

**General  
Pharmaceutical  
Council**

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# Consultation on initial education and training standards for pharmacy technicians

December 2016





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## About the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in England, Scotland and Wales. It is our job to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the public by upholding standards and public trust in pharmacy.

Our main work includes:

- setting standards for the education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, and approving and accrediting their qualifications and training
- maintaining a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies
- setting the standards that pharmacy professionals have to meet throughout their careers
- investigating concerns that pharmacy professionals are not meeting our standards, and taking action to restrict their ability to practise when this is necessary to protect patients and the public
- setting standards for registered pharmacies which require them to provide a safe and effective service to patients
- inspecting registered pharmacies to check if they are meeting our standards

## Foreword

There are growing expectations on everyone working within health and care – including pharmacy – to give better-quality experiences and outcomes to patients and the public.

Our Strategic plan (2017–20) sets out our aim to use our regulatory powers to support and improve the delivery of safe, effective care and to uphold trust in pharmacy. One of the ways we intend to do this is by continuing to make sure the pharmacy team have the necessary knowledge they need, and display the necessary attitudes and behaviours.

It is vital that the pharmacy team are equipped to work flexibly alongside other health and care professionals, and can respond with confidence to the changing needs of people and populations needing care. This is a key part of making sure that the best use is made of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of every member of the pharmacy team so they can deliver pharmacy services and improve them. The standards of initial education and training we set for pharmacy technicians are crucial to this. Pharmacy technicians have a vital and increasing role in the delivery of pharmaceutical care.

As a professional group, pharmacy technicians were regulated only relatively recently. But they are being seen more and more as crucial members of the healthcare workforce, with growing responsibilities and roles. This is clear from our dealings with the sector, and the feedback we have received on our discussion paper *Tomorrow's pharmacy team* (2015). Our research confirms that, in common with other

professional groups, the profession is diverse and works in many different settings, delivering pharmaceutical care in increasingly complex ways.

Our aim for education and training – reflected in these standards – is that it must not only support pharmacy technicians' learning of knowledge and skills, but also help instil in them decision-making abilities, clarity about professionalism and the ability to work both within teams and independently.

The standards we are consulting on must reflect the roles that are required now of pharmacy technicians at the point of registration. They must also prepare pharmacy technicians of the future to take on increasing roles and responsibilities, if employers (both in the NHS and independent sectors) want this and if governments across Great Britain propose changes to legislation. This document sets out draft standards for the initial education and training (IET) of pharmacy technicians that are designed to reflect this.

We have drafted the new standards in two parts. Part 1 is a set of educational course learning outcomes based on what we heard during two consultations with pharmacy professionals and patients: *Educating the pharmacy team* (2015), and *Standards for pharmacy professionals* (2016). If we have accurately reflected what we heard, the learning outcomes should describe the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional behaviours needed by an early-career pharmacy technician. Part 2 is a set of standards and requirements for course

providers – the people whose courses will deliver the learning outcomes.

Pharmacy technicians have a valuable and important role in improving the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public – and their initial education and training is central to that. We hope to hear from as many people and organisations as possible as we continue to develop our standards over the coming months.



**Nigel Clarke**

Chair



**Duncan Rudkin**

Chief Executive  
and Registrar

## Developing the standards

We have considered a range of information in developing these draft standards. We have heard from pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy technicians. We have also considered the feedback we received from our discussion papers *Tomorrow's pharmacy team* (2015) and *Standards for pharmacy professionals* (2016) - which builds on our 2014 paper *Patient-centred professionalism in pharmacy*.

We were also supported in developing these standards by an external group with expertise and knowledge of pharmacy technician education and training.

We now want to test our thinking to make sure our new standards reflect the essential features of this profession. Please let us know what you think about any or all of the proposals described in this document.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks and will close on **Wednesday 1 March 2017**. During this time we welcome feedback from individuals and organisations. We will send this document to a range of stakeholder organisations, including professional representative bodies, employers, education and training providers, and patients' representative bodies.

