

Proposed 2020 Continuing Professional Development Framework for Pharmacists in Northern Ireland

October 2019

Pharmaceutical Society 
Protecting Registering Regulating

About the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland

1. The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (NI) is the regulatory body for pharmacists in Northern Ireland.
2. Its primary purpose is to ensure that practising pharmacists in Northern Ireland are fit to practise, keep their skills and knowledge up to date and deliver high quality, safe care to patients and the public.
3. It's the organisation's responsibility to protect and maintain public safety in pharmacy by:
 - Setting and promoting standards for pharmacists' admission to the Register and for remaining on the Register;
 - Maintaining a publicly accessible Register of pharmacists and pharmacy premises;
 - Handling concerns about fitness to practise of pharmacists, acting as a complaints portal and protecting patients and the public; and
 - Ensuring high standards of education and training for pharmacists in Northern Ireland.

Why Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

4. CPD is a career-long process - not an end in itself. It involves the tracking and documenting of skills, knowledge and experience gained, both formally and informally, beyond any initial education and training.

¹ [Article 4A of the Pharmacy \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1976 \(as amended\)](#)

² [Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland The Code: Professional standards](#)

5. It helps pharmacists keep their practice and proficiency up to date to maintain standards. It also improves patient confidence in the profession.
6. CPD is a legal requirement¹ for all registered pharmacists. Every registered pharmacist must meet the requirements of Standard 5 of the Pharmaceutical Society NI Code² - to ***maintain and develop professional knowledge, skills and competence.***

What is the CPD Framework?

7. **Legislation¹ requires** the Pharmaceutical Society NI **to develop, publish and maintain a CPD Framework** for all registered pharmacists in Northern Ireland.
8. This Framework sets the standard of CPD which is required for a registered pharmacist to maintain in order to continue to meet the standards of proficiency for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy.
9. The Framework outlines what pharmacists are required to do, how to do it and by when. It also outlines the process if a CPD submission does not meet the standard required upon assessment.

[of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacists in Northern Ireland](#)

Who must undertake CPD?

10. **All registered pharmacists** must make an annual CPD submission and declaration to the Registrar **by 31 May every year**.
11. CPD can be recorded and maintained throughout the year using the Pharmaceutical Society NI's online CPD portal. The submission period during which CPD portfolios and declarations can be compiled and submitted will normally open in early April and will close at midnight on 31 May.
12. Pharmacists wishing to submit a paper portfolio must use the forms specified on the CPD Resources section of Pharmaceutical Society (NI) website.
13. Pharmacists submitting paper portfolios must ensure that the submission and declaration is received by the Registrar by the 31 May deadline.
14. There are a number of exceptions for pharmacists:
 - those granted a full exemption by the Registrar following an application for extenuating circumstances;
 - those on the Visiting Practitioners Register undertaking requirements in their home state; and
 - Those that have applied for and been granted voluntary removal from the Register during the CPD year i.e. no later than 31 May.

Failure to comply

15. Failure to comply with the requirement for submission, or to engage with the process, may put a pharmacist's continued registration at risk.

Extenuating circumstances

16. The legislation allows the Registrar to consider granting extenuating circumstances where the pharmacist has a 'reasonable excuse'.
17. There is no automatic entitlement to extenuating circumstances.
18. Applications should be made as soon as possible. Pharmacists should not wait until the CPD year end.
19. Pharmacists should apply within 21 days of becoming aware of the grounds they consider to be extenuating circumstances.
20. The operational deadline for applications is 30 April each year.
21. The Registrar will consider each application and advise of the outcome which could be:
 - No exemption;
 - Requirement to complete a partial submission; or
 - Full exemption from submission.
22. The Registrar's decision is final.
23. This application relates singularly to the year of submission and cannot be assumed to apply to any subsequent years.
24. Further information can be found in the supporting guidance on applying for extenuating circumstances and pharmacists on the EEA Visiting Practitioners Register.

Selection of portfolios for assessment

25. The Pharmaceutical Society NI has the authority to audit and assess all CPD submissions. We will use a combined random and focused approach to reviewing a sample of submitted portfolios including but not limited to the following criteria:
- a random proportion of all CPD portfolios submitted;
 - a proportion of, or all, late CPD submissions;
 - a defined proportion of those pharmacists who have changed pharmacy sector in the past year;
 - A proportion of pharmacists re-joining the register after:
 - more than one year out of pharmacy practice;
 - obtaining voluntary removal in a CPD year in which they did not submit a compliant CPD portfolio.
26. These groups of pharmacists rejoining the register during a CPD year may be asked to make an early CPD submission for assessment or may be selected for assessment at the end of the CPD year.

