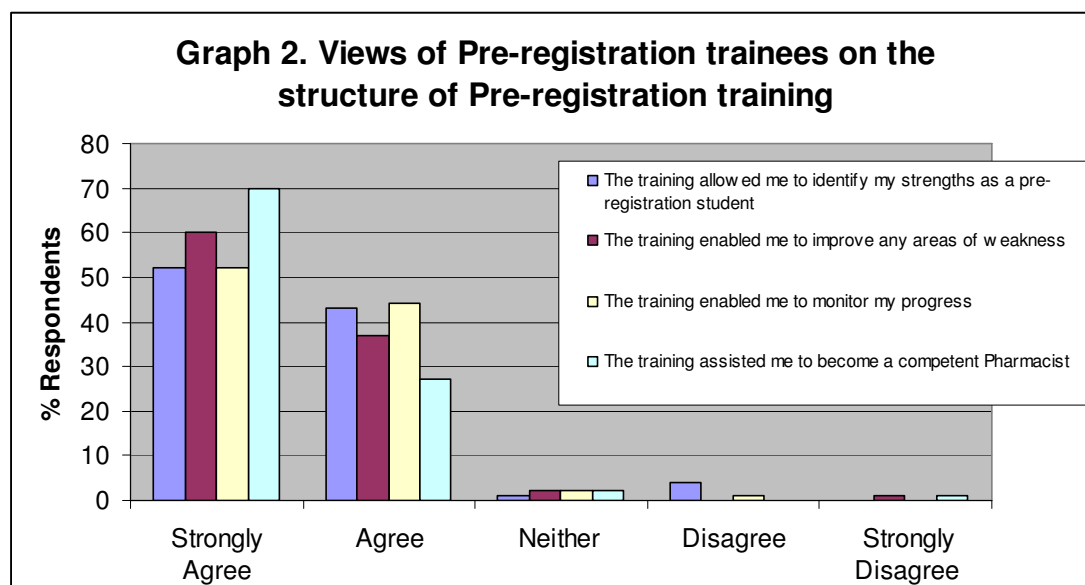
## Section 2: STRUCTURE OF PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINING

The trainees are asked in Section 2 about the structure of their pre-registration training. The results for the 2010-2011 trainees are shown in Table 2 below alongside comparisons from previous years.

**Table 2: Structure of pre-registration training**

	% Strongly Agree or Agree						
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06	04-05
The training allowed me to identify my strengths as a pre-registration student	97	99	89	98	98	93	95
The training enabled me to improve any areas of weakness	98	99	94	99	98	98	96
The training enabled me to monitor my progress	96	97	95	96	97	94	89
The training assisted me to become a competent Pharmacist	97	93	93	98	98	98	98

Graph 2 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-2011 cohort.



### Additional Comments

Additional comments made by the trainees are shown in Appendix 3. There is a very high level of contentment regarding the structure of pre-registration training as demonstrated in Table 2. As a result there were fewer additional comments made and no clear themes could be identified.

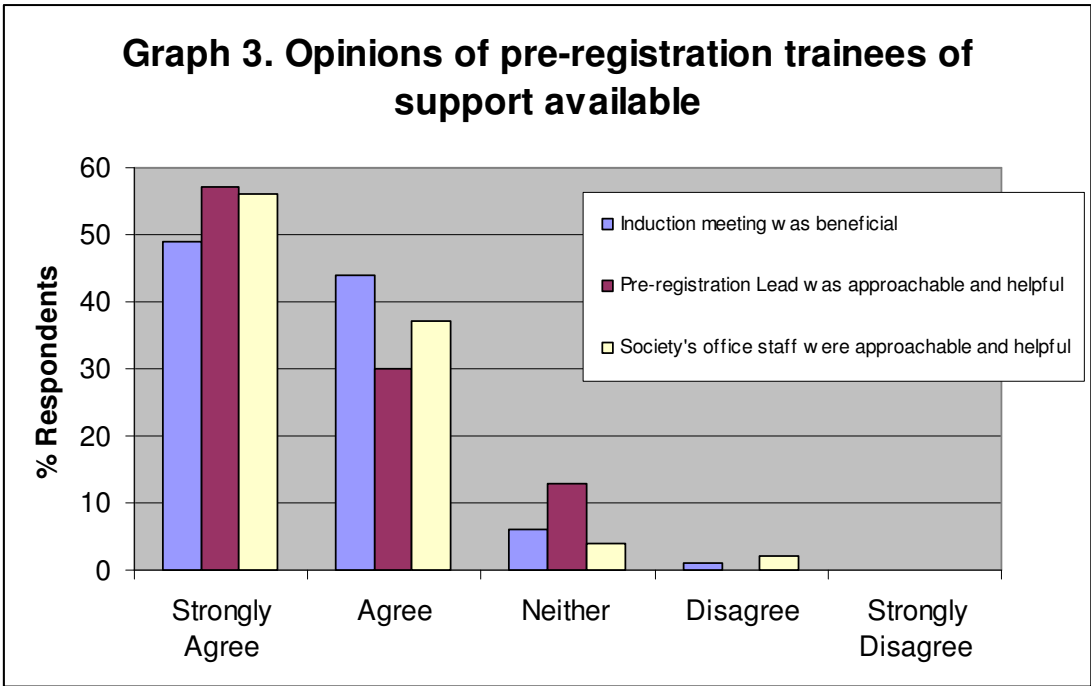
**Section 3: SUPPORT available to pre-registration trainees**

The trainees are asked in Section 3 about the support available from the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland during their pre-registration training. The results for the 2010-2011 trainees are shown in Table 3 below alongside comparisons from previous years.

**Table 3 Support available to pre-registration trainees**

	% Strongly Agree or Agree					
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06
The induction meeting with other trainees at the start of the year was beneficial	93	96	98	76	81	80
The pre-registration facilitator was approachable and helpful on any occasion I needed to contact her.	87	94	83	82	74	75
The Society's office staff were approachable and helpful on any occasion I needed to make contact	94	93	93	93	84	87

Graph 3 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-2011 cohort.



## **Additional Comments**

Additional comments made by the trainees are shown in Appendix 4. The information obtained in section 4 of the questionnaire indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the support provided by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. A number of trainees commented on the inability to contact the Pre-registration Lead due to part time working. The Pre-registration post is now a full time position which will eliminate this issue. Two trainees commented that they felt they would benefit from a Pre-registration meeting to discuss progress.

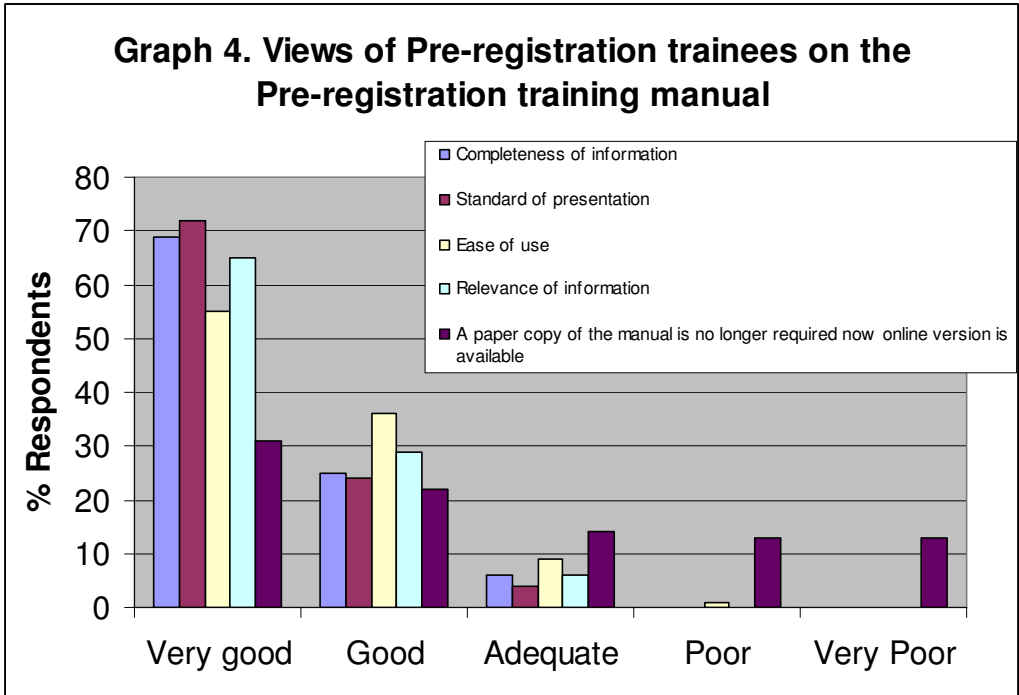
**Section 4: PRE-REGISTRATION MANUAL**

All pre-registration trainees are provided with a hard copy of the Pre-registration Trainee Manual prior to commencement of training. During the 2010-2011 training year this information was also made available at [www.psn.org.uk](http://www.psn.org.uk). The trainees are asked in Section 4 for their opinions on the Pre-registration Trainee Manual. The results for the 2009-2010 trainees are shown in Table 4 below alongside comparisons from previous years.

**Table 4 Pre-registration Trainee Manual**

	% Very Good or Good						
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06	04-05
Completeness of information	94	97	90	96	96	87	82
Standard of presentation	96	97	93	96	96	92	92
Ease of use	91	95	97	93	93	84	83
Relevance of information	94	98	90	94	95	87	87
A paper copy of the manual is no longer required now an online version is available to download from the PSNI's website	53	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Graph 4 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-2011 cohort.



## **Additional comments**

The additional comments are shown in Appendix 5. Many trainees felt it was of benefit to have a paper copy of the manual. The manual could be made solely available on the PSNI website and trainees could print a hard copy off for the use as needed.

## Section 5: IN-PRACTICE ASSESSMENT and REGISTRATION EXAMINATION

During pre-registration training, the trainees undergo appraisal at quarterly intervals. The results of each appraisal are sent to the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland where they are reviewed and cumulatively provide a profile of how each trainee is progressing.