We hope you will read this paper and consider responding. You can get more copies of this document on our website [www.pharmacyregulation.org/PTIETstandards](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/PTIETstandards) or you can contact us if you would like a copy of the document in another format (for example, in larger type or in a different language).

## How to respond

You can respond to this consultation in a number of different ways. You can fill in the questionnaire at the end of this document or go to [www.pharmacyregulation.org/PTIETstandards](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/PTIETstandards) and fill in an online version there.

If you fill in the questionnaire in this document, please send it to:

[consultations@pharmacyregulation.org](mailto:consultations@pharmacyregulation.org) with the subject 'IET standards for pharmacy technicians consultation'

or post it to us at:

**IET standards for pharmacy technicians  
consultation response  
Education Team  
General Pharmaceutical Council  
25 Canada Square  
London E14 5LQ**

## Comments on the consultation process itself

If you have concerns or comments about the consultation process itself, please send them to:

[feedback@pharmacyregulation.org](mailto:feedback@pharmacyregulation.org)

or post them to us at:

**Governance Team  
General Pharmaceutical Council  
25 Canada Square  
London E14 5LQ**

Please do not send consultation responses to this address.



## Our report on this consultation

Once the consultation period ends, we will analyse the responses we receive. Our governing council will receive the analysis at a meeting in Summer 2017. It will take the responses into account when considering the final IET standards for pharmacy technicians.

We will also publish a summary of the responses we receive and an explanation of the decisions taken. You will be able to see this on our website **[www.pharmacyregulation.org](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org)**

## Background

### Context

Pharmacy technicians play a vital role in delivering care and helping people to maintain and improve their health, safety and wellbeing. The professionalism they demonstrate is central to maintaining trust and confidence in pharmacy. That professionalism must be grounded in initial education and training that is fit for purpose.

Pharmacy technicians have been operating for some time, but have only had to be on our statutory register since 2011. It is important that all our standards are reviewed and updated regularly. This is our opportunity to make sure that the pharmacy technician IET standards we originally set reflect both the present and changing roles of the pharmacy technicians. To put it another way, the main challenge of setting these IET standards is to make sure that newly registered pharmacy technicians not only have the knowledge, skills and competence to perform the role of an 'early years' registrant, but also have decision-making skills and a clear understanding of what it means to be a healthcare professional. It is this combination of knowledge, skills, behaviours and professionalism which will allow future registrants to develop to meet future demands.

### Other relevant sources of information

When we consulted on *Tomorrow's pharmacy team* we heard that you agreed with our belief that professionalism, good communication and the ability to work in teams were at the heart of

all roles in the team. Our aim has been to have all three embedded in these standards. In *Patient-centred professionalism* we proposed that our new standards for pharmacy professionals<sup>1</sup> should be based on nine areas of practice:

1. Person-centred care
2. Partnership working
3. Effective communication
4. Professional knowledge and skills
5. Effective leadership
6. Speaking up about concerns
7. Respect for personal privacy and confidentiality
8. Professional behaviour
9. Professional judgement

Respondents agreed with us. As education and training standards are linked closely to practice standards it makes sense to map them on to each other in this context. This is what we have done.

We also took into account two pieces of research we commissioned in 2014 and 2015: one into the present state of initial pharmacy technician education and training in Great Britain, and one into people's views on pharmacy technician IET<sup>2</sup>. We know from this

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<sup>1</sup> These will replace our *Standards of conduct, ethics and performance*

<sup>2</sup> *The quality of pharmacy technician education and training* (Centre for Pharmacy Workforce Studies, University of

work that the new standards need a greater emphasis on professionalism and personal responsibility, and that we need to remove references to some obsolete technical procedures.

Another very recent and valuable source of information about present and future roles for pharmacy technicians is a study commissioned by the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) and the University of East Anglia (UEA)<sup>3</sup>. This study tells us that there are common cores to the pharmacy technician roles in community and hospital pharmacy, but that there are also differences. It also tells us that whatever their sector of practice, pharmacy technicians must be responsible professionals with a range of skills and competencies. We hope you will see that our revised standards reflect this.

