

Foundation training year 2021/22 – Designated supervisor development resource

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Introduction

Trainee pharmacists undertaking their foundation training year in Great Britain have a designated supervisor, who must be a pharmacist. The designated supervisor is responsible for supervising their training and signing them off as meeting the interim learning outcomes, to the expected level, at specific points during the foundation training year. A trainee pharmacist will have more than one designated supervisor if their training is split between different sectors of practice or training sites and/or their designated supervisor works limited hours.

A designated supervisor must be a pharmacist registered in Great Britain, who is suitably experienced and qualified to carry out this supervisory role¹.

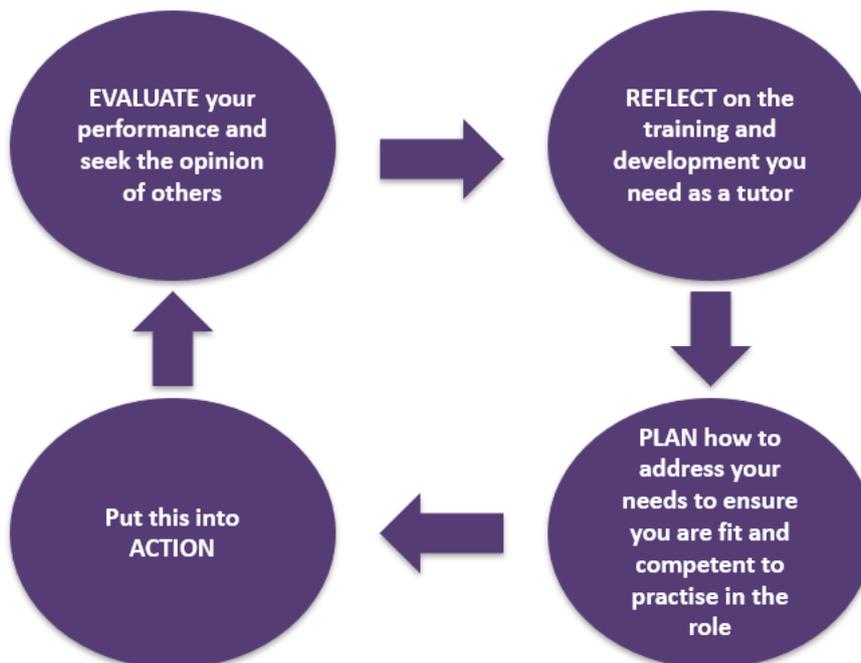
This resource is designed to support designated supervisors to:

- reflect on the training and development they might need
- reflect on their performance as a designated supervisor
- deal with any developmental needs identified by them or someone else

The role of a designated supervisor

As a pharmacist, a designated supervisor must record their on-going learning to demonstrate that their practice remains safe and effective, including any training and development needed to act as a designated supervisor.

Figure 1: Evaluate, reflect, plan and put into action



¹ [Designated supervisor suitability policy](#)

Being a professional role model

As a designated supervisor you are in a position of responsibility. You are responsible for guiding your trainee pharmacist through their training to become a registered healthcare professional.

It is important that you act as a professional role model at all times. This includes thinking about how you lead by example. In that respect, you should consider the GPhC's ***Standards for pharmacy professionals*** as well as other relevant regulatory or legal frameworks when undertaking your day-to-day activities and throughout your practice.

You should:

- offer constructive feedback and advice to your trainee throughout their training to aid progression through their foundation training year
- actively contribute to the education and development of others
- delegate your trainee tasks, relevant to their development, at which they are competent, or are learning under supervision to be competent, so that patient safety is not compromised
- demonstrate leadership

The aim of the following sections is to give you some practical support to help you fulfil your responsibility as a designated supervisor and professional role model.

Evaluation and reflection

The activities in this section are designed to help you:

- reflect on the training and development you need to prepare for the training period ahead
- reflect on your performance as a designated supervisor, and
- identify any of your own development needs while in this role

Alongside your self-evaluation, multisource feedback (e.g. informally or through 360 feedback mechanisms) is a useful way to help you identify your strengths and developmental needs. Aim to get feedback from a range of sources, which could include:

- yourself (essential)
- colleagues who have observed your interactions with trainees
- network peers
- previous trainees
- other staff members that you have trained
- patients
- your current trainee as it is also essential that you give the opportunity to give feedback on your performance as a designated supervisor

Another useful activity is to conduct a self-training needs analysis via mapping yourself against a competency framework for supervisors². This will enable you to decide whether you would benefit from additional training to support this role.

