

Guidance Notes on Pre-registration Training

For all trainees, prospective trainees,
tutors and anyone employing trainees

These guidance notes are based on the Society's Regulations
and all aspects of training agreed by Council regarding pre-registration
experience



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The term **trainee** refers to any person undertaking pre-registration training in Northern Ireland with the aim of being admitted to the register of pharmacists. The term **tutor** refers to any pharmacist who agrees to supervise the trainee, accepts the associated responsibilities of tutoring specified by the Society and meets the criteria for being a tutor as specified by the Society.

The Society refers to the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland and the Council is the body who directs and manages the business of the Society.

For ease of reading we have opted to refer to tutors as female and pre-registration trainees as male.

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1. Registering as a trainee of the Society

Before starting his training, a candidate wishing to be registered as a trainee of the Society must:

- (1) Organise his pre-registration training placement where there is a suitably qualified tutor (section 7) in an establishment that has been approved by Council for this purpose (section 6).
- (2) Apply in writing to the Society using the specified application form obtainable from the Society at **least three months before** commencing his training informing the Society of the date of commencement of training, where he is undergoing training and the name(s) of his tutor(s) for the full training period.

Late applications will be considered but a late administration charge of £100 will be levied and this must be included with the application in addition to the required fee.

- (3) Submit documentary evidence that he has been awarded an appropriate degree in pharmacy at a UK University recognised by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.
- (4) Pay the required fee to the Society.
- (5) Be familiar with and accept the rules and regulations on pre-registration training specified by the Society and outlined in this guide.
- (6) Be of good character and in good health.
- (7) Affirm that he will abide by the Society's Code of Ethics.

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In addition a candidate wishing to be registered as a trainee of the Society must NOT:

- (1) have been refused permission to join the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Register for disciplinary reasons.
- (2) have previously failed the GPhC registration examination three times or where there is any other reason that has resulted in refusal to permit him to complete pre-registration training.
- (3) normally have taken longer than six years from commencing an MPharm degree programme to graduation with an MPharm degree.
- (4) normally have taken longer than 24 months from graduation to commencement of pre-registration training.

The training period cannot be recognised unless the conditions specified above are met in full.

Notes:

Suitable establishments normally include community pharmacies and hospital pharmacies. A six month industrial training programme in association with six months in community pharmacy is also permitted, provided the industrial establishment has approval from the Society to provide a pre-registration training placement.

Undergraduates in the final year of their degree programme who intend to start their pre-registration training within a short period of graduation, are required to submit their application at least three months before their intended start date and to provide the documentary evidence as soon as it is available that they have been awarded an appropriate degree.

It is possible to start pre-registration training provided there is written evidence from the university awarding the degree that the candidate has been successful.

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A **certified copy** of the original university degree certificate must be submitted to the Society within two months of commencing training.

If there is any doubt about any aspect of the requirements, clarification should be sought from the employer, tutor or from the Society.

2.Aims and objectives for pre-registration training

- (1) The Council of the Society considers that the primary aim of the pre-registration experience is to reinforce among trainees an awareness that they are to become members of a profession, and to develop further within them a professional attitude and a sense of responsibility.
- (2) The objectives for pre-registration training are:
 - (a) to give the trainee experience of applying in practice the knowledge acquired during the undergraduate course;
 - (b) to emphasise that the trainee's positive attitude towards the experience is important if the aims are to be fulfilled;
 - (c) to facilitate the development of a responsible attitude by requiring the trainee to reach a satisfactory level of competence in relation to the time spent in those aspects of pharmaceutical practice in which approved experience is given;
 - (d) to develop the ability of the trainee to communicate clearly with members of the public and with members of allied professions;
 - (e) to give the trainee an appreciation of the pharmacist's role within the health service and the pharmaceutical industry, and within the community;
 - (f) to give the trainee an appreciation of the need for continuing study throughout their professional career;
 - (g) to increase the trainee's awareness of the whole spectrum of pharmaceutical activities, including a direct involvement with patients in relation to the proper use of medicines and the promotion of good health;

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- (h) to bring the trainee to the commencement of a career in pharmacy with a willingness to make professional decisions within his current competence and a desire to improve his competence continually through experience and continuing professional development;
- (i) to give the trainee an understanding of the development, structure and functions of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland and of other pharmaceutical bodies and organisations.

