

**Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) support
staff qualification recognition event report, parts 1
and 2, March 2021**



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Event summary and conclusions

Provider	Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
Course	Support staff qualification
Names of courses	SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6
Event type	Recognition
Event date	25 March 2021
Approval period	May 2021 – May 2027
Relevant requirements	Requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff, October 2020
Framework used	National Occupational Standards
Outcome	<p>Approval with conditions</p> <p>The recognition team has agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 (and associated modern apprenticeship framework) developed by the SQA should be recognised for a period of six years, with an interim event in three years, subject to one condition.</p>
Conditions	<p>1. Although the recognition team accept the limitations of the mapping against the National Occupational Standards in the development of qualifications, the team could see limited evidence of relevant mapping to the GPhC generic learning outcomes, specifically generic outcomes 3 and 9. It is therefore a condition that SQA should develop additional guidance in order to support centre providers and assessors in development of course material and assessment strategies directly against the GPhC generic learning outcomes. This is to meet criteria 2a, 3a and 3b.</p> <p>Evidence of how the SQA has addressed the condition must be sent to the GPhC, for approval by the recognition team. This must be sent to the GPhC for review before end of May 2021.</p>
Standing conditions	A link to the standing conditions can be found here .
Recommendations	No recommendations were made.

Registrar decision	The Registrar of the GPhC has reviewed the recognition report and considered the team's recommendation. The Registrar has accepted the team's recommendation and has confirmed that the SQA is recognised to offer the SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 (and associated modern apprenticeship framework) for a period of six years, with an interim in three years' time, and that the condition stated has been met.
Key contact (provider)	Jonathan Gillies, Qualifications Manager
Recognition team	Barbara Wensworth (Team Leader) Currently Freelance Pharmacy Lecturer, Standards Verifier, assessor and writer Laura McEwen-Smith (Pharmacy Technician) Strategic Project Lead, Pharmacy and Primary Care Development, Health Education England Catherine Davies (Pharmacy Technician) Free-lance Education and Training provider Leonie Milliner (Lay Member) Director of Education, General Optical Council
GPhC representative	Chris McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC
Rapporteur	Professor Brian Furman, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, University of Strathclyde

Introduction

Role of the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and is the accrediting body for pharmacy education in Great Britain. The approval process is based on the Requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff – October 2020.

GPhC in relation to the accreditation of pharmacy education are legislated in the Pharmacy Order 2010. For more information, visit: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/231/contents/made>

Background

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is the statutory awarding body for qualifications in Scotland, while the development of health-related vocational work-based qualifications (SVQs) in Scotland is the responsibility of Skills for Health. The current qualification for pharmacy support staff, an SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 5, has had a very modest uptake since its development in 2010. A revised training programme has been developed based on the latest National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the GPhC requirements for the education and training

of pharmacy support staff. The SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 has been mapped by Skills for Health to the GPhC requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff working in a community, hospital or primary care setting; it was designed and developed in partnership with a number of key pharmacy stakeholders, including SQA, SQA Accreditation, NHS Education for Scotland, NHS pharmacy employer representatives, Community Pharmacy Scotland, pharmacy education and training specialists and training providers. A recognition event was scheduled for March 2021; this was undertaken against the GPhC's 2020 'Requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff' and the following is a report of that event.

Documentation

Prior to the event, the provider submitted documentation to the GPhC in line with the agreed timescales. The documentation was reviewed by the accreditation team and it was deemed to be satisfactory to provide a basis for discussion.

Pre-event

In advance of the main event, a pre-event meeting took place by videoconference on 8 March 2021. The purpose of the pre-event meeting was to prepare for the event, allow the GPhC and the provider to ask any questions or seek clarification, and to finalise arrangements for the event.

The event

The event took place by videoconference on 25 March 2021, and comprised a series of meetings with representatives of the SQA and external staff involved in the design and delivery of the qualification.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Key findings - Part 1 - Outcomes for all support staff

During the event the recognition team reviewed all 19 outcomes for all support staff and judged that two of the 19 learning outcomes **were not met** to the level required by the GPhC requirements. The following learning outcomes were not met: **3 and 9**. The learning outcomes that were not met will need amendment prior to the first intake of trainees being admitted to the qualification (see 'Event summary and outcome').

Key findings - Part 2: Standards for the initial education and training

Criteria 1: equality, diversity and inclusion

Criteria met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team was satisfied that all three criteria relating to equality, diversity and inclusion are or will be met.

