



Foundation training year - guidance for foundation training supervisors

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Contents

About this guidance	2
Related documents.....	2
Initial education and training of pharmacists	3
Requirements for supervisors	4
Designated supervisor suitability	4
Standards for pharmacy professionals	5
Guidance to help supervisors in their role.....	6
Supervisors as leaders and role models.....	6
The foundation training plan	6
Assessing a trainee’s performance	7
Giving feedback to a trainee	8
Trainee final sign off	8
Respecting a trainee’s right to confidentiality and disclosure of information	8
Supporting a trainee	9
Raising concerns	10
Raising a concern about the initial education and training of trainees	11
Speaking up when things go wrong and the duty of candour	11
Useful GPhC documents.....	12
Standards	12
Guidance	12
Criteria for registration as a pharmacist in Great Britain.....	12
More information.....	12

About this guidance

In December 2020, the GPhC council approved new **Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists**. Their implementation will introduce major reforms and will enable pharmacists to play a greater role in providing clinical care to patients and the public from their first day on the register.

The new standards introduce a number of changes to ensure pharmacists are equipped for their future roles. Specifically, a new set of learning outcomes will be used to assess the full five years of education and training. Accordingly, from July 2021 the pre-registration year is being replaced by the **foundation training year** and from then on, pre-registration trainees will be known as **trainee pharmacists** ('trainees') and tutors will be known as **designated supervisors**. Furthermore, the current pre-registration performance standards will cease for new trainee pharmacists in all settings and sectors and will be replaced with the learning outcomes, which describe the knowledge, skills and attributes a trainee must demonstrate by the end of their foundation training year and reflects current pharmacy practice.

The full set of learning outcomes captured in the new *Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists* have been modified, as **Interim learning outcomes**, to accommodate the interval before the introduction of independent prescribing as part of the foundation training year. For the upcoming 2021/22 foundation training year, training providers, designated supervisors and trainees will need to ensure that regular progress reviews are included to monitor the trainee pharmacist's progression against the *Interim learning outcomes*¹.

During the foundation training year, trainees will undertake 52 weeks of practical training under the supervision of their designated supervisors, who will support trainees to meet the learning outcomes for the foundation training year. 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.

This guidance is designed to assist all supervisors who are responsible for the educational supervision of trainees during the foundation training year. However, certain sections only focus on designated supervisors (e.g. designated supervisor suitability requirements, designing and agreeing a training plan, signing a trainee pharmacist off).

Related documents

This document should be read alongside the following documents:

- **Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists** (GPhC, 2021)
- **Standards for pharmacy professionals** (GPhC, 2017)
- The GPhC's online *Foundation training manual*

¹ Please find **on our website more information on the 2021/22 foundation training year**

Initial education and training of pharmacists

The initial education and training of pharmacists includes:

- academic study, and
- professional training, the foundation training year

All trainees will also undergo health, character and English language checks.

For more information about routes to registration please see the GPhC's ***Criteria for registration as a pharmacist***.

Requirements for supervisors

Supervisors play a key role in helping trainees to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviours they need to meet the standards expected of a pharmacy professional.

In addition to the requirements set out below, all supervisors should:

- have relevant experience in the sector, or a related sector², of pharmacy they wish to supervise in
- have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and involvement in a supervisory role to support their trainee throughout their training and have capacity within their job role to do this effectively
- be appropriately trained for their role
- be competent to assess trainees' skills, knowledge, understanding and professional behaviours

Designated supervisor suitability

Designated supervisors should be working with everyone involved in the foundation training year and are responsible for coordinating trainees' supervision, overseeing trainees' progress and signing trainees off.

The GPhC's ***Designated supervisor suitability policy*** sets out the requirements a designated supervisor must meet, in order to formally supervise trainees during the foundation training year in Great Britain. That is, they must:

- be a registered pharmacist in Great Britain
- have been registered for three years or more
- have been practising in the sector, or a related sector³, of pharmacy in which they wish to supervise
- satisfy the assessment requirements if they are under investigation by the GPhC (have no sanctions or conditions on their registration and no current fitness to practise issues that stops them from being a designated supervisor)

² For instance, for those who wish to supervise a trainee pharmacist in general practice.