Introducing the foundation training year

All trainee pharmacists train according to a personal training plan, which provides them with the opportunity to show their progression during the foundation training year. The training plan should be outcome-based and developed as part of getting your foundation training year programme approved.

You should discuss and agree the training plan with your trainee. You and your trainee have a shared responsibility to review the plan at the start of training and complete a training/learning needs analysis, reflecting on and considering your trainees previous education and experience, to identify specific objectives to adapt the training plan to enable them to demonstrate their competence throughout the year.

It must:

- cover all of the ***Interim learning outcomes*** across the sectors of practice that make up the foundation training year,
- be approved by the GPhC

You should:

- induct your trainee at the beginning of their training so they know what is expected of them and when it is expected
- identify your trainee's training and development needs at the beginning of their training period, linked to the foundation training programme's learning outcomes, through completion of a training/learning needs analysis
- involve your trainee in planning their progress while they are training
- set and agree realistic targets with your trainee
- have regular documented developmental meetings with your trainee to reflect on their learning, monitor their progress throughout their training and ensure they work within their scope of competence
- identify actions to support development where progress in any area is not at the expected level to meet the interim learning outcomes

Getting to know the foundation training requirements and creating a training plan

You need to be familiar with the GPhC foundation training scheme requirements to be able to write or review the suitability of a training plan. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the **54 *Interim***

² As for instance, Health Education England's **Educational Supervisors Framework**

learning outcomes that the GPhC expects trainees to demonstrate to enable you to identify a training plan. This will allow the trainee pharmacist to meet the interim learning outcomes at the required level and achieve all the skills and knowledge required whilst following your foundation training programme.

If your foundation training year programme is managed by **Health Education England**, **Health Education and Improvement Wales** and **NHS for Scotland**, you will also need to familiarise yourself with their training requirements.

This training plan is likely to include:

- guidance, coaching and experience within your pharmacy and other sectors of practice involved in the foundation training programme
- learning resources
- training or experience away from your pharmacy
 - study events
 - visits to GP surgeries
 - visits to hospital departments/community pharmacies
 - time with other healthcare professionals

The trainee will also need exposure to practice, that enables them to cover all of the components of the registration assessment framework.

Fitting in everything that needs to be covered will require careful planning and flexibility to allow for changes in circumstances. The plan should include:

- an induction for each sector of practice
- time to complete progress reports (at 13, 26, 39, weeks and a final declaration) plus time for review meetings at least every 2 weeks
- placements in other areas of practice providing exposure to different services, multi-disciplinary working or other identified learning opportunities
- projects such as the quality improvement process required to meet interim learning outcome 55
- training workshops or study events
- named practice supervisors³ and location of training
- learning objectives mapped to the interim learning outcomes and/or the registration assessment framework
- protected time for reflection and developmental activities

³ Other people, practice supervisors, may be involved in the supervision of trainees, including other work colleagues, line managers, mentors and assessors as the foundation training year might be split between different practice settings or different training sites in the same sector. Practice supervisors don't have the same responsibilities than designated supervisors. Only designated supervisors have overall responsibility for supervising trainees and signing them off.

- annual leave

Table 1: Example of how to draft a training plan

Week commencing	Week no	Activity/place of work/event	Others involved in training / practice supervisor	Interim learning outcomes to be achieved/ framework areas to be targeted
26 September	12	NHS & private prescriptions – complete a prescription screening and validation reflective log of 30 prescriptions Finish CPPE pack on common clinical conditions and minor ailments BNF chapter on respiratory system Prepare for first review	Designated supervisor – community site Dispensary manager and team	Interim learning outcomes 18, 26, 27, 31, 36 and 39 Registration assessment framework 10.2.2 Validating therapeutic approaches and supplying prescribed and over-the-counter medicines 10.2.4 Working with patients and the public Medium weighted therapeutic areas
3 October	13	Basic endorsing, observe month end, CDs Review CPCS toolkit Undertake and document GPhC 13-week Progress review Plan for rotation into GP practice and complete prerequisites checklist Attend external study day 2 -“Consultation skills and Management of childhood ailments”	Dispensary manager designated supervisor – community site Regional training team	Interim learning outcomes 5, 10, 12, 14, 18, 26 and 27 Registration assessment framework 10.2.4 Working with patients and the public 10.2.5 Maintaining and improving professional performance