Assessment process

27. Any portfolio of evidence chosen for assessment will be allocated to an independent assessor [IA].
28. The IA will review the portfolio against the published essential criteria and determine if the portfolio cycles have met all six criteria. The IA will then make a recommendation to the Registrar.

29. The recommendations are that the portfolio has:
- Met the required standard
 - Not met required standard
30. If an IA concludes that the required standard is not met, the CPD portfolio will be subject to verification assessment by a second IA.
31. If the second IA agrees that the standard is not met, then the recommendation is confirmed as 'not met standard'.
32. If the second IA concludes that the portfolio does meet the standard, then it will then be subject to a verification assessment by a third IA. The decision of the third IA shall form the final recommendation to the Registrar.

Quality control of portfolios passing first assessment

33. A proportion of portfolios that have met the standard may be subject to the verification process for quality control purposes.
34. If the second IA does not agree that the portfolio meets the standard, it will be sent to a third IA who will undertake an arbitration assessment to determine the final recommendation to the Registrar.



Figure 1: CPD Framework requirements

Amount and type of CPD required

Form and Manner

35. Pharmacists must keep their CPD portfolio of evidence properly documented and submit in a form and manner outlined by the Pharmaceutical Society NI by way of the online portal or a paper submission for assessment³.
36. Pharmacists must ensure that portfolio evidence meets the recording format and the essential criteria required by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. Those making a paper submission can obtain the relevant forms from the CPD section of the Pharmaceutical Society NI website.

37. Each cycle must be recorded as detailed under the four domains of successful learning:

- Reflection
- Planning
- Action
- Evaluation

38. If selected for assessment, pharmacists must provide any additional supporting evidence, if requested by the Registrar, and by the deadline specified.
39. Any documentary evidence provided should be verifiable by a third party, where appropriate.

³ See point 12 of the Framework

Current scope of practice

40. CPD must be evaluated in relation to a pharmacist's current scope of practice and the environment in which they work in the CPD year.
41. It is essential that a pharmacist can evidence how a learning cycle has been closed and the learning outcomes evaluated in practice.
42. Some CPD learning can be evaluated only in a simulated test or environment to demonstrate how learning would be applied to a future situation. This also applies when evaluating learning relating to a future change in practice or sector.
43. At least 75% of the total number of cycles, and the total number of hours submitted, must be directly evaluated within a pharmacist's current practice and environment.
44. This allows up to 25% of the portfolio cycles and hours to have the learning outcomes evaluated using simulated practice or by evaluating their application to a situation in future practice or sectors.
45. In considering CPD cycles for inclusion in their portfolios, pharmacists should take account of the range of their current scope of practice and environment. This includes the amount of time spent acting in an annotated role or in a pre-registration tutor role.

Scheduled and Unscheduled CPD

46. CPD cycles should be scheduled/planned to address an identified learning need relating to the current scope of practice and environment.

47. A scheduled learning cycle is where a prior learning need has been identified and is addressed through a planned and structured approach.
48. An unscheduled learning cycle does not start with a prior identified learning need and is often a reaction to circumstances that emerge during day to day working and are often responded to immediately.
49. At least 50% of CPD cycle numbers and hours must relate to scheduled learning activities.

Minimum number of hours

50. A CPD portfolio submission must include a minimum of 30 hours CPD activity. The 30 hours must all relate to learning and reflecting activity. There is no specific allowance for time taken in writing up a cycle.
51. Pharmacists providing more than 30 hours of CPD may be asked to specify the cycles, amounting most closely to the 30-hour minimum requirement, that they want considered for assessment.

Number of cycles

52. Pharmacists must submit no less than four and no more than ten individual CPD cycles.
53. There is no limit to the number of CPD hours or cycles that a pharmacist can record in the online portal or in paper form. The specified hours and cycles relate to the activity selected by the pharmacist for the annual portfolio submission.
54. For pharmacists using the online portal, all CPD activity not included in a submission will continue to be recorded on the system.

Essential criteria for assessment

55. To meet the standard, CPD cycles must comply with the six essential criteria (see Figure 2) recorded under the four domains of successful learning.
56. In planning, pharmacists must demonstrate how they planned or scheduled the learning activity in response to an identified learning need.
57. In evaluation, they must show how at least 75% of the learning has been applied in the context of their current scope of practice and environment.