³ For instance, for those who wish to supervise a trainee pharmacist in general practice.

Standards for pharmacy professionals

The GPhC's ***Standards for pharmacy professionals*** set out the key requirements that pharmacists must follow at all times.

Figure 1: The nine standards for pharmacy professionals



The *Standards for pharmacy professionals* are relevant to trainees while in training. The standards explain the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that will be expected of trainees if they apply to join the register. They should be interpreted in the context of education and training and used as a tool to prepare trainees for registration as a pharmacist.

It is essential all trainees understand the *Standards for pharmacy professionals*. It is part of the supervisor's responsibility to ensure trainees are aware of the standards and how they apply to them as they work towards joining the register and becoming a pharmacist.

Guidance to help supervisors in their role

This section gives supervisors guidance, particularly in the areas of trainee induction, assessment, feedback and support. Supervisors should follow the guidance in this section.

Supervisors as leaders and role models

Supervisors are in a position of responsibility to guide trainees through their education and training to become registered healthcare professionals.

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

In addition, supervisors should:

- offer constructive feedback and advice to their trainee throughout their training to aid progression through their educational programme
- actively contribute to the education and development of others
- delegate their 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 foundation training plan

Trainees have a training plan which sets out the aims and objectives, of how the trainee's development will enable them to meet the learning outcomes, over the course of their foundation training year. The plan can include a set training programme, or a course or courses undertaken while in training.

The plan should be agreed by the designated supervisor and their trainee⁴. For the 2021/22 foundation training year, the training plan must cover the **Interim learning outcomes**⁵.

Designated supervisors should:

- induct their trainee at the beginning of their training so they know what is expected of them and when it is expected
- identify their trainee's training and development needs at the beginning of their training period, linked to the programme's learning outcomes, through completion of a training/learning needs analysis

⁴ Where foundation training year programme are managed by **Health Education England, Health Education and Improvement Wales** and **NHS for Scotland**, the statutory education bodies will be involved in developing training plans, recoding trainees' progress.

⁵ Please find **on our website more information on the 2021/22 foundation training year**

- identify any specific learning support that their trainee may need
- involve their trainee in planning their progress while they are training
- set and agree realistic targets with their trainee
- have regular developmental and documented meetings with their 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
- discuss the performance of their trainee with other people when this is appropriate

Assessing a trainee's performance

Assessing a trainee is a fundamental part of their development, as well as essential to determining the final assessment of competence to join the register.

It is important that any assessment of a trainee is fair and objective and helps them understand:

- how they are progressing towards the interim learning outcomes
- how they are performing in line with the requirements of their personal training plan
- how they are performing as a professional

Designated supervisors should:

- discuss with their trainee how they will be assessed while they are training⁶. This relates to whether they have a summative assessment where they are being assessed against one or more of the ***Interim learning outcomes*** where they have to reach a certain level on Miller's triangle, or a formative assessment which offers developmental feedback
- discuss what evidence their trainee will need to produce to help a supervisor evaluate their performance
- consider a range of evidence as part of the assessment process
- make use of feedback collected from a variety of sources, which should include other practice supervisors, members of the pharmacy team, peers and patients
- give their trainee a range of opportunities to demonstrate their competence
- consider their trainee's performance and behaviour against the interim learning outcomes, which are mapped against the GPhC's ***Standards for pharmacy professionals***
- review and record their trainee's progress regularly and adapt their personal training plan as appropriate

⁶ If foundation training year programmes are managed by **Health Education England, Health Education and Improvement Wales** and **NHS for Scotland**, trainees and supervisors might use the statutory education bodies' tools to evaluate and record trainee's progress

If there are concerns that a trainee pharmacist may be failing to meet the interim learning outcomes for the foundation training year, an action plan must be put in place.

Giving feedback to a trainee

One important aspect of the supervisor role is to give feedback to help a trainee to develop their confidence and broaden their scope of competence during their training, to be demonstrate the interim learning outcomes to the expected level by the end of their training.

