

Pharmacy Technician Course/Qualification guidance (2019/20)

For providers and awarding bodies



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1. Introduction

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in England, Scotland and Wales (the countries of Great Britain). In order to practise in Great Britain, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must be registered with the GPhC and have satisfied us that they meet our detailed requirements.

If you are a training provider or awarding body¹, you will need to follow the process set out in this document to have your pharmacy technician competency and knowledge-based course/qualification approved by us.

Purpose of this guidance

This document sets out the procedures by which the GPhC will accredit a course² or recognise qualification against the standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians [October 2017]. It is intended as a reference source and guide for those providers/awarding bodies wishing to apply to the GPhC for accreditation or recognition of a pharmacy technician course/qualification.

The contents relate to accreditation (application process for initial approval of a course), reaccreditation (application process for extension to accreditation period, where accreditation has not lapsed), and recognition (the process to approve a qualification). Specific requirements relating to re/accreditation and recognition are detailed within this document.

Pharmacy technician initial education and training

Initial education and training for pharmacy technicians is vocational - it combines both knowledge *and* competence and allows trainees to learn based on experience of clinical, operational and scientific practices and procedures whilst working and studying at the same time. The training consists of two years consecutive vocational (both knowledge *and* competency) experience under the direction of a pharmacist to whom the trainee is directly accountable for not less than 14 hours per week.

As a vocational course, it is flexible in its delivery. It can be delivered face-to-face, at a distance, online or a combination of these.

Recognised qualification regulators in Great Britain (GB)

The GPhC recognise the following qualification regulators:

- England - Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual),
- Wales - Qualifications Wales, and
- Scotland - Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

¹ For the purposes of this document an awarding body must be registered with one or more of the recognised qualification regulators listed above

² Accredited courses may include the integration of a recognised RQF qualification

Apprenticeships

GPhC approved courses/qualifications delivered through an apprenticeship funding route must fulfil all the relevant requirements of the apprenticeship standard, and as such this will include the End Point Assessment (EPA). It is a requirement that apprentice pharmacy technician trainees must pass the EPA to be eligible to register with the GPhC.

The funding route for pharmacy technical education in Wales and Scotland is a devolved matter and is subject to local arrangements.

Important information

This document will refer to route 1 (accreditation) and route 2 (recognition). Route 1 is designed for providers who work directly in conjunction with employers and the learner, and have developed quality assurance mechanisms in place to deliver the pharmacy technician course. Route 2 is designed for awarding bodies offering an approved pharmacy technician approved (or are in the process of approval) by a recognised qualification regulator (listed above).

2. The accreditation/recognition process

The accreditation/recognition process involves the review of the course provider's/awarding body's submission and supporting documentation. Once this is reviewed by the GPhC, the accreditation/recognition team, the event is held and attended by the accreditation/recognition team and provider/awarding body. The accreditation/recognition team make a judgement based on the evidence given by the provider/awarding body on how the course/qualification has been designed to meet the standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians. The accreditation/recognition team will form a recommendation on the accreditation/recognition of the course/qualification which may or may not have conditions associated with it. Authority to accredit/recognise courses/qualifications rests with the Registrar, based on the accreditation or recognition team's report and recommendations. The reaccreditation and re-recognition process are identical to the accreditation/recognition process but involve feedback from students in respect of the course/qualification.

A course/qualification may be granted probationary accreditation/recognition following an event. Probationary accreditation/recognition will be granted if it can be demonstrated that standards are likely to be met. Should this happen, the provider will be required to produce an action plan within twenty-eight days of being notified of the decision. The GPhC will make any probationary status known publicly. More information on the process can be found in section 9 of this document.

Depending on the course/qualification being accredited/recognised, the event itself may involve some or all of the following: site visit; meetings with teaching and delivery staff; meetings with senior management; meetings with quality assurance partners; meetings with standards verifiers; meetings with external stakeholders such as patient groups; telephone or face to face meeting with trainees; telephone or face to face meetings with practice supervisors; and exploration of teaching resources. More information on the process can be found in section 7 of this document.

Supporting documents

This document should be read alongside the following documents:

- Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians (October 2017)
- Standards for pharmacy professionals (May 2017)
- Criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician in Great Britain (August 2018)
- Guidance on tutoring for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians (August 2018)

Methodology

The GPhC's course accreditation methodology is based on six principles that the accreditation/recognition process is:

1. proportionate;
2. transparent;
3. public;
4. evidence-based;
5. cyclical; and
6. based on peer review.

Learning outcomes (providers)

Given the delivery options available for pharmacy technician courses, the accreditation team will need to test how the learning outcomes are delivered and met. Where practical, this will be based on the following:

- a mapping exercise of the learning material and curriculum against the GPhC learning outcomes prior to the event; this will inform the team prior to the pre-event meeting of any concerns regarding the mapping of the submission.
- a session that examines in more depth a sample of the 53 pharmacy technician learning outcomes. Typically, the team will sample between 3 and 5 of the learning outcomes with the provider to assure that in the course is being taught with integration and the spiral curriculum in mind. If they are satisfactory, the team will assume the remaining learning outcomes are delivered in this way.
- Miller's Triangle when assessing how a learning outcome is achieved. This will be tested in the way of 'knows how' and 'does' as per the requirements of the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians.

Questions for the provider may include:

How is the learning outcome introduced?

How is the learning outcome assessed initially?

How is the learning outcome developed through the principles of Miller's Triangle?

How does the assessment profile of the outcome change as it develops?

How is knowledge and competence integrated?

How does the assessment ensure the outcome is met at the level described in the learning outcomes?

Who will need to be in attendance for the learning outcome session (provider)?

These sessions will typically involve all course staff that are actively/or will be active involved in the delivery of the course. There will be an interactive discussion between the team and staff members and the team will probe how the outcomes are achieved, testing integration of knowledge and practice through a spiral curriculum model.

Learning outcomes (awarding bodies)

The team will conduct mapping exercise of the learning material and curriculum against the GPhC learning outcomes prior to the event; this will inform the team prior to the pre-event meeting of any concerns regarding the mapping of the submission.