Figure 2: CPD Framework Essential Criteria

Reflection	<p>Did the pharmacist identify specific learning needs?</p> <p>Did the pharmacist describe why they wanted to learn about this (the context for the learning activity)?</p>
Planning	<p>Did the pharmacist describe, in the activity table, the learning activity/activities they completed to meet the learning needs?</p>
Action	<p>Did the pharmacist include a summary of what they had learned?</p>
Evaluation	<p>Did the pharmacist evidence how their practice has changed or will change because of the learning or how they have applied or will apply their learning?</p> <p>Is it evident that the learning needs have been addressed within the cycle?</p>

Pass Mark

58. To meet the standard required, all CPD portfolio submissions that are assessed must achieve a pass mark of 50%. This must include:

- 50% of all the submitted cycles; and
- those cycles which pass must contain at least 50% of all CPD hours submitted.

Failure to comply

59. The CPD regulations⁴ are clear that a pharmacist will fail to meet the requirements if they:

- do not comply with the requirements to submit a CPD portfolio;
- do not comply with the requirements and conditions of the CPD Framework and the form and manner in which it must be submitted;
- do not meet the required standard within the specified timeframe after remedial measures have been directed ;
- can be regarded as making a false declaration about their compliance with the terms of the CPD Framework.

60. Where a pharmacist is deemed not to have complied with the CPD Framework, the Registrar has the powers⁵ to:

- impose one or more remedial measures (Reassessment 1 and 2) in connection with CPD that does not meet the standard; or
- initiate steps to remove a pharmacist from the Register; or

⁴ Article 2 of the CPD Regulations.

- remove an annotation in respect of a specialist area of practice against a pharmacist's name in the Register.

Remedial measures where the standard is not met

61. Where a recommendation is made, after verification, that a portfolio has not met the required standard, the Registrar can apply remedial measures.

62. The first stage of remediation is Reassessment 1. This requires the pharmacist to submit three new CPD cycles, totalling between 15 and 20 hours, from the current CPD year (that is, CPD activity undertaken since 1 June).

63. The pharmacist will have two months to submit a reassessment portfolio. This will be assessed for compliance against the essential criteria.

64. To meet the standard required, pharmacists must pass a minimum of 2 of these cycles, covering at least 50% of the CPD hours submitted. When a portfolio does not meet standard, it will be reassessed by another IA [see Paras 27-32].

65. The pharmacist only enters Reassessment 2 if their portfolio does not meet the required standard at Reassessment 1.

66. The second stage of remediation, Reassessment 2, requires the pharmacist to submit three new CPD cycles, totalling between 15 and 20 hours, from the current CPD year (that is, CPD activity undertaken since 1 June).

⁵ Article 3 of CPD Regulations

67. The pharmacist will have two months to submit a reassessment portfolio. This will be assessed for compliance against the essential criteria.
68. To meet the required standard for Reassessment 2, pharmacists must pass a minimum of 2 cycles, covering at least 50% of the CPD hours submitted. Where a portfolio does not meet standard, it will be reassessed by another IA [see Paras 27-32].
69. If the portfolio does meet standard at Reassessment 2 then the steps outlined in the CPD regulations will be followed. This may lead to a decision to remove the pharmacist from the Register.
70. Further information can be found in the supporting guidance on remedial measures and reassessment.

Appealing a decision to remove a name from the Register

71. A pharmacist has a statutory right to appeal, via the Statutory Committee, any decision to remove their name or to remove their annotation from the register for CPD non-compliance.
72. Further information can be found in the supporting guidance on Appealing a decision to remove a pharmacist's name or annotation from the register for CPD non-compliance.
73. The Registrar has the authority to suspend a pharmacist's registration while the appeal process is undertaken.

Restoration of a name to the Register following removal for CPD non-compliance

74. An applicant can apply to the Registrar for restoration to the Register any time after being removed for non-compliance with CPD requirements. Evidence must be provided as part of this application which supports the grounds for the application.
75. In deciding on any such application, the Registrar may require the applicant to undertake additional education, training or experience as a condition for restoration to the Register. This may include an additional 30 hours continuing education and the submission of a Personal Development Plan (PDP).
76. Where an application for restoration to the Register or restoration of an annotation is refused, the applicant may make an appeal to the Statutory Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

Requirements on joining or re-joining the Register

77. An applicant applying to join the Register, who has not been registered as a pharmacist for more than 12 months, may be required by the Registrar to make an early CPD submission for assessment.
78. Applicants seeking to rejoin the Register, having previously obtained voluntary removal from the Register during a CPD year, may be required to make a CPD portfolio submission for that CPD year.
79. If an applicant re-joins the Register during a future CPD year, they may be required by the Registrar to make an early CPD portfolio submission in the CPD year they re-join.