It is expected that, having completed the pre-registration training year and achieved a satisfactory standard in all compulsory assessments, the trainee will have met the aims and objectives for pre-registration training.

3. Pre-registration trainee employment conditions

- (1) Employment is generally only acceptable as pre-registration training if it is full-time and during normal working hours of the establishment concerned.
- (2) Periods of training should total one year and include the normal holiday entitlement for the establishment concerned and public holidays.
- (3) The trainee will normally be expected to work 35 hours per week.

If an establishment opens for an extended period each day, the hours of employment must be agreed with the employer provided the total number of hours worked per week does not significantly exceed the 35 hours specified.

- (4) If a trainee is absent on sick leave, or for any other reason, for more than the equivalent of one week the Society must be informed. The Society permits a maximum total absence of 42 days (inclusive of annual leave, sick leave, public and bank holidays) out of the 52 weeks pre-registration training before an extension to training is required. The Council of the Society has the discretion with regard to any allowances that can be made.

Notes:

In exceptional circumstances if a trainee wishes to be considered for pre-registration training other than full-time, he must apply in writing to the Society. The final decision regarding any training other than full-time will be made by the Council of the Society.

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4. Pre-registration training requirements for trainees

- (1) The trainee is required to demonstrate that he has developed competence during his training such that upon joining the Pharmaceutical Register, he will be able to undertake all the duties of a pharmacist. Competence is having the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to consistently undertake the role of a pharmacist. Performance standards have been specified which make explicit the competencies to be developed.
- (2) The trainee is required to prepare a portfolio of evidence of completing the performance standards. The trainee must achieve a satisfactory standard in all performance standards.
- (3) The trainee must complete all compulsory elements of training specified by the Society.
- (4) The trainee must attend all compulsory training days specified by the Society.
- (5) The trainee's progress will be assessed regularly by his tutor. The purpose of this procedure is to help both the tutor and trainee to monitor progress during the year. It should be carried out openly and jointly to enable problems to be fully discussed as they occur.
- (6) Reports throughout the year on trainee progress must be sent to the Society using the specified procedure and must meet the deadlines specified by the Society.
- (7) If a trainee fails to make satisfactory progress throughout the year and/or fails to have attained a satisfactory standard at the end of the training period, his training will be reviewed and he may be required to extend his training for a further period until he is deemed to have achieved a satisfactory standard.
- (8) The trainee must achieve a satisfactory standard as defined by the Society in the Registration Examination (section 5).
- (9) During the year, if the trainee experiences any problems in relation to the training provided, the matter should first be discussed with the pre-registration tutor, and then, if necessary, with the Pre-registration Lead.
- (10) While recognising the important role of his tutor, the trainee must nevertheless at all times take responsibility for his own learning.

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5. Requirements for the Registration Examination

- (1) The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland Registration Examination is normally held before the end of June of each year. A pass in this examination is a pre-requisite for registration.
- (2) An additional examination **may** be held in October of each year at the discretion of the Society.
- (3) The syllabus for the examination will be as defined by the Council and is normally an assessment of the knowledge and understanding of topics that form the core of knowledge required for effective professional practice.
- (4) All aspects of the examination and associated procedures will be specified by the Council and will be subject to review and amendment.

(5) Conditions of Admission

- (a) A person shall be eligible to sit the examination upon completion of at least **45 weeks pre-registration training** in accordance with the Society's Regulations, payment of the entrance fee stipulated, and production of evidence to satisfy the Registrar of the Society as to his/her identity and satisfactory progress in pre-registration training.
- (b) Eligibility to sit the examination for the first time will lapse **18 months** after the satisfactory completion of pre-registration training. In such circumstances the candidate will have to meet such requirements as are specified by the Council before once again becoming eligible for entry to the examination.

(6) Entry and re-entry to examinations

- (a) The total number of attempts at the registration examination is three. This includes all prior attempts at the GPhC's registration examination.
- (b) The examination entry form and all the required information as specified below must be submitted to the Society at least **six weeks** before the date of the examination.

The appropriate examination fee must be paid.

Two passport sized photographs must be submitted, each bearing on the reverse side the following **hand-written** declaration of the pre-registration tutor, "*I certify that this is a true likeness of [trainee's name and address]*". This declaration must be signed and dated by the tutor in each case.

