

Registering as a pharmacist in Great Britain: internationally-qualified pharmacists

Find out about the route to registering as a pharmacist in Great Britain if you have an international pharmacist qualification which is not a 'relevant European qualification'.

Who this factsheet is for

If you want to register as a pharmacist with us and you have completed an international pharmacist qualification which is not a 'relevant European qualification', and all the education and training requirements to be eligible to register as a pharmacist in the country where you qualified, this factsheet explains the steps you will need to complete and the additional education and training you will need to carry out in Great Britain before you are able to apply to register.

What education and training do I need to complete?

To be eligible to apply to register as a pharmacist, you will need to complete:

1. **an Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme (OSPAP)**
2. **52 weeks of pre-registration training** in England, Scotland or Wales signed off as satisfactory by your tutor
3. **the GPhC registration assessment** with a pass result

You must complete these steps and apply to be registered within four years from the date you start your OSPAP course.

The right to live and work in the UK

If you complete the education and training you will be able to apply to register, but this does not mean that you will be able to live or work in the UK, or that you are guaranteed to find a job as a pharmacist.

Before you start the education and training, you should carefully consider information provided by the UK Borders Agency (UKBA) to see whether you will be able to get the necessary visas and work permits. Unfortunately, we are not able to answer questions about this.

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About the GPhC

Who we are

We regulate pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain.

We work to assure and improve standards of care for people using pharmacy services.

What we do

Our role is to protect the public and give them assurance that they will receive safe and effective care when using pharmacy services.

We set standards for pharmacy professionals and pharmacies to enter and remain on our register.

We seek assurance that pharmacy professionals and pharmacies continue to meet our standards, including by inspecting pharmacies.

We act to protect the public and to uphold public confidence in pharmacy if there are concerns about a pharmacy professional or pharmacy on our register.

Through our work we help to promote professionalism, support continuous improvement and assure the quality and safety of pharmacy.

Step 1: completing an OSPAP course

An OSPAP course is a one-year, full time postgraduate diploma course run by some UK universities. You can find [**a list of universities that offer OSPAP courses on our website.**](#)

The course is designed to make sure that you receive the right education and training to prepare you to practise in the UK, and to complete pre-registration training.

You will need to pay a fee to a university to complete the course, and you will have to consider how to support yourself while you are studying.

Applying to complete an OSPAP course

We will verify your qualifications and experience to check that you are eligible to apply to complete an OSPAP course.

Complete our *Applying for eligibility to complete an Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme (OSPAP)* form so that we can assess your eligibility. There is a **£687.00** fee for processing this application form.

Your pharmacy qualification

You will need to know how your pharmacy qualification compares to the UK MPharm qualification.

The **UK National Recognition Information Centre** (UK NARIC) can assess your qualification and provide an official document called a 'Statement of Comparability', that states how your international qualifications compare to UK qualifications.

You can **find out more on the UK NARIC website.** If you have any doubts about how your qualification compares with a UK qualification, we recommend that you request an assessment before going any further.

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If we decide that your qualifications and experience meet the eligibility criteria, you will be able to apply for an OSPAP course. You must start a course within the next two academic years of the date of you receive our decision that you are eligible. For example, if you receive the decision before September 2021, you must start your course in 2021, or in 2022.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, you must complete one of the qualifications leading to registration (such as an MPharm) to be able to practise as a pharmacist in Great Britain.

As part of the *Applying for eligibility to complete an Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme (OSPAP)* form, we will ask you to choose the universities where you would like to complete your OSPAP.

You can find **[a list of universities that offer OSPAP courses on our website](#)**. We recommend that you find out about the different courses on offer before you send us your form.

If your qualifications and experience meet the eligibility criteria, we notify the universities you have chosen that you are eligible to apply. We will contact them to confirm that you are eligible to apply for the course, and we may send them some of the information that you provide as part of your application.

The university may contact you once we have written to them to confirm that you are eligible to apply, but we recommend that you get in touch with them yourself, once you know the outcome of your application.

Once we have sent your information to the university, they may ask you for more information about your qualifications and

experience, to decide about offering you a place. The information we send them shows that you are eligible to apply, but it does not mean that they must offer you a place.