80. In considering the application, the Registrar will review whether other evidence of CPD has been demonstrated and evidenced.
81. In each case, the number of cycles and hours may be specified by the Registrar as well as the date for submission. The pass mark will be 50% of the cycles submitted and at least 50% of the hours.
82. If selected for assessment, the portfolio will be subject to the normal assessment process (see Paras 27-32) with remedial measures applied if the submission does not meet the required standard (see Paras 61-70).
83. Pharmacists making an early CPD submission to the Registrar which is compliant will not be required to make a further submission in the same CPD year.
84. These are the CPD requirements for pharmacists joining or rejoining the Register. There may be other requirements that form part of the application process.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

85. When using examples from practice to evidence CPD learning, the pharmacist must ensure that they maintain patient confidentiality as per the Pharmaceutical Society NI's **Code of conduct ethics and performance**.
86. The Pharmaceutical Society NI keeps personal files/records on all registrants. All records are handled in confidence and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. The organisation's policy is available on our website.

Under GDPR, information will be retained for the shortest time possible. This will be in line with the policy set by the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI. Where a registrant provides hard copy documents, these will either be returned or confidentially shredded, if not required to be retained.

Supporting Guidance

87. A range of supporting guidance documents and resources are available to support pharmacists with further information on how the processes supporting the Framework operate.

The Guidance documents include:

1. Applying for extenuating circumstances and pharmacists on the EEA Visiting Practitioners Register;
2. Portfolio Assessment – A guide to CPD Assessment;
3. Remedial Measures and Reassessment;
4. Appealing a decision to remove a pharmacist's name or annotation from the Register for CPD non-compliance; and
5. Restoration to the Register following removal.

88. Further resources and examples of good practice can be found in the CPD section of the Pharmaceutical Society NI website.

This Framework takes effect from 01 June 2020 and will apply to the 2020-21 CPD year.

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Guidance notes on the CPD framework

Legislation & CPD Regulations

There are several of pieces of legislation that cover the issues relating to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of pharmacists. These are:

Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (as amended). Article 4A relates to Continuing Professional Development for pharmacists and the Pharmaceutical Society NI's responsibilities.

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (Continuing Professional Development) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012.

The Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (Continuing Professional Development) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013.

CPD year

A CPD year runs from 01 June to 31 May in any calendar year.

CPD Portfolio

CPD portfolio means a written record in either electronic or hard copy form which is completed by the pharmacist about CPD learning activity undertaken and complies with the requirements of the CPD Framework.

CPD Portal

The Pharmaceutical Society NI provides a live CPD online portal where pharmacists can record any CPD activity that they undertake throughout the year.

The portal is also opened for CPD portfolio submissions in early April ahead of the 31 May deadline each year. At this point, pharmacists can select and submit relevant cycles for the final CPD portfolio submission. Each cycle must be completed properly to allow submission online. The portal closes for submissions at midnight on 31 May.

Where the Registrar requires a pharmacist to make an early in year submission, the pharmacist will be advised of the arrangements and dates for submission online via the portal or in a paper portfolio.

CPD activity not selected as part of the submission remains on the pharmacist's individual record but will not be assessed.

If submitting online, the pharmacist must submit a portfolio annually via the link [www.https://members.psn.org.uk/Cpd](https://members.psn.org.uk/Cpd)

Pharmacists can submit a paper portfolio if required that complies with the requirements of the CPD Framework. Further details and paper forms can be obtained from the CPD Resources section of the Pharmaceutical Society NI website.

Paper submissions must be received by the Registrar at the Pharmaceutical Society NI by the submission deadline of 31 May. Each cycle must be in the form and manner directed by the Framework.

Extenuating Circumstances and Reasonable Excuse

The legislation provides for the Pharmaceutical Society NI to offer full or partial exemptions to the CPD requirements in any given year where the pharmacist can provide evidence of having a reasonable excuse.

This relates to any circumstance beyond the pharmacist's control which has had a significant and/or detrimental impact on the pharmacist's ability to comply with their CPD requirements and to make a submission by 31 May.

There is no automatic entitlement to extenuating circumstances and pharmacists must make an application to the Registrar according to the process outlined in the supporting guidance on applying for extenuating circumstances and pharmacists on the EEA Visiting Practitioners Register.

