

Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists – Interim learning outcomes

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Introduction

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacies in Great Britain. One of its core roles is to set standards for education and training leading to registration and in 2020 its Council agreed new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists. They come in to force in October 2021.

The initial education and training of pharmacists comprises a four-year MPharm degree followed by a year of pharmacist pre-registration training and passing the GPhC's Registration Assessment, a national registration examination. In 2020, it was agreed by the GPhC, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, the professional body for pharmacists, the chief pharmaceutical officers for England, Scotland and Wales and statutory education bodies (SEBs) – Health Education England (HEE), NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) – that the pre-registration training year will become a year of foundation training with greater input from SEBs and, in time, schools of pharmacy.

The foundation training year in each country will be developed by SEBs in consultation with employers and other stakeholders.

MPharm degrees based on the new 2021 standards will be introduced over several years from 2022/23, meaning that foundation training following on from them will be introduced from 2026/27. Recognising the importance of developing pharmacists as clinicians, stakeholders have agreed that earlier, transitional, iterations of foundation training will be introduced from 2021.

This document describes the interim learning outcomes for the 2021/22 foundation training year. The interim learning outcomes will apply for all settings and sectors and will replace the pre-registration performance standards. All training delivered for 2021/22 should be based on the interim learning outcomes. Training providers will need to ensure that regular progress reviews monitor the trainee's progression against the learning outcomes.

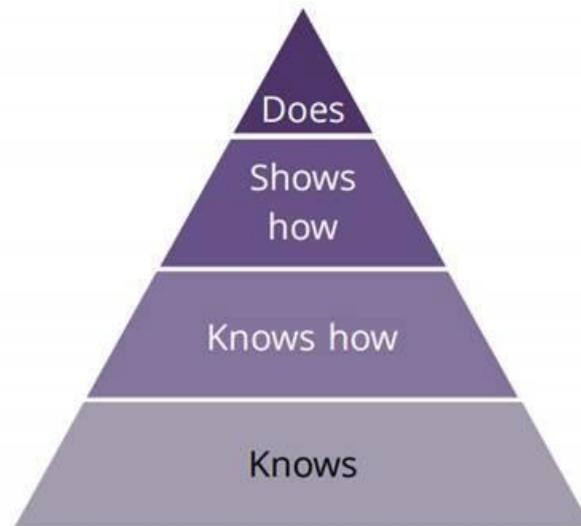
There might be further iteration of the learning outcomes until they can be fully implemented in 2026/27, once students who have graduated from MPharm degrees based on the GPhC's 2021 education and training standards enter the foundation training year.

A key distinction between the GPhC's 2011 education and training standards and the 2021 standards replacing them is the inclusion of pharmacist independent prescribing. The GPhC recognises that this cannot be introduced immediately so the learning outcomes in this document do not require 2021/22 trainees to train as independent prescribers. Nevertheless, prescribing is becoming an essential skill for pharmacists and after extensive discussions with SEBs, employers and other stakeholders, we expect to include the requirement for independent prescribing in later iterations of transitional learning outcomes. This is not to suggest that trainee pharmacists will not prescribe in the more general sense – that they will advise people about medication during their foundation training year, but formal annotation as a pharmacist independent prescriber may take several years to implement in the foundation training year.

Describing and assessing outcomes

The outcome levels in this standard are based on an established competence and assessment hierarchy known as 'Miller's triangle':

Figure 1: ‘Miller’s triangle’



Because what is being assessed at each of the four levels is different, the assessment methods needed are different too – although there will be some overlap.

Level 1 – Knows

Has knowledge that may be applied in the future to demonstrate competence. Assessments may include essays, oral examinations and multiple-choice question examinations (MCQs).

Level 2 – Knows how

Knows how to use knowledge and skills. Assessments may include essays, oral examinations, MCQs and laboratory books.

Level 3 – Shows how

Can demonstrate that they can perform in a simulated environment or in real life. Assessments may include objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs) and other observed assessments; simulated patient assessments; designing, carrying out and reporting an experiment; dispensing tests and taking a patient history.

Level 4 – Does

Can act independently and consistently in a complex but defined situation. Evidence for this level is provided when a student pharmacist demonstrates the learning outcomes in a complex, familiar or everyday situation repeatedly and reliably. Assessments may include OSCEs or other observed assessments.

Level of study

The level of study for foundation training is master’s degree level, as defined in UK national qualifications frameworks.

Domains of study

The learning outcomes are presented in four domains:

- person-centred care and collaboration
- professional practice
- leadership and management
- education and research

The domains and learning outcomes are all of equal importance and are mapped on to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s curriculum for post-registration foundation training.

To achieve them, curricula, teaching and learning strategies and training plans to deliver these learning outcomes will:

- apply the science behind pharmacy throughout all learning
- focus on the role of the pharmacist as a healthcare professional – using their comprehensive expertise of medicines, and building on their strong grounding in science – to deliver high-quality, person-centred care
- provide experiential learning and inter-professional learning, with students from other health and care professions, and provide experience in pharmacy settings
- provide opportunities to engage with people and other health and care professionals
- build the requirement of patient and public safety into all aspects of the design and delivery of initial education and training.