Entering into a learning relationship, individual training/learning needs analysis and tailoring the training plan

As part of the GPhC application to enter the foundation training scheme, you and your trainee pharmacist must both sign up to a learning contract confirming joint commitment to the learning relationship. This is completed by you both. You will confirm this as part of your validation of the training arrangements via myGPhC once the trainee pharmacist has completed their application.

Important: the learning contract is in addition to, not instead of, any contract of employment between the trainee pharmacist and the employer.

It is important to have a discussion with your trainee pharmacist at the beginning of the training period that clarifies:

- the trainee's role and the expectations they may have
- your role and the expectations you have about them,
- the role of other practice supervisors or staff members
- any concerns you or your trainee have about the training
- any support/adjustments your trainee might need during their training

Offer your trainee the opportunity to provide evidence of their current level of competence in relation to the ***Interim learning outcomes***. Their evidence could be based on relevant previous experience, if they have already completed some training elsewhere, for example.

Asking for and reviewing this evidence will help you establish your trainee's base level of competence and identify if you need to make any adaptations to the training plan referred to in section "Getting to know the foundation training requirements and creating a training plan".

It's also helpful to understand how the trainee prefers to learn and any learning support mechanisms they may have had access to in the past.

The amount, nature and location of any "study" time should be defined at the start of training so that expectations are clear on both sides from the start, however this may need to be adapted to meet any specific needs of the trainee identified during the year.

This discussion will complement any more formal induction training.

A formal induction withing the employing organisation which covers organisation specific policies and procedures, will be more relevant to the employment contract. This is a business relationship outside the remit of the GPhC foundation training scheme.

Helping your trainee to learn and develop by agreeing objectives

Agree your trainee pharmacist's developmental objectives for the first part of their training period, making sure that your trainee is involved in planning their progress.

You should devise and agree some short-term **SMART learning objectives** to cover the next month of training. Review these after the month has passed and agree a revised or new set of SMART objectives. SMART objectives are:

- **Specific** to what you want to achieve
- **Measurable** to enable you to quantify whether you have met the objective
- **Achievable** with the resources available to you
- **Realistic** and relevant to what you need to achieve
- **Timed** to give a target by when the objective should be achieved

Assessing your trainee pharmacist's performance

Assessing your trainee pharmacist is a key part of their development. It is important that the ongoing assessment of your trainee is fair and objective and helps them understand how they are performing in line with the requirements of their training plan, and how they are performing as a professional.

You should:

- discuss with your trainee how they will be assessed while they are training, including any specific elements of the foundation training programme that you would normally expect to be “passed” to enable sign off
- discuss what evidence your trainee will need to produce to help you evaluate their performance⁴
- consider a range of evidence as part of the assessment process, it is acceptable to adapt your assessment methods to meet any specific needs of your trainee providing it doesn't change the likely outcome with regards to managing risk or patient safety concerns
- give your trainee a range of opportunities to demonstrate their competence
- consider your trainee's performance and behaviour against the interim learning outcomes and the GPhC's **Standards for pharmacy professionals**
- review your trainee's progress regularly and adapt their personal plan as appropriate
- ensure that GPhC formal progress reviews are completed at the designated time points
- discuss the performance of your trainee with other people when this is appropriate

Checking your own competence in assessing and learning how to record trainee pharmacist progress

After mapping yourself against a competency framework for supervisors, you may already have planned to complete additional training to support this role that helps you with this aspect. As part of your additional training you may find it useful to review the following two samples of evidence and describe the strengths and areas for improvement for each. Compare your answers with the suggestions provided to improve the quality of the evidence you request.

⁴ If your foundation training year programme is managed by **Health Education England**, **Health Education and Improvement Wales** and **NHS for Scotland**, you might use their tools to evaluate and record trainee's progress

Sample 1

Name of trainee: *A Person*

Date: *20/02/xx*

"I took in a prescription for clarithromycin tablets. I checked the prescription to ensure that it was legal. It was.