Pharmacy stakeholders also played an important part in helping us to develop our standards. We were helped by stakeholders from all three countries in Great Britain and from a variety of settings who had direct knowledge and experience of pharmacy technician education and training. They worked with us to develop these draft standards and were a valuable 'sounding board' during the development process.

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Manchester, 2014) and *An analysis of the initial education and training standards for pharmacy technicians and views on their fitness for purpose* (University College London (UCL)/London Pharmacy Education and Training (LPET), 2015)

<sup>3</sup> *Identifying the roles of Pharmacy Technicians in the UK* (APTUK/University of East Anglia, 2016)

## The standards

These standards will apply to everyone training to be a pharmacy technician in Great Britain. Practising pharmacy technicians will work in a variety of contexts and their roles will change over time, but our register does not make a distinction between sectors of practice. The purpose of IET is to give early-career pharmacy technicians a broad base of skills and qualities that means they can work in a range of pharmacy settings across all the countries in Great Britain.

In the standards we have tried to accurately reflect the expectations on early-career pharmacy technicians:

- what the NHS and other employers need them to be able to do
- the settings in which they will practise, and
- wider workforce requirements

These issues are key to setting the standards and preparing pharmacy technicians for registration, as well as for further education and training in more specialist roles.

A significant number of learning outcomes will be similar for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. But there are also important differences in both the scope and level of training. The key challenge is to make sure both pharmacist and pharmacy technician IET standards reflect the reality of practice, and the knowledge and skills needed.

Our present IET standards for pharmacy technicians make it clear that initial education and training must be undertaken in the workplace. However, in the research we commissioned and through direct feedback

from stakeholders, it was very clear that for learning to be as effective as possible there should be stronger links between course providers and employers. We have built this into our standards.

The context in which pharmacy technician education and training is delivered is relevant to our standards as well. Courses are delivered alongside work: some are delivered face-to-face, some are delivered at a distance and some by a mixture of the two. One of our key aims is that the standards for course providers allow for this range of delivery methods.

## Understanding the pharmacy technician role

Like pharmacists and other healthcare professionals, the pharmacy technician role is a flexible one and varies between settings and sectors. Whatever the circumstances, pharmacy technicians play a part in the management of medicines as pharmacy or multi-professional team members, managers and educators. The role's flexibility means that pharmacy technicians can work in registered pharmacies; in primary, secondary and tertiary care; in non-healthcare settings; or in combinations of these.

We have also heard, through discussions we held and feedback we gathered before starting this consultation, that some parts of the pharmacy technician role that used to be seen as advanced practice are now a basic part of the role. When this is the case, it should be reflected in the new draft standards.

Examples of this include:

- the ability to carry out accuracy checking
- the requirement for newly qualified pharmacy technicians (like pharmacists) to be able to understand core safety concepts such as clinical and corporate governance, as well as audit, and
- the ability to work both within and across teams

## Quality-assuring initial education and training

This consultation is about the standards that we set for the initial education and training for pharmacy technicians. However, we realise that once new standards are approved and introduced we will need to move quickly to develop our accreditation procedures for awarding bodies and course providers. As part of this work we will also need to consider how we can be assured about the quality of workplace training. This is something that was raised when we were discussing these standards before starting this consultation.

For pharmacists, there are a number of ways of quality-assuring IET, especially in the pre-registration training year. These vary from country to country depending on the structure, funding and quality-assurance procedures used: for example, by Health Education England, NHS Education Scotland and the Workforce, Education and Development Service in Wales.

The structure for pharmacy technician pre-registration training is very different. Some training is delivered by private providers and directly accredited; other training is delivered

by further education colleges to a national qualification body's requirements.

We intend to do further work to review how we manage accreditation, and how better quality-assurance procedures can improve confidence in workplace training. This will involve working with qualifications bodies, training providers, pharmacy technician representative bodies, employers and others.

We will start by getting a better understanding of the issues around workplace training for pharmacy technicians, and their roles and responsibilities, and how IET is quality-assured at the moment. Then we will develop proposals to update, and if necessary improve, how we oversee pharmacy technician training.