Domain: Person-centred care and collaboration

If they are to pass, trainee pharmacists must be able to demonstrate the following:

Table 1: Learning outcomes domain: person-centred care and collaboration

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
1	Demonstrate empathy and keep the person at the centre of their approach to care at all times	Does
2	Work in partnership with people to support and empower them in shared decision-making about their health and wellbeing	Does
3	Demonstrate effective communication at all times and adapt their approach and communication style to meet the needs of the person	Does
4	Understand the variety of settings and adapt their communication accordingly	Does
5	Proactively support people to make safe and effective use of their medicines and devices	Does
6	Treat people as equals, with dignity and respect, and meet their own legal responsibilities under equality and human rights legislation, while respecting diversity and cultural differences	Does

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
7	Obtain informed consent before providing care and pharmacy services	Does
8	Assess and respond to the person's particular health risks, taking account of individuals' protected characteristics and background	Does
9	Take responsibility for ensuring that personal values and beliefs do not compromise person-centred care	Does
10	Demonstrate effective consultation skills, and in partnership with the person, decide the most appropriate course of action	Does
11	Take into consideration factors that affect people's behaviours in relation to health and wellbeing	Does
12	Take an all-inclusive approach to ensure the most appropriate course of action based on clinical, legal and professional considerations	Does
13	Recognise the psychological, physiological and physical impact of prescribing decisions on people	Does
14	Work collaboratively and effectively with other members of the multi-disciplinary team to ensure high-quality, person-centred care, including continuity of care	Does

Domain: Professional practice

If they are to pass, trainee pharmacists must be able to demonstrate the following:

Table 2: Learning outcomes domain: professional practice

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
15	Demonstrate the values, attitudes and behaviours expected of a pharmacy professional at all times	Does
16	Apply professional judgement in all circumstances, taking legal and ethical reasoning into account	Does
17	Recognise and work within the limits of their knowledge and skills, and get support and refer to others when they need to	Does
18	Take responsibility for all aspects of pharmacy services, and make sure that the care and services provided are safe and accurate	Does
19	Take responsibility for all aspects of health and safety and take actions when necessary, particularly but not exclusively during the COVID-19 pandemic	Does
20	Act openly and honestly when things go wrong and raise concerns even when it is not easy to do so	Does

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
21	Apply the science behind pharmacy in all activities	Does
22	Demonstrate how the science behind pharmacy is applied in the discovery, design, development and safety testing of medicines and devices	Knows how
23	Recognise the technologies that are behind developing advanced therapeutic medicinal products and precision medicines, including the formulation, supply and quality assurance of these therapeutic agents	Knows how
24	Keep abreast of new technologies and use data and digital technologies to improve clinical outcomes and patient safety, keeping to information governance principles	Does
25	Apply pharmaceutical principles to the safe and effective formulation, preparation, packaging and disposal of medicines and products	Shows how
26	Consider the quality, safety and risks associated with medicines and products and take appropriate action when producing and supplying them	Shows how
27	Take responsibility for the legal, safe and efficient supply and administration of medicines and devices	Does
28	Demonstrate effective diagnostic skills, including physical examination, to decide the most appropriate course of action for the person. During the COVID-19 pandemic all relevant precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of the patient and foundation trainee when physical contact is necessary.	Shows how
29	Apply the principles of clinical therapeutics, pharmacology and genomics to make effective use of medicines for people	Does
30	Appraise the evidence base and apply clinical reasoning and professional judgement to make safe and logical decisions which minimise risk and optimise outcomes for the person	Does
31	Critically evaluate and use national guidelines and clinical evidence to support safe, rational and cost-effective procurement for the use, and prescribing (by others) of, medicines, devices and services	Does
32	Accurately perform calculations	Does
33	Effectively promote healthy lifestyles using evidence-based techniques	Does
34	Apply the principles of effective monitoring and management to improve health outcomes	Does

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
35	Anticipate and recognise adverse drug reactions, and recognise the need to apply the principles of pharmacovigilance ¹	Does
36	Apply relevant legislation related to prescribing	Does
37	Prescribe effectively within the relevant systems and frameworks for medicines use²	Does
38	Understand clinical governance in relation to prescribing	Shows how
39	Take responsibility for people's health records, including the legality, appropriateness, accuracy, security and confidentiality of personal data	Does
40	Understand and implement relevant safeguarding procedures, including local and national guidance in relation to each person	Does
41	Effectively make use of local and national health and social care policies to improve health outcomes and public health, and to address health inequalities	Does
42	Proactively participate in the promotion and protection of public health in their practice	Does
43	Identify misuse of medicines and implement effective strategies to deal with this	Does
44	Respond appropriately to medical emergencies, including the provision of first aid	Shows how

Domain: Leadership and management

If they are to pass, trainee pharmacists must be able to demonstrate the following:

Table 3: Learning outcomes domain: leadership and management

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
45	Demonstrate effective leadership and management skills as part of the multi-disciplinary team	Does
46	Make use of the skills and knowledge of other members of the multi-disciplinary team to manage resources and priorities	Does

¹ Monitoring the effects of medicines after they have been licensed for use, especially to identify previously unreported adverse reactions.

² Removed in the 2021/22 interim learning outcomes

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
47	Develop, lead and apply effective strategies to improve the quality of care and safe use of medicines	Does
48	Actively take part in the management of risks and consider the impacts on people	Does
49	Use tools and techniques to avoid medication errors associated with prescribing (by others), supply and administration	Does
50	Take appropriate actions to respond to complaints, incidents or errors in a timely manner and to prevent them happening again	Does
51	Recognise when and how their performance or that of others could put people at risk and take appropriate actions	Does
52	Demonstrate resilience and flexibility, and apply effective strategies to manage multiple priorities, uncertainty, complexity and change	Does

Domain: Education and research

If they are to pass, trainee pharmacists must be able to demonstrate the following:

Table 4: Learning outcomes domain: education and research

N.	Learning outcome	Foundation training year
53	Reflect upon, identify, and proactively address their learning needs	Does
54	Support the learning and development of others, including through mentoring	Does
55	Take part in research activities, audit, service evaluation and quality improvement, and demonstrate how these are used to improve care and services	Does