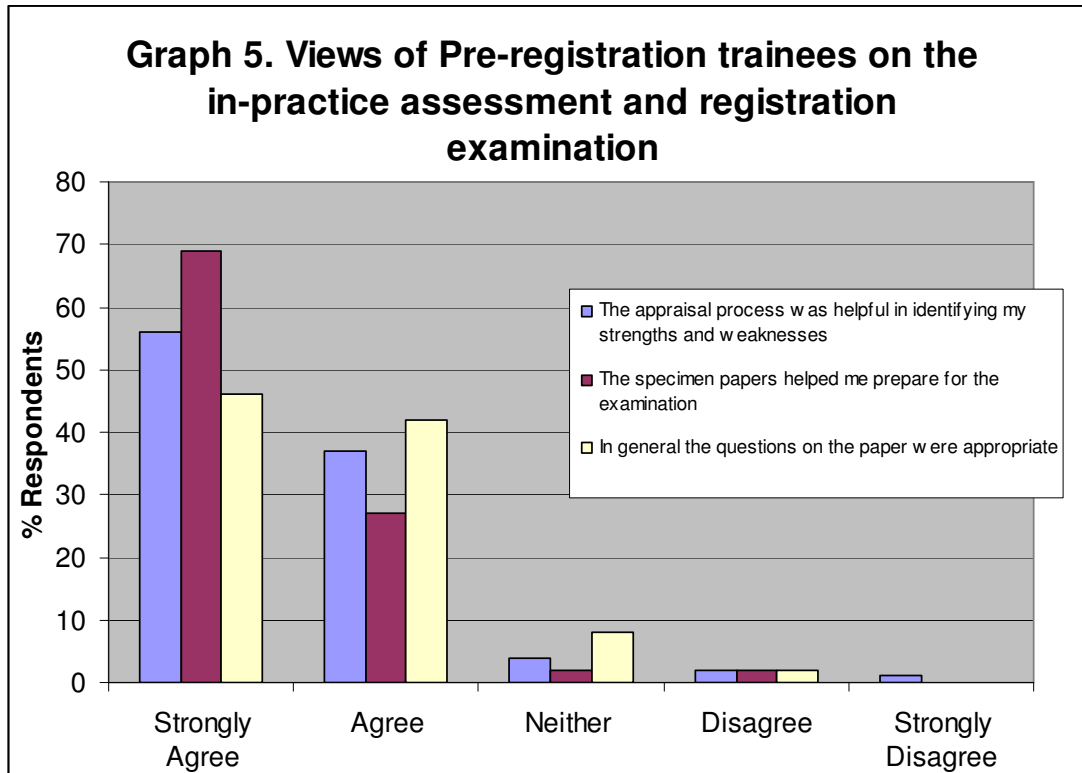
Prior to the 2009-2010 training year, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland posted a past examination paper to trainees in January/February of their training year. A copy of the answers was posted at the same time to the pre-registration tutors. In autumn of the 2009-2010 training year the October 2009 Registration Examination papers were made available at [www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk) along with a set of answers. Trainees could therefore choose when and how to use the past paper in their preparation for the Registration Examination.

The trainees are asked in Section 5 for their views on the helpfulness of the appraisal process, the past examination papers and their view as to the appropriateness of the questions in the Registration Examination. The results for the 2010-2011 trainees are shown in Table 5 below alongside comparisons from previous years.

**Table 5 In-Practice Assessment and Registration Examination**

	% Strongly Agree or Agree						
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06	04-05
The Appraisal Process was helpful in identifying my strengths and weaknesses	93	95	94	89	90	86	N/A
The specimen papers provided helped me prepare for the examination	96	95	89	92	94	65	73
In general the questions on the paper were appropriate	89	91	97	82	81	68	54

Graph 5 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-2011 cohort.



#### Additional comments

The additional comments received are shown in Appendix 6. Comments varied from those that found appraisals to be very helpful and gave good direction for training to those who felt their tutor rushed the process.

There were more comments made in relation to the Registration Examination and although there was a high level of satisfaction with the past paper provided some trainees commented that availability of more than one paper would be helpful. An extra practice paper will be made available to trainees in January 2012. Comments included that some trainees found the questions ambiguous and badly worded and some questions were too open ended. These comments will be taken on board and very seriously. At the exam committee meeting and on meeting with the external examiner these comments will be discussed and extra care advised to be taken when reviewing the examinations.

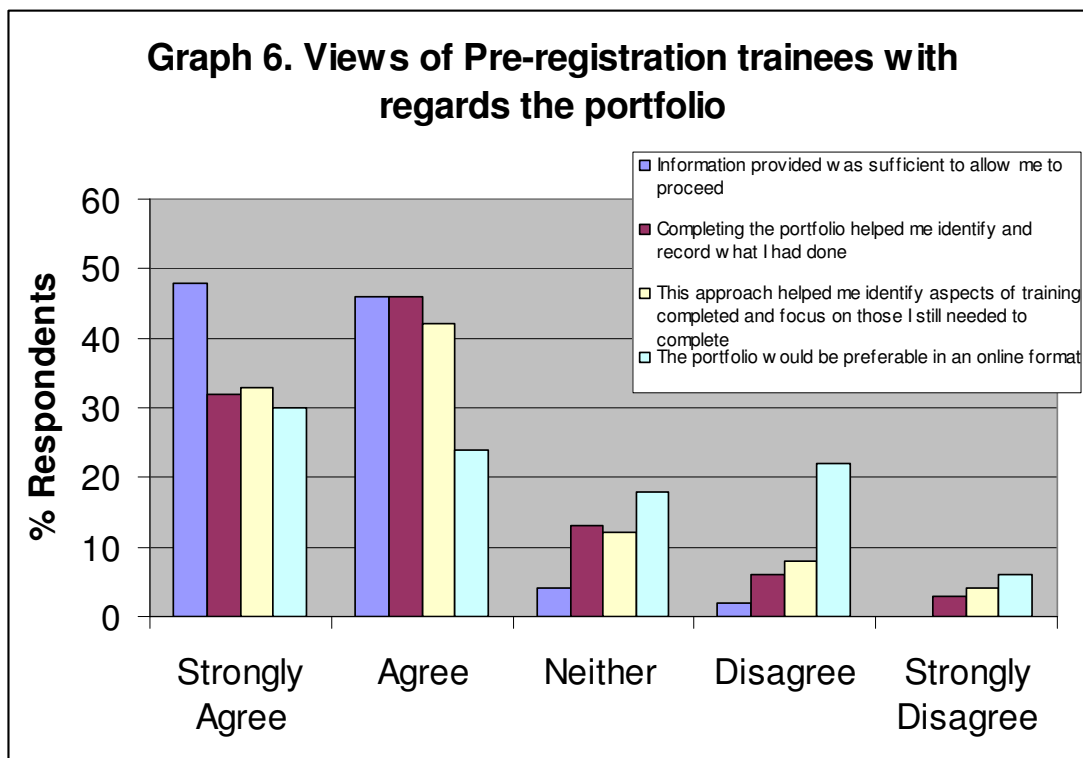
## SECTION 6: PORTFOLIO

All pre-registration trainees are provided with a hard copy of the Pre-registration Portfolio prior to commencement of training. During the 2009-2010 training year this information was also made available at [www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk). The trainees are asked in Section 6 for their opinions on the Pre-registration Portfolio. The results for the 2010-2011 trainees are shown in Table 6 below alongside comparisons from previous years.

**Table 6 Portfolio**

	% Strongly Agree or Agree					
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06
The information provided on the portfolio was sufficient to allow me to proceed	94	96	89	93	89	80
Completing the portfolio helped me identify and record what I had done	78	75	86	84	80	66
This approach helped me identify the aspects of training that I had completed and focus on those I still needed to complete	75	79	77	82	71	65
The portfolio would be preferable in an online format rather than a paper format	54	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Graph 6 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-2011 cohort.



**Additional Comments**

The additional comments received are shown in Appendix 7. The main themes identified by the trainees were that completion of the portfolio was very time consuming and that for some trainees there was no time to complete the portfolio during the working day. Some trainees commented that some of the competencies such as ability to communicate effectively in English were unnecessary and that the requirement to provide three pieces of evidence as a minimum for each competency was excessive. Thoughts on an online portfolio were mixed. One trainee commented on lack of availability of computer and printer.

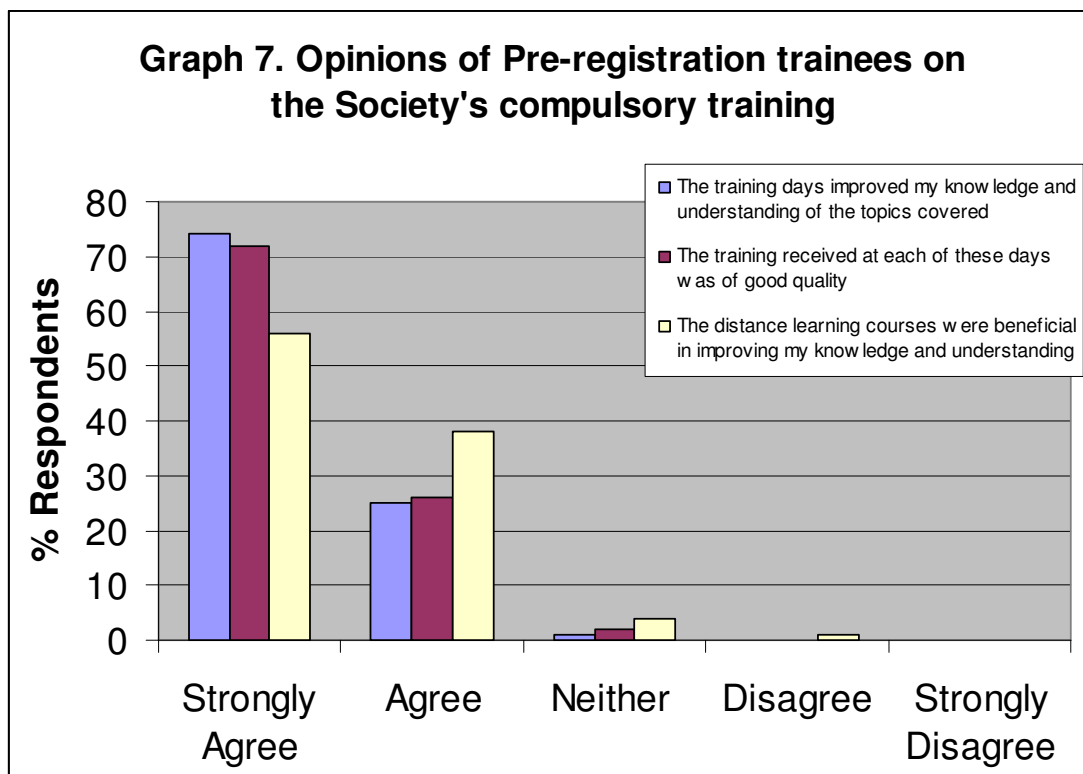
## SECTION 7: Compulsory Training Courses

During the 2010-2011 training year there were four compulsory training courses for trainees. These were an Induction Event (half day), Law and Ethics (2 days), First Aid (1 day) and Probity day (1 day). In addition the trainees were required to complete four distance learning packs. These were Smoking Cessation, Patient Medication Records, Repeat Dispensing and Responding to Symptoms (Minor Ailments). The results for the 2001-2011 trainees are shown in Table 7 below alongside comparisons from previous years.

**Table 7 Compulsory Training Courses**

	% Strongly Agree or Agree						
	10-11	09-10	08-09	07-08	06-07	05-06	04-05
The training days improved my knowledge and understanding of the topics covered	99	97	73	97	99	96	97
The training received at each of these days was of good quality	98	99	97	97	99	99	96
The distance learning courses were beneficial in improving my knowledge and understanding	94	98	98	96	57	61	64

Graph 7 below shows the results obtained from the 2010-2011 cohort.



