

# Board of Assessors role and person specification: pharmacist member (Northern Ireland)

## Introduction

The Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) are the independent pharmacy regulators in Northern Ireland and Great Britain respectively.

Their role is to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the public by upholding standards and public trust in pharmacy.

The common work of the regulators includes:

- setting standards for the education and training of their registrants/members, and approving and accrediting their qualifications and training
- maintaining a register of their registrants/members and pharmacies
- setting the standards that pharmacy professionals have to meet throughout their careers
- investigating concerns that registrants are not meeting their standards, and taking action to restrict their ability to practise when this is necessary to protect patients and the public or to uphold public confidence in pharmacy
- setting standards for registered pharmacies which require them to provide a safe and effective service to patients

## National pharmacist registration examination

To register as a pharmacist in Northern Ireland (NI) or Great Britain (GB) all NI/GB-trained and non-EEA pharmacists must pass a national registration examination. The examination is taken by pre-registration trainee pharmacists towards the end of a year of compulsory training in practice, the pre-registration training year.

The examination is run twice per year. Each sitting comprises two papers: a pharmaceutical calculations paper and a selected response paper comprising single best answer questions and extended matching questions.

The PSNI and GPhC have agreed that from 2021 one, joint examination, known as the Registration Assessment, will be sat by both NI-trained and GB-trained pre-registration trainees. It will be delivered online.

The primary purpose of the Assessment is to ensure that pre-registration trainee pharmacists demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge appropriately and in a timely manner when making professional judgements in pharmacy practice contexts. In addition, it ensures that candidates are appropriately numerate to practise as a pharmacist.

The subjects tested in the Registration Assessment are specified in its framework, which can be found here <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/53-registration-assessment-framework>

## The Board of Assessors

The Registration Assessment is set, marked and moderated by a Board of Assessors, comprising pharmacists and non-pharmacists with assessment and pharmacy experience. The number of members is between 10-15, including members from all four countries of NI and GB.

The Board has a chair who is a pharmacist, who must be registered with either the PSNI or the GPhC.

The principal function of the Board is to protect patients and the public by contributing to the maintenance of standards in pharmacy education.

### Duties and responsibilities of pharmacist Board members

Pharmacist members of the Board bring their expertise as practising pharmacists to the Board and help to ensure that the primary purpose of the Registration Assessment is upheld.

### Duties and responsibilities

- Attending and participating in meetings of the Board of Assessors, including sub-group meetings. Meeting may be virtual or face-to-face
- Approving papers for the Registration Assessment
- Ensuring marks are awarded in a fair and equitable manner
- Ensuring the Assessment Regulations are correctly applied
- Confirming the marks achieved by candidates and determine which candidates have met the pass criteria
- Reviewing the performance of questions after each sitting and amending pass marks if necessary
- Considering requests for an assessment attempt to be nullified
- Considering requests for reasonable adjustments in the assessment in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and other relevant legislation found at [www.equalityni.org/Legislation](http://www.equalityni.org/Legislation)
- Advising the PSNI's and GPhC's councils on aspects of the Registration Assessment
- Ensuring the Registration Assessment is conducted with regard to relevant legislation, such as *Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and other relevant legislation found at [www.equalityni.org/Legislation](http://www.equalityni.org/Legislation)*
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times

The above duties and responsibilities are not exclusive or exhaustive and may alter depending on the needs of the PSNI and GPhC.

### Essential criteria: members must be able to demonstrate

- That they are a pharmacist practising in Northern Ireland (and, therefore, a member of the PSNI)
- At least 3 years' experience within the last 5 years of providing patient-centred care
- Knowledge and understanding of the duties and responsibilities of early career pharmacists
- Experience of assessing competence/performance in pharmacy
- Experience of developing and/or quality assuring assessments
- Familiar with the standards for pre-registration pharmacist training
- Familiarity with the knowledge and skills expected of early career pharmacists
- Current or recent involvement in planning or delivering pharmacy education and training either at the undergraduate or pre-registration training stage.

