

Historic qualifications leading to eligibility to be admitted to the Register and to Membership of the (Royal) Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain ((R)PSGB)

Introduction

Registration with the Royal/Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain* has always been by membership of the Society (M(R)P(harm)S) having met different conditions and qualifications that evolved over time.

The schedule below sets out the eligibility criteria for award of the M(R)P(harm)S to people resident in GB/UK and receiving their education and training here, and puts them in their historical context. It does not cover:

- the various historic reciprocity agreements with former colonies,
- the qualifications listed in the relevant European Directives on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications, nor
- any temporary or emergency regulations to allow for those not eligible to be members of the Society to practise pharmacy.

It covers the whole period of the Society's history and is the point of departure for the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) from 2010.

Being of good health and good character has always been a requirement for membership and registration since 1841. Between 1873 and 2010 being 21 years of age was also a specific requirement for membership. (There were, though, never any other restrictions on membership for non-educational or non-professional grounds).

An indicative history of the development of the eligibility criteria is set out below. For completeness it goes back to the creation of the Society, but the real point of departure for modern coherent regulation of the profession was the 1953 Pharmacy Act. Although not stated in the Act itself, it was part of a raft of legislation to ensure that the newly created NHS was in a position to employ only suitably qualified clinical staff. The point of departure for the present day (higher) educational requirements is 1967 with a universal scheme of accredited degrees and assessed pre-registration experience. This scheme was built on in 2001 to include the Society's own membership examination (Registration Examination). Given demographic realities, therefore, 1967 is the earliest date that may have any relevance for GPhC in terms of the actual holders of qualifications.

*Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain was the title granted in the Royal Charter of 1843 despite the Society then covering the whole of the UK. Specific arrangements were made for the newly devolved profession in Northern Ireland in 1929, after which the original Charter title finally became accurate. Up to 1988 the initials used for membership were MPS. In 1988 the Society was granted the privilege of using the title "Royal", after which "Royal/R" was added to all the titles and abbreviations used and granted by it and the "P" in the middle had to be lengthened to "Pharm" to avoid duplication with the Royal Photographic Society.

1841 - 43

The Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain was established as a trade association but with an object of seeking statutory powers to protect the public (as well as the profession) and to develop professional education and training through Royal Charter and Act of Parliament. Membership and exams were voluntary and conferred no title or privileges. There were two levels of examination – both of them viva voce and by practical demonstration. The “major” was restricted to owners of retail pharmacies wishing to become full members of the Society. The “minor” examination was reserved for pharmacist employed assistants and led to the award of the title “Chemist and Druggist”. In 1842 the PSGB set up a School of Pharmacy to teach candidates for its examinations. (This would eventually lead to the present day London School of Pharmacy in collaboration with the University of London). The majority of applicants, however, studied as apprentices and by correspondence courses.

1843 -1868

The first Royal Charter was granted in 1843 and was the only statute covering the profession until the first Pharmacy Act in 1852. These two statutes together empowered the Society to run examinations and defined various titles associated with the profession. Success at the examination led to the award of the title “Pharmaceutical Chemist”, but members of the Society did not yet need to be pharmaceutical chemists to join it or to stay in membership/registration.

1869

A second Pharmacy Act in 1868 regularised this situation by requiring all new entrants to the register after 1869 to have passed the examinations (“intermediate” and “qualifying” or “major” for full membership) run by the Society and to be eligible for the award of one of the protected titles: “Pharmaceutical Chemist” or “Pharmaceutist”. Only those registered and eligible to use these titles were allowed to sell poisons from retail premises. There was no formalised entry route for eligibility to sit the major/qualifying examination despite the Society running its own courses in its own School. In parallel the “minor” examination continued for pharmacist employed assistants and led to the award of the title “Chemist and Druggist”. The Act also allowed for associate membership upon passing the minor examination.

1869 – 1933

More and more educational institutions ranging from prestigious universities to private “crammers” offered courses in pharmacy to prepare students for the Society’s examinations even though attendance at formal (higher) education was still a matter of choice. The effect, however, of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, was to marginalise private pharmacy education and concentrate pharmacy education (where not already in universities) progressively into state sponsored and recognised technical institutions in what would later be called the polytechnic and further education sectors.

1904

First degree in pharmacy (BSc) offered by the University of Manchester, although not formally adopted into the registration scheme until 1932.

1908

A new Pharmacy Act gave PSGB the power to make Byelaws covering curricula, syllabi and examinations, although these were not implemented immediately.

1919

Building on the powers in the 1908 Act, a national syllabus for the PSGB's examinations became mandatory for the first time. Admission to the examinations also became, for the first time, by successful completion of an approved course of study at an approved institution. (This was not yet an accreditation or approval scheme, though, because no detailed discretion was exercised).