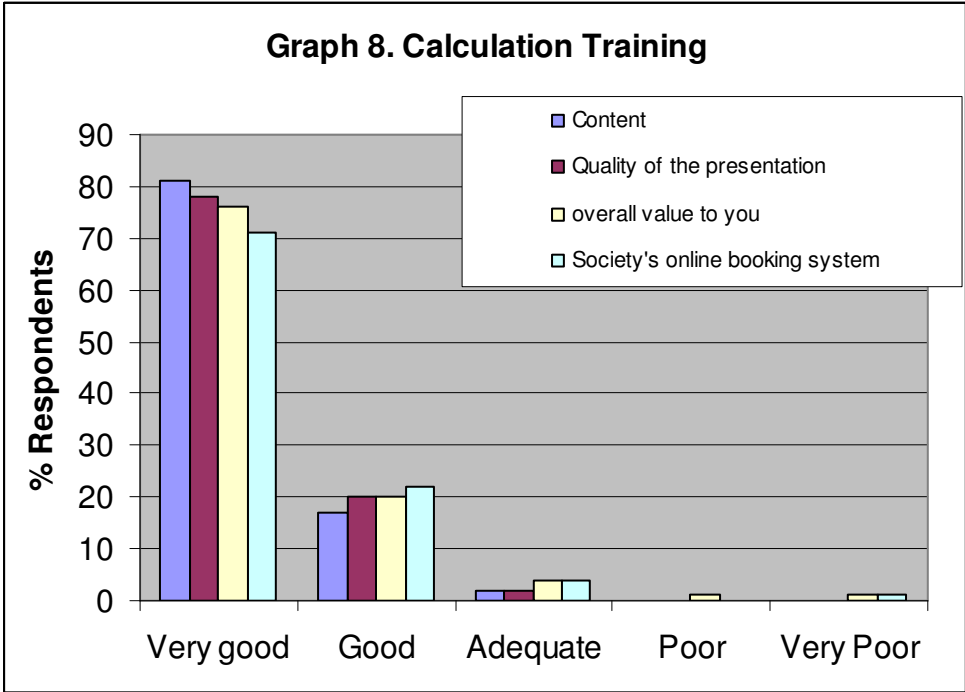
#### Additional comments

The additional comments received are shown in Appendix 8. Overall as shown in Table 7 trainees found the compulsory training to be very beneficial. A number of trainees commented that they found the Probity day least helpful.

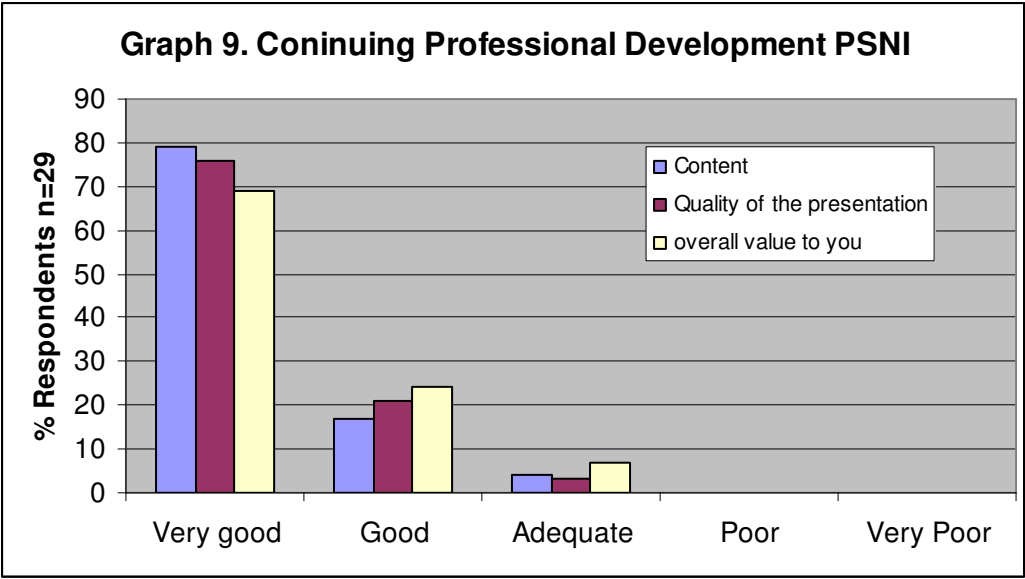
**Section 8: Optional Courses available to all trainees**

During the pre-registration training year a number of optional courses are offered to trainees via the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. It is recognised that many trainees also attend other courses offered by their employers – these are not assessed via this review questionnaire.

Graph 8 shows how trainees rated the Calculation Training course offered by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. In 2010, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland introduced on line course booking via the website. This course was the second to avail of the new facility.



Graph 9 shows the views of trainees who attended a lecture offered to pre-registration trainees on Continuing Professional Development.



**Additional comments**

The additional comments received are shown in Appendix 9. Feedback on the Calculations Training course was very positive.

## Section 9: Premises Standards for Pre-registration Training

In January 2010, the Community Pharmacy Premises standards<sup>3</sup> were launched, including standards for pharmacies providing pre-registration training.

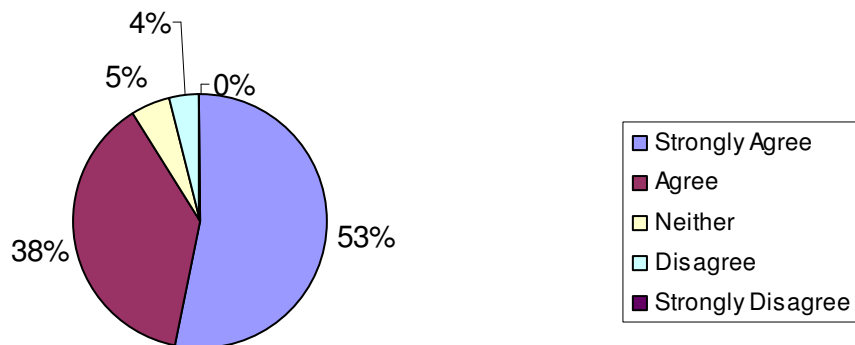
These standards are shown in table 8 below:

Indicator	Status
P11.1 A comprehensive training programme allowing the trainee to fulfil the requirements of the Performance Standards programme and the examination syllabus must be in place	ESSENTIAL
P11.2 All recommended reference sources for pre-registration training are available	ESSENTIAL
P11.3 The pharmacy has sufficient staffing levels to allow appropriate learning to occur	ESSENTIAL
P11.4 All staff have an awareness of the aims and components of the pre-registration training programme	ESSENTIAL
P11.5 A suitably qualified tutor if available to supervise the pre-registration trainee. when the tutor is not available satisfactory arrangements for supervision should be in place	ESSENTIAL
P11.6 The pre-registration trainee must have protected time to study and tailored to individual circumstances	ESSENTIAL
11.7 A learning contract between pre-registration trainee and pre-registration tutor has been completed	DESIRABLE

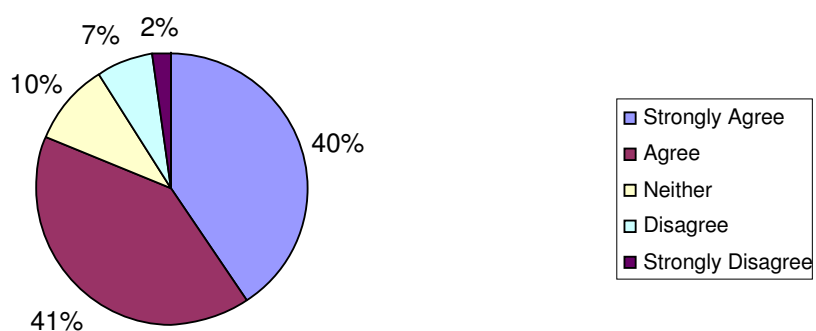
Since these standards were launched in January 2010 questions were included in the trainee review questionnaire 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Responses will be monitored year on year.

Graph 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 show the responses received:

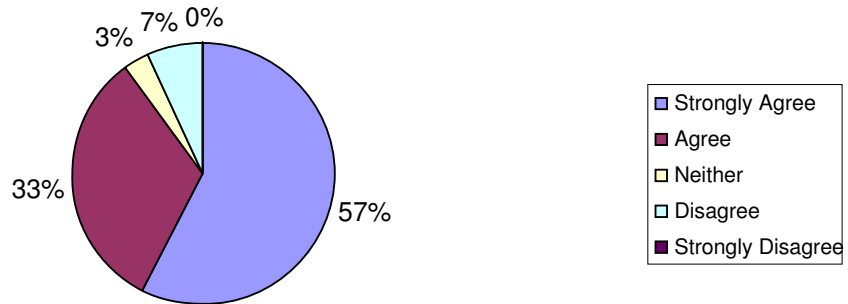
Graph10. A comprehensive training programme was available allowing trainee's to fulfill the requirements of the performance standards programme and examination syllabus n=193



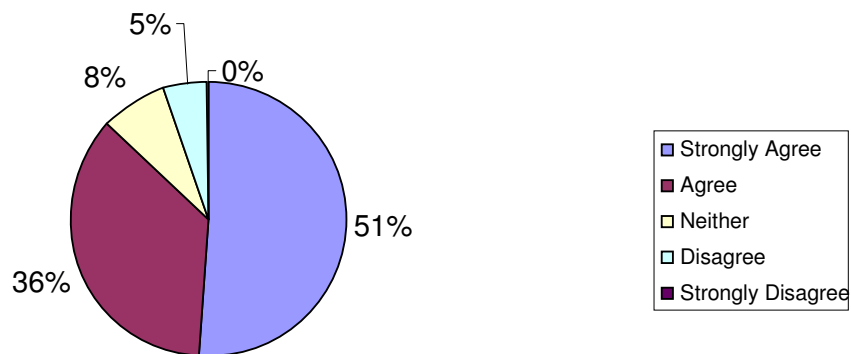
Graph 11. The pharmacy had sufficient staffing levels to allow learning to occur n=192



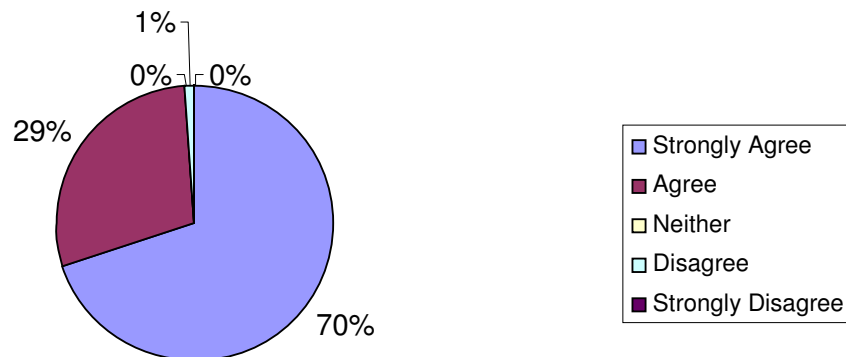
Graph 12. The recommended reference sources for pre-registration training were available in the pharmacy n=191



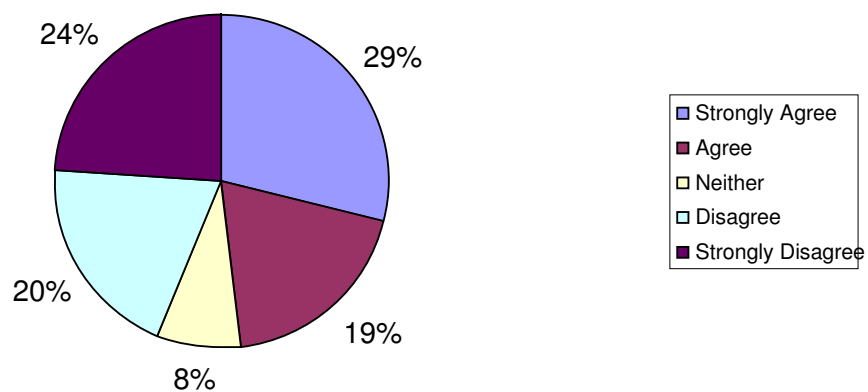
Graph 13. All relevant staff in the pharmacy had an appropriate awareness of the aims and components of the pre-registration programme n=190



Graph 14. A suitably qualified tutor was available to supervise trainee's work and when not available satisfactory arrangements were made  
n=190



Graph 15. As recommended by the Society approximately half a day per week was protected for study n=192



## Section 10: About YOURSELF:

The questions asked in Section 10 of the questionnaire seek to find out information specific to the individual trainee. Concerns have been expressed in the past regarding the numbers of hours worked by trainees and information on this was requested for the first time from the 2009-2010 cohort. There is anecdotal information that many newly registered pharmacists are finding permanent employment difficult to find in Northern Ireland and so information regarding first job upon registration has also been sought.

