

Standards for Foundation Training Year

(updated September 2021)

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Reforms to the initial education and training of pharmacists

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 and better integration across the continuum. This will prepare pharmacists to work at a higher clinical level across all sectors of the profession and, importantly, newly qualified pharmacists will ultimately 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 reforms will be adopted to ensure a smooth and gradual transition to the Foundation Training Year. The NI Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) will oversee the delivery of the Foundation Training Year which will be approved by the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

Further information about the reform of initial education and training is available on our website – www.psni.org.uk.

This document sets out the Standards for foundation training in 2021/22 and reflects the previous requirements that existed when training was referred to as pre-registration training. Within the document, there are some minor changes to terminology; tutors are now called Educational Supervisors and, from 01 July 2021, any changes in training arrangements should be directed to NICPLD who will be responsible for the management and development of the Foundation Training Year and for providing support to trainees and Educational Supervisors.

These Standards for foundation training set out the requirements for training and apply to trainees, prospective trainees, Educational Supervisors and employing organisations. The primary purpose of these Standards is to ensure that trainees receive appropriate training, supervision and support during the Foundation Training Year so that they are well prepared to sit the Common Registration Assessment and, thereafter, practise as independent practitioners.

Terminology

The Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 states there '*there shall be kept a register of students*'. Students are considered trainee pharmacists and will be referred to in the standards for foundation training as '**trainees**'.

The term '**trainee**' refers to any registered person undertaking foundation training in Northern Ireland with the aim of being admitted to the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists.

The term '**Educational Supervisor**' refers to any registered pharmacist who agrees to mentor the trainee, accepts the associated governance responsibilities of supervising a trainee and meets the published criteria for being an Educational Supervisor as specified by the Pharmaceutical Society NI.

The term '**relative**' refers to a person connected by blood (parent, sibling, offspring, cousin, niece and nephew), marriage or civil partnership.

1. Aims and objectives of the foundation training year

The primary aim of the foundation training experience in Northern Ireland is to reinforce among the trainees an awareness that they are to become members of a healthcare profession and to develop a professional attitude and a sense of responsibility, embracing the requirements of The Code (Professional standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacists in Northern Ireland 2016) and its associated Standards and Guidance.

The Foundation Training Year takes place after students graduate with their MPharm degree. It consolidates their initial learning and education and offers workplace-based, practical training in a clinical setting or settings. The training enables trainees to build upon their pharmacy knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours, and previous experience and to apply them to enhance their knowledge and skills in preparation for registration.

2. Registering as a foundation trainee

In order to register for the Foundation Training Year, a potential trainee must:

- (1)** organise a foundation training placement in an establishment that has been approved for this training purpose (Section 6) under the supervision of an accredited Educational Supervisor (Section 7);
- (2)** apply in writing by the date stipulated by the Pharmaceutical Society NI, using only the specified application form, providing confirmation of the date of commencement of training, where they are to undergo training and the name(s) of their Educational Supervisor(s) for the full period of training;
- (3)** submit documentary evidence that they have been awarded an MPharm degree/or equivalent qualification¹ in pharmacy at a UK-based University recognised by the Pharmaceutical Society NI;

It is only possible to start foundation training provided there is written evidence from the university awarding the degree that the trainee has been successful. The university degree certificate must normally be submitted for verification within two months of commencing training.

- (4)** pay in full the required fee to the Pharmaceutical Society NI;
- (5)** be familiar with and accept the rules and regulations on foundation training as specified by the Pharmaceutical Society NI and outlined in these Standards;
- (6)** be in good health;
- (7)** affirm that they will abide by the Code and Professional Standards and Guidance documents; and
- (8)** be fit to practise as a foundation trainee. A statutory declaration must be made that there is nothing in their past history, conduct or character that, having regard to patient safety and public health, would render it unsafe for them to undertake foundation training.

¹ OSPAP overseas pharmacist assessment programme

- (9) In addition, an applicant wishing to be registered as a **trainee** must:
- i. not have been refused permission to join the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) training programme/register;
 - ii. not have previously failed the GPhC Registration Assessment three times or where there is any other reason that has resulted in refusal by the GPhC to permit him to undertake or complete training;
 - iii. not have taken longer than 24 months from graduation to commencement of foundation training (subject to paragraph (11) below).