From the PMR I noted that the patient had been prescribed warfarin tablets for the past 6 months and there could be an interaction between warfarin and clarithromycin. The prescription for the antibiotic had been written by a locum doctor. I rang the doctor to explain the problem. He asked me to recommend an alternative. I said I would call him back. I then looked in the BNF and spoke to the pharmacist. When we had discussed the interaction and agreed an alternative antibiotic, I called the doctor.

I should have been more prepared when I called the doctor for the first time. It would have been better if I had thought of an alternative drug beforehand. In future, I must remember to put myself in the doctor's position and think of any questions that I would ask the pharmacist."

Which aspects of the interim learning outcomes does this provide evidence for?

Interim learning outcome 38

Compare your analysis of sample 1 with our suggestions

Overall, a good opportunity was not fully used to demonstrate evidence of competence or further learning needs.

Strengths

- the trainee has reflected, identified a learning need and suggested an action for improvement

Areas for improvement

There are several learning opportunities that the trainee has not identified.

The trainee could:

- provide more specific information relating to their personal checking process for legality
- include details of the mechanism of the drug interaction and possible consequences if unmanaged
- suggest options for management including suitable alternative agents with reference to the type of infection being treated
- suggest monitoring patient during a period of infection treated by antibiotics
- consider if this provides evidence for other interim learning outcomes

The trainee should be encouraged to also reflect on what they would do when they become a pharmacist and they do not have a supervisor or other pharmacist to refer to

Sample 2

Name of trainee: A Person

Date: 20/02/xx

"I set up a Health Promotion for 'National No Smoking Day' in the pharmacy waiting area. I needed to arrange for a qualified member of staff to man the stand. As well as the product display, I needed to ensure that there were a number of leaflets available to give to interested people. It was also important for other healthcare professionals in the area to be aware of the health promotion.

I ordered a number of 'Giving Up Smoking' leaflets before the day, I ensured that all healthcare staff had received further training on Nicotine Replacement Therapy and any advice that should be given to people who wished to stop smoking. I wrote to all the offices in the area, telling them that we would be supporting 'National No Smoking Day' and I contacted all the doctor's surgeries and occupational health centres. During the day I had 112 queries about 'Giving up Smoking'.

The day went well. One of the staff told me that I'd done a very good job and one of the local GPs was also impressed."

Which aspects of the interim learning outcomes does this provide evidence for?

[...]

Compare your analysis of sample 2 with our suggestions

Overall, being a substantial piece of work, the event could have provided a wealth of evidence but the trainee has given little evidence to the assessor.

Strengths

- extensive detail about planning the event

Areas for improvement

The trainee could:

- provide further detail about the actual event e.g. describe their role during the event, the nature of some of the queries
- evaluate the event and make recommendations for managing similar future events
- refer to the relevant interim learning outcomes where competence has been demonstrated
- identify learning points e.g. from queries that the trainee couldn't answer on the spot or would like to know more
- provide some supporting evidence of the positive feedback referred to in the account

Recording progress

You should discuss and agree with your trainee how they produce their portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their competence against the interim learning outcomes. In preparation for revalidation once registered, you can encourage trainees to consider the revalidation recording formats.

You must record the trainee pharmacist's progression once you consider your trainee has demonstrated a particular interim learning outcome in a sufficient range of circumstances and to the level expected of a newly registered pharmacist. Over the year this will become a cumulative record of the interim learning outcomes your trainee has achieved so far. You can use the ***Progression monitoring template***, which acts as a cumulative list. Please retain a copy of this for your own records. You may be asked by the GPhC to submit a copy.

Generally, at the time of the first progress report, few areas will have been 'signed off' but you should consider the trainee pharmacist's overall development in terms of level of competence you would expect to see from a trainee who has only been in training for 13 weeks. You should expect your trainee to become more competent as their training progresses. Further interim learning outcomes may be 'signed off' at subsequent progress reports.

Once an interim learning outcome is signed off you should still expect to observe it in practice. If you later see that your trainee's performance has fallen below the required level you would be justified to revoke the sign off until you are satisfied that their performance has improved.