Supervisors should give their trainee regular constructive feedback to help them develop during their training and ensure they understand the feedback. The feedback given should be:

- regular and given in time for a trainee to reflect on the feedback, discuss it with the supervisor if necessary and be able to be used effectively to improve their performance
- specific and based on evidence
- given in a suitable environment

Supervisors should also:

- encourage their trainee to gather feedback from sources other than the supervisor and to discuss this with the supervisor if requested
- encourage their trainees to reflect on their practice and identify their ongoing developmental needs
- make sure there is a documented plan in place for feedback and performance to be reviewed
- give a trainee the opportunity to provide feedback on the supervisor and their training experience

Trainee final sign off

The final sign-off confirms that a trainee has achieved all the learning outcomes at the level described within the **Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists**, or for the 2021/22 foundation training year, the **Interim learning outcomes**.

Designated supervisors must ensure that:

- their trainees meet all the interim learning outcomes before being signed off
- their trainees are not be signed off if there are any outstanding trainee fitness to practise concerns about them

The *Final declaration* is part of the application for registration and includes confirmation that the trainee has demonstrated competence appropriate to a newly registered pharmacist by the end of their foundation training and that they are a fit and proper person to be registered as a pharmacist.

Respecting a trainee's right to confidentiality and disclosure of information

Supervisors have a responsibility to respect their trainee's right to privacy and confidentiality in order to build a positive working relationship.

Supervisors should:

- respect their trainee's right to confidentiality
- if necessary, advise their trainee to contact another organisation or person if they need help, advice or support
- if necessary, advise their trainee to disclose relevant information to another organisation or person if they need help, advice or support
- if necessary, get consent to disclose relevant information about their trainee to another organisation or person before disclosing it

However, if it is in the public interest to do so, a supervisor may be required to disclose relevant information about their trainee to another person or organisation without the consent of their trainee. If this is the case, the supervisor should tell their trainee if they have disclosed, or intend to disclose, information about them to another person or organisation.

For more information please see the GPhC's [**Guidance on confidentiality**](#).

Supporting a trainee

Supervisors should encourage and support their trainee to help them achieve their full potential. Support may be linked to trainees' competence or professionalism.

Supervisors should:

- use regular meetings that are documented accurately, to identify good practice and any problems or difficulties which may be affecting their trainee's progress
- take all reasonable steps to respond to a request for support from their 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 their trainee's difficulties, lifestyle or opinions, and should give them opportunities to explain any difficulties
- take into consideration the diversity of their trainee's circumstances and experiences and the implications that has for their trainee's support and development
- make sure their trainee is aware of and follows internal standard operating procedures on employee health, which includes both physical and mental health
- where necessary, identify whether a trainee's health (physical or mental) could risk causing harm to themselves or others and respond appropriately. This could mean considering safeguarding procedures such as putting certain measures in place to make sure they are fit to practise or refer their trainee elsewhere for support if the supervisor cannot help them. This could include referring them to professional bodies, careers advisers or other pharmacy organisations and support services

Supervisors should also make sure trainees understand what is expected of them when their religion, personal values or beliefs might impact on their willingness to provide certain services. There is more information about this in the GPhC's **Guidance on religion, personal values and beliefs**.

Raising concerns

Supervisors have a professional responsibility to raise concerns. Concerns may be raised about a trainee or the initial education and training of trainees.

It is important to recognise that trainees may require further support and guidance to develop and improve their performance, to meet the interim learning outcomes. Supervisors should consider whether their concerns relate to the trainee's:

- performance and can identify areas where they need more support to develop and improve, or
- fitness to practise and whether there is a risk to patient safety that could affect a trainee's suitability for future registration.

Raising a concern about a trainee's performance and areas for development

Raising concerns about a trainee's performance at an early stage with a trainee can help to identify areas of practice that can be improved. Concerns should be resolved between the trainee, their supervisors, their employer or superintendent as appropriate, and if they are involved in the foundation training year, statutory education body⁷ and/or higher-education institution. The GPhC expects most concerns to be dealt with in this way.