(10) In order to ensure that their knowledge and skills are up-to-date and relevant to current pharmacy practice, **applicants for registration as a pharmacist** must complete their initial pharmacy education and training successfully and apply to register with the Pharmaceutical Society NI within:

- eight years of beginning the MPharm degree, or
- four years of beginning the OSPAP postgraduate diploma (subject to paragraph (11) below).

It should be noted that, if undertaking a PhD immediately after graduation, the eight-year stipulation will still apply.

(11) The Registrar will consider extenuating circumstances to extend these time limits on a case-by-case basis on submission of supporting evidence.

(12) Suitable sites for training normally include community pharmacies and hospital pharmacies.

If there is any doubt about any aspect of the requirements, clarification should be sought from NICPLD.

The training period will not be recognised unless all of the conditions specified above are met in full.

3. Foundation trainee employment conditions

- (1)** Employment for foundation training is acceptable if it is full-time and during normal working hours of the establishment concerned. In exceptional circumstances, a trainee may wish to be considered for training other than in a full-time capacity. Under such situations, the trainee must apply in writing to NICPLD, including submission of evidence supporting grounds for a reasonable adjustment.
- (2)** Periods of training must total one continuous year (12 months) and include the normal holiday entitlement for the establishment concerned and public holidays.
- (3)** The trainee will be expected to work 35 - 45 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 exceed 45 hours.
- (4)** If a trainee is absent on sick leave, or for any other reason (excluding normal holiday entitlement), for more than the equivalent of one working week, they must inform NICPLD and provide a valid and documented reason. A maximum total absence of 42 days (inclusive of annual leave, sick leave, public and bank holidays) out of the 12-month training year is allowed before an extension to training is required. NICPLD has discretion with regard to any allowances that can be made.
- (5)** Foundation training must not be undertaken in an establishment in which the trainee has a potential conflict of interest. For example, where there is significant financial interest or where the trainee is related² to an owner, director or employee (including an Educational Supervisor) of the pharmacy where they will be training.

² See definition on page 3

4. Foundation training requirements for trainees

- (1) The trainee is required to demonstrate that they have developed adequate competence during their training such that, upon joining the Pharmaceutical Register, they 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 and published which make explicit the competencies to be developed during the course of the Foundation Training Year. All performance standards must be achieved before the final declaration document can be signed by the Educational Supervisor.

- (2) The trainee is required to prepare a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate completion of the performance standards. The trainee must achieve a satisfactory standard in all performance standards in order to complete the Foundation Training Year.
- (3) The trainee must complete all mandatory elements of training.
- (4) The trainee must attend/complete all mandatory training days.
- (5) The trainee's progress will be assessed regularly by their Educational Supervisor. The purpose of this process is to help both the Educational Supervisor and trainee to regularly monitor progress during the 12-month Foundation Training Year. Assessment should be carried out openly and jointly to enable any problems to be fully addressed as they occur.
- (6) Reports throughout the year on trainee progress must be submitted to NICPLD using only the specified procedure and within the deadlines specified.
- (7) The trainee must achieve a pass in the Common Registration Assessment within a maximum of three entries (Section 5).
- (8) If a trainee fails to make satisfactory progress throughout the year and/or fails to attain a satisfactory standard at the end of the Foundation Training Year, their training will be reviewed. They may be required to extend their training for a further period until they are deemed to have achieved a satisfactory standard by appraisal/passing the Common Registration Assessment.

- (9)** During the year, if the trainee experiences any problems in relation to the training provided, the matter should first be discussed with the Educational Supervisor and employer, and then, if necessary, with the Lead for Foundation Training at NICPLD. The expectation is that problems are best addressed and managed in the first instance at a local level and at an early stage.
- (10)** While recognising the important role of the Educational Supervisor, the trainee must nevertheless at all times take responsibility for their own learning.

5. Requirements for the Common Registration Assessment

- (1) A pass in the Common Registration Assessment is a pre-requisite for registration.

