



18 March 2021

Dear Pharmacy Student

Introducing reforms to the initial education and training of pharmacists – what you can expect in 2021/22

As you will now be aware, new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists have been introduced by the Pharmaceutical Society NI and the General Pharmaceutical Council. The new standards cover the first five years of the training continuum which consists of the four-year MPharm degree followed by one year of foundation training. Key changes mandated by the new standards are for a much higher proportion of experiential learning, integrated across the continuum of undergraduate education and foundation training. This will prepare pharmacists to work at a higher clinical level across all sectors of the profession and, importantly, newly qualified pharmacists in the future will also register as independent prescribers. These changes will begin to be introduced in July 2021 with full application of the new standards anticipated by 2026/2027.

Within Northern Ireland, a phased approach to the implementation of the reforms will be adopted to ensure a smooth and gradual transition to the new Foundation Training Year (currently known as the Pre-registration Training Year). The purpose of this email is to help you understand more about these changes and, specifically, those that will be introduced in 2021/2022 that will impact on you as a trainee.

At present, the Pre-registration Training Year is managed by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. As of 2021, this role will move to the NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) who will oversee the delivery of the Foundation Training Year. The Foundation Training Year will be approved by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. NICPLD and PSNI will work together to ensure seamless transition arrangements during your Foundation Training Year.

From July 2021, your Pre-registration Training Year will be known as the Foundation Training Year and Tutors will be called Educational Supervisors. The term 'Educational Supervisor' will be adopted nationally within the pharmacy profession and is used across the healthcare professions to refer to someone with mentoring responsibility. These terms will be used in correspondence you receive going forward.

The Foundation Training Year will be structured and paced to optimise your experiential learning and to support both you and your Educational Supervisor. The 2021/2022 Foundation Training Year will encompass the following elements:

- A 52-week workplace-based training during which you are supervised by an Educational Supervisor.
- A quarterly appraisal to review your progress and to identify ongoing development needs.
- The completion of eLearning and specified workshops/webinars as specified as mandatory by the Pharmaceutical Society NI.
- An ePortfolio to evidence developing competence.
- The introduction of a small number of Supervised Learning Events (SLEs) to evidence some performance standards. SLEs are commonly used in workplace training to provide a structured and supportive approach to training for both trainees and Educational Supervisors. Examples of SLEs include keeping a log of prescription clinical checks, undertaking a medication review or addressing a medicine-related query.
- An enhanced education and training programme to support you as you work towards sitting the Common Registration Assessment in Summer 2022.
- NICPLD will monitor your progress throughout the Foundation Training Year via appraisal review and progress with completion of the ePortfolio.

Applying to join the Foundation Training Year

The Pharmaceutical Society NI will administer the application process to the Foundation Training Year in 2021/22. Further information about the application process, including key dates, will follow in the coming weeks ensuring you understand what needs to happen and by when.

Induction Training

Prior to the beginning of the Foundation Training Year, induction training will be delivered by NICPLD to provide an overview of the Foundation Training Year programme and to outline the requirements of the programme.

Independent Prescribers

A core goal of the new standards is to make all new pharmacists Independent Prescribers upon joining the professional register. However, it will take some time to make the necessary changes to both the Undergraduate and Foundation Training Year programmes to ensure registrants have the necessary skill set to enable them to prescribe. Consequently, pharmacists joining the professional Register in 2022 will not be Independent Prescribers but rather will have opportunities to engage in further study to enable them to prescribe in practice.

You can find out more about the general programme of reform by visiting the dedicated [page](#) on the Pharmaceutical Society NI's website.

We wish you well in your ongoing studies.

Yours faithfully



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