If a supervisor does have a concern about a trainee's performance, they should:

- discuss the concern with their trainee and establish:
 - the nature of the concern
 - who or what the supervisor or someone else is concerned about
 - whether the supervisor considers there is a direct or immediate risk of harm to people receiving care
- assess the concern and raise it at the appropriate level with their line manager, employer, superintendent and/or statutory education body training lead
- make a record of the concern, including who they have raised them with, and the response or action that has been taken

Raising a concern about a trainee's fitness to practise

In normal circumstances, the GPhC does not investigate concerns about trainee fitness to practise. However, if after having assessed a concern a supervisor considers that the concern is serious, and relates to a trainee's fitness to practise that could affect their suitability for future registration and cannot be resolved locally, the supervisor should raise it with the GPhC or another relevant person or

body. Serious concerns include those which may be criminal or may have significant safety implications for patients, members of the public or members of the pharmacy team.

For more information please see the GPhC's **[Guidance on managing fitness to practise concerns in education and training](#)**.

If a supervisor wants to raise a serious concern about a trainee with the GPhC, phone 020 3365 3400 or email **info@pharmacyregulation.org**.

Raising a concern about the initial education and training of trainees

The GPhC may investigate concerns about the quality of foundation training delivered in a training site – especially if the way the foundation training is delivered might present risks to patient safety.

For more information please see the GPhC's **[Guidance on raising concerns](#)**.

If a supervisor wants to raise a concern about the quality of a foundation training year programme delivered in a training site, they can find more information and complete an online form on the GPhC's website⁸.

Speaking up when things go wrong and the duty of candour

It is important for supervisors to embed a culture where pharmacy professionals learn from feedback and incidents, and challenge poor practice and behaviours. These behaviours improve both the quality of care and pharmacy practice by reflecting on and learning from feedback when things go wrong.

The GPhC's **[Standards for pharmacy professionals](#)** require pharmacy professionals to be candid with other people, including trainees, colleagues and employers. This is usually called the 'duty of candour' which includes being honest and open when things go wrong or when one has concerns leading to taking appropriate action to put things right⁹.

Supervisors have a responsibility to promote and encourage a culture of learning and improvement. Trainees should understand the importance of challenging poor practice and behaviours and raising concerns, even when it is not easy to do so, as well as supporting others who have raised concerns. Supervisors should ensure trainees are aware of what behaviours are expected of them in relation to raising concerns and being honest and open when things go wrong, and their responsibilities when it comes to the duty of candour.

⁸ **[Raising concerns about pharmacy education and training](#)**

⁹ **[Joint statement from the Chief Executives of statutory regulators of healthcare professionals](#)**

Useful GPhC documents

All these documents are available on the GPhC's website at www.pharmacyregulation.org.

Standards

- ***Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists*** (GPhC, 2021)
- ***Interim learning outcomes for the 2021/22 foundation training year*** (GPhC, 2021)
- ***Standards for pharmacy professionals*** (GPhC, 2017)
- ***Education procedures for the initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians*** (GPhC, 2013)
- ***Foundation training manual*** (GPhC, 2021)
- ***Foundation training designated supervisor suitability policy*** (GPhC, 2021)
- ***Revalidation Framework*** (GPhC, 2018)
- ***Standards for the education and training of non-EEA pharmacists wanting to register in Great Britain*** (GPhC, 2011)
- ***Standards for registered pharmacies*** (GPhC, 2018)

Guidance

- ***Guidance on managing fitness to practise concerns in education and training*** (2020)
- ***In practice: Guidance on consent*** (GPhC, 2018)
- ***In practice: Guidance on maintaining clear sexual boundaries*** (GPhC, 2020)
- ***In practice: Guidance on confidentiality*** (GPhC, 2018)
- ***In practice: Guidance on raising concerns*** (GPhC, 2020)
- ***In practice: Guidance on religion, personal values and beliefs*** (GPhC, 2017)

Criteria for registration as a pharmacist in Great Britain

- ***Criteria for registration as a pharmacist*** (GPhC)

More information

For copies of this document in other formats or in Welsh, please contact the GPhC's communications team: communications@pharmacyregulation.org If you have questions or comments about the content of this guidance, please contact the GPhC's education team: education@pharmacyregulation.org