The GPhC recognises that awarding bodies may not directly define a mode of delivery and therefore their centres³ may have the autonomy to offer the qualification using any mode of delivery that meets their learners' needs. The recognition team will not be able to test learning outcomes in the same way as the accreditation process detailed above as centres will approach the awarding body to propose a delivery approach. The GPhC recognised that approved awarding bodies are subject to additional scrutiny by external agencies in the development and delivery of qualifications. Therefore, although the GPhC will not directly test learning outcomes in the same way as it would with a GPhC course provider, the recognition team will expect part 1 of the submission template to be supplemented with detailed evidence of:

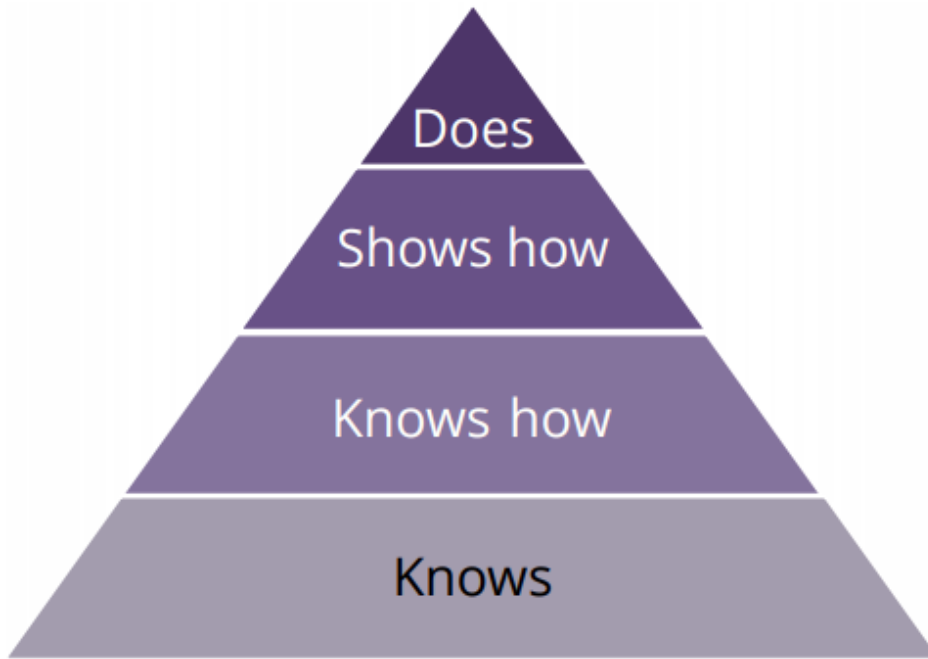
- the qualification structure and purpose,
- qualification support materials,
- quality assurance requirement of centres,
- centre resource requirements,
- assessment strategies,
- indicative content,
- details on assessors and internal quality assurers,
- any recommended delivery strategies, and
- centre visit requirements.

Who will need to be in attendance for the learning outcome session (awarding bodies)?

These sessions will typically involve staff members who have been involved in the design of the qualification. There will be an interactive discussion between the team and staff members and the team will probe how the overall quality assurance of the learning outcomes are achieved.

³ Centre provider that deliver the qualification on behalf of the awarding body.

Millers Triangle



As 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. Generally, achieving one level of Miller’s triangle requires achieving and exceeding the preceding level.

Level 1 – Knows	This is 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	Context-based tests – a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician knows how to use knowledge and skills. Assessments may include essays, oral examinations, MCQs and laboratory books.
Level 3 – Shows how	A pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician is able to 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	Acting independently and consistently in a complex but defined situation. Evidence for this level is provided when a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician demonstrates the learning outcomes in a complex, familiar or everyday situation repeatedly and reliably. Assessments may include OSCEs or other observed assessments.

It is likely that themes will begin with ‘knows’ moving on to ‘know how’ to ‘shows how’ and ‘does’. Understanding that the level at which something is being delivered should be accompanied with an exploration of how teaching and learning is aligned with assessment. Progression between levels might

not be entirely linear and that a level does not equate to a year of study e.g. Year 1 = knows how, Year 2 = does.

Review after the first cohort

The GPhC reserve the right to undertake a review of the course/qualification once the first cohort have passed and are eligible to apply to register with the GPhC. This will be at the discretion of the accreditation/recognition team and may be in the form of an event or desktop-based review.

The purpose of the review event is to review the performance of the course against the education and training standards with the first cohort of pharmacy technicians and to ensure that delivery is consistent with the GPhC education standards.

3. Accreditation/recognition criteria

The GPhC's learning outcomes have been designed to ensure that trainees undertaking an accredited course or recognised qualification are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the learning outcomes and to practise safely and effectively.

The standards focus on selection and entry, equality and diversity, the course provider's/awarding body's academic and quality management procedures and the course/qualification resources.

The learning outcomes

1. Person-centred care

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

1. Involve, support and enable every person when making decisions about their health, care and wellbeing	Does
2. Optimise a person's medicines to achieve the best possible outcomes	Does
3. Listen to the person, and understand their needs and what matters to them	Does
4. Give the person all relevant information in a way they can understand, so they can make informed decisions and choices	Does
5. Advise people on the safe and effective use of their medicines and devices	Does
6. Obtain relevant information from people – including patients, carers and other healthcare professionals – and use it appropriately	Does
7. Recognise and value diversity, and respect cultural differences - making sure that every person is treated fairly whatever their values and beliefs	Does
8. Adapt information and communication to meet the needs of particular audiences	Does
9. Apply the principles of information governance and ensure patient confidentiality	Does
10. Effectively promote healthy lifestyles using available resources and evidence-based techniques	Knows how
11. Be able to provide public health advice and recommend recognised health screening or public health initiatives	Knows how
12. Understand how to safeguard people, particularly children and vulnerable adults	Knows how

2. Professionalism

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

13. Apply professional judgement in the best interests of people	Does
14. Recognise and work within the limits of their knowledge and skills, and refer to others when needed	Does
15. Understand how to work within the local, regional and national guidelines and policies	Knows how
16. Respond effectively to complaints, incidents and errors and in a way that demonstrates person-centred care	Does
17. Use information to make effective decisions	Does
18. Take personal responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others, and following up any concerns about the workplace which might put them, or others, at risk	Does
19. Demonstrate leadership skills within their scope of practice as a trainee	Does
20. Recognise when their performance or the performance of others is putting people at risk and respond appropriately	Does
21. Raise concerns even when it is not easy to do so	Does
22. Act openly and honestly when things go wrong	Does
23. Effectively use a variety of methods, including feedback, to regularly monitor and reflect on practice, skills and knowledge	Does
24. Carry out a range of relevant continuing professional development (CPD) activities	Does
25. Reflect and act on feedback or concerns, thinking about what can be done to prevent something happening again	Does

3. Professional knowledge and skills

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

26. Provide a safe, effective and responsive pharmacy service	Does
27. Take personal responsibility for the legal, safe and efficient supply of medicines	Does
28. Understand the basic principles of biology, microbiology, physiology, and chemistry	Knows how
29. Understand the basic pharmacological principles to the use of medicines in relation to disease processes and the treatment of identified clinical conditions	Knows how
30. Confirm the suitability of a person's medicines for use	Does
31. Accurately retrieve and reconcile information about a person's medicines	Does
32. Assess a person's present supply of medicines and order appropriate medicines and products	Does
33. Order, receive, maintain and supply medicines and other pharmaceutical products safely, legally and effectively	Knows how
34. Receive requests for medicines, including prescriptions, and check for their validity, safety and clarity, taking action to deal with any problems	Does
35. Effectively use systems to support the safe supply of medicines	Does
36. Accurately assemble prescribed items	Does
37. Apply pharmaceutical principles to the safe and effective formulation, preparation and packaging of medicines and products	Knows how
38. Ensure the quality of ingredients to produce and supply safe and effective medicines and products	Knows how
39. Issue prescribed items safely and effectively and take action to deal with discrepancies	Does
40. Carry out an accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products	Does
41. Accurately perform pharmaceutical calculations to ensure the safety of people	Does
42. Recognise adverse drug reactions and interactions and respond appropriately	Does
43. Safely and legally dispose of medicines and other pharmaceutical products	Knows how
44. Respond appropriately to medical emergencies, including providing first aid	Knows how
45. Identifies and responds effectively to errors and near misses	Does
46. Apply the principles of clinical governance	Does
47. Understand the principles of audit and quality-improvement strategies, and how to implement recommendations effectively	Knows how
48. Understand the principles of risk management	Knows how