1921

First specific reference to a three-year Bachelor of Pharmacy (BPharm) (as opposed to a BSc) in preparation (at the University of London).

1924

University of London's BPharm course was the first degree specifically to be approved as part of a formal entry route to the profession. This coincided with a major overhaul of the syllabus and the progression routes to the register including making the Society's exam a written one.

1926

A formal, universal and mandatory "pupilage" scheme was authorised for the "Students of the Society" (leading directly to the present Pre-registration Trainee status). (NB. the terminology in the 1920s being borrowed from the legal professions).

1929

The Pharmacy Act, 1929, gave the Society the discretion, which it has always exercised, to award membership and registration to anyone who is a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland on that basis alone.

Early 1930s

By this time pharmacy education and training had reached the point where capacity was being matched against demand (in however rudimentary a form), provision was all but restricted to the public sector and there was growingly even coverage across GB enabling students to study locally. This last feature was significant for widening access to the profession.

1933

The Poisons Act, 1933, defined the relationship between registration and membership. Success at the qualifying examination, together with meeting other criteria, entitled an applicant to be entered onto the "Register" as a full member of the Society and "Pharmaceutical Chemist" upon payment (and continued payment) of the prescribed fee. The registrable title was (and remains) M(R)P(harm)S. This Act also instituted the registration and inspection of premises and a fitness to practise scheme (although not yet under that name). This Act also made the Privy Council the Government Department with authority over the Society and with some matters reserved to the Privy Council for approval – including the approval of Byelaws.

1933 – 1954

All aspects of pharmacy practice by now required some qualification by examination which in turn required some formal education at university or further education level. This was codified and rationalised through powers in the 1953 Pharmacy Act which came into effect in 1954.

1954 – 1967

Two routes to the award of the title of Pharmaceutical Chemist (and MPS) were regularised with all applicants having to achieve the Pharmaceutical Chemist Diploma (PCD) (see below) as the academic threshold entry standard. (Other titles associated with the Register were abolished).

Route 1 was by award of a three year BPharm/BSc (originally from just the universities of London, Leeds, Glasgow, Manchester, Nottingham, and Wales) to a syllabus set by the Society. The degrees encompassed the PCD (see below). The degree had to be followed by a year's apprenticeship in a pharmacy and success at the Society's own examination in forensic pharmacy (the only subject examined separately by the Society in this route). Any BPharm offered by a university or a public (poly)technic(al) institution was accepted for this purpose – provided it did follow the Society's syllabus, which was checked. The Society listed all the BScs and BPharms known to it and accepted for this purpose in its annual "Calendar".

Route 2 was by the award of the three year Pharmaceutical Chemist Diploma alone to a syllabus set by the PSGB. School leavers wishing to follow this route had to enrol with PSGB as "Students of the Society"* - to follow a scheme of "articled pupilage" - having demonstrated that they held prescribed secondary school exam certificates. They then enrolled in a pharmacy as an apprentice and at a relevant college to undertake the course of studies. Applicants had to pass an intermediate and a final examination in the PCD before progressing to a year's practical experience in a pharmacy and then taking the Society's own (full) membership examination. This route involved a minimum of two calendar years apprenticeship in a pharmacy.

The institutions accredited for the delivery of the educational component of the PCD are set out at the end.

*Note: although this term went back to 1898 - and was then variously "student", "apprentice", "student-apprentice" or "student-associate" – it is from 1954 that the references in the Byelaws to "Student of the Society" should be dated. The post-1954 term related specifically to PCD students. It did not, and does not, cover undergraduates or pre-registration trainees as such. The term was, however, never removed from the Byelaws after 1970. It remained current in RPSGB documentation thereafter (causing some confusion for the non-cognoscenti as to who it was still intended for).

1958

Requirement formalised for all applicants to demonstrate a minimum of four years post-secondary education and training.

1967-70

In 1967 the PCD route was withdrawn and replaced by a universal requirement for a Bachelors degree in pharmacy to a syllabus set by PSGB and followed by a universal one year's experience in a pharmacy and passing specified papers in the degree final examination – which played the role of passing any examination the PSGB might have set under its own authority. After 1970 only graduates could progress towards registration. From 1967 the PSGB formally accredited institutions to deliver and award the BPharm and BSc. The institutions accredited since 1967 are set out below.

1972

First reference to the former pupilage/apprenticeship/associateship/practical experience scheme formally being called a "pre-registration year".