Giving feedback to your trainee pharmacist

One important aspect of the supervising role is to give feedback to help your trainee pharmacist to develop their competence during their training and to become competent by the end of their training.

You should:

- give your trainee regular constructive feedback to help them develop during their training
- give feedback in time for your trainee to use the feedback to improve their performance
- give feedback to your trainee that is specific and based on evidence
- encourage your trainee to get feedback from sources other than you
- give your trainee the opportunity to reflect on their feedback and then discuss it with you
- give feedback to your trainee in a suitable environment
- give your trainee the opportunity to give feedback on you as a designated supervisor, on the training environment and learning opportunities

You need to complete a formal review of your trainee pharmacist's progress after each 13-week period. Your trainee's progress must be assessed as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory and you must keep a record of this. All unsatisfactory reports should be sent to the GPhC. Copies of satisfactory reports should be retained by you and the original kept by the trainee. The GPhC may ask to see these reports at any time.

The third progress report that is undertaken at 39 weeks is recorded via myGPhC. It forms part of the application to sit the registration assessment.

As well as the formal review process, it is good practice to document additional regular review meetings. This will help you to capture progress against shorter term objectives and any concerns or shortfalls against the training plan and agreed actions to address these.

You should agree a format for your review sessions with your trainee to make sure that you are both prepared and able use the time effectively. You should give your trainee the opportunity to express their opinion of their progress.

You should consider:

- the location and environment where the review will occur
- how and who will document the meeting
- where this documentation will be stored and who has access to it
- the most suitable time for the review and how you will ensure that you are not disturbed unnecessarily

When preparing to meet with your trainee you should reflect on their progress both from your own observations and by collating information from other staff members that the trainee may have worked with.

You should identify:

- where they have made good progress
- any areas where progress is below your expectations or as set in the training plan and consider any factors that may have contributed to that
- measures that you feel would be appropriate to target areas of poor performance
- any of the interim learning outcomes that you are confident can be signed off
- any specific learning situations that have arisen that could form the basis of a discussion with the trainee to allow them to consider things such as:
 - any pharmaceutical problems
 - what input a pharmacist might provide
 - personal learning needs relating to the registration assessment framework
 - the appropriateness of their professional conduct

Supporting your trainee pharmacist

As a designated supervisor you should encourage and support your trainee pharmacist to help them achieve their full potential. Support may be linked to trainees' competence or professionalism.

You should:

- use regular meetings to identify good practice and any problems or difficulties which may be affecting your trainee's progress
- take all reasonable steps to respond to a request for support from your trainee, including reasonable adjustments, and record:
 - requests for support
 - what is said in meetings when support requirements are discussed

- further actions planned to resolve matters
- final outcomes of requests for support
- not make assumptions or be judgemental about your trainee’s difficulties, lifestyle or opinions, and should give them opportunities to explain any difficulties to you
- refer your trainee elsewhere for support if you cannot help them. This could include referring them to professional bodies, careers advisers or other pharmacy organisations and support services

Using the STAR approach to troubleshooting

For all problems, big or small, you may find it helpful to use a ‘STAR’ approach:

- **Specify** the exact nature of the problem to your trainee, relating it to the interim learning outcomes and any facts that are available
- **Talk** it through to establish each of your views and discuss possible causes as soon as possible
- **Agree** an action plan, including a review date
- **Review** the situation at the agreed time

Using the STAR approach, consider these example scenarios and compare your thoughts with the suggested action plans.

Scenario 1

By week 13, your trainee pharmacist has demonstrated to you that they work accurately, including when under pressure, and so far they can be relied upon when given any task. You do not have any concerns about their capabilities, but other members of your staff (whose judgement you would usually trust) have increasingly been complaining to you that the trainee is difficult to work with.

You raise these concerns with the trainee who maintains that the problem lies with the staff, stating: “They have not liked me from the word go and have got it in for me.”

How are you going to deal with this?

Suggested action plan

Knowing that your trainee pharmacist disagrees that there is a problem on their part, before going any further you should:

- get the facts and ask for specific examples to confirm whether the claims made by the other staff are a fair assessment of the trainee
- discretely observe the interactions between the trainee and other staff
- seek feedback from staff members that have worked with the trainee but not raised any concerns to make sure that this is not an individual clash
- consider whether the trainee may have unidentified needs for support in the work place

If after this it is clear that there is a problem, proceed to try and resolve it using the STAR approach.