Table 9. About YOURSELF.

		<b>Number (%) of Respondents</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	71 (36%)
	Female	122 (63%)
	Not Completed	2 (1%)
<b>Type of community pharmacy</b>	Large multiple (>8)	92 (47%)
	Small multiple	24 (12%)
	Independent	73 (37%)
	12 Month Hospital	2 (1%)
	6 Months Hosp/Comm	13 (3%)

### Average Hours Worked

	<b>45hrs</b>	<b>40hrs</b>	<b>39hrs</b>	<b>38hrs</b>	<b>37.5hrs</b>	<b>37hrs</b>	<b>36hrs</b>	<b>35hrs</b>	<b>Not Completed</b>
<b>Number of Trainees</b>	3	44	4	3	27	3	0	0	111

### If >35hrs – reason

	<b>Contracted</b>	<b>Voluntary at my request</b>	<b>Voluntary at employers request</b>	<b>At my request and was remunerated</b>	<b>At my employers request and I was remunerated</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Number of Trainees</b>	139	7	4	0	11	4

### First Destination upon registration

	Community NI	Hospital NI	Community GB	Hospital GB	Don't Know	Other
First Destination	98	0	28	2	56	11

### First Position

	Permanent	Locum	Not completed
First Position	36	104	29

### Section 11

Trainees were invited to make any other comments they have concerning their pre-registration experiences and these comments are shown in Appendix 11. There are some concerns from pre-registration trainees around a lack of uniformity and consistency in pre-registration training.

## Discussion

The review of training trainee questionnaire is posted to trainees with their registration documentation. The trainees are asked to return their completed questionnaire with the registration documentation. This approach resulted in a 99% response rate from the 195 trainees who had been issued with the questionnaire at the time of writing.

Section 1 related to the personal experiences of the pre-registration trainee's. The results obtained for the 2010-2011 cohort are largely comparable to previous years. An additional question was asked in 2009-2010 related to whether the workload/working conditions allowed the trainee to make the most of learning opportunities. A total of 83% (98% in 2009-2010) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that this was the case. This decrease in satisfaction is reflected in the additional comments section. Trainee's commented that there was a lack of protected study time during the working week and their workload left it difficult to make the most of learning opportunities.

Section 2 relates to the structure of pre-registration training. Trainee's expressed a high level of satisfaction and 97% of trainee's felt that training has assisted them in becoming a competent pharmacist. The results obtained were comparable to previous years. It is interesting to note that whilst 97% of trainee's felt that training assisted them in becoming a competent pharmacist, only 75% indicated in section 6 that developing a portfolio against the performance standards helped identify aspects of training completed and to identify aspects of training still to be completed. This was reflective of the feedback received in 2009-2010. Comments received in section 6 also indicated that completion of the portfolio was time consuming and not necessarily integrated into the working day. The performance standards framework is integral to pre-registration training. It must be noted that as the building of a portfolio against performance standards involves a considerable amount of work for trainee's that there may always be a cohort of trainee's who report negative experiences of the performance standards/portfolio.

Section 3 relates to the support provided by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland to trainees. The first question relates to the Induction Event held by the Society. Levels of satisfaction decreased from 96% to 93% of trainees that strongly agreed or agreed that it was of benefit. The

increase in trainees by 1/3 on previous years may be reflected in this small decrease. 93% is still a vast majority of trainees and is reflective of the workshop style learning system currently in place. While trainees commented on how approachable and helpful the pre-registration facilitator was they also commented on the fact that they worked on a part-time basis and therefore could be difficult to liaise with. The position is now full time and therefore trainees should find the pre-registration facilitator even more accessible.

Section 4 relates to the pre-registration manual. This is provided in hard copy to all trainees prior to the commencement of training. Trainees are encouraged to read the manual before attending one of the Society Induction Events so that any questions can be addressed early in training. The 2010-2011 trainees expressed a high level of satisfaction with the information provided in the pre-registration manual and the results are comparable to recent years.

The 2010-2011 questionnaire explored trainee opinions on no longer receiving a paper copy of the manual due to its availability online. This brought a mixed response with 53% either strongly agree or agree that a paper copy is no longer required (14% neither agreed or disagreed totally 67% in agreement or content with an online format). A large number of trainees commented that they liked to have a paper copy to refer to and a small number of trainees commented on a lack of internet access which would result in difficulties referring to the online version. Some trainees did comment that they felt there was no need to receive a paper copy as it was available online. 53% represents over half the trainees and is grounds to support further research into an online only pre-registration system.

Section 5 relates to the quarterly appraisal process and the Registration Examination. The quarterly appraisal process allows the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland to monitor the progress of trainees through-out the pre-registration year. A trainee must achieve a satisfactory appraisal at week 39 in order to be accepted to undertake the Registration Examination. Trainees consistently report a high level of satisfaction with the appeals process. Undertaking effective appraisal is one of the learning objectives of the compulsory tutor training course and it is therefore satisfying that trainees report high levels of satisfaction with the appeals process. Section 5 is also related to the Registration Examination. The purpose of this examination is to provide assurance to the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland that trainees applying for registration as a pharmacist have the necessary knowledge for safe contemporary practice. The October 2010 papers were made available to the 2010-2011 cohort of trainees via the Society's website. The vast majority of trainees agreed that the

questions were appropriate. There is a robust and rigorous procedure followed in producing the Registration Examination and it is reassuring that the majority of trainees agree that the questions are appropriate. In appendix 6 a number of trainees commented that some questions were ambiguous and questioned the wording. All questions undergo item analysis when the results are available and any questions where less than 15% of trainees have chosen the correct answer are removed. A number of trainees also commented on the need for additional examination papers to be made available through the Society.

Section 6 relates to the Portfolio of evidence against the performance standards. Whilst the majority of trainees agree that this approach to training helps identify aspects of training that are completed and provide focus on those still to be completed and provide focus on those still to be completed there is a view shown in appendix 7 that completion of the portfolio is time consuming and that much is completed in the trainees own time. Compliance with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland recommendation<sup>2</sup> that pre-registration trainees should have protected study time would ease this situation.

Pre-registration tutors that have found difficulties arising with their trainees in relation to competence or conduct have found the performance standards a useful framework for continuing training in a constructive manner.

Feedback with regards having the portfolio in an online format was mixed with 54% of trainees agreeing that it would be preferable (18% neither agree nor disagree totally 72% of trainees content with online portfolios). Lack of access to internet was commented on as was the ease of having a paper copy to work from. The majority of trainees did support the online portfolio and full investigation should be prompted.

Section 7 relates to compulsory training that is available to all pre-registration trainees. The results obtained show a consistently high level of satisfaction with the training programme. Comments received were mostly very positive and complemented the training courses.

Section 8 relates to the optional training that is available to all pre-registration trainees. Overall there was a high level of satisfaction with the training events. The Society's online booking system has worked well since its introduction in 2010 however unfortunately due to IT issues at the same time as a high level of online booking activity this resulted in trainees registering but not appearing on the

system. This is an IT issue which has been resolved and is not likely to be a frequently recurrent issue. The training day by the Health and Social Care Board was made compulsory in 2010-2011 and was well received by the trainees.

A lecture on Continuing Professional Development is offered to pre-registration trainees prior to registration. Perhaps due to the timing of this event the turnout is low.

Section 9 related to the premises standards for pre-registration training. In January 2010, the Community Pharmacy Premises standards<sup>2</sup> were launched, including standards for pharmacies providing pre-registration training. Feedback is very comparable to the result for 2009-2010 which indicated that the majority of training sites are meeting the standards with the exception of the standard related to protected study time which for the second year in a row had received poor feedback.

Section 10 relates to the trainees themselves. As highlighted in the results section due to anecdotal information about long working hours and difficulty finding time to study, trainees were asked how many hours they worked. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland recommends that trainees work approximately 35 hours per week. The majority work more than this. The data obtained on first destination shows that the majority of respondents are undertaking locum work upon registration. A total of 28 (an increase of 3 from 2009-2010) trainees indicated that their first destination was Great Britain and none of the 2010-2011 trainee cohort have indicated hospital pharmacy in Northern Ireland as a first destination.

Section 11 allows the trainees to make any other comments they may have concerning pre-registration experiences. Many of the concerns expressed by the trainees were with regards managing workload in the pharmacy and devoting enough time to learning and development in the workplace. Reflection in the hospital training offered a majority positive experience by trainees.

Overall the results obtained from the trainee review of training questionnaire are very positive and play an important role in assuring the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland that pre-registration training in Northern Ireland is fit for purpose and compliant with relevant standards. A number of recommendations are made based on the feedback and it is intended that the results of the

questionnaire are made public via the Society's website and that a similar questionnaire is developed for pre-registration tutors.

## Recommendations

- The trainee review questionnaire should continue to develop and information obtained compared year on year.
- The information obtained should be made publicly available via the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's website [www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk)
- A similar questionnaire should be developed for pre-registration tutors to assist the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland in quality assuring pre-registration training in Northern Ireland.
- Tutors need to continue to be made aware of the premises standards for pre-registration training. In particular it is important that the need for weekly study time is required for the trainees. This can be portrayed through email and education at live events.
- The pre-registration induction Event held by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland should continue in its current format including the workshop format and the extra attention to completion of performance standards and correct way to complete learning cycles.
- The training manual and portfolio format should remain however the possibility of making the pre-registration training year a more online system should be investigated with best way to implement the process researched.
- The trainee performance standards should be reviewed and necessary changes made.
- An additional past paper should be made available to trainees via [www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk).
- Consideration should be given to the timing of the lecture on Continuing Professional Development.
- Continue to email trainees in group email format and post information on [www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk) to ensure trainees keep up to date with relevant issues.
- Due to feedback with regards ambiguous questions on the registration examination the examination committee and external examiner will be informed and the need for the highest of standards stressed.
- Probity day to continue as mandatory if deemed satisfactory by the Health and Social Care board.
- . A trainee support evening could be run around January for trainees to attend the Society to discuss training issues.
- At tutor course extra emphasis will be put to tutors to ensure the appraisal process is taken seriously and an adequate amount of time is given to the trainees to ensure development of their learning needs.