1985 (and 2005)

Two European Directives were adopted that harmonised pharmacy education and training across Europe. These were the “Training Directive” (85/432/EEC) and the “Pharmacists Directive” (85/433/EEC – “concerning the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidence of formal qualifications in pharmacy...”). All the Directives covering the mutual recognition of professional qualifications were then consolidated into a single Directive in 2005 (2005/36/EC - “on the recognition of professional qualifications”). The Directives did not require a revision as such of entry routes to membership and registration, but they did set a mandatory educational level and specified that pre-registration experience must include at least six months in a pharmacy “open to the public”.

1993

The Society (re-)introduced its own membership examination (the “Registration Examination”) to test knowledge and experience specifically relevant to the practice of pharmacy.

1997 – 2001/2

The three year BPharm was discontinued in 1997 (together with any remaining BScs) and replaced by the four-year Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) – a four year undergraduate Masters course. The period between entering higher education and being eligible for registration was accordingly extended to five years minimum. From 1997 onwards there were no further enrolments on BSc or BPharm courses and a Bachelors route to registration was ended. This change took place partly in response to the need to demonstrate “harmonising” pharmacy education and training across the European Economic Area to meet the requirements of the Pharmacists Directive and the Training Directive in 1985 (see above), and partly to meet recommendations made by the Nuffield Committee in 1986 on extending the scope of the undergraduate curriculum.

2001/2 – 2010

The MPharm, successful completion of the Pre-registration year and success at the Registration Examination was the only entry route to membership and to the register for applicants educated, trained and resident in GB.

2010

GPhC inherits the RPSGB Registration Scheme.

Rights and Eligibilities

Only the qualifications, entry routes and institutions specified here led (or lead) to eligibility to progress towards registration with - and membership of the (R)PSGB and GPhC - and confer/ed consequent rights. Universities may confer a number of other awards containing the word Pharmacy in some form, but only accredited BScs, BPharms and MPharms confer/red rights with the Society and GPhC on their holders. Award of an accredited BSc, BPharm or MPharm back to 1967 conferred eligibility to enter pre-registration training up to 2010 when the GPhC will consult on limiting the time for which degrees remain current for the statutory regulation of the profession.

Institutions Accredited since 1967 for the Award and Delivery of the Courses and Degrees of Bachelor (to 1997/2001) and Master of Pharmacy (after 2001)

For academic award only:-

- the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) (N.B. abolished in 1992 and its (usually BSc) degree awarding powers then transferred to individual universities), and
- University of London external degrees (also to 1992 when all the external delivering institutions gained their own degree awarding powers).

The following is a list of institutions accredited for delivery of the course and award of the qualification (if authorised to do so pre-1992) since 1967. Where the name of the institution has changed since then, the date of the change is given. Where there is no start date shown, the institution or its predecessor was already delivering a BPharm or BSc prior to 1967.

- Aberdeen (Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology, 1992 Robert Gordon's University),
- Bath (University of Bath),
- Belfast (Queen's University Belfast),
- Birmingham/Aston (University of Aston),
- Bradford (University of Bradford),
- Brighton (Brighton College of Technology, 1969 Brighton Polytechnic, 1992 University of Brighton),
- Cardiff (University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology, 1988 University of Wales College of Cardiff, 2009 University of Cardiff),
- Chelsea – see KCL,
- Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) (award of BSc to 1992),
- East Anglia (University of East Anglia from 2007),
- Edinburgh (Herriot-Watt University to 1989),
- Glasgow (University of Strathclyde),
- Hertfordshire (University of Hertfordshire from 2009),
- Keele (University of Keele from 2010),
- King's College London (Chelsea/King's College London) (Chelsea College of Science and Technology/Chelsea Polytechnic, 1985 King's College London) (up to 2008 MPharm of the University of London, from 2008 MPharm from KCL also offered),
- Kingston (University of Kingston from 2008),
- Leeds (University of Leeds to 1970),
- Leicester (Leicester College of Technology, 1969 City of Leicester Polytechnic, 1992 de Montfort University),
- Liverpool (Liverpool Polytechnic, 1992 Liverpool John Moore's University),
- London (University of London School of Pharmacy awarding a degree of the University of London),
- London (University of London award of BPharm as an external degree to 1992),
- Manchester ((Victoria) University of Manchester, "Victoria" formally dropped from the title in 2004 although little used by then),
- Medway (joint between the Universities of Greenwich and Kent since 2008),
- Nottingham (University of Nottingham) (delivery also overseas from 2009),
- Portsmouth (Portsmouth Polytechnic, 1992 University of Portsmouth),

- Reading (University of Reading since 2009),
- Strathclyde – see Glasgow,
- Sunderland (Sunderland Technical College, 1969 Sunderland Polytechnic, 1992 University of Sunderland),
- University of Sunderland and SEGi University College (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) (first graduates due in 2012), and
- Wolverhampton (University of Wolverhampton from 2010).