In response to an application, the Registrar can offer a full or partial exemption to the CPD requirements, grant an extension to the submission date or decline the application.

Visiting Practitioners Register This refers to pharmacists visiting Northern Ireland from European Economic Area (EEA) states who are entered onto the 'temporary service register' of the Pharmaceutical Society NI, as defined in The Pharmacy (Northern Ireland order) 1976 Article 6(1)(d).

The legislation exempts pharmacists on this Register from CPD requirements if they are undertaking CPD requirements in their home state.

These provisions may be subject to future change as a result of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union.

Registrar The Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society NI is responsible, under the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (as amended), for the registration of pharmacists and pharmacy premises.

Learning Need An area or issue which has been identified as requiring some component of learning. All CPD activity should be a response to an identified learning need.

CPD Cycles A CPD cycle is a specific CPD activity directly related to a learning need identified. It is the pharmacist's record of learning activity with specific details of the activity or activities undertaken, what was learned as a result and how it has benefitted patients and the public, and/or practice under the headings of Reflection, Planning, Action and Evaluation.

Scheduled & Unscheduled CPD Activity A scheduled or planned learning cycle is where a prior learning need has been identified and is addressed through a planned and structured approach.

Unscheduled learning is a cycle which does not start with a prior identified learning need and is often a reaction to circumstances that emerge during day to day working and are often responded to immediately.

CPD should relate to identified learning needs. Therefore, there must be a predominance of scheduled or planned CPD cycles and hours over unscheduled or unplanned CPD.

Current scope of practice At least 75% of CPD cycles and hours submitted must be completed and evaluated in relation to the pharmacist's declared current scope of practice and environment. Cycle completion and evaluation must demonstrate how the pharmacist applied the learning outcomes to real life practice.

Within their current practice, the pharmacist may be preparing for future needs or future roles in different areas of practice. Therefore, up to 25% of the portfolio cycles and hours can be evaluated using simulated environments or evaluation through demonstrating how learning outcomes would be applied if a scenario occurred in potential future practice or environments. (see Future practice and simulated practice).

Future practice and simulated practice	<p>Future practice relates to areas of CPD activity that relate to practice that a pharmacist may plan to undertake in the future e.g. changing pharmacy sectors. CPD cycles relating to future practice must be closed by the pharmacist and evaluated by demonstrating how the learning would be applied in the future to specific circumstances.</p> <p>Simulation relates to CPD activity where the learning activity is evaluated using a scenario designed to replicate actual practice. Care must be taken to ensure that the conditions in which the activity is being assessed/observed mirror the work environment and are realistic.</p> <p>Up to 25% of CPD cycles and hours submitted can be evaluated and closed in the context of future practice or simulated practice.</p>
Pre-registration Tutor	<p>Pre-registration tutor is a designated role wherein a pharmacist has personal responsibility in their role as the supervisor of a pre-registration students.</p>
Assessment and Essential Criteria	<p>A CPD portfolio selected for assessment is evaluated against the assessment criteria by an independent assessor contracted by the Pharmaceutical Society NI.</p> <p>Six essential criteria are used by the independent assessors to determine if a pharmacist's CPD portfolio meets the required standard.</p>
Verification Process	<p>This is the process where a CPD portfolio is reassessed by one or two additional assessors. This occurs in all cases where an initial assessor deems that a portfolio has not met the standard. It may also be used for quality assurance purposes on a sample of portfolios that were deemed to have met standard by the initial assessor.</p>
Remedial measures	<p>The Registrar has the power, under the regulations, to apply remedial measures to pharmacists who do not meet the required CPD standard in their initial CPD portfolio or subsequent submissions.</p> <p>Reassessment is a remedial measure where there is a requirement for a pharmacist to complete three additional cycles totalling between 15-20 hours of CPD activity. These must be submitted by a specified date. There are two opportunities offered to pharmacists in Reassessment 1 and 2 to submit a portfolio which meets the standard.</p> <p>If a pharmacist's portfolio does not meet the standard in both Reassessment 1 and 2 then they may be issued with a Notice of Intention to Remove their name from the Register.</p>
Statutory Committee	<p>The Statutory Committee of the Pharmaceutical Society NI makes judgements on whether a registrant's fitness to practise is impaired for reasons concerning their conduct, professional performance or health.</p> <p>The Committee also considers appeals from pharmacists who are in the process of having their name removed from the Register for failing to comply with the CPD requirements.</p>