## References

1. The Performance Review Standards. Standards of Good Regulation. Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence. June 2010
2. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland's Standards for Registered Pharmacy Premises (Community) January 2010

## Appendix 1

### PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINING 2010-2011

The aim of this questionnaire is to find out your views and experiences of YOUR pre-registration year. This will help us identify important issues and improve the quality of training. Please tick the appropriate boxes below. IF YOU DO NOT Strongly Agree or Agree with the statement, please add additional comments in the space provided.

NB Please complete the separate questionnaire relating to your tutor.

**Section 1: The statements below relate to your opinion of your PERSONAL EXPERIENCES as a pre-registration trainee. Please complete the following:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I enjoyed my pre-registration year					
I coped well with the training					
The pre-registration training year reinforced my choice of Pharmacy as a career					
My workload/working conditions allowed me to make the most of learning opportunities					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to your personal experiences?

**Section 2: In relation to the STRUCTURE OF THE PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINING, please complete the following:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training allowed me to identify my strengths as a pre-registration student					
The training enabled me to identify and improve any areas of weakness					
The training enabled me to monitor my progress					
The training assisted me to become a competent Pharmacist					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the structure of the pre-registration training?

**Section 3: The following are issues relating to the SUPPORT available to pre-registration trainees. Please complete the following:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The induction event with other trainees at the start of the year was beneficial					
The pre-registration facilitator was approachable and helpful on any occasion I needed to contact her					
The Society's office staff were approachable and helpful on any occasion I needed to make contact					

Do you have any additional comments with regard the support for pre-registration trainees?

**Section 4: The following are issues relating to the PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINEE MANUAL. Please indicate how you rated the following:**

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Completeness of information					
Standard of presentation					
Ease of use					
Relevance of information					
A paper copy of the manual is no longer required now an online version is available to download from the PSNI's website.					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the pre-registration manual?

**Section 5: The following are issues relating to the in-practice training ASSESSMENT AND FINAL EXAMINATION. Please indicate your views on the following:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Appraisal process was helpful in identifying my strengths and weaknesses					
The past exam paper provided on the website helped me prepare for the examination					
In general the questions on the paper were appropriate					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the in-practice appraisal process?

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the examination process?

**Section 6: The following are issues relating to the PORTFOLIO. Please indicate how you rated the following:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The information provided on the portfolio and at the PSNI Induction Event was sufficient to allow me to proceed					
Completing the portfolio helped me identify and record what I had done					
This approach helped me identify the aspects of training that I had completed and focus on those I still needed to complete					
The portfolio would be preferable in an online format rather than a paper format					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the Portfolio?

**Section 7: The following are issues relating to the SOCIETY'S COMPULSORY TRAINING – Please indicate how you rated the following:**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training days (Law and Ethics, First Aid and HSC Probity day) improved my knowledge and understanding of the topics covered					
The training received at each of these days was of good quality					
The distance learning courses were beneficial in improving my knowledge and understanding					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the Society's compulsory training?

**Section 8: The following are issues relating to the ADDITIONAL TRAINING EVENTS**

Calculations training course. If you attended this course, please indicate how you rated the following,

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Content					
Quality of presentations					
Overall value to you					
Society's online booking system					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the calculations training course?

CPD event. If you attended this event, please indicate how you rated the following,

	Very good	Good	Adequate	Poor	Very Poor
Content					
Quality of presentations					
Overall value to you					

Do you have any additional comments with regard to the CPD event?

## Section 9: Premises standards for pre-registration training

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A comprehensive training programme was available allowing me to fulfil the requirements of the Performance Standards programme and the examination syllabus					
The pharmacy had sufficient staffing levels to allow learning to occur					
All the recommended reference sources for pre-registration training were available in the pharmacy					
All relevant staff in the pharmacy had an appropriate awareness of the aims and components of the pre-registration programme					
A suitably qualified tutor was available to supervise my work and when not available satisfactory arrangements were made					
As recommended by the Society approximately half a day per week was protected for study.					

## Section 10: About YOURSELF:

Male

Female

What type of pharmacy did you complete your pre-registration training in?

Large Multiple (more than 8)

Small Multiple

Independent

12 months hospital placement

6 months hospital, 6months community sector

On average how many hours did you work in the pharmacy per week excluding breaks

If this value was greater than the recommendation of 35 hours (excluding breaks) by the PSNI , please tick the appropriate reason for this

My contracted hours were greater than 35 hours

I worked more than 35 hours on a voluntary basis at my request

I worked more than 35 hours on a voluntary basis at my employer's request

I requested to work more than 35 hours and was remunerated

My employer requested that I work more than 35 hours and was remunerated

Other

If you answered Other please explain below:

My first destination when I register is:

Community NI                       Hospital                      NI                       Don't know yet   
Community GB                       Hospital                      GB                       Other

My first position will be:

Permanent                       Locum

### **Section 11: Other comments**

**Please provide below any additional comments you may have on any aspect of your training. You may want to include aspects that were beneficial to your training or areas that could be improved or added. This will ensure the quality of pre-registration training for future years (continue overleaf if required).**

Thank you for completing this survey

## Appendix 2

Work load was heavy any true reflection or reading was done in personal time, however I learned much from those heavy work load days (ID16)

Work load too much leading up to exam, tutor refused study time, felt I was there to work not to learn (ID19)

Thoroughly enjoyed my pre-reg year, feel I have learnt the necessary skills (ID22)

6 months hospital (community) split provided good opportunities to learn (ID40)

I enjoyed my time in hospital and at other Medicare shops. I didn't enjoy my time at Cullingtree as much and the work load was too great to make the most of learning opportunities. (ID41)

Having done a split 12 month placement between hospital and community has given me so much experience in various areas. Excellent opportunity. However since the recognised start date in the hospital was 1 month after my community placement ended (although I worked this month) I was not allowed to register to 1 month later. (ID42)

Portfolio completion is time-consuming alongside full time working hours and studying for pre-registration exam - does not leave a lot of time for completion of additional distance learning courses which would have been a more useful learning tool (ID48)

Minimal opportunity to learn in my community placement - I felt I was only there as free labour. Would not want the next pre-reg going to that pharmacy to have the same experience (ID51)

Training manageable and time to do additional NICPLD courses for my own knowledge. However, feel training did little to add to what knowledge I already had from working in community pharmacy as a student, where I was given more opportunity for independent practice and learning them in my pre-reg. However the last 3 months of my pre-reg were more enjoyable - I feel that these tasks should be commenced much earlier in training and that previous experience should always be considered. (ID53)

Thoroughly enjoyed it all. Plenty of opportunities to discover every aspect of the pharmacist's role (ID54)

Sometimes I felt my shop was too busy for me to learn (ID58)

Working conditions during my community placement did not allow any time for personal development/learning. Being used as a member of staff rather than a trainee means carrying out technical rather than professional tasks (ID62)

Having a good staff team to work alongside made it an easier experience for me (ID72)

This year was very enjoyable but very stressful and demanding at times. I enjoyed getting to know the regular patients and gained a lot of satisfaction as the year progressed as their confidence in me began to grow as they asked to speak to me more (ID85)

A lot of my pre-registration year did not afford me the opportunity to work in similar situations to a pharmacist, instead I was required to do a significant amount of work in the shop area, unrelated to medicine. (ID88)

I was not allowed directed time each week, I would suggest that directed time is made compulsory and that pre-registration students should only be contracted to work 36 hours per week. (ID89)

There was no time at work for studying (ID94)

Many opportunities during the year to carry out extra services, e.g. health promotion, and further develop my skills as the year progressed (ID 100)

Sometimes a little too much 'shop experience' (ID106)

A lot of work - meant some time lost dealing with everyday pharmacy tasks (ID127)

Very limited time in work to study left me feeling pressurised whilst at home (ID129)

I think the year could be more structured, as in my placement you're more member of pharmacy staff with a day packed with jobs and there is not time for learning other than things you pick up yourself or that pointed out by the pharmacist. I felt that at night most of my learning was done because there isn't enough time during your working day because our shop is so busy (ID163)

Very busy dispensary, my learning was not priority - the patients were. Though I learned to work under pressure (ID167)

I feel I have improved my communication skills with patients and I have al to more confidence when providing advice and responding to symptoms (ID169)

Did not get much study time in work, I had to do my learning at home. I was given a few days to study over Easter and in my to prepare for the exam (ID174)

I would have preferred more allocated study revision time during work hours - however with such a busy dispensary this wasn't always available (ID187)

### Appendix 3

The structure was fairly useful (ID3)

PR training should be incorporated in the Mpharm degree over 3-4 yrs to allow a more prolonged & consistent method of learning (ID21)

Hospital needed more planning in advance. Longer stints of clinical/wards & project time (ID33)

Hospital structure (Altnagelvin) Excellent. (ID42)

Identifying strengths and weaknesses was done but I felt that most staff made assumptions about levels of competence and part experience

without wanting to find out accurately. I had a lot of previous community experience but I felt this was ignored and I was left to do mundane tasks not conducive to learning, or building on skills I already had, eg answering a telephone. Didn't get to do tasks myself until 10 months in - not enough time

to develop independent practice. Too much time spent following pharmacists and shadowing - rotating to a different ward each week

meant this process was repeated until each pharmacist as none had worked with me long enough to ascertain competence. Much better

to do eg 3 months in medical ward, 3 months in surgical ward like medical ? do. Would allow to build competence and confidence in a

familiar environment. As it stands I feel the pre-reg year has made me more narrow about independent practice due to deskilling (ID53)

As the amount of work I did related to a pharmacists role was limited I found it difficult to ID strengths or weaknesses in certain areas.

I was able to ID some areas, for e.g. placing drug orders, that would be areas of weakness simply because I was rarely involved in these areas. The training has assisted me becoming competent in some areas, while my own private learning has tried to compensate for areas that I may have been lacking. (ID88)

There needs to be more courses, focusing on exam technique plus content.