Further information relating to the Common Registration Assessment is available on the Pharmaceutical Society NI website – www.psn.org.uk

6. Foundation training requirements of employers

- (1)** All establishments in which foundation training is provided must be approved for this purpose. The relevant section of the foundation training application form must be completed by the pharmacy owner/superintendent to ensure premises meet the standards for the delivery of foundation training.
- (2)** Applications for approval of an establishment should be made on the foundation training application form.
- (3)** The employer must ensure that a suitably qualified Educational Supervisor is available to supervise the trainee before offering employment to the trainee and that the Educational Supervisor will be able to fulfil the role as specified.
- (4)** The workplace learning experience provided by the employer should enable the trainee to develop the competencies specified in the performance standards.
- (5)** If any aspect of competency development cannot be ensured at the employing establishment, alternative arrangements to develop the competency must be put in place. These should be agreed with the trainee and may include attendance at training events identified by the Educational Supervisor.
- (6)** Facilities within the establishment should allow the trainee to keep up to date with recent developments relevant to the practice of pharmacy.
- (7)** Trainees are considered supplementary to the workforce. The employer must agree to allow the trainee to attend the mandatory training days specified. Attendance at mandatory 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 to support their ongoing development.
- (8)** An employer must be aware of all the requirements for foundation training.
- (9)** An employer, who is not the Educational Supervisor, must be aware of the duties and responsibilities of such and commit and agree to facilitate the Educational Supervisor in carrying out their duties.

- (10)** Foundation training must not be undertaken in an establishment in which the trainee has a potential conflict of interest, for example, where there is significant financial interest or where the trainee is related to an owner, director or employee (including an Educational Supervisor) of the pharmacy where they will be training.
- (11)** The trainee should be given access to the internet, if required during designated Personal Protected Professional Development Time, to support their professional development. Trainees must adhere to the employer's standards on internet behaviour.
- (12)** An employer/superintendent pharmacist must ensure that the foundation trainee will have onsite Personal Protected Professional Development Time agreed by both the trainee and the Educational Supervisor. Training needs should be reviewed regularly. A minimum of the equivalent of four hours per working week must be dedicated to Personal Protected Professional Development Time.

7. Foundation training requirements of Educational Supervisors

- (1)** A pharmacist can only act as an Educational Supervisor if they hold three years' post-registration relevant experience within the previous five years in the sector in which they wish to tutor e.g. community or hospital pharmacy.
- (2)** A pharmacist who wishes to act as an Educational Supervisor must first complete any accredited training course of instruction specified by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. For 2021/22, this accreditation programme will be run by the Pharmaceutical Society NI. From July 2021, those tutors who have current accreditation with the Pharmaceutical Society NI will automatically be accredited to act as an Educational Supervisor within the foundation training programme.
- (3)** A pharmacist who has completed an accredited training course to act as an Educational Supervisor must attend, within the next five years and at intervals no longer than every five years thereafter, a further course of instruction as specified in order to continue to be recognised as an Educational Supervisor.
- (4)** No Educational Supervisor should agree to supervise a trainee where there is a potential conflict of interest, for example where there is significant financial interest or where the trainee is related to an owner, director or employee (including an Educational Supervisor) of the pharmacy where they will be training.
- (5)** The primary objective of the Foundation Training Year is to ensure that trainees receive the appropriate level of training and are robustly and fairly assessed against criteria described by the performance standards and appraisal process. This is best achieved when each trainee has a dedicated Educational Supervisor as their exclusive mentor. Such an arrangement ensures that a trainee receives appropriate supervision, mentoring and support to help them prepare for practice and to be fully prepared for the Common Registration Assessment whilst also allowing the Educational Supervisor to be well placed to deliver robust and accurate assessments.

With the exception of one particular circumstance, the Educational Supervisor must personally supervise only one trainee at a time. The exception to this rule can be at the beginning or end of a period of training, only in circumstances where the outgoing trainee started training late due to not achieving their MPharm in the normal timeframe.

Both trainees must consent to the overlap. A maximum of six weeks' overlap may be approved subject to the conditions set out in the explanation being satisfied.