4. Collaboration

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

49. Demonstrate effective team working	Does
50. Communicate and work effectively with members of the multidisciplinary team	Does
51. Check their own and others' work effectively	Does
52. Take part in the learning and development of others	Does
53. Prioritise time and resources effectively to achieve objectives	Does

Standards

Domain 1 – Selection and entry requirements

Standards	
1.	Selection processes must be open, clear, unbiased and keep to relevant legislation to identify applicants with the right attributes to train as healthcare professionals.
Criteria	
1.1	Entry requirements must ensure that applicants are fit to practise as trainees at the point of selection.
1.2	Selection criteria must be clear and unambiguous. They must include as a minimum: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• meeting specified English language requirements• meeting specified numeracy requirements• other academic requirements or experience equivalent to national level 2 or above• taking account of good character checks• taking account of health checks
1.3	Applicants must be working in a pharmacy environment or have secured a placement as a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician and be supervised by a pharmacy professional.
1.4	Selectors must apply the selection criteria consistently, in an unbiased way and in line with relevant legislation. They should be trained to do this and training should include equality, diversity and inclusion.

Domain 2 – Equality, diversity and inclusion

Standard	
2.	All aspects of pharmacy technician education and training must be based on principles of equality and diversity and keep to all relevant legislation.
Criteria	
2.1	Equality and diversity must be embedded in course design and delivery
2.2	Equality and diversity data must be used in designing and delivering courses, and in planning the whole experience of being a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician.
2.3	Reasonable adjustments must be made to course delivery and assessment to help pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians having specific needs to meet the learning outcomes. Teaching, learning and assessment may be modified for this purpose but learning outcomes may not.

Domain 3 – Management, resources and capacity

Standard	
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3.	Courses must be planned and maintained using transparent processes which must show who is accountable for what at each stage of initial education and training. The education and training facilities, infrastructure, leadership, staffing and staff support must be adequate to deliver the course.
Criteria	
3.1	<p>All courses must be backed up by a defined management plan which must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a schedule of roles and responsibilities, in the learning and training environments and in the workplace • lines of accountability, in the learning and training environments and in the workplace • defined structures and processes to manage delivery • processes for identifying and managing risk
3.2	There must be agreements in place outlining the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in delivering a course.
3.3	Each pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician must have a learning agreement covering all the learning and training environments. This must outline roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability, and must say how trainees will be supported during the course. Course providers must explain how they will be reassured that learning agreements will be implemented in full.
3.4	All course providers must have pharmacy professionals involved in the design and the delivery of the course.

Domain 4 – Monitoring, review and evaluation

Standard	
4.	The quality of courses must be monitored, reviewed and evaluated in a systematic and developmental way
Criteria	
4.1	All relevant aspects of courses must be monitored, reviewed and evaluated systematically. When issues are identified they must be documented and dealt with within agreed timescales.
4.2	There must be a quality-management structure in place that sets out procedures for monitoring and evaluation. This must include who is responsible, and the timings for reporting, review and taking action when appropriate.
4.3	There must be systems in place to monitor and evaluate the standard of teaching, learning and assessment to make sure that quality is maintained across all learning environments.
4.4	Course monitoring and review must take into account the external environment, especially pharmacy, to make sure that courses stay up to date as they are delivered.
4.5	Feedback to pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must be a part of monitoring, review and evaluation processes.

Domain 5 – Course design and delivery

Standard	
5.	Courses must develop the required skills, knowledge, understanding and professional behaviours to meet the outcomes in part 1 of these standards by using a coherent teaching and learning strategy. The design and delivery of training must take account of stakeholders' views and must ensure that trainees practise safely and effectively.
Criteria	
5.1	Courses must be designed and delivered using strategies which bring together knowledge, competence and work experience.
5.2	The GPhC's standards for pharmacy professionals must be part of all courses and used actively. This is to make sure that pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians know what will be expected of them when they are registered.
5.3	There must be a course teaching and learning strategy which sets out how trainees will achieve the outcomes in part 1 of these standards.
5.4	Courses must be designed and delivered to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and professional behaviours required to meet the learning outcomes in part 1 of these standards.
5.5	Awarding bodies and course providers must get the views of a range of stakeholders – including patients, the public and employers – and take account of them when designing and delivering the course.
5.6	Courses must be revised when there are significant changes in practice, to make sure they are up to date.
5.7	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must be supervised using an agreed system in all learning and training environments, to ensure patient safety at all times.

5.8	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must only carry out tasks in which they are competent, or are learning under supervision to be competent in, so that patient safety is not compromised.
5.9	Course regulations must be appropriate for a course that leads to professional registration. That is, they must prioritise professionalism, patient safety, and safe and effective practice.
5.10	All course providers and employers must have procedures to deal with concerns. Serious concerns that may affect a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician's suitability for future registration must be reported to the GPhC.

Domain 6 – Course assessment

Standard	
6.	Courses must have an assessment strategy which assesses required skills, knowledge, understanding and professional behaviours to meet the outcomes in part 1 of these standards. The assessment strategy must assess whether a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician's practice is safe.
Criteria	
6.1	Courses must have an assessment strategy which ensures that assessment is robust, reliable and valid.
6.2	The assessment strategy must assess the learning outcomes in part 1 of these standards. Methods used must be appropriate for what is being assessed; and teaching, learning and assessment must be aligned.
6.3	The assessment strategy must include a methodology to assess decisions of competence in the workplace and other appropriate environments.
6.4	Patient safety must come first at all times, and the assessment strategy must assess whether a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician is practising safely as a trainee.
6.5	Monitoring systems must be in place in all learning and training environments. The systems must assess a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician's progress towards meeting the learning outcomes in part 1 of these standards. They must ensure that a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician's practice is safe at all times, as a trainee. Causes for concern must be dealt with as soon as possible.
6.6	Agreements must be in place between course providers and the workplace regarding the roles and responsibilities for assessment.
6.7	Assessments must be carried out by appropriately trained and qualified people who are competent to assess the performance of pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians.
6.8	There must be independent quality assurance of assessment processes. Quality assurance processes should be carried out by an external and appropriately qualified person or organisation, that is not an employee of the course provider and has no involvement with the pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician in their day-to-day work.
6.9	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must receive appropriate and timely feedback on their performance, to support their development as pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians and professionals.
6.10	Assessment regulations must be appropriate for a course that leads to professional registration. That is, they must prioritise professionalism, patient safety, and safe and effective practice.