This work will run separately from our consultation on the standards, but will start while the consultation is going on.

## The structure of these standards

The standards set out the learning outcomes for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians. The main aim of the learning outcomes is for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians to provide high-quality care, with safety as a vital part of this. This is central to the education and training of all pharmacy professionals and is embedded throughout these standards.

The standards are in two parts:

### Part 1: IET standards for pharmacy technicians – learning outcomes

This part includes the knowledge, skills, understanding and professional behaviours a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician must demonstrate at the end of a course leading to registration with the GPhC.

### Part 2: Standards for IET course providers

This part includes the requirements of a course delivering the learning outcomes in part 1.

Although they are for different audiences, the two parts are closely linked to each other. This is why they have been presented in one document.

Once the standards have been agreed we will issue guidance on them for course providers.

## **Our approach to part 1: IET standards for pharmacy technicians – learning outcomes**

These standards are presented as learning outcomes. The learning outcomes include the skills, knowledge, understanding and professional behaviours a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician must demonstrate at the end of their initial education and training. As a whole, these learning outcomes describe a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician who is fit to practise once registered.

We have grouped them under four 'domains', building on the three key themes in our consultation on the future pharmacy team (professionalism, communication and team working) and the standards for pharmacy professionals. The domains are:

1. Person-centred care
2. Professionalism
3. Professional knowledge and skills
4. Collaboration

The learning outcomes in 'professionalism' and 'collaboration' are more general and describe the attributes of a pharmacy professional. The learning outcomes in 'professional knowledge and skills' focus on the mechanics of the pharmacy technician role, and those in 'person-centred care' put the knowledge and skills needed into the context of the delivery of care.



## Linking initial education and training and practice

Each of the four headings has been linked to a standard from our nine standards for pharmacy professionals, to show the link between IET and practice. When appropriate we have included these standards as learning outcomes (see below).

The standards include the term 'person-centred care' and refer to a 'person' throughout. This means 'the person receiving care'. However, although we have not specifically mentioned carers or patients' representatives, these terms apply to them too depending on the context. This is consistent with our use of 'person' in our standards for pharmacy professionals.

Person-centred care			Professionalism		Professional knowledge and skills		Collaboration	
Person-centred care	Effective communication	Respect for personal privacy and confidentiality	Professional behaviour	Professional judgement	Speaking up about concerns	Professional knowledge and skills	Partnership working	Effective leadership

## Our approach to part 2: standards for IET course providers

Part 2 of the standards focuses on the key features of courses that deliver the learning outcomes in part 1. Pharmacy technician IET is delivered in a variety of different ways. Therefore it is important to note that the standards are not prescriptive about how IET is delivered. They should work equally well for training that is delivered face-to-face, at a distance or by a mixture of the two.

Accepting that delivery and design can be varied, in our view there are three documents all courses must have:

- a teaching and learning strategy, to describe how the learning outcomes in part 1 will be delivered
- an assessment strategy, to describe how the learning outcomes in part 1 will be assessed, and
- a management plan, to describe who is responsible for what in the delivery of a course, and the links between learning and work

In the standards we have been clear about what these documents must contain, but in such a way that courses can be delivered, assessed and managed in quite different ways.

As we did with part 1, we have grouped part 2 of the standards into domains:

1. Selection and entry requirements
2. Equality and diversity
3. Management, resources and capacity
4. Monitoring, review and evaluation
5. Course design and delivery
6. Course assessment
7. Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician support and the learning experience

In each domain there are one or more standards, followed by a number of criteria that have

to be in place for a standard to be met.