Successful completion of the Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme (OSPAP) at the following universities, which must always also deliver and award an accredited MPharm, also confers eligibility to enrol on the pre-registration year:-

- University of Aston (2004),
- University of Brighton (2005),
- Robert Gordon’s University (2007), and
- University of Sunderland (1975).

The following courses, institutions and awards are in the process of being accredited in 2010, but no accredited awards have yet arisen from them:-

- University of Central Lancashire (Preston),
- University of Huddersfield,
- University of Ulster,
- Liverpool John Moore’s University and MAHSA University College (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia),
- University of Cardiff and Taylor's University College (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).

Pre-registration in-service experience

The practical experience part of progression to membership and registration has always followed a number of general principles to be acceptable - whether called apprenticeship, pupillage, associateship, studentship or pre-registration training. These included that it must be notified to the Society and agreed in advance, that at least half must be in a dispensing pharmacy, that the tutor (or whatever other terms have been used) must be a member of the Society, that the dispensing pharmacy (from 1933) must be a registered pharmacy open to inspection by the Society and that there must be satisfactory completion of the time served.

List of Institutions approved to deliver the Pharmaceutical Chemist Diploma up to 1967

- Any university or university college in the British Isles, but specifically:-
 - London University, School of Pharmacy,
 - Manchester University (a.k.a. Manchester Victoria University), and
 - Nottingham University.
- Non-university Colleges and Polytechnics:-
 - Aberdeen (Robert Gordon’s Technical College/Institute of Technology),
 - Acton Technical Institute,
 - City of Bath Technical College,
 - Birkenhead Technical College,
 - Birmingham Central College/College of (Advanced) Technology (Aston University 1966),
 - Blackburn Municipal Technical College,
 - Bolton Municipal Technical College,

- Bournemouth Municipal College,
- Bradford Technical College/Institute of Technology,
- Brighton Technical College,
- Bristol College of Technology/Science and Technology,
- Burnley Municipal College,
- Cardiff Technical College/Welsh College of Advanced Technology,
- Carlisle Technical School/College,
- Chatham/Gillingham (Medway College of Technology),
- Chelmsford (Mid-Essex Technical College (and School of Art)),
- Cheltenham Technical School,
- Colchester (North East Essex Technical School),
- Colwyn Bay Grammar School,
- Coventry Technical College,
- Croydon Polytechnic,
- Crumlin Mining and Technical College,
- Dagenham (South East Essex Technical College),
- Dartford County Technical College,
- Derby Technical College,
- Doncaster Technical College,
- Dundee Technical College,
- Edinburgh (Heriot-Watt College, 1966 Heriot-Watt University),
- Enfield Technical College,
- Ewell County Technical College,
- Folkestone Technical Institute,
- Glasgow Royal Technical College (University of Strathclyde 1964),
- Gloucestershire Technical College,
- Guildford County Technical College,
- Halifax Technical College,
- Huddersfield Technical College,
- Hull Municipal Technical College,
- Kingston-upon-Thames Technical College (and School of Art),
- Leicester College of Technology/Technology and Commerce,
- Leeds College of Technology,
- Liverpool (City of Liverpool Technical College/College of Technology),
- London, Chelsea Polytechnic/College of Science and Technology,
- London, Northern Polytechnic Institute,
- London, Norwood Technical Institute,
- London, Regent Street Polytechnic,
- London, Woolwich Polytechnic,
- Middlesbrough (Constantine Technical College),
- Neath Mining and Technical Institute,
- Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Rutherford Technical College),
- Newport Technical Institute,
- Northampton College of Technology,
- Norwich Technical Institute,
- Paisley Technical College,
- Plymouth Technical College,
- Portsmouth College of Technology,
- Preston (Harris Institute),
- Redruth (Cornwall Technical College),
- Rotherham College of Technology,
- St Helen's Municipal Technical College,
- Salford Royal Technical College/College of Advanced Technology,
- Shrewsbury Technical College,
- Soham Grammar School,

- Southend-on-sea Municipal/Technical College,
- Southport Technical College,
- Stockport College,
- Stoke-on-Trent (North Staffs Technical College),
- Swansea Technical College,
- Sunderland Technical College,
- Torquay (South Devon Technical College),
- Walthamstow (South West Essex Technical College),
- West Ham Municipal College,
- Weybridge (Brooklands County Technical College)/ Weybridge and Brooklands County Technical College,
- Wigan and District Mining and Technical College,
- Wolverhampton and Staffordshire Technical College, and
- Wrexham (Denbighshire Technical Institute).