Having a review every 13 weeks allowed a suitable time frame to improve in certain areas (ID100)

Law and ethics training day would have been lengthened to a day and a half and used time to have a brief overview on cardiovascular. First

aid training day could have been completed in half a day (ID158)

I think when you spend a lot of time doing the same tasks in the same job you can learn very little because the pre-regs have set jobs. It

was hard to learn about other things that went on without other members of staff thinking that you were just sticking your nose in. So due to this I think that society should make it compulsory to complete say 20 weekly dispensary 20x dispensing ? methadone dispensing etc so that every pre-reg is trained to the same standard then you will definitely be able to recognise strength and weaknesses (ID163)

My main area of weakness is acting in a managerial role, I felt uncomfortable doing this and wanted to address it but it wasn't possible due to the age and experience of other staff (ID167)

Well structured course that covered all aspects needed to become a competent pharmacist (ID169)

#### Appendix 4

Pre-reg group days would be beneficial, relaxed progress days where PR can exchange experiences (ID16)

Never contacted PR Facilitator (ID19)

Although the society's staff were very helpful and niche when speaking with them, sometimes the offices were

shut early when I was trying to hand things in e.g. 11th July, Good Friday. Also, sometimes needing to contact

pre-reg facilitator on a Thursday or Friday, and no one could answer my questions. A full time person to answer

questions would be better (ID33)

Sometimes found office staff difficult when corresponding by email. Ignored some of my questions. Directed

me to another individual but gave no contact details (number or email) and ignored my request by one

specific email for these (ID42)

Office staff were not able to answer any queries regarding pre-registration training. Pre-registration facilitator was

never present to deal with queries however when contact was eventually made, she was helpful (ID48)

Pre-registration facilitator was very helpful but only available part time (ID46)

Didn't contact pre-reg facilitator. Staff helpful regarding advice on registering with RPSGB/GPHC. May be

beneficial to have an event at 6 months point to reassess progress, compare to others and think about any

additional knowledge/skills needed (ID53)

Did not need to make much contact, things ran fairly smoothly!(ID54)

The induction event wasn't very useful for me at the time since I was doing hospital work and not community (ID75)

I didn't have any reason to contact the society therefore cannot comment (ID93)

Staff were helpful anytime I phoned with queries (ID169)

I found the pre-registration facilitator more than helpful and always approachable (ID187)

## Appendix 5

### SECTION 4

I like the paper copy (ID1) (ID19)  
Important to have a paper back copy of your manual close to hand (ID2)  
Paper copy very useful tool, potentially having it on line & charging small fee to cover printing costs for those who want hard copy (ID3)  
Paper copy always easier than on line (ID5)  
A choice should be given re hard/electronic copy (ID6)  
Paper copy very important (ID8)  
Layout inadequate (ID16)  
Would still recommend printed version (ID29)  
Always good to have a hard copy which you can have & look at (ID 30)  
A paper version is very useful to have as it is there when you need it (ID35)  
Comprehensive, answers to any questions I had were contained within (ID53)  
A paper copy is still helpful for ease of mobility from day one (ID54)  
I never used the online manual and therefore can't comment (ID58)  
Although electronic version is useful for information etc a paper copy is required (ID62)  
No internet in my home to download (ID65)  
More likely to read, absorb and refer to if given in paper format (ID68)  
While I do support the use of an online version, I believe that a minority of people work better with a paper copy.  
Think it is more convenient having a paper copy to refer to when not convenient to use computer (ID78)  
Very useful to have a hard copy (ID79)  
Great reference source which I referred to on a regular basis throughout the year (ID85)  
I still feel a paper copy has its use (ID88)  
The information that was available in the manual was not always 100% complete or accurate which lead to confusion. (ID89)  
Very helpful for keeping up with deadlines & exam prep (ID93)  
I would have printed out the online version of a paper copy was not available (ID95)  
A paper copy of the manual was required as internet facilities were not always available in home and I did need to consult it in work (ID99)  
If I had any queries, the answer was almost always in my manual when I checked, so it was very well laid out and presented (ID100)  
A paper copy should be available for students as it is useful for days when a computer is not accessible (ID107)  
I would always prefer a paper copy to be given and not just a copy on the internet (ID109)  
Prefer having paper copy (ID113)  
A paper manual would be better than an online version (ID115)  
I think a paper copy of manual is better or quick and easy to refer to if no computer available (ID120)  
Prefer paper copy (ID129)  
I feel paper copy of the manual is valuable (ID139)  
A paper copy is easier to navigate through than on a computer screen (ID140)  
I think it was very beneficial to have a paper copy (ID142)  
Rarely used - could have just been online or even just dates etc - all I ever used it for !(ID145)  
It is great that it is available online however I think it is good and easier to have a paper copy (ID151)  
It is very helpful to have access to both a paper and online version of the pre-registration trainee manual (id 160)  
Personally I would prefer a paper copy for ease of use (ID169)  
Easier to have the manual in paper form answers as well as being accessible via the internet (ID171)  
A paper copy of manual was a very good resource to have to hand in store (ID173)  
Would rather have the paper copy (ID174)

I find it much easier to have a paper based copy of the manual as I think it is quicker to look through a folder.

I found the manual helpful to have -however as its available online it may not be necessary as a paper copy (ID187)

I do not think the pre-reg manual should solely be online due to people not having access to internet and/or printing facilities.

## Appendix 6

### Appraisal Process

Very beneficial.

I feel this portfolio takes up a lot of time when we are working full time and revising a test?(ID36)

No - although should make clear - 52 week appraisal should be called 49 week! (ID42)

There is a lot of variation in how appraisals are carried out by different tutors (ID48)

It gave a good opportunity to assess progress and develop a relationship with the tutor(ID48)

I felt the portfolio could have been shorter more focus on distance learning may have been more beneficial (ID50)

My 2 appraisals in community were at 8 o'clock in the morning and I was not allowed the hour back (ID51)

Tutors should give feedback, rather than trainee feeling they have to say when they need to want one - difficult

to be objective identifying own ? For improvement. What needed to achieve also needs to be better communicated to

all staff (ID53)

Was seen as a sheet that needed to be filled in no personal/specific address or discussion made between student and

tutor about progress, strengths, weaknesses or how to go forward

While meeting performance standards in a beneficial process, recording them individually on worksheets is very

time consuming (ID81)

My appraisals were very helpful - but I think that was completely due to my tutor. I think this will vary greatly between pre-regs. (ID93)

The 'ability to accept and take authority' was ambiguous (ID95)

I found the reviews very beneficial in identifying my strengths and weaknesses. (ID100)

Appraisal process should be more in-depth to cover all aspects of practice including ability to check prescriptions accurately (ID110)

My tutor didn't take the time to go through their reasons for each score. I wasn't really involved in the process (ID115)

Found the appraisal beneficial (ID118)

Very good at identifying areas which need to be worked on especially if working in a busy dispensary as day to day talk of this cannot always take place (ID130)

I don't think its appropriate to have the numbered grades defined as they are - how can we truly achieve 'the highest standards expected of a competent pharmacist' when we are not qualified yet? I believe tutors made their own definition of what a grade '1' pre-reg etc (ID134)

Very time consuming and some were easy so was waste of time (i.e. accepting a script) took a lot of valuable time which could have been used to study (ID151)

Some of the appraisal standards were unnecessary i.e. first aid, being able to communicate in English. Others were repetitive, should be more specific like a list of things you must see or do during your pre-reg because otherwise its hard to know if you are competent in all areas of professionalism(ID163)

Appraisals were not helpful. They were rushed and not relevant (ID167)

Beneficial as monitored progress throughout the year and highlighted areas that I needed to improve (ID169)

I found the appraisals helpful in giving me deadlines to have performances standards finished (ID187)

## **Examination Process**

Some Q's on the paper were too open ended for a MCQ (ID3)

Not completed the exam as yet therefore I cannot comment.

I'm doing the late exam & feel waiting a month to do the exam & nearly 6 wks from finishing is too long (ID15)

Late starters should have the option of sitting the June examination, responsibility must then rest with trainee (ID16)

Could do with more than one past paper (ID19)

Many Q's not related to practice, Q's should directly relate to how one would work in community/hospital setting (ID21)

It was quite distracting when the questions were amended mid-exam. It would be useful to spend more time reviewing

the exam before we sit it (Particularly open book - time was precious). (ID33)

A few more example papers would be helpful (ID38)

Examination could have been more challenging (ID40)

Some questions were bizarre (ID41)

No - late fees extortionate for late appraisals!! (ID42)

A lot of the questions on both the past paper and the exam sat were ambiguous and badly worded (ID48)

The examination (2011) I believe was not completely specific to pharmacy practice. Few questions focused on any

clinical knowledge, and question wording was very ambiguous. In open book paper several questions were written ? And spelling mistakes existed, I felt for an examination which had to be paid for and which was professional this was not acceptable. Questioning technique was not at all similar to ? papers and very little of what was asked could have been revised for, or learnt in practice.(ID47)

More past papers would be useful (ID51)

Necessary to make more examination papers available. Why provide just one if there are many years? Society should

provide Drug Tariff - confusion over versions, and the limited version being inaccurate, sections missing etc is tiresome, and may be stressful for some (ID53)

Fairly different from uni, maybe the syllabus was vaguer than I was used to i.e. initially difficult to know how much/little

of retrain areas to concentrate on (ID54)

Some of the questions on this years paper were unexpected and I was unable to answer these confidently e.g. the blood

sample question (ID60)

I felt there were some questions on closed book that were poorly worded (ID68)

Not sure how much I gained from completing it, all standards are covered in day to day running of a pharmacy without

having to find evidence and write it up. I suppose it is useful for those students who work in a ? Pharmacy to ensure

they are able to do everything expected of a pharmacist. (ID68)

The examinations syllabus is very vague and gives little aid to preparation for the exam (ID70)

More than 1 years past papers should be made available and more recent papers made available. Majority of questions on exam were VERY ambiguous - can add stress in an exam situation (ID73)

Some questions ambiguous (ID74)

A revision session incorporating legal /ethical sections of exam should be useful (ID80)

Some of the questions seemed more relevant to hospital or community scenarios, disadvantaging all applicants. A modular system may be better where questions can be posed to everyone according to relevance, perhaps a small choice section for specific to community /hospital practice (ID82)

I would have liked to have access to more samples of past papers for reference as this was my ? First year and he was unsure about the exam structure and layout (ID85)

Not enough papers made available , many questions were ambiguous, need either space to justify answers, or the questions to be worded more appropriately. I would suggest three separate papers, open, closed and calculations, as insufficient time (IG89)

Questions should be unambiguous - it was not clear exactly what answer was required in the calculations question about potassium permanganate solutions (ID93)

I feel more time should be given to open book and less time is needed for closed (ID96)

Have more checks made of the paper before the exam as it was distracting when changes were called out during the exam (ID99)

Most questions on the paper were appropriate and my pre-reg year prepared me well for it (ID100)

A greater number of past papers would be food for the purposes of studying (ID107)

It would be beneficial to have more than one closed book past paper available to allow for more practice of using a broad variety of knowledge or to divide gaps not exposed during work of study (ID109)

Re-enforced the importance of having a wide and accurate scope on all areas of pharmacy. (ID117)

Perhaps more practice calculation questions made available e.g. past papers (ID118)

I found that the questions on the closed book exam varied from the impossible to very easy. A more balanced paper would have been appropriate (ID124)

Need less time for closed book and more time for open book (ID126)

Most past papers should be made available (ID129)

More past papers would be useful (ID51)

More past papers would be useful (ID130)

Exam seemed irrelevant to pre-reg year assessment throughout year more appropriate than a final exam, some questions ambiguous in their nature. Working off previous editions of BNF (id143)

More past paper questions would be very much appreciated. The GPhC has large numbers of websites (on track pharmacy .com) and any number of past papers available - dating back more than 10 years. How come NI pre-regs only get a single paper relevant to us? (ID144)

I felt large proportions of the closed book exam were focused on irrelevant subject matter.

Such as the role of NICE and who pharmacy technicians were registered with? Another question focused on IV vancomycin? Relevance ???