- Experience of joint decision making, for example, as a member of a clinical team, communities of practice, faculty, or project team.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to verbally articulate views clearly and concisely
- Ability to consider competing arguments and reason logically to reach decisions.
- Able to demonstrate level one competencies specified in the appended Core Competency Framework

#### **Desirable criteria – able to demonstrate**

- Current or previous involvement on an examination board
- Knowledge and/or experience of contemporary standard setting methodologies
- Experience of using multiple choice questions in assessment
- Experience of decision making in relation to consideration of extenuating circumstances and requests for reasonable adjustment

#### **Conflicts of interest**

Board members cannot act as a pre-registration tutor during the period of their appointment, but may be associated with pharmacist education and training, including pharmacist pre-registration training.

#### **Behavioural competences**

Applicants will be assessed and role holders' performance will be reviewed against level one competencies within the Core competency framework for members and chairs of the Board of Assessors (see pp.5-7).

Members of the Board are appraised annually by the Board of Assessors chair.

#### **Remuneration**

The current daily rate for this role is £300 per day for attendance at meetings, with additional specified allowance for associated preparatory work.

Expenses will be reimbursed in line with the PSNI's expenses policy.

#### **Anticipated workload**

Face to face meetings of the Board are held at the GPhC offices in central London. Sub-groups are convened for various purposes and membership of such groups is by agreement among the members of the Board.

# Core competency framework for Members and Chairs of the Board of Assessors

This framework details the essential competencies for Board of Assessors' (the 'Board') members and the chair.

## *Definition of competency*

In this schedule, 'competency' means the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required by a person in order to perform effectively as a member of the Board.

## *Competency levels*

Each competency is divided into 2 levels:

Level One applies to all members of the Board and the chair

Level Two applies to the chair

## **Competency 1: Law and procedure (including the application of guidance issues by the regulators and relevant legislation)**

### **Level One:**

- 1.1 Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the legal and procedural frameworks which govern the functions of the Board.
- 1.2 Demonstrates the ability to participate in reasoned decision making, based on evidence and taking account of any relevant guidance issued by the regulators.
- 1.3 Demonstrates ability to formulate clear and adequate reasons for decisions.
- 1.4 Reviews performance regularly, adapting skills and approach to improve personal and team effectiveness.

### **Level Two:**

- 1.5 Possesses a detailed knowledge and understanding of the law, practice and procedures relevant to pharmacy education and the *Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 as amended*.
- 1.6 Demonstrates ability to ensure that members of the Board remain focused on key issues.

## **Competency 2: Working in a collaborative and professional manner**

### **Level One:**

- 2.1 Upholds confidentiality, honesty and discretion at all times.
- 2.2 Demonstrates a calm, patient, tolerant and non-confrontational manner, even in the face of provocation.
- 2.3 Shows a willingness to give and receive constructive feedback and to learn from others.
- 2.4 Demonstrates at all times a level of sensitivity which reflects the serious nature of the process.
- 2.5 Listens to and works collaboratively with other Board members.
- 2.6 Generates trust, confidence and respect of others.
- 2.7 Possesses high standards of personal probity, integrity, tact and discretion.

### **Level Two:**

- 2.8 Establishes a rapport with Board members in an authoritative, open and participative style.
- 2.9 Draws upon the maximum contribution of individual Board members.
- 2.10 Appropriately challenges discriminatory views.
- 2.11 Maintains the confidence of all parties, including other Board members.
- 2.12 Intervenes when there is inappropriate behaviour on the part of any Board member or observer.
- 2.13 Participates in training of new Board members.
- 2.14 Reviews practices and procedures and reports areas for improvement.
- 2.15 Provides constructive feedback

### **Competency 3: Decision making**

#### **Level One:**

- 3.1 Actively and constructively participates in decision making.
- 3.2 Exercises discretion fairly and impartially, applying knowledge and experience to decisions.
- 3.3 Considers competing arguments and reasons logically to reach correct and balanced decisions.
- 3.4 Provides comprehensive reasons for decisions.
- 3.5 Accepts collective responsibility for decisions reached.
- 3.6 Ability to recognise any personal prejudices and set them aside.

#### **Level Two:**

- 3.7 Guides Board members through each stage of the decision-making process in a structured way.
- 3.8 Ensures all procedures are observed and where necessary that decisions are reached collectively.