SQA's policy on the equality of access to its qualifications, reflecting the requirement of the Equality Act 2010, supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment, education and training, and opposes all forms of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of disability, race, age, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation. Approved centres can make reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning or assessment in order to help those with specific needs. SQA develops methods of assessment and quality assurance which are sensitive to the needs of all learners but which do not compromise the overarching aims of fairness and consistency. Assessment arrangements are provided to allow disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs to access the assessment without compromising its integrity. For learners with disabilities, SQA will make reasonable adjustments in accordance with relevant legislation. In order to become an SQA approved centre, centres must evidence that learners will be supported and guided through the qualifications for which they are entered; this evidence includes an equal opportunities policy or statement, including equal access to assessment, and information on the process which will be used for identifying specific additional needs of learners, identifying, implementing and reviewing appropriate assessment arrangements, as well as a statement of intent to provide support and assessment arrangements for learners with additional needs. This ensures that selection data are analysed and used for course development purposes.

Criteria 2: course curriculum

Criteria met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team was satisfied that five of the six criteria relating to course curriculum are or will be met with one criterion (2.a) subject to a condition.

The SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 was developed using National Occupational Standards (NOS); it was designed and developed by Skills for Health in partnership with a number of key pharmacy stakeholders, including the SQA, SQA Accreditation, NHS Education for Scotland, NHS pharmacy employer representatives, Community Pharmacy Scotland, pharmacy education and training specialists and training providers. It is a workplace-based qualification designed to ensure the integration of knowledge, competency and work experience. The course curriculum has been mapped to the learning outcomes described in part 1 of this report. The programme comprises four mandatory and three optional units, all of which must be passed to achieve the qualification; guidance has been developed on the selection of optional units within

the framework, based on whether the trainee is in a hospital, industrial or community setting.

In considering the broad statements that make up the four mandatory NOS units, the team was unable to confirm that these could be readily mapped to all of the GPhC's generic outcomes; in particular, it was unclear how person-centred care (learning outcome 3) and raising concerns (learning outcome 9) are integrated into the curriculum and assessed, and how the SQA can be assured that all centres will interpret this in the same way. Discussions with the SQA revealed that, although the NOS had been mapped to the GPhC's learning outcomes, the requirement was that centres deliver the NOS outcomes without specific reference to those required by the GPhC. Thus, the team's concern was that the requirement to deliver the GPhC learning outcomes is not explicitly articulated and criterion 2.a is not met. Therefore, the team imposed a condition that the SQA should develop additional guidance in order to support centre providers and assessors in development of course material and assessment strategies directly against the GPhC generic learning outcomes (see 'Event summary and outcome').

Criteria 3: assessment

Criteria met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team was satisfied that two of the four criteria relating to assessment are or will be met with criteria 3.a and 3.b subject to a condition.

The assessment of the SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 must follow the requirements of the Skills for Health Assessment Strategy for the SVQs in Pharmacy Services. Integration of knowledge and practice is a fundamental feature of work within the pharmacy sector, and it is expected that a range of different assessment methods will be used. Evidence for attainment of each outcome is obtained from the learner's performance at work. Assessment includes direct observation of practice by a qualified assessor or by an expert witness, and a professional discussion between the learner and assessor, as well as a reflective account. Assessment may also include direct questioning and assignments, assessment of products generated during the learners' normal work practices and expert witness testimony/evidence. Direct observation of the trainee's performance in the workplace must be the primary source of evidence.

Observations should be of naturally occurring practice within the trainee's work role and include demonstration of application of knowledge and understanding. Each SVQ unit has knowledge and understanding relevant to the specified area of practice. Assessment of knowledge and understanding should, wherever possible, be carried out during performance to ensure integration of theory and practice. Assessors, who take the lead role in the assessment must be pharmacists or pharmacy technicians who are competent in the area of practice to which the NOS being assessed apply. Expert witnesses must be occupationally competent in the area of practice relevant to the particular NOS, and have either a qualification in the assessment of workplace performance, or a professional work role which involves evaluating the everyday practice of staff. The internal verification process, undertaken by pharmacists or pharmacy technicians ensures that all learners entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and consistently to the specified standard (see criteria 5). In order to pass a work-based unit, learners must be able to demonstrate all of the required knowledge and performance statements included in the SVQ unit/NOS; all component units must be passed.