Closed book was much harder than previous papers (ID148)

It would be beneficial if we had more past papers to practice from (ID159)

I think it might be helpful to have the open book examination in the morning, as its quite demanding due to time constraints, other than that I felt the process overall was fair in every respect (ID161)

Exam is a good way of testing knowledge but think calculations should be non-calculator to be online with England, because I went to an English uni and its good practice to get into the way of doing calculations mentally instead of always relying on a calculator(ID163)

Exam best way to learn. Questions too sneaky in the exam, should just be testing knowledge (ID167)

Everything that was expected from me was made clear in terms of what reference sources Needed to get etc (ID169)

Calculations - 80% pass rate, the GPhC exams still 70% will be a bit more stress to make sure you pass (ID171)

Don't feel it fair that four years of university and a good degree classification. Require more exams. Maybe the degree layout should be more practically based (ID181)

I haven't undertaken the examination yet (ID187)

## Appendix 7

Not a fan, unnecessary paperwork, area's vague. Make it more concise & base more on a tutor's assessment.(ID3)

A choice should be given either paper/electronic as many may not have access to internet (ID6)

A lot of extra work to record everything, would be better if some was tutor assessed (ID15)

The portfolio did not aid my learning at all, a better method of continuous assessment that demonstrates the true capabilities, i.e. projects (ID21)

Most of the standards appropriate although writing all of them seemed tedious (ID22)

I'm not sure whether an online format would be easier, I would prefer paper personally.

The paper format would be more accessible and you can keep record sheets & evidence together (ID31)

Easier to have the portfolio there in front of you, more of a sense of achievement (ID35)

Of no benefit (ID36)

Some performance standards are awkward to prove & document e.g. use appropriate body language, and others e.g. communicate effectively in English are difficult to document – also having achieved an Mpharm should be evidence enough of this. The competencies are difficult to write-up in CPD style as many are proving skills already present – not showing how I identified the lack of a skill. Also the action is doing- not a learning exercise as in CPD. My tutor found this difficult to grasp when signing off my portfolio. More clarity and different headings would be more appropriate. Although the portfolio had its benefits it was also very time consuming and nearly a waste of time – a tutor evaluation and trainee checklist would be better.(ID41)

I preferred typing my performance standards, which allowed for easier changes and revisions as well as superior back-up options as opposed to paper hardcopies. An online option seems like a good idea to reduce waste, however submission of evidence and signatures of tutors may become troublesome. (ID44)

It was difficult to obtain evidence for some performance standards even though I felt I had met those standards. Perhaps some performance standards could be assessed as complete on discussion with the tutor other than needing to record 3 examples for every standard (ID48)

I felt the portfolio could have been shorter more focus on distance learning may have been more beneficial (ID50)

Allowed me to have the opportunity to learn some things that I may not have if there was no portfolio (ID51)

I personally feel it is unnecessary – just additional paperwork, time consuming, off putting for tutor and other staff. I had no difficulty completing it, but feel that competence could just as easily be demonstrated by tutor written statements. All aspects covered in portfolio should be covered by any competent trainee. Submission of the regular amount of CPD required by pharmacists would be adequate, and would allow more time to focus on actual learning needs. A lot of 'dumbing down' in pre-reg training – most competencies could be achieved by anyone with a year, ? or pharmacy graduate (ID53)

I feel the portfolio was irrelevant in some cases. For example demonstrating being able to communicate in English. I am unaware of the relevance as my tutor ensured I had experience in all areas of pharmacy (ID58)

A very time consuming process beneficial to do (ID60)

The structure of the portfolio is too strict, many of the standards are very specific and it is unrealistic to define every pre-reg experience to filling a standard sheet. In my opinion the portfolio was a complete waste of my time and was of not benefit to the training. Simple comprehension exercise such as this telling a story of what you did on a structure base are a waste of time (ID70)

Notes should be added to any past exams in order to clarify legal changes etc from the ? Of the exam to cannot (ID71)

Time spent completing the portfolio in its entirety could be spent learning using online sources and in leaving my competency in a variety of topics (ID81)

The portfolio is very time consuming to complete and signing off of the standards was a very lengthy process - it included staying after ? A few evenings a month. Some of the standards were very difficult to meet and or find evidence for (IG85)

Found some difficulty in understanding the performance standards record sheets initially and hard to incorporate evidence for some areas which would have been carried out regularly e.g. communicating effectively in English (IG88)

Some of the standards in the portfolio were very basic and part of everyday running in the shop. No documenting them was not worthwhile e.g. 'communicate in English' (ID90)

Some performance standards overlapped and had 'similar meanings e.g. A2.4 AND C2.1.

Some felt unnecessary e.g. B1.1. Many situations covered more than 5 performance standards (ID95)

I completed a lot of my portfolio in work and internet connection was not always available (ID99)

Online format would be good like the CPD website. When doing my portfolio I stuck to the limit of compliances per sheet which is what use more 'told of the training day'. However on speaking to a few colleagues it seems they were able/allowed to include significantly more than this into one entry. Is this policed or was five jus a guide as it meant I ended up doing about 80 sheets? Confirmation for future candidates with a strict limit would be beneficial (ID106)

The portfolio while useful in highlighting aspects of the job which you may not encounter in your particular pharmacy as more focused and less broad or abstract range of standards or competencies would help (ID109)

Some of the performance standards seemed very trivial. Online or paper would be ok (ID115)

Paper format easier to keep track of would need to be printed at home anyway (ID119)

I feel a paper format is easier when entering all standards are complete, easier to look back at if needed (ID120)

I did not find the amount of time required to complete my portfolio beneficial in general throughout my pre-reg year. I did find a lot of the competencies quite pointless and think that my time would have been much better spent studying or completing different NICPLD course MCQs instead (ID123)

It was a long process and some standards can be difficult to find examples for (ID130)

I don't feel it enhanced my learning in any way - I thought it just took up time (a lot of time) that could otherwise have been spent taking a more practical approach to learning - rather than theorising about it on record sheets. I spent a lot of time stressing about how I was to come up with pieces of evidence for competency and I can honestly say that now I have finished my portfolio I don't think it will have any influence on my readiness for becoming a pharmacist (ID134)

Very time consuming process with little learning with respect to time spent on it. Time could definitely be spent more wisely (ID 135)

I feel paper is better than online format (ID139)

A paper based copy is easier to use and a computer is not always accessible (ID140)

The portfolio was very time consuming. Some of the competencies seemed quite irrelevant (ID142)

Would prefer to do a year of CPD. Standards based on speaking and writing English and lots of other highly unhelpful and time consuming standards (ID143)

The portfolio has proved to serve no real purpose in identifying needs, and was really a pointless task (ID144)

More examples of what could be used in induction event - was abit lost at start of year. A lot of what you had to record was unnecessary and at this stage practical learning is enough without having to document such incidents. Too much paperwork required (ID145)

Online portfolio would be beneficial as only a limited amount of space on the paper copies and you always had to print out additional paper copies whilst completing the record sheets (ID150)

When working a 40 hour week it was very taxing and time consuming process. Time that could have been used more beneficially else where (ID152)

Found portfolio to be extremely time consuming and was not of any benefit to my training process. Temptation is to fabricate scenarios merely to tick boxes. Most unenjoyable part of pre-reg year (ID154)

Required a lot of work and wasn't that useful in the end (ID155)

I felt the portfolio is an excellent way to develop the skills required to complete CPD during my professional career (ID161)

Didn't find the portfolio that helpful. I would prefer to manage and prioritise my learning needs in a more flexible way and based on the requirements each day brought. Most standards were very simple tasks I feel don't need to be proven e.g. ordering stock (ID167)

I would find it easier completing it in a paper format (ID169)

not sure if online portfolio would be beneficial (ID174)

The portfolio was a large task undertaken over the whole year. Having a paper format was extremely good - it allowed for easier completion. Having an online format would have made discussions with my tutor re my portfolios development would have been much harder - handing over a file was quick and straightforward (ID175)

Although I understand that the portfolio is vital in proving our ability to register as a pharmacist as well as prepare us for CPD the current format is very long-winded. At times it can take longer to write up the performance standard than to do the basic itself. I would recommend that each standard could simply be stated by number as done now) however the identification section and plan removed. Therefore overall standard number action and evaluation only. This will prevent repetition of information (ID 178)

Very time consuming (ID181)

Should have to be submitted a good while before exam as it is stressful enough to prepare for it at the time (ID184)

I think the portfolio is a very time consuming exercise where there trainee could be spending more time on more important areas as practice (ID188)

I think a hard copy is always better option for something of this nature. Again due to internet and printer access may be a problem for a lot of people . Also due to the amount of work sheets, appraisal forms a hard copy is always best to refer to (ID189)

## Appendix 8

DL Courses - might be beneficial to have a few compulsory modules, would encourage independent learning (ID6)

More compulsory training on relevant subjects e.g. smoking cessation (ID19)

Very knowledgeable and friendly staff at this training day (ID21)

Minor ailments in paper form was useful as you could refer back to the pictures for skin etc (ID35)

Online NICPLD courses covered too much detail into pmrs etc. Too lengthy - A series of lectures online or a workshop would have been better (ID41)

All relevant and appropriate would be food if included smoking cessation and substance misuse although can see not applicable for all (ID42)

A well presented, relevant information well explained (ID53)

The courses were all great and expanded my knowledge (ID60)

Smoking and EHC - very good (ID65)

Probity day not as useful as others (ID73)

Law and ethics day did not talk about the most important area in law and ethics i.e. emergency supplies and loans. This needs to be highlighted to future pharmacists, instead it's not even mentioned (ID75)

I was very disappointed that the cardiovascular training event was cancelled as this is an area I think a lot of pre-reg students are not confident with (ID85)

Were a great help, may have been more beneficial to have some of them sooner in the year, particularly law & ethics (ID88)

Patient medication - records case - quite long winded (ID106)

I really enjoyed these days and found the law and ethics day good for the exam (ID118)

Didn't get to do cardiovascular training, (ID120)

Minor ailments was a good distance learning package but I found the repeat dispensing and enforcing patient safety not very useful and quite long and waffily (ID142)

Law and ethics - too much information in a short space of time (ID144)

First aid could be more tailored towards pharmacists - we were asked id we know what an inhaler was used for?(ID145)

Probity day wasn't really that useful (ID155)

Mentioned earlier (ID158)

I think there should be more of them throughout the year. I found the law and ethics day excellent, as it now only covered theory but also the application of law to every day situations faced in pharmacy on a daily basis (ID161)

Excellent !! Very informative, all of them! (ID163)

Think the CV training day was a vital part of learning and shouldn't have been removed (ID174)

The law and ethics days and the first aid day were both extremely well presented and I learnt a lot from both of them (ID175)

All well presented (ID183)

I found the days helpful the only criticism is the travelling to Belfast on training day in the WEST would've been appropriate

## Appendix 9

### **Calculations Training:**

Helpful if a few examples worked through at start of each class (ID5)  
Very helpful & worthwhile (ID21)  
An excellent, well run course. Very useful for understanding calculations (ID29)  
Really useful, and Johanne very approachable for help (ID33)  
More than two days would be useful to get more time & more calculations (ID35)  
Excellent (ID41)  
Excellent course - not clear as to one session or 2 sessions - bad since needs to be able book time off work (ID42)  
Did not attend (ID46)  
Did not attend (ID48)  
Made me feel more confident about calculations in the exam (ID53)  
Did not attend (ID58)  
Should also have an online paying facility (ID67)  
Very useful, helped increase my confidence and highlight areas of weakness (ID68)  
A very useful course and great revision for the exam (ID80)  
Very helpful and well explained  
Provide more calculation examples (IG89)  
Very beneficial for the exam. Would recommend it to others! (ID100)  
Extremely beneficial and helpful (ID104)  
Would like to be able to see which days I am signed up for and more if needed. I ended up signed up to both days at one time by mistake (ID119)  
Didn't attend the calculations training day as I felt the training days provided by my organisation were adequate (ID121)  
I found the calculation training very beneficial and would recommend it to all pre-reg students especially those struggling with the calculations (ID123)  
Very beneficial especially as pass mark was raised to 80% (ID129)  
Would be helpful if able to pay course online (ID137)  
Very helpful courses. Should be compulsory (ID143)  
Very helpful! (ID145)  
Very valuable training day - highly recommend it too ALL pre-reg trainees (ID157)  
I think it should be compulsory as it covered everything you needed to know (ID159)  
Excellent really useful in preparation for my pre-reg exam (ID161)  
Excellent! Should be compulsory training, ? Of people were in two minds whether or not to go but it was definitely worth while (ID163)  
The example questions were excellent preparation for the calculations in the examination (ID164)  
Very useful improved my confidence in calculations (ID174)  
Greatly improved my understanding of the calculations that the exam was going to cover.  
Would recommend to any pre-reg student in future (ID175)  
The calculations course was extremely helpful (ID185)