Make sure you apply in good time for your course and your pre-registration training placement

There is no deadline for you to submit your application to us, but you should do it in good time before the start of the course that you plan to study. National training placement schemes also open their applications up to 14 months before placements are due to start.

The OSPAP course normally starts at the start of the UK academic year, in September or October. To make sure you can apply for courses, you should send your application to us so that we receive it before 31 July.

Providing evidence of English language competency

You will need to provide evidence of your English language competency as part of your application. You can find out how to provide evidence, and what types we will accept in the **[Providing evidence of English language competency guidance pack](#)**. You can find more information about the legal requirements in our **[guidance on evidence of English language skills](#)**.

The OSPAP course structure and content

The course includes:

- a structured academic assessment of your qualifications
- attending specific modules
- completing assessments

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Depending on your knowledge and previous experience, you may be exempt from some taught elements, but you will have to complete all the assessments.

If you complete the OSPAP course successfully, this will demonstrate that you have met the UK MPharm graduate criteria, but it will not give you a MPharm (Master of Pharmacy) degree qualification.

You can find out more information about each course structure and content on the university website.

Step 2: pre-registration training placement

Under the supervision of a tutor, trainees spend at least 52 weeks in a GPhC approved training site, developing their practice to meet a range of performance standards. Their progress is guided by and verified by their tutor, using progress reviews.

You can **find out more about the structure of the training placement in the pre-registration manual.**

Both UK-qualified MPharm and OSPAP students must successfully complete the pre-registration training placement to be eligible to sit the registration assessment and meet the criteria for registration.

The placement is currently a paid position, and is usually full time. You may be able to make arrangements with your employer about working patterns, or to work part time, but you should contact us so we can approve this.

Finding a training placement

Once you have successfully completed your OSPAP, you will be eligible to start your pre-registration training placement.

But you should investigate applying for your placement before you start your OSPAP course, especially if you want to apply to a national scheme.

Trainees are responsible for finding their own training placement and tutor, and letting us know the arrangements they have made by applying for entry to the pre-registration scheme. We will assess their application to make sure that they are eligible to start training, and that the arrangements they have made are suitable and will provide them with the opportunity to meet the performance standards.

Your course tutors should be able to tell you more about the pre-registration training placements available near you.

You can **find out more about finding a training placement** on our website.

National training schemes

As well as individual training providers, there are national recruitment schemes for training places.

If you want to train in England or Wales, Health Education England operates a **national recruitment scheme** for all hospital pre-registration placements, and many other community training providers.

If you want to train in Scotland, NHS Education for Scotland operates a national recruitment scheme for all pre-registration placements. You

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can **find out more about the scheme and the timeline for applications** on their website.

You can apply to the individual schemes through the **online application portal, Oriel**. The Scotland scheme accepts applications in May each year and England and Wales accepts applications in June each year, for placements starting the following year. This means that you may not have started your OSPAP course before you apply for pre-registration training, if you want to start training straight after your course.

For example, if you want to complete your OSPAP course in 2021/22 and start training in 2022, you will need to apply for your placement in May or June 2021, depending on which scheme you are applying to.

You can **find out more about the England and Wales application process** (including the application timelines and the structure of the interviews) by visiting the 'Resource Bank' section on the Oriel website.

Step 3: the registration assessment

The registration assessment is one of the ways we test whether trainees can demonstrate that they understand how to apply knowledge appropriately and in a timely way, to make professional judgements in pharmacy practice. It also tests their number sense and that they can perform the calculations needed to practise as a pharmacist.

There are two registration assessments per year, in June and September. The registration assessment consists of two question papers. Candidates must pass both papers at one attempt but can have up to three attempts to

pass the registration assessment. The assessment is carried out simultaneously in locations across Great Britain.

You must complete a certain amount of training before you are eligible to apply to sit the registration assessment. When you reach these points in your training will affect whether you sit the assessment in June or September.

You can **find out more about the registration assessment** in the pre-registration manual.

Step 4: registration

Once you have successfully completed an OSPAP course, 52 weeks of pre-registration training, and the registration assessment, you are eligible to apply to register with us as a pharmacist. You will need to apply through the myGPhC online system. You must apply to be registered within four years of the date you start your OSPAP course.

You can **find out more about applying to register as a pharmacist on our website**.

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