Domain 7 – Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician support and the learning experience

Standard	
7.	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must be supported in all learning and training environments to develop as trainees and professionals during their initial education and training.
Criteria	
7.1	<p>There must be a range of systems in place to support trainees to achieve the learning outcomes in part 1 of these standards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • induction • effective supervision • an appropriate and realistic workload • personal and academic support • time to learn • access to resources.
7.2	There must be systems in place for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians to meet regularly with workplace colleagues to discuss and document their progress as learners.
7.3	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must have support available to them covering academic study, general welfare and career advice.
7.4	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must have access to pharmacy professionals who are able to act as role models and give professional support and guidance.
7.5	Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must have the opportunity to work in multidisciplinary teams.
7.6	There must be clear procedures for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians to raise concerns. Any concerns must be dealt with promptly, with documented action taken when appropriate. Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must be made aware of the GPhC's guide to raising concerns about pharmacy education and training.
7.7	Everyone supporting pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must take into account the GPhC's guidance on tutoring for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in their work.

The accreditation and recognition processes (Route 1 and Route 2)

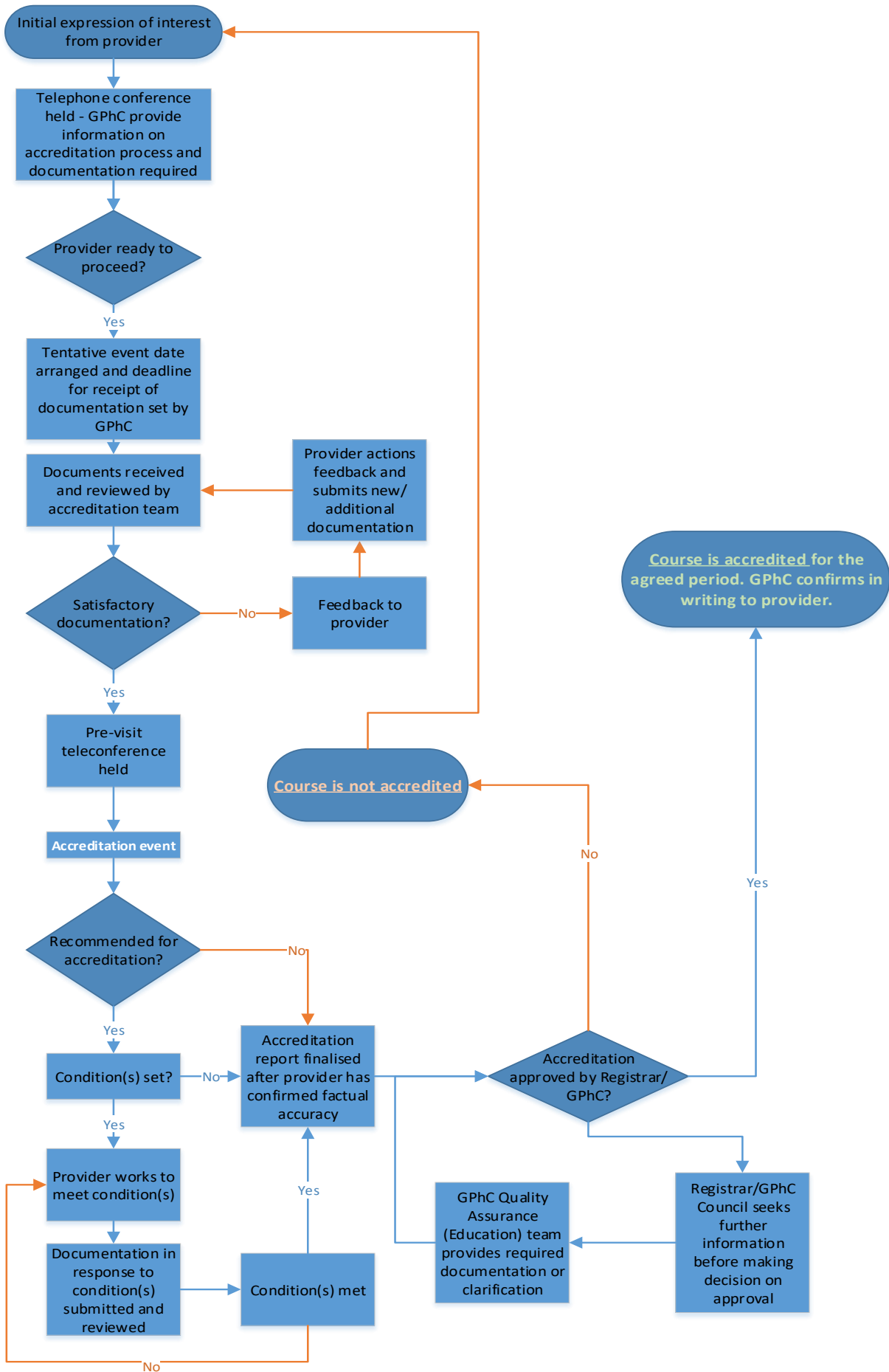
The below route describes the accreditation process for a course that is designed to meet the standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians - October 2017.

Route 1 – accreditation of a course

1. The provider will contact the GPhC to express their initial interest in the development of a pharmacy technician course. During this discussion the provider **must** identify how the proposed course will demonstrate its ability to meet the competency **and** knowledge-based requirements as set out in the initial education and training for pharmacy technicians [October 2017].
2. At the initial point interest the GPhC will suggest and agree provisional dates for a pre-event teleconference and accreditation event. The provider will be given the opportunity to ask any clarification questions about the GPhC accreditation process.
3. The GPhC will organise an appropriate accreditation team as per **section 5** of this document and confirm the proposed team members and event date with the provider. Any conflict of interests in relation to team members should be notified to the GPhC immediately.
4. The provider will complete **parts 1 and 2** of the submission template and submit this to the GPhC approximately six weeks prior to the agreed accreditation event date. All supporting documentation must be included with the submission.
5. Two weeks before the event, and following review of the documentation, the accreditation team will submit their findings and notify the GPhC as to whether the provider appears ready for accreditation.
6. The pre-event teleconference will be held approximately two week prior to the main event. This will involve a GPhC representative, the team leader of the accreditation event, and the provider.
7. The accreditation event will be held and appropriate representatives from the provider will be present to answer any questions posed by the accreditation team.
8. The accreditation team will give a verbal recommendation, based on the submission and evidence provided at the event, as to whether the provider meets the requirements for accreditation. A formal recommendation will be sent to the provider within 2 working days after the event. See **section 9** for possible outcomes.
9. Approximately three weeks after the event a draft record and report of the accreditation event will be prepared by the rapporteur and forwarded to the GPhC for review.
10. Approximately five weeks after the accreditation event, the record and report will be examined by the team members and any comments addressed by the GPhC representative and rapporteur.