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- (c) The Registrar reserves the right to refuse late entry to the examination for first or re-entry candidates who fail to comply with any of the conditions specified above. Such persons will only be admitted to the examination if they can prove postage to the Society of the specified items six or more weeks before the date of the examination or that the failure to submit these was due to circumstances completely unforeseen and beyond the control of the candidate. An additional administration fee may be required for late applications.
- (d) Any request for special arrangements for a candidate with a permanent or temporary disability should normally be made to the Society no later than the 31st March. The disability should be described and the nature of the special arrangements requested outlined. The Society reserves the right to request corroborating (medical) evidence for any adjustment requested. This is required in all cases when the requested adjustment is for additional time. Further guidance is available from the Society. Candidates who develop a disability shortly before the examination should inform the Society immediately.
- (e) Candidates will be admitted to the examination, on production of a ratified entry form with affixed photograph. These will be sent to candidates no later than two weeks before the date of examination.
- (f) A candidate who informs the Registrar of the Society in writing not less than seven days before the date of the examination of the withdrawal of his/her entry will be regarded as not having made an entry.
- (g) Candidates who do not attempt the examination due to illness, accident, bereavement or other adequate cause, for which **appropriate certification must be provided**, will be regarded as not having made an entry.
- (h) Candidates who under the provisions of (e) or (f) above are deemed not to have made an entry will be eligible to sit the next following examination without undergoing practice experience beyond an initial satisfactory 52 weeks pre-registration training.
- (i) The Council will specify the reference sources permitted in the Open Book examination. Candidates are required to bring their own **unmarked** copies of these reference sources in the editions specified.
- (j) After payment of the required fee a pre-registration trainee who
 - (i) fails the registration examination at the first attempt shall sit the examination again within the following eighteen months.

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- (ii) fails the examination at the second attempt shall be required to complete a period of six months employment in community or hospital pharmacy in an establishment approved by the Council and shall sit the examination for a third and final attempt within twelve months of completion of such period of employment.

6. Pre-registration training requirement of employers

- (1) All establishments in which pre-registration training is provided must be approved for this purpose by the Council.
- (2) Applications for approval of an establishment should be made on the forms provided by the Society.
- (3) The employer must ensure that a suitably qualified tutor is available to supervise the trainee before offering employment to the trainee and that the tutor will be able to fulfil the role of tutor as specified by the Society.
- (4) The programme of experience provided by the employer should normally enable the trainee to develop the competencies specified in the Performance Standards programme by the Society. A detailed description of the experiences to be undertaken will be published by the Society and provided at the commencement of each period of pre-registration training.
- (5) If any aspect of competency development cannot be ensured at the employing establishment, alternative arrangements to develop the competency must be in place and these must be explained to the trainee. This may include attendance at training events identified by the tutor.
- (6) The establishment facilities should be available for the trainee to keep up to date with recent developments in pharmacy and medicine in general. The Council will specify the reference sources that must be available in paper-based or electronic versions in the establishment in which pre-registration training is provided. The full list of references sources will be available from the Society prior to the commencement of each period of pre-registration training.
- (7) The employer must agree to allow the trainee to attend the compulsory training days specified by the Society. Attendance at compulsory training days is normally during the working week. The trainee is not expected to take these days as holidays but should be given this time off work.

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- (8) The employer is encouraged to allow the trainee to attend any additional training events that are identified by the Council as being conducive to training.
- (9) An employer must be aware of the requirements for pre-registration training.
- (10) An employer, who is not the tutor, must be aware of the duties and responsibilities of a tutor and agree to facilitate the tutor to enable her to carry out these duties.
- (11) A trainee must not normally be related to, or be a spouse or partner of, an employer.

7.Pre-registration training requirement of tutors

- (1) A pharmacist can only act as a pre-registration tutor after a minimum of three years practice as a registered pharmacist in the aspect of pharmacy with which the particular establishment is concerned.
- (2) A pharmacist who wishes to act as a pre-registration tutor must first complete any courses of instruction specified by the Society. This is normally a one day course.
- (3) A pharmacist who has completed the first pre-registration tutor training course must attend within the next 5 years a further course of instruction as specified by the Society in order to continue to be recognised as a tutor.
- (4) A pharmacist who wishes to act as a pre-registration tutor must not normally be related to, or be a spouse or partner of, a trainee.
- (5) A pharmacist who wishes to act as a pre-registration tutor must not currently be subject to any fitness to practice proceedings by the Society.