## **CPD Event:**

very good guide to CPD (ID5)

Very informative (ID22)

Very good - although I have ticked 'good' for value as I'd already covered the majority of the topic at

undergraduate level (ID41)

Did not go since done this all at university (ID42)

Did not attend (ID48)

Good opportunity to ask questions specific to my needs. Everything well explained (ID53)

Thorough (ID54)

Did not attend (ID58)

Did not attend (ID54)

Did not attend (ID60)

I would have preferred to hear about the event after exam - as I had forgotten about it due to studying. An

online version would be very useful (ID93)

I did not attend this as I had already arranged for after the exam. It would be useful if the information from this

was made available online (ID99)

Too close to exam (ID103)

Have not attended yet but going to book on upcoming week (ID164)

## **Appendix 10**

I did hospital and community placements for pre-reg (ID41)

Last question hospital yes / community no (ID42)

Section 9 this person disagreed with these results when looking at community pharmacy (ID44)

Section 9 this person disagreed with the results regarding both hospital and community pharmacy (ID48)

When it wasn't too busy when I got his time it was very helpful (ID60)

I was given 4 days of revision but not sufficient study time throughout the year, it needs to be made compulsory

## Appendix 11

I would like to see a small part of the course on methadone, my pharmacy did not carry this service & I had to make my own arrangements.(ID3)

Further clinical training days. Opportunity for every pre-reg to spend 2 weeks in hospital environment.

Mandatory study time should be introduced, no study time given coming up to exam, had to use holidays as did many other trainees (ID21)

I completed six months in hospital first and I would recommend that the pre-reg gets more time working on the wards as I felt that I was only getting to grips with patient interviews/counselling sessions when I had to leave then. I would also recommend that pre-regs are split up when on the wards.(ID 25)

Hospital - very good clinical training - lots of learning! - good experiences - presentations, audits, ward work - could do with more planning & structure - great advice from colleagues, always willing to help & very friendly.

Community - great atmosphere - as much hands on as I wanted - given lots of responsibility - good staff levels - not enough 'protected' study time - this needs to be made clearer to tutors by the society ( ID33)

Performance standards should be revised or replaced by an alternative assessment - if tutor evaluation forms didn't go back to tutor a more honest feedback could be given - not good to be truthful and expect a good reference - provide more past papers - put study time in contact for tutor so it must be observed - ensure tutor knows pre-reg is supernumerary - provide more structure from PSNI - each pre-reg has had a different experience with some given much better training than others.(ID41)

Training in the hospital was great - well structured and all pharmacists were very helpful and keen to teach. My community placement was unfortunately very disappointing. I'm not sure if my tutor really understood how to train a pre-reg. The locum was the one who taught me anything e.g. how to put a prescription through the computer, how the smoking cessation scheme, minor ailments scheme works etc. I am seriously worried for the next pre-reg going there of a full year as the training is minimal and if you want to learn anything you have to ask or teach yourself. All day everyday I was sent picking up prescriptions around about 15 GP surgeries a day for 2 - 5 hours then the rest of the day was spent making mediboxes and I feel that I have learned very little there. (ID51)

Regarding section 9, I had a detailed rota of location within the hospital, but it was not set out what should be learnt/achieved, anything I needed to achieve was ? To 'tick a box off', eg first 2 months allocated to dispensary, but left to answer phones and answer reception - not appropriate work for a pre-reg pharmacist! Was told it was because of staffing and I needed to be trained - unacceptable. Felt like a waste of time. I ? highlighted in this ? need addressed for the benefit of future pre-regs. Misconception by most staff, including pharmacists what a pre-reg should be doing. Much of my initial work had already been covered on undergrad visits. Need to be much better training and structure in place in the hospital setting. Also, regarding tutor although we got on very well it should be someone who spends most of their time with you where they can accurately observe you - I spent three weeks working with my tutor due to the nature of her role. I feel this is not enough time to accurately get a picture of the pre-reg and their progress and any issues they feel I could improve on. (ID53)

I have the same complaints regarding lack of time put aside for study and regarding being used as another pair of hands (especially considering employers are paid well above what they offer as a salary) as previous pre-reg trainees. This will lead to a poorer quality professional, more liable to make clinical errors than if time was forcibly set aside. I am lucky in that my hospital training has been excellent but most are in an unfortunate position that I was in, in community where I would not have been clinically competent (ID62)

I had no choice just told hours were 9-6, 5 days a week. My salary was less than people working less hours than me. Did not know what salary was until my 1st pay cheque. I was under the impression it was going to be more than it was. I think the salary given to each pre-reg should be the same and the hours of work should be dictated by PSNI as well as a compulsory 1/2 day to study. Would be useful if there was an optional training course to assess progress during the year e.g. targets set for what to have learnt by each appraisal (clinical/BNF) and then McQ's to self assess your progress. (ID68) I thoroughly resent the costs associated with the training, late fees and examination fees followed by registration fees. It comes across that the society is doing its best to hold pre-reg students to ransom at any given chance (ID70)

I worked five days a week, opening until closing time. I wasn't aware of the recommendation of 35 hours. But I did get plenty of breaks.

I believe the amount of performance standards should either be reduced, or the amount of evidence needed reduced. Too much time is spent writing up these standards just for the sake of it. Less standards done at a better quality I think is needed. It would also be good to have mean event on the problems pharmacists face regularly, such as how to best deal with short items; problems to watch out for with weekly blister packs; important aspects of O2 therapy, how to communicate best with GP surgeries, what you need to know about dressings etc (ID75) (ID75)

The contracted hours were 9-6 Monday to Friday - with a day off during the week if I worked Saturday. On a number of occasions my day off fell on the same day I had training event and so essentially worked a 6 day week (ID85)

I was enrolled for both UCA AND Jacqui Dougan training days which were of great help to my learning. Despite being told I was excess staff in my pre-reg placement and should be able to do work which focused on my learning this was rarely the case (ID88)

There needs to be more comprehensive training programme for example, that it be compulsory for students to go to training courses, held by sangers, as training i.e. additional training is not always provided by employers ? External courses. And directed time, MUST be made compulsory (ID89)

I feel tutor feedback should be confidential to allow a true reflection on performance (ID91) Protected study time was not available - this needs to be defined over all pharmacies with pre-regs. The day of the exam - is this counted as study time - am I entitled to it ? I had to take it as part of my holiday entitlement (ID95)

This pharmacy was open 9-6 so this was my contracted hours for the week.

Most likely community NI and locum (ID104)

Society needs to make sure that pre-regs are not used as shelf stockers as that is not the purpose of the year and needs to maintain that a pre-reg is not to be included in staff levels as they are separate as funded by society (ID106)

I thought that the pre-registration training structure was of an excellent standard and would find it difficult to identify any areas which need improvement for future years (ID116)

Thoroughly I found my pre-registration training year very beneficial and enjoyable. I found the law and ethics, and calculation training very helpful. I also benefited greatly doing the minor ailments and repeat dispensary courses online. I did find the medication review course quite boring and I did find it very long and hard to follow in a lot of parts and think it should be looked at again. (ID123)

I sometimes felt like a glorified dispenser due to restrictions on what I was and wasn't permitted to do. I also felt my role as pre-registration pharmacist was sometimes misunderstood by staff. I think it would be of benefit to have a signed off document of hours private study the pre-reg receives in the workplace per week (ID137)

I was disappointed we couldn't have the CVD course as it is a huge area in pharmacy (ID142)

Portfolio should be changed, felt very much like a waste of time - protected study time shouldn't be at employers discretion, some students got the time but the majority didn't (ID143)

My pharmacy company (Gordons) were very interested in having pre-regs but only as a 'free shop hand' no in the learning capacity. I have spent many many hours stacking shelves, and even covering the delivery service for 3+ weeks while the delivery driver was off on holiday/sick. When challenged on this he said 'to allow me to be extra staff was no way to run a business'. The recommended study time was clearly ignored as well; it was suggested that no study should be done in the shop - everything is done in your own time (ID144)

I feel the PSNI needs to do more to address the current over supply of pharmacists in NI. Caps need to be enforced in order to prevent the ongoing farcical job situation (ID146)

Boots provided a brilliant training profile. Alison Buchanan, and Mairead Conlan along with a brilliant tutor (Cathy Morris) ensured a fantastic year (ID148)

I think the 35 hour week should be the most a pre-reg should have to work, and this should be more than a recommendation e.g. part of contract of payment from BSO for pre-reg. Study half day should also be part of recommendation, stipulations of employment. I think the course provided by society, NICPLD here excellent I think it would be beneficial if there were more compulsory courses (ID161)

Every aspect of the year was applicable, and prepared me for future working on my own in a pharmacy (ID164)

One issue that has arisen concerns the compulsory training days (and exam day) it has been brought to light that the company expects pre-reg. to have taken these days as either unpaid leave or holidays. This, in my opinion, is unreasonable. The matter is currently being looked into further within the company (ID166)

The availability of older past papers would have been beneficial for the exam (ID169)

although the portfolio was beneficial to do to help practice CPD cycles, some standards were difficult to get @ least 3 scenarios to match, is easier day to day ones were matching many competencies..From speaking to others people may have tended to make up scenarios just to meet the standards required defeating the purpose of the portfolios (ID171)

I worked an extra half hour each day voluntarily in the morning to assist with any script from the early doctors surgeries (ID 174)

Although my tutor was very accommodating in terms of revision there was no set time for me to revise or do my portfolio. Therefore when the pharmacy was busy I completed this work at home. This is not ideal and a compulsory half day should be recommended. (ID178)

Overall I think pre-registration is successful. As mentioned earlier, I think that it should become compulsory to have revision time. Each employer is different in this respect which can often be unfair, Especially in a busy pharmacy. There should also be specific working hours as some people work 35 hours and other up to 45 hours (ID178)

No half day for study. I was never aware of this (ID179)

I feel more emphasis should be placed on allowed study time whilst working. I felt at a real disadvantage working in a very busy pharmacy, which is tiring, knowing I had to go home and do work that I should have been allocated time to do during the day, as I know others were. (ID183)

Compulsory training courses from NICPLD were quite useful as was the calculations course. In the future it would be beneficial to include training days as use of the drug tariff, oxygen services and would management/compression hosiery etc either with society or from the BSO themselves (ID193)