11. Approximately seven weeks after the event the draft record and report will be forwarded to provider to check factual accuracy.
12. Any conditions imposed by the team will usually be expected to be met prior to the record and report being considered by the Registrar
13. Approximately ten weeks after the event the record and report will be considered by the Registrar who will make the final approval decision.
14. Approximately twelve weeks after the event the record will be published on the GPhC website accompanied by the formal response on accreditation from the provider.

Flow chart of process for route 1 - accreditation



Route 2 – the recognition of a qualification

Qualification development (stage 1)

The below route describes the recognition process for a qualification that is designed to meet the standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians - October 2017. **Stage 1** is designed to recognise a pharmacy technician qualification⁴ in order for the awarding bodies to gain qualification regulatory approval. **Stage 2** is designed to recognise the awarding body and their ability to implement the approved qualification. If the awarding body proposes to use an existing recognised pharmacy technician qualification, only **stage 2** of this section is applicable.

Stage 1:

1. The awarding body will contact the GPhC to express initial interest in respect of qualification recognition. During this discussion the awarding body⁵ will explain how they seek to develop a suitable qualification, using the relevant qualification regulator guidance, that proposes to meet the standards of the GPhC's initial education and training for pharmacy technicians [October 2017].
2. At the point of initial interest, the GPhC will agree provisional dates for a pre-event teleconference and recognition event. The awarding body will be given the opportunity to ask any clarification questions about the GPhC recognition process.
3. The GPhC will organise an appropriate recognition team as per **section 5** of this document and confirm the recognition date with the awarding body.
4. The awarding body will complete **part 1** of the submission template and submit this to the GPhC approximately six weeks prior to the agreed recognition event date.
5. Two weeks before the event, and following review of the documentation, the recognition team will submit their findings and notify the GPhC as to whether the qualification appears ready for recognition.
6. The pre-event teleconference will be held approximately two weeks prior to the main event. This will involve a GPhC representative, the team leader of the recognition event, and the awarding body.
7. The recognition event will be held and appropriate representatives from the awarding body will be present to answer any questions posed by the recognition team.
8. The recognition team will give a verbal recommendation, based on the submission and evidence provided at the event, as to whether the qualification meets the requirements for recognition. A formal recommendation will be sent to the awarding body within 2 working days after the event. See **section 9** for possible outcomes. A standing condition of any qualification recognition by the

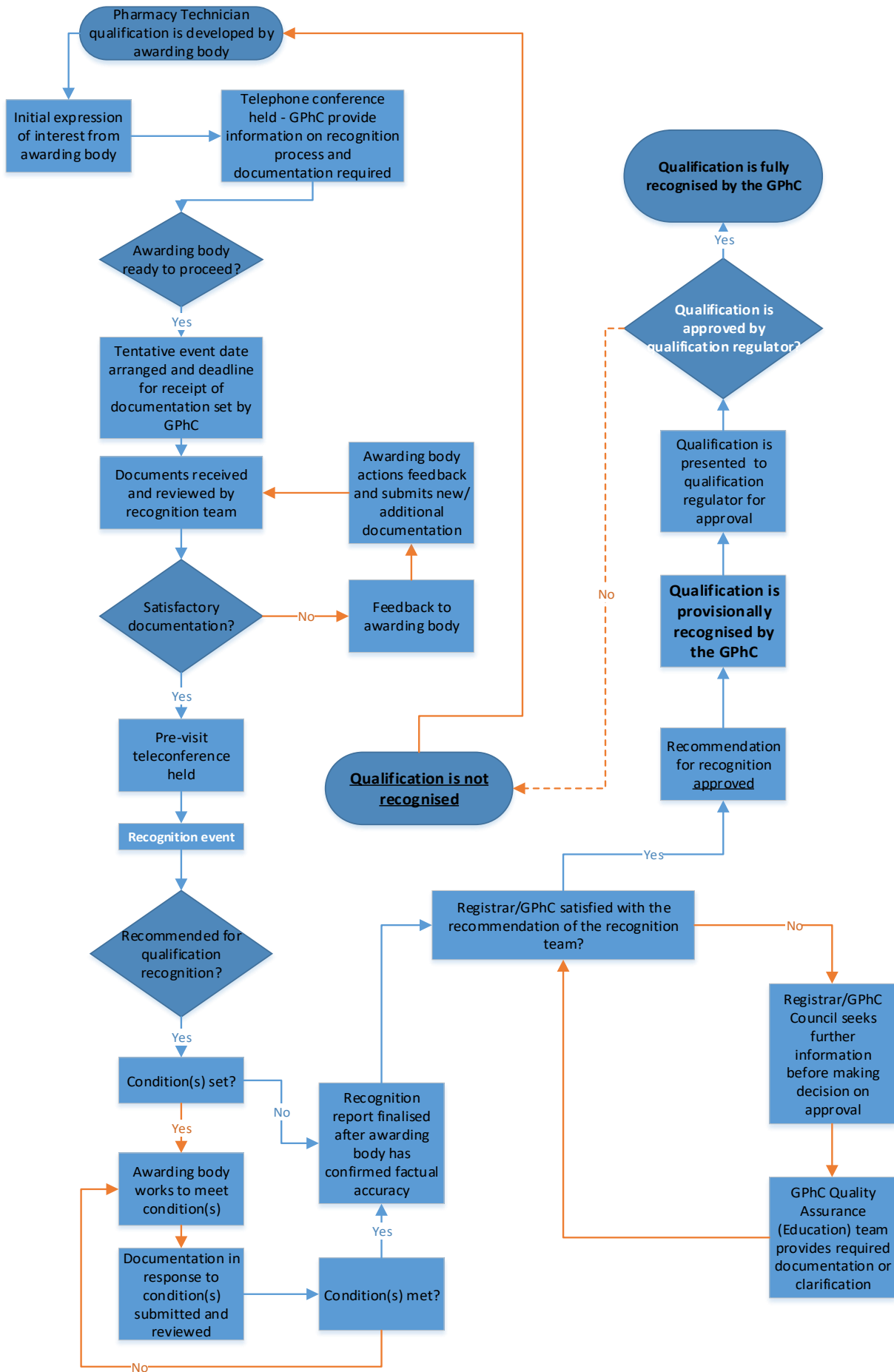
⁴ At RQF level 3 or above England and Wales. SCQF level 5 or above in Scotland

⁵ An awarding body in this context refers to a singular awarding body, a group of awarding bodies, or a facilitating organisation working with/on behalf of an awarding body in order to develop a pharmacy technician qualification.

GPhC will be on the basis that the qualification is recognised by the relevant qualification recognition authority.