An employer can request an application form for an overlap in Educational Supervisor mentoring by contacting NICPLD. The application must:

- clearly demonstrate that all other options for Educational Supervisor mentoring have been exhausted;
- provide details of efforts made by the employer/Educational Supervisor to minimise the potential adverse effects on training which may arise from an Educational Supervisor supervising two trainees simultaneously;
- must provide evidence that both trainees affected have consented to the overlap; and
- must outline proposed arrangements to minimise the impact of any proposed overlap on the trainees' progress against the performance standards.

Please note that training will only be recognised if the overlap arrangement has been approved in advance by NICPLD.

- (6) An Educational Supervisor must be aware of all the requirements for the foundation training programme.
- (7) An Educational Supervisor must be aware of, and accept, the supervisory responsibilities as specified below:

Educational Supervisors are responsible for the supervision and delivery of foundation training. In conducting their supervisory responsibilities, Educational Supervisors are expected to provide training, deliver constructive feedback to trainees about performance in practice, conduct assessments objectively and act as a mentor to their trainees. Educational Supervisors are also expected to work with the trainee to help them develop the necessary professional skills so that they have the right attitude expected of healthcare professionals, have good communication skills, can work with others and can demonstrate leadership. An important part of the Educational Supervisor role is making the final declaration that their trainee is fit to practise and Educational Supervisors will gather evidence for this throughout the year from the verification of multiple competencies (performance standards) via the online reflective portfolio and the appraisal process.

Other Educational Supervisor responsibilities include:

- helping their trainee plan training and identify training needs;
 - providing timely and constructive feedback on trainee performance;
 - providing an assessment of trainee progress in a robust, objective and fair manner;
 - encouraging trainees to reflect on their own performance;
 - working with their trainee to set objectives;
 - providing training opportunities to enable the trainee to meet the performance standards programme;
 - welcoming feedback from their trainee to help them identify their own learning needs in relation to being an Educational Supervisor;
 - listening and respecting the views of their trainee;
 - acting as a role model;
 - conducting quarterly appraisals and submitting progress reports to NICPLD in a timely manner; and
 - providing support if a trainee encounters difficulty.
- (8) The Pharmaceutical Society NI expects that trainees will be well supported and will receive an appropriate level of training. This is best achieved when each trainee has a dedicated Educational Supervisor who is responsible for ensuring a robust and fair assessment of trainees in line with the foundation training requirements.

In any period of training at one approved training site, and in order to undertake their supervisory responsibilities, an Educational Supervisor normally shall be engaged full-time at the same training site as a trainee.

The Pharmaceutical Society NI defines full-time as a pharmacist working a minimum of 30 hours over a minimum of four days each week at the training site where the trainee is based.

Where training occurs in the community pharmacy setting, and where the majority of clinical pharmacy services and training experiences are provided at the same premises, the expectation is that the trainee and Educational Supervisor will be located together at the same training site with the Educational Supervisor providing the majority of the training experience whilst fulfilling their supervisory and assessment responsibilities for a minimum of 30 hours over a minimum of four days each week at the same training site at which the trainee is based.

If an Educational Supervisor is of the view that training would be enhanced by gaining experience in another branch of the same pharmacy business, approval may be sought by contacting NICPLD to discuss their reasons for requesting this arrangement at another branch within the same organisation. The Educational Supervisor is required to submit a training plan, in advance, which indicates:

- the number of days the trainee will be away from the approved training site (up to a maximum of five days per training year);
- what areas of pharmacy practice will be covered;
- what performance standards will be met;
- what governance arrangements will be in place to ensure continuity of training and verification by the Educational Supervisor; and
- confirmation that an accredited Educational Supervisor will be available on site.

Where training occurs in a hospital pharmacy setting, and where a trainee is required to meet the performance standards across a range of disciplines by visiting multiple departments and, as it is recognised that other healthcare personnel may need to be involved in the delivery of this training, the following must apply:

- the nominated Educational Supervisor still has overall responsibility for conducting assessment of outcomes of training and for submission of those assessments and must, therefore, be directly involved in the planning and delivery of the training provided; and
- arrangements must be in place to ensure that there is clear and ongoing communication about the trainee's progress between the Educational Supervisor and other personnel supervising the different aspects of training experience.