### **Competency 4: Communication and conduct of Board meetings**

#### **Level One:**

- 4.1. Listens attentively to all evidence and understands complex arguments.
- 4.2. Accurately and concisely records relevant points from written or oral evidence and subsequent discussions.
- 4.3. Asks fair and pertinent questions confidently using plain language.
- 4.4. Recognises and discloses any potential conflicts of interest.
- 4.5. Articulates views clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.
- 4.6. Listens actively, avoids assumptions, checks understanding with others and shares information.

#### **Level Two:**

- 4.7. Clearly explains process and procedures in understandable terms and specifies what is expected during each stage of a Board meeting.
- 4.8. Maintains firm and effective control of Board meetings taking into account good and effective use of time.
- 4.9. Provides sufficient opportunity for the entire Board to address relevant questions and express individual opinions.
- 4.10. Requests additional evidence or documentation where necessary and appropriate.
- 4.11. Manages the unexpected appropriately.

### **Competency 5: Equal Treatment**

**Level One:**

5.1. Is aware of and respects:

- a) Cultural and other differences among members of the Board, including differences in age, beliefs, gender, race, religious customs, sexual orientation and life styles or social status.
- b) The particular needs of members with physical or mental disabilities.

5.2. Presents a fair and balanced view based on all the information presented.

**Level Two:**

Facilitates the participation of all members to promote equal treatment.

## The Board of Assessors

### The Board of Assessors

The Board of Assessors is a group which sets a national examination on behalf of the pharmacy regulators in NI and GB. It comprises mainly pharmacists but also includes non-pharmacists who are assessment experts. The size of the Board is 10-15 members. The Board has a chair who is a pharmacist, registered in either Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

The work of the Board is supported by the GPhC's Education function.

### The assessment of pharmacist students/trainees

Pharmacist students are assessed at university and then during a year of professional training, pre-registration. During the training year they are assessed by a designated pharmacist tutor on four occasions against a set of competencies and, towards the end of the training year, by a national examination, the Registration Assessment.

The national examination is set, marked and moderated by the Board of Assessors. There are full details of the Registration Assessment at <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/the-registration-assessment>.

### Principal function of the Board

The principal function of the Board is to protect patients and the public by contributing to the maintenance of standards in pharmacy education.

### Remit of the Board

The remit of the Board is to:

1. maintain the standard and integrity of the Registration Assessment;
2. ensure that Registration Assessment papers are relevant to contemporary pharmacy practice, including devolved practice;
3. agree results and ensure that candidates pass the Registration Assessment on merit;
4. report to the councils of the pharmacy regulators in NI and GB on the performance of candidates and papers;
5. approve papers;
6. approve example questions; and
7. maintain the currency of the Assessment Framework and Regulations.

### Duties and responsibilities of the Board

The duties and responsibilities of the Board are to:

- ensure papers are fit for purpose and are of an appropriate standard and orientated towards contemporary pharmacy practice;
- report to the councils of the pharmacy regulators in NI and GB twice per annum about the conduct and performance of the Registration Assessment;

- maintain confidentiality at all times
- approve papers for the Registration Assessment;
- ensure marks are awarded in a fair and equitable manner;
- agree the Registration Assessment Regulations;
- ensure the Registration Assessment Regulations are correctly applied;
- agree and update periodically the Assessment's Framework;
- agree and update periodically the Registration Assessment Regulations;
- confirm the marks achieved by candidates and determine which candidates have passed;
- analyse the performance of questions after each sitting and to amend pass marks for a sitting if necessary on the basis of an analysis of performance;
- consider requests for candidate assessment attempts to be nullified;
- ensure the Registration Assessment is conducted with due regard to relevant legislation, such as the [Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and other relevant legislation found at \[www.equalityni.org/Legislation\]\(http://www.equalityni.org/Legislation\)](#)

The Board is not responsible for:

- the pharmacist pre-registration scheme in Northern Ireland or Great Britain;
- hearing appeals;
- the administration of the Registration Assessment;
- overseeing sittings of the Registration Assessment;
- contracting printers and printing papers;
- contracting contractors and venues;
- informing candidates of their results.