9. Approximately two weeks after the event a draft record of the recognition event will be prepared by the rapporteur and forwarded to the GPhC for review.
10. Approximately three weeks after the accreditation event, the record and report will be examined by the team members and any comments addressed by the GPhC representative and rapporteur.
11. Approximately four weeks after the event the draft record will be forwarded to awarding body to check factual accuracy.
12. Any conditions imposed by the team will usually be expected to be met prior to the record and report being considered by the Registrar.
13. Approximately five weeks after the event the record and report will be considered by the Registrar who will make the final approval decision.
14. Approximately six weeks after the event the record will be published on the GPhC website accompanied by the formal response on recognition from the awarding body.

Flow chart of process for route 2 – Stage 1

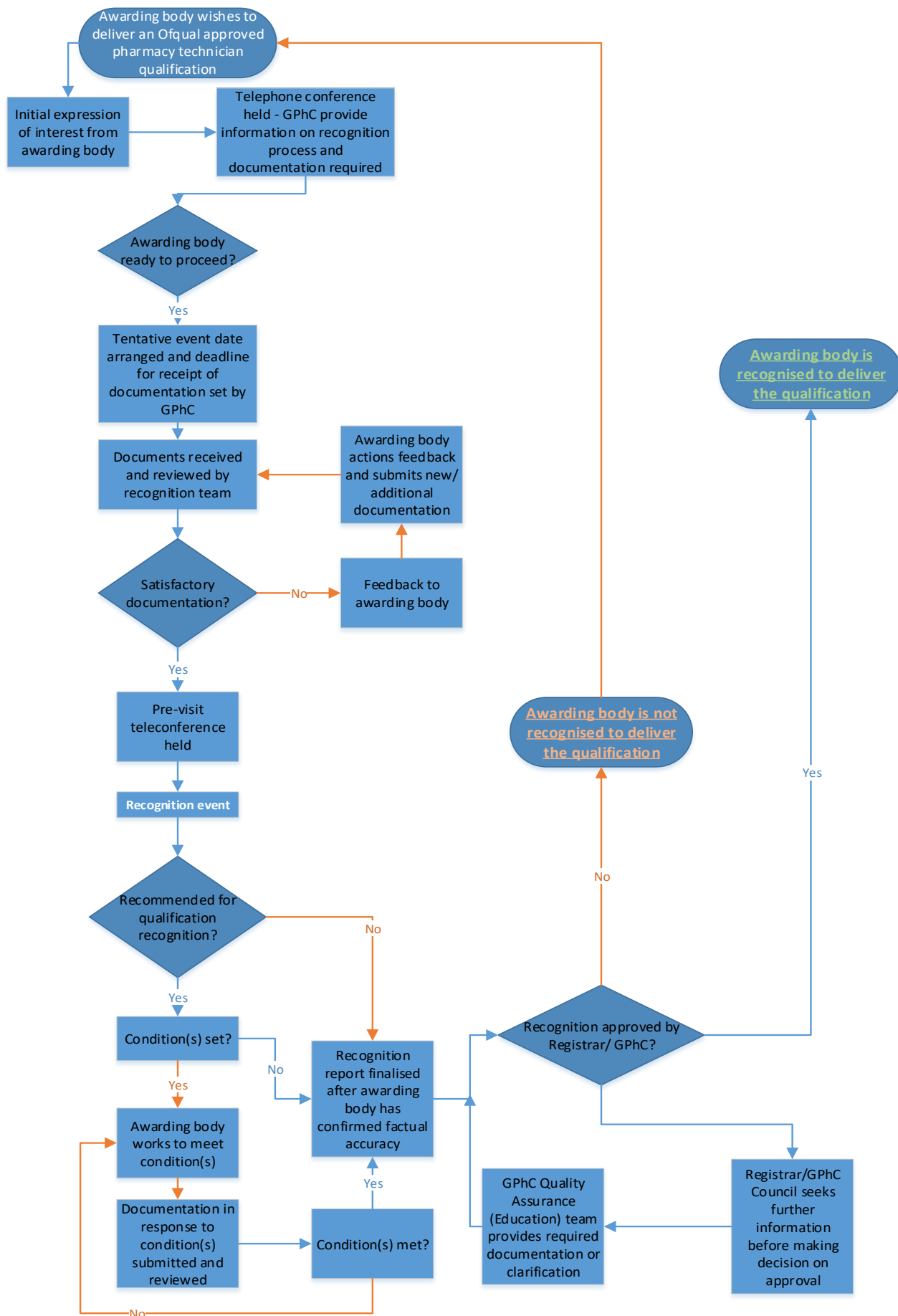


Awarding body implementation (stage 2)

1. When stage 1 has been completed and/or that there is already a regulated and recognised qualification in operation, the awarding body will contact the GPhC to express initial interest in respect of delivering the approved qualification.
2. The awarding body will contact the GPhC to express initial interest in respect of delivering an approved pharmacy technician qualification. During this discussion the awarding body will explain how they seek to deliver the approved qualification to meet the standards of the GPhC's initial education and training for pharmacy technicians [October 2017].
3. At the point of initial interest the GPhC will agree provisional dates for a pre-event teleconference and recognition event. The awarding body will be given the opportunity to ask any clarification questions about the GPhC recognition process.
4. The GPhC will organise an appropriate recognition team as per **section 5** of this document and confirm the recognition date with the awarding body.
5. The awarding body will complete **part 1 and 2** of the submission template and submit this to the GPhC approximately six weeks prior to the agreed recognition event date.
6. Two weeks before the event, and following review of the documentation, the recognition team will submit their findings and notify the GPhC as to whether the qualification appears ready to be delivered.
7. The pre-event teleconference will be held approximately 1 week prior to the main event. This will involve a GPhC representative, the team leader of the recognition event, and the provider.
8. The recognition event will be held and appropriate representatives from the awarding body will be present to answer any questions posed by the recognition team. This event will either be at the GPhC London office or the head office of the awarding body.
9. The recognition team will give a verbal recommendation, based on the submission and evidence provided at the event, as to whether the qualification meets the requirements for delivery. A formal recommendation will be sent to the awarding body within 2 working days after the event. See **section 9** for possible outcomes.
10. Approximately three weeks after the event a draft record of the recognition event will be prepared by the rapporteur and forwarded to the GPhC for review.
11. Approximately five weeks after the accreditation event, the record and report will be examined by the team members and any comments addressed by the GPhC representative and rapporteur.
12. Approximately seven weeks after the event the draft record will be forwarded to awarding body to check factual accuracy.
13. Approximately ten weeks after the event the record and report will be considered by the Registrar who will make the final approval decision. Any conditions imposed by the team will usually be expected to be met prior to the record and report being considered by the Registrar.

14. Approximately twelve weeks after the event the record will be published on the GPhC website accompanied by the formal response on recognition from the awarding body.

Flow chart of process for route 2 – Stage 2



5. Accreditation/recognition team composition

The GPhC accreditation/recognition team comprises members with suitable expertise drawn from its accreditation/recognition panel. The accreditation/recognition team will usually consist of four members of the accreditation/recognition panel with expertise in pharmacy technician courses.