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- (6) With the exception of one particular circumstance, the Council requires that the pre-registration tutor must normally personally supervise one trainee at a time.

The exception to this rule can be at the beginning or end of a period of pre-registration training if a trainee wishes to commence training in an establishment with a particular tutor before another trainee has completed his training. The Council will normally permit up to three weeks overlap. A further extension beyond this period may be requested in writing by the tutor and an explanation for the request is required. The final decision will be made by the Council of the Society.

- (7) A tutor must be aware of the requirements for pre-registration training.
- (8) A tutor must be aware of and accept the responsibilities of being a tutor as specified by the Society. This includes taking responsibility for pre-registration training, undertaking to complete all appraisals and assessment of portfolios, liaising with the Society and making the final declaration.
- (9) Tutors must be a member of the pharmacy's staff with whom the trainee can have regular and frequent contact to ensure the quality of supervision and training.
- (10) In any period of training in one approved establishment, the pre-registration tutor normally shall be engaged full time* in the same premises as the trainee, except in hospital programmes of training where pre-registration trainees move from one premises to another to undertake the full range of training, in which case the pre-registration tutor shall undertake to meet each trainee in the trainee's place of employment at least once a month. If the tutor is NOT engaged full time in the same premises as the trainee, the Society must be informed in writing before commencement of training. The time spent by the tutor at the training premises should be specified and the supervisory arrangements in place described for when the tutor is not on the premises. The final decision on the suitability of these proposals will be made by the Council of the Society.

* The Society defines full time as a pharmacist working a minimum of 30 hours over a minimum of four days in the pharmacy where the trainee is based.

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- (11) If a tutor works less than 30 hours and there is a second qualified tutor working in the same pharmacy, it is permitted that both tutors share the responsibility for pre-registration training. The total hours worked must meet the minimum full-time requirement.

Either the tutor who works the most hours takes the major responsibility for the trainee and completes appraisals and the final declaration after consulting the other tutor OR both tutors work equally with the trainee and both co-sign appraisals and the final declaration.

Both tutors must write to the Society describing the tutoring arrangements they wish to adopt and the trainee must also indicate in writing his/her understanding and acceptance of the arrangements.

- (12) While it is the responsibility of each trainee to inform the Society in writing by the date specified prior to the commencement of training, where he is undergoing training and the name(s) of his tutor(s), a tutor should confirm with each trainee that this has been done at the start of the training period.
- (13) A pharmacist whose employment terminates or whose conditions of employment change while she is responsible for acting as tutor must discuss alternative arrangements with her employer so as to ensure the trainee receives satisfactory supervised training for the remainder of the training period for the trainee. The Society must be informed of the proposed alternative arrangements as soon as possible and reserves the right to refuse to recognise the training proposed. In these circumstances a trainee may be required to find an alternative training position with another employer and tutor.
- (13) Any change in tutor must be notified in writing to the Society as soon as is known.

8. Pre-registration training tutor responsibilities

- (1) It is the Council's view that the role of the tutor is pre-eminent during pre-registration training. The most important aspect of pre-registration experience is the way in which the trainee is influenced by the professional activities of the tutor.
- (2) A tutor is expected to complete any assessment of the trainee specified by the Society promptly and professionally. This must not be delegated to any other individual.

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- (3) A tutor is expected to give regular feedback to a trainee on progress to help identify strengths and weaknesses and in association with the trainee to develop a plan of action that will help ensure the trainee reaches the required standard by the end of the training period.
- (4) If a tutor is concerned about the progress of a trainee, she must inform the Pre-registration Lead of her concern as soon as possible.
- (5) A tutor must make a final declaration that a trainee is eligible for registration. If a tutor is unable to make this final declaration she must inform the trainee and indicate whether further training is necessary. The tutor must inform the Registrar who will then make recommendations for any further training requirements that may be necessary. A further 3 months training is the expected minimum additional training period. The tutor is under no obligation to accept the trainee for an extended training period.
- (6) Normally all trainees will be permitted to enter for the Registration Examination. However, where a tutor considers a trainee has made insufficient progress throughout the year to justify admission to this examination, she must declare this in writing to the Society at least six weeks before the Registration Examination.