In considering assessment of outcomes, the team could see only limited evidence of relevant mapping to the GPhC generic learning outcomes, specifically generic outcomes 3 and 9, as discussed under criteria 2. Thus, criteria 3.a and 3.b are not met and the team therefore imposed a condition that the SQA should develop additional guidance in order to support centre providers and assessors in development of course material and assessment strategies directly against the GPhC generic learning outcomes (see 'Event summary and outcome').

Criteria 4: management, resources and capacity

Criteria met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team was satisfied that all eight criteria relating to management, resources and capacity are or will be met.

The evidence required to become an SQA-approved centre includes demonstration of processes in place for reviewing the reference, learning and assessment materials, assessment environments and equipment, resources and staff that the centre has in place to support the delivery of the qualification. This evidence covers information on how requirements for qualifications and experience of assessors and internal verifiers are addressed in the recruitment processes, the systems, policies and procedures for managing the centre, and the detailed roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in delivering the course, as well as how the centre will review assessment environments, equipment, reference, learning and assessment materials. All assessors must be registered pharmacists or pharmacy technicians and must be specialists in this field, ensuring that trainees are monitored, assessed and supported throughout their training to ensure that they are able to practise safely and effectively. Centres must describe the places in which their learners will be assessed, the equipment that will be used to allow learners to attain the qualification and the reference and learning materials that will be used to develop and maintain learners' knowledge and skills in relation to the qualification content. All of these aspects are scrutinised during the SQA's annual external verification process.

Criteria 5: quality management

Criteria met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team was satisfied that all four criteria relating to quality management are or will be met.

The SQA manages the quality of all programmes delivered by its various centres. In order to be approved by the SQA, centres must provide evidence covering the systems, policies and procedures for managing the centre, the processes for reviewing the reference, learning and assessment materials, the assessment environments and equipment, resources and staff, and how the centre supports learners throughout their qualification. Evidence must also be produced showing the systems, policies and procedures to ensure that all assessment decisions will be consistent with qualification standards, and how the centres will maintain records of their internal verification processes; internal verification is a crucial element of SQA's quality assurance, ensuring that all learners entered for the same qualification are assessed fairly and

consistently to the specified standard. Centres must describe how they will manage communication with staff and learners, and how they will gather feedback from learners and employers and use this to inform improvements. In addition, centres must provide detailed roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in delivering the course, and a robust learner induction; they must also provide a copy of a partnership agreement if they intend to offer any part of the qualification in partnership with another organisation or centre. After gaining approval as an SQA centre, a systems verification visit takes place within one year to ensure that the centre meets the SQA's criteria in managing its systems and resources. Qualification verification is the process by which SQA ensures that centres are assessing their learners in line with national standards, and that assessment decisions comply with the SQA's quality assurance criteria. All centres will undergo an annual qualification verification visit by subject experts. Where matters affecting an approved pharmacy support staff course are identified, SQA, the training provider and/or the employer will raise relevant issues proactively with GPhC. A Pharmacy Qualification Support Team (QST), the membership of which includes all SQA approved centres and key stakeholders, will meet annually; its remit is to monitor, evaluate, and address issues relating to the delivery, assessment and verification of the group award, including resources and quality assurance processes. Where updates and/or changes are required to the training programme, SQA will liaise with Skills for Health, SQA Accreditation and the GPhC to discuss the required changes.

Criteria 6: supporting learners and the learning experience

Criteria met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team was satisfied that all five criteria relating to supporting learners and the learning experience are or will be met.

Employers will complete a pre-enrolment candidate information pack for each trainee, describing the selection of relevant optional units, and the support arrangements in place for the trainee, as well as confirmation of the allocated protected learning time each week; this pack will also confirm the named employer contact to allow discussions to take place relating to the time and opportunities required by trainees to meet the course requirements. Centres must provide a learner induction outlining the support available to trainees; this induction will cover general welfare and career advice, academic study, support, details of the assessments and opportunities for re-assessment, how feedback on assessments will be provided, malpractice and declarations of authenticity, complaint/grievance procedures, and internal assessment appeals. In addition, centres must provide evidence for the process that ensures regular meetings between learners and their assessors to review progress and to revise their assessment plans accordingly. Trainees will work with pharmacists and/or pharmacy technicians and will be supervised using an agreed system in all learning and training environments at all times to ensure patient safety; they will be supported by educational supervisors and workplace mentors. Dedicated workplace educational supervisors will be in place to co-ordinate the training programme and to liaise regularly with the centre and work-based assessor(s).

Part 3 - Role-specific learning outcomes

Please see the individual qualification part 3 report for commentary.