At the point that the accreditation/recognition event date is confirmed, the course provider/awarding body will be given the names and job titles of those accreditation/recognition panel members who will be involved in the accreditation/recognition of the course/qualification. On receipt of the details of the accreditation/recognition team, the provider is asked to raise any objections, or potential conflicts of interest, with the GPhC.

During the accreditation/recognition event, the team will be accompanied by a rapporteur who will take notes and prepare a written account of the event to include the accreditation/recognition team's decision, in the form of an accreditation/recognition report and record. The rapporteur is not a member of the accreditation/recognition team and will play no role in the decision-making process. The rapporteur will only be involved in discussions during the event where it is necessary for them to ask for clarifications of fact to ensure accuracy within the report.

The accreditation team will also be accompanied by a member of staff from the GPhC Quality Assurance (Education) team who will oversee the accreditation process to ensure that the GPhC accreditation procedures and policies are followed and that decisions are made in a fair and consistent manner, with a focus on patient safety.

The accreditation team will be drawn from members of the accreditation/recognition panel. A Team Leader will be appointed from the panel for each accreditation/recognition event. As a guide, an accreditation/recognition team might be composed of the following members⁶:

- Team leader⁷
- Pharmacy technician (x2)
- Lay person

Recruitment, performance and remuneration

Members of the accreditation/recognition panel are Associates of the GPhC and must meet the GPhC's requirements for Associates, as well as the Code of Conduct for Accreditors. Accreditation/recognition panel members are required to meet core competencies for the role, against which they are appraised annually.

⁶ Qualification recognition events (stage 1) will not include a lay member

⁷ The team leader will be a pharmacist, pharmacy technician or the lay member of the panel

Panel members are required to make a declaration of any relevant interests e.g. providers for whom they have held an appointment, acted as external verifiers or for which they have or acted as a consultant and will commit to updating this declaration as the need arises. The GPhC Quality Assurance (Education) team holds a record of declared interests, and panel members are asked to update their record at the start of each academic year.

Panel members are paid an allowance and expenses for participation in accreditation/recognition events, including time spent preparing for the event. Details of current allowances are available from the General Pharmaceutical Council.

Training

All accreditation/recognition panel members are required to attend regular training and development sessions organised by the General Pharmaceutical Council. All panel members are trained in equality and diversity legislation.

6. Documentation

Format and content

The submission documentation must describe in detail how the provider/awarding body will meet all of the accreditation/recognition standards⁸ and ensure that pharmacy technicians successfully completing the course/qualification will meet all of the learning outcomes and be safe to register and practice as a pharmacy technician.

Upon receipt of submission documentation, it will be circulated by the GPhC to the accreditation/recognition team members for review. For reaccreditation/re-recognition events, the accreditation team will also be sent a copy of the report and record relating to the provider/awarding body previous accreditation/recognition event. The provider/awarding body submission will be scrutinised by the accreditation/recognition team between 6 and 2 weeks before the accreditation/recognition event. If the documentation does not adhere to the format and guidelines within the application templates, or if the accreditation/recognition team considers, based on the documentation provided, that the course/qualification is not yet ready for an accreditation/recognition event, the documentation will be returned, and the event date will be postponed.

Please see submission templates for detailed guidance on the required format of the submission document and the number of copies that should be provided.

⁸ Except for the qualification recognition (stage 1) process where only part 1 of the submission documentation is required

Deadline for receipt

The provider/awarding body must submit their submission documentation to the GPhC's Quality Assurance (Education) team by the agreed deadline. This is normally six weeks in advance of the accreditation/recognition event; however, the exact date will be confirmed in advance by the GPhC.

Completion of templates

Providers applying for accreditation or reaccreditation of a pharmacy technician course must complete the following:

- **pharmacy technician course submission template parts 1 & 2 - accompanied by supporting documentation**

An awarding body applying for recognition of a new pharmacy technician qualification **not** recognised by a qualification regulator must complete the following:

- **pharmacy technician course submission template stage 1 - accompanied by supporting documentation**

An awarding body applying for recognition of an approved and regulated qualification must complete the following:

- **pharmacy technician course submission template parts 1 & 2 - accompanied by supporting documentation**

Templates for the submission documents are provided on the [GPhC website](#).

Preparing for accreditation/recognition

The submission documentation is expected to reflect a course that has been fully developed and is ready for accreditation/recognition. All supporting documentation should be up to date and complete. The course is expected to be approved by internal processes and/or the relevant qualification regulator prior to accreditation/recognition by the GPhC. Evidence of this should be included as part of the submission.

Pre-event meeting

In order to support providers/awarding bodies of new pharmacy technician courses/qualifications, the GPhC offers a pre-event meeting via telephone at the beginning of the accreditation/recognition process. The purpose of this meeting is to support the provider's understanding of the GPhC's accreditation/recognition requirements for pharmacy technician courses, and to answer the provider's/awarding body's queries regarding the accreditation/recognition process. The pre-event is an essential part of the process for new providers/awarding bodies. This is to ensure that the requirements for accreditation/recognition are fully understood before submission documentation is prepared.

7. The accreditation/recognition event

Location

Should the GPhC be approached by a provider that does not have experience of offering an accredited/recognised pharmacy technician course/qualification, the accreditation/recognition event will take place on site at the provider's/awarding body's location. This is to enable the accreditation/recognition team to take a view on the available facilities and/or resources from first-hand experience.

Reaccreditation/re-recognition events for courses/qualifications are normally held at the GPhC Offices in London. The GPhC reserves the right to vary locations if necessary.

8. Event schedules

Accreditation events

Day 1

13:30 – 17:00	Private meeting of the accreditation team to review course documentation as a collective to formulate questions
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Day 2

09:00 – 09:30	Private meeting of the accreditation team
09:30 – 11:15	Accreditation team meet with course provider (presentation from provider) Q&A session
11:15 – 11:45	Demonstration of VLE system
11:45 – 12:30	Meeting with stakeholders (employers/patients) / trainees (if applicable)
12:30 – 13:00	Working lunch
13:00 – 14:00	Accreditation team meet with course provider and external quality assurance representatives
14:30 – 15:30	Meeting to test learning outcomes
15:30 – 16:30	Private meeting of the accreditation team
16:30 – 17:00	Feedback to provider

Recognition event (stage 1)

Day 1

09:30 – 12:30	Private meeting of the recognition team
12:30 – 13:00	Working lunch
13:00 – 15:30	Awarding body and GPhC recognition team meet
15:30 – 16:30	Private meeting of the GPhC recognition team
16:30 – 16:45	Feedback to awarding body

Recognition event (stage 2)

Day 1

09:00 – 11:30	Private meeting of the recognition team
11:30 – 13:00	Recognition team meet with awarding body
13:00 – 13:30	Working lunch
13:30 – 14:30	Meeting to discuss learning outcomes
14:30 – 16:00	Private meeting of the recognition team
16:00 – 16:15	Feedback to awarding body

The above schedules are provided as a guide only. The final schedule and event location will be confirmed by the GPhC Quality Assurance (Education) team at the pre-event meeting.