The expectation is that the Educational Supervisor, in this instance, will still be situated at the same hospital training site as the trainee for a minimum of 30 hours over a minimum of four days each week. This is to ensure that the Educational Supervisor is available for a sufficient period of time to provide support and to intervene, if required, to ensure that adequate training is being provided, to provide feedback and to monitor and assess progress.

The Educational Supervisor is accountable for making the final declaration that a trainee is fit to practise and, consequently, must have appropriate first-hand knowledge of their trainee's performance to do so. In order to fulfil their duties and supervisory responsibilities, including being adequately informed to make the final declaration, the Pharmaceutical Society NI expects that an Educational Supervisor will be working at the same training site as a trainee for a minimum of 30 hours over a minimum of four days per week.

- (9)** The preferred arrangement for supervision is that a single Educational Supervisor is responsible for a sole trainee for the duration of the 12-month foundation training. In exceptional circumstances, such as when an Educational Supervisor is unable to supervise a trainee for the requirement of a minimum of 30 hours over a minimum of four days a week and when all other options for single supervision have been exhausted, a co-supervision arrangement may be considered where two Educational Supervisors share supervisory responsibilities. The trainee must consent to the co-supervision arrangement. Approval for co-supervision should be sought from NICPLD.

In a co-supervision arrangement, the total hours worked by both Educational Supervisors must meet the minimum full-time requirement as previously described. In such an arrangement, one Educational Supervisor will be nominated to conduct quarterly appraisals and to validate learning cycles via the reflective e-portfolio. Both Educational Supervisors must co-sign the final declaration.

Please note that co-supervision will only be recognised after approval by NICPLD.

- (10)** While it is the responsibility of each trainee to inform the Pharmaceutical Society NI, in writing by the date specified prior to the commencement of training, where they are undergoing training and the name(s) of their Educational Supervisor(s), the Educational Supervisor should confirm with each trainee that this has been completed before allowing the commencement of the Foundation Training Year.
- (11)**
- (i)** NICPLD must be informed of any proposed change of Educational Supervisor as soon as possible and training will only be recognised after the change has been approved.
 - (ii)** In some circumstances, a trainee may be required to find an alternative suitable training position, for example, if no alternative Educational Supervisor is available.

- (12)** If an Educational Supervisor receives unsatisfactory feedback from their trainees for three consecutive years, they will lose accreditation as an Educational Supervisor for foundation training for a period of one year. Further to this, they will be required to attend further training to develop their mentoring skills before accreditation will be awarded again.
- (13)** An Educational Supervisor must provide opportunities for the foundation trainee to demonstrate all of the specified performance standards.
- (14)** An Educational Supervisor must ensure that the foundation trainee will have onsite Personal Protected Professional Development time of at least four hours per working week.

8. Educational Supervisor responsibilities

- (1)** As an Educational Supervisor, a pharmacist is expected to role model professional attributes and competencies.
- (2)** An Educational Supervisor is expected to complete any assessment of the trainee promptly and professionally. This must not be delegated to any other individual.
- (3)** An Educational Supervisor is expected to provide regular feedback to a trainee on progress to help them identify strengths and weaknesses and, in association with the trainee, to develop activity that will help ensure the trainee reaches the required standard by the end of the training period. Review meetings should be held with trainees to discuss training needs. These meetings should be held regularly and at least twice per month. Good practice would be that the outcomes of these discussions are documented.
- (4)** If an Educational Supervisor is concerned about the progress of a trainee, they must inform the Lead for Foundation Training at NICPLD of their concern as soon as possible.
- (5)** An Educational Supervisor must make a final declaration that a trainee is eligible for registration. If an Educational Supervisor is unwilling to make this final declaration, they must inform the trainee and indicate what further training is necessary. NICPLD must be informed. Whilst situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, a further continuous three months assessed training is the expected minimum additional training period. The Educational Supervisor is under no obligation to accept the trainee for this extended training period.
- (6)** A foundation trainee shall be eligible to sit the Common Registration Assessment after completion of not less than 45 weeks of foundation training provided that:
 - i. they have paid an examination fee of £174; and
 - ii. after completion of not less than 39 weeks of foundation training, an Educational Supervisor, approved by the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society NI, has submitted a satisfactory 39-week appraisal report.