

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
Level 1
151 Buckingham Palace Road
London
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Monday, 15 April 2019

To whom it may concern,

Proposal to develop an apprenticeship standard L7: Pharmacist

We are writing with regard to your consultation on the above proposal. We understand that this applies only in England and that higher and degree apprenticeships are available at levels 4 to 7, with level 7 being equivalent to a Master's degree. We also understand that there are other degree apprenticeships relating to healthcare currently in existence, including a Healthcare Service Practitioner and Registered Nurse (degree) both at level 6 which is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree.

Our role

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) regulates pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain. We work to assure and improve standards of care for people using pharmacy services.

Our role is to protect the public and give them assurance that they will receive safe and effective care when using pharmacy services. We do this by:

- setting standards for pharmacy professionals and pharmacies to enter and remain on our register
- seeking assurance that pharmacy professionals and pharmacies continue to meet our standards, including by inspecting pharmacies
- acting to protect the public and to uphold public confidence in pharmacy if there are concerns about a pharmacy professional or pharmacy on our register

Through our work we help to promote professionalism, support continuous improvement and assure the quality and safety of pharmacy.

Regulatory requirements

Given the crucial role that pharmacists play in delivering care and in helping people to maintain and improve their health and wellbeing, our **standards of initial education and training** are vital in making sure that pharmacists are appropriately prepared to deliver pharmacy services and improve them. They define the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours needed for the successful delivery of their professional roles and the provision of safe and effective care to the people using their services.

Any new programme of education and training would need to be accredited by the GPhC to ensure that it meets our standards and anyone wishing to be registered as a pharmacist with the GPhC must pass our registration assessment.

In considering this proposal, the Institute should be aware of the regulatory requirements for the initial education and training of pharmacists and I have set these out in more detail below. In particular, as the UK is currently a member of the European Union, all courses must meet the requirements set out in Directive 2005/36/EC for pharmacists to undergo at least five years' full-time (or part-time equivalent) initial education and training. This must be made up of at least four years' academic study and at least six months of patient-facing training in a community or hospital pharmacy towards the end of the five years. (These requirements may change depending on the outcome of Brexit negotiations.)

The GPhC criteria for registration and our standards of initial education and training

In order to legally practise in Great Britain, every pharmacy professional – pharmacist or pharmacy technician – must be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council.

Criteria for registration

The **criteria for registration as a pharmacist** are available on our website and describe the education, training and experience requirements for initial registration as a pharmacist with the GPhC. People qualified in the UK¹ must meet all of the following requirements:

- the successful completion of a UK-recognised pharmacist qualification (an accredited 4-year MPharm degree)
- the successful completion of a 52-week programme of pre-registration training in Great Britain, and

¹ Information on the route to the register for applicants holding an EEA pharmacist qualification or a non-EEA pharmacist qualification is **available on our website**.

- the successful completion of a registration assessment conducted by the GPhC²

Accreditation of courses

The GPhC is responsible for accrediting and recognising pharmacy courses leading to registration and annotation, including Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degrees leading to pre-registration and then pharmacist registration.

Any new course of education or training would need to go through our accreditation process, to ensure that it meets the relevant GPhC standards.

It is not within our remit to decide which courses should be developed; we are required by legislation to accredit any course that meets our standards.

Our recent consultation on the standards

We have recently consulted on proposals to review our standards given the changing world of pharmacy and healthcare provision. The consultation sought views on a single set of standards and learning outcomes that would cover the full period of initial education and training for pharmacists, based on the integration of the MPharm degree with the pre-registration training year, to form a 5-year integrated course.

This consultation has now closed and we are analysing the results, before our Council decides on the next steps.

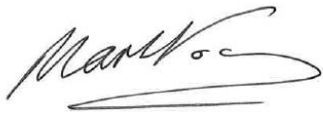
Your consultation

Our engagement has been limited to attending two meetings to advise on our regulatory requirements for any new course. We are happy to provide the Institute and the apprenticeship trailblazer group with further advice on the regulatory requirements relating to the accreditation and approval of pharmacy courses and entry to the register, including the requirement to pass our registration assessment.

We recognise that a wide range of views has been expressed within the pharmacy sector in response to this short initial consultation. We would encourage the Institute to hold a further and more detailed consultation for a longer period if the proposals move forward, to enable everyone with views on the proposals to fully contribute.

² In Northern Ireland, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) is responsible for overseeing the pre-registration year of pharmacy students, as well as for organising their own registration assessment.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Voce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Voce

Director of Education and Standards