Hospitality and acceptance of gifts

The accreditation/recognition team, either collectively or individually, may not accept payment or gifts from any institution, training provider or awarding body. Neither will they accept meals or refreshment constituting entertainment rather than sustenance, or transport except for essential local travel.

9. The accreditation/recognition reports

An accreditation/recognition report and record will be prepared following the accreditation/recognition event⁹. Approximately seven weeks after the event, the provider/awarding body will be sent a draft of these reports to check for matters of factual accuracy. Once the provider has confirmed that they are satisfied that the reports are a true record of the event, the documents will be finalised and submitted to the Registrar for approval. The accreditation/recognition team's recommendations are not binding on the Registrar and the Registrar may add, remove or modify points on reflection and in light the accreditation/recognition panel views. The accreditation/recognition team's feedback is confidential until it has been ratified by the Registrar.

Report

The accreditation/recognition report will consist of a summary of the discussions and the outcome. Once the accreditation/recognition team decision has been ratified by the Registrar the report will be published on the General Pharmaceutical Council's [website](#) and remain for the duration of the accreditation/recognition period.

Record

The record will consist of a detailed note of the discussions at the meetings and the outcome and will be kept confidential to the General Pharmaceutical Council and course provider/awarding body.

Formal approval

The accreditation/recognition is formally approved only once any conditions set have been met satisfactorily, and the provider has received written confirmation from the GPhC that the Registrar has accepted the recommendation for approval.

Along with the formal approval letter, the provider/awarding body will receive a final version of the record and report. The provider must formally respond to the record and report within three months. This response will be published on the [GPhC website](#) alongside the report for the duration of the accreditation/recognition period.

10. Outcomes of accreditation/recognition

The usual outcome of an accreditation/recognition event is expected to be a recommendation to the Registrar that accreditation/recognition is granted. This recommendation may be subject to conditions that must be met before accreditation/recognition is granted, and before pharmacy technicians are permitted to undertake the course/qualification.

⁹ This process is different for qualification recognition – stage 1.

An accreditation/recognition event will culminate in the accreditation/recognition team confirming that they will be making one of the following recommendations to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council:

1. **Pass** - Recommend a full period of accreditation/recognition (three years)
2. **Pass** - Recommend a shorter than normal period (less than three years) of accreditation/recognition
3. **Pass with remediation** - Recommend accreditation/recognition subject to conditions
4. **Refusal** - Recommend that accreditation/recognition is not granted (new courses)
5. **Withdrawal** - Recommend that accreditation/recognition is withdrawn (existing courses/qualifications)
6. **Probation** - Impose a requirement for an acceptable action plan subject to additional monitoring and review with probationary accreditation/recognition in the meantime (existing courses)

All conditions must be met before accreditation/recognition can be granted. Pharmacy technicians may not begin to undertake a new pharmacy technician course until the provider/awarding body receives formal notification in writing from the GPhC that accreditation/recognition has been approved by the Registrar.

Standing conditions of accreditation/recognition

The following conditions apply to all accredited/recognised providers of pharmacy technician courses/qualifications:

1. The record and report include other comments from the team and the provider/awarding body are required to take all comments into account as part of the accreditation/recognition process. The provider/awarding body must confirm to the GPhC that required amendments have been made.
2. The provider/awarding body must respond to the definitive version of the record and report within three months of receipt. The summary report, along with the provider's response, will be published on the GPhC's website for the duration of the accreditation/recognition period.
3. The provider/awarding body must seek approval from the GPhC for any substantial change (or proposed change) which is, or has the potential to be, material to the delivery of an accredited/recognised course/qualification. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. the content, structure or delivery of the accredited/recognised course/qualification;
 - b. ownership or management structure of the institution;
 - c. resources and/or funding;
 - d. trainee numbers and/or admissions policy;
 - e. changes/conditions imposed by qualification regulators;
 - f. any existing partnership, licensing or franchise agreement;
 - g. staff associated with the course.
4. The provider/awarding body must make trainees and potential trainees aware that successful completion of an accredited course or recognised qualification is not a guarantee of future employment as a pharmacy technician.

5. The provider/awarding body must make trainees and potential trainees aware of the existence and website address where they can view the GPhC's accreditation/recognition reports and the timescales for future accreditation/recognition events.
6. Whenever required to do so by the GPhC, providers/awarding bodies must give such information and assistance as the GPhC may reasonably require in connection with the exercise of its functions. Any information in relation to fulfilment of these standing conditions must be provided in a proactive and timely manner.

Non-compliance

If at any time the GPhC identifies that a provider/awarding body is not complying with the accreditation/recognition criteria it will make it a "condition of accreditation/recognition" that the provider/awarding body rectifies the non-compliance within a specified period of time. These conditions may be applied:

- at the point of accrediting/recognising the course/qualification;
- as a consequence of monitoring by the GPhC;
- if changes to the course/qualification become necessary in the interests of users.

The GPhC reserves the right to investigate if evidence suggests that the accreditation/recognition standards are no longer being met. An investigation may require an additional visit and/or meeting with staff and trainees.

Probation or withdrawal of accreditation/recognition

The GPhC reserves the right to impose probationary or remedial arrangements or withdraw accreditation/recognition if conditions of accreditation/recognition are not met within the specified period or immediately, if a serious deficiency is identified.

The provider will be notified in writing of the decision of the Council in not less than 1 month of the accreditation/recognition event setting out reasons and the right of appeal to the Appeals Committee.

Certification

The provider/awarding body is responsible for issuing the award and certificate of completion to all successful trainees.

11.Complaints

Any complaints arising from the accreditation/recognition process will be referred to the Registrar.

Appeals against accreditation/recognition process or outcomes

For the avoidance of appeals, shortly after the accreditation/recognition event, the provider/awarding body can offer to the original accreditation/recognition team further or clarifying information or evidence (this must be new information or evidence) about important matters at issue.

At the time of relevant consideration by the Council, the provider/awarding body might again offer further or clarifying information or evidence (this must be new information or evidence) about important matters at issue.

Appeals against decisions to impose probational or remedial measures or to refuse or withdraw approval of a course/qualification must be made to the Appeals Committee.

Appeals committee

Having considered the appeal, the Appeals committee may:

- (a) dismiss the appeal;
- (b) allow the appeal and quash the decision appealed against;
- (c) substitute for the decision appealed against any other decision that the person taking the decision could have taken; or
- (d) remit or refer the case to the Registrar for the disposal of the matter in accordance with the Appeals Committee's directions.

The Appeals Committee must, as soon as reasonably practicable, send to the provider bringing the appeal a statement in writing giving them notice of the committee's decision and the reasons for it.

The Appeals Committee is not required to publish its decision and the reasons for it unless the provider making the appeal so requests.