Specify which of the interim learning outcomes they are not meeting or ask the trainee to reflect on any specific examples that have been provided and tell you which of the interim learning outcomes relate to the incident(s)

Talk it through to find out if they now, in view of the facts you have collected, acknowledge any responsibility for the problem. Also try to establish their view as to what the cause is or what they think the best solution might be

Agree an action plan. This may be:

- setting of specific tasks with others to give the trainee the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to work within the team
- a strategy for the trainee to build a rapport with the other staff members and clarify their role
- setting a review date to discuss progress with this particular issue

Review with the trainee how they are progressing with building a rapport and assess the quality of their working relations with colleagues.

Ultimately if the issue cannot be resolved, it could have a significant impact on the trainee's progress and well-being. It may be useful to arrange a short placement for them in another local pharmacy and get feedback from another practice supervisor to establish whether the problem follows the trainee or whether it is an issue with the team dynamics at your site. A permanent move may be the best option, but further advice should be sought.

Scenario 2

Leading up to 26 weeks of training, you are concerned that your trainee pharmacist is still making too many mistakes in the dispensary and you are not confident in their provision of advice to patients. You have brought errors to their attention as they have occurred, but they have been unable to provide any explanation for them.

At the 26-week progress report you sign the trainee off as 'satisfactory' as generally they are making good progress in other areas. You highlight clearly your concerns about these mistakes, but the trainee disagrees that any problem exists.

What action will you take?

Suggested action plan

Specify which of the interim learning outcomes they are not meeting when these mistakes occur.

Talk it through to find out if they now acknowledge the problem or can give a reason for it. Ask the trainee to reflect on the patient safety risks of the errors that you have observed. Consider whether there is an unidentified learning disability and ask the trainee whether there is a learning disability which was supported at undergraduate level and not in the workplace.

Agree an action plan:

- the trainee should keep a log of their dispensed items, perhaps using the paperwork that accredited checking technicians use, to highlight any trends with the errors that they make. It may also be useful to note whether the errors occur at a particular time of day
- the trainee could be asked to complete a reflective entry relating to any errors that they make

- the trainee should write down their self-checking procedure and refer to it as needed
- you may need to consider whether the trainee is being given enough time or support to carry out the task efficiently and, if needed, organise support to the trainee in the workplace
- set a date to review and a target number of items to complete without error within the timeframe

Review – review the dispensing logs and any other specific incidents that have been reported. You should also discuss this with the trainee in terms of patient safety and consider how it may impact on their 39-week progress review assessment and therefore entry to the registration assessment.

Scenario 3

By 39 weeks, your trainee proves that they are able to consistently meet all of the interim learning outcomes. You therefore record their progress as ‘satisfactory’ on the 39-week progress report to the GPhC. However, they subsequently exhibit lapses in the accuracy of their work and their reliability.

How do you deal with this?

Suggested action plan

Specify the interim learning outcomes they have now fallen short on and consider whether they are sufficiently poor to revoke the sign off. Relate this to specific observed examples

Talk to the trainee and ask them to reflect on their professional conduct based on the examples you raised. Try to find out why this backward step has occurred, it may be that they are so focussed on the assessment at this stage that their work has been affected or they may have just become complacent because they have had their interim learning outcomes signed off. In the latter case they should be reminded that personal and professional development doesn’t stop once they join the register. If there are personal issues that you were not aware of, you should make sure you are aware of any external support that the trainee could be referred to.

Agree an action plan:

- ask the trainee to define what needs to improve
- set some short-term goals that will allow the trainee to demonstrate that they are ready to practise as an independent professional practitioner
- refer to other appropriate support mechanisms if needed
- consider a short break in training if the trainee has external issues to resolve
- set a review date

Review to see if there has been sufficient improvement. If no, it is likely that discussions with the GPhC will be needed. An extension to training will be likely and it may have to occur at a new placement. This could mean that they need to continue their training from week 27.

Ultimately your decision when signing off the final declaration should focus on whether their recent conduct poses a risk to patient safety.