This section shows the text of the proposed standards

## Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians

### Protecting patients and the public

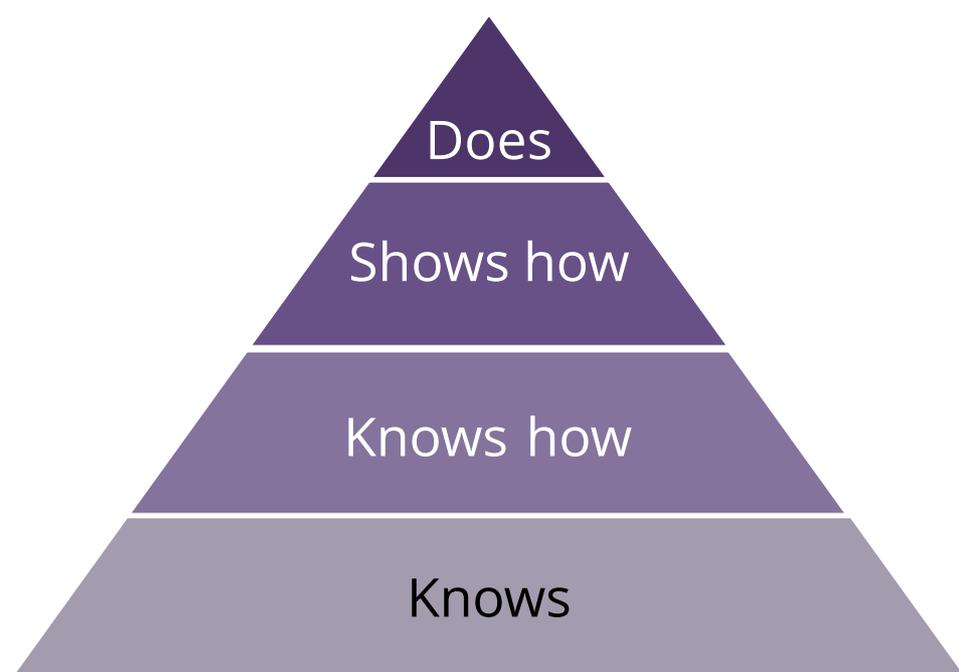
Pharmacy professionals play a vital role in ensuring public and patient safety by providing safe and effective care. The safety of people is at the heart of these standards and must be central to the education and training of pharmacy technicians across all learning environments. Public and patient safety is not a separate requirement – it is embedded in all these standards and criteria. Programme providers and employers must prioritise public and patient safety in all aspects of the course and its delivery.

### Part 1: Learning outcomes

**Standard: On successful completion of their initial education and training, pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will have achieved the learning outcomes in these standards.**

#### Describing and assessing outcomes

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

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.

### Level of study

Initial education and training for pharmacy technicians is a *vocational* learning experience, combining learning and work. Courses must be designed and delivered to at least Level 3 in the *National Qualifications Framework* (England and Wales) or Level 6 in the *Scottish Qualifications and Credit Framework*.

### Domains of study

The learning outcomes fall under four domains:

1. Person-centred care
2. Professionalism
3. Professional knowledge and skills
4. Collaboration

The domains and learning outcomes all have equal importance.



## 1. Person-centred care

### Learning outcomes

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

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

## 2. Professionalism

### Learning outcomes

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

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



### 3. Professional knowledge and skills

#### Learning outcomes

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

24. Provide a safe, effective and responsive pharmacy service	<b>Does</b>
25. Take personal responsibility for the legal, safe and efficient supply of medicines	<b>Does</b>
26. Apply basic pharmacological principles to the use of medicines	<b>Know how</b>
27. Confirm the suitability of a person's medicines for use and ensure sufficient supply	<b>Does</b>
28. Accurately retrieve and reconcile information about a person's medicines	<b>Does</b>
29. Assess a person's present supply of medication and order appropriate medicines and products	<b>Knows how</b>
30. Accurately review a person's medication to identify the medicines they need	<b>Knows how</b>
31. Order, receive, maintain and supply medicines and other pharmaceutical products safely, legally and effectively	<b>Knows how</b>
32. Receive prescriptions and check for their validity, safety and clarity, taking action to deal with any problems	<b>Does</b>
33. Effectively use systems to support the safe supply of medicines	<b>Does</b>
34. Accurately assemble prescribed items	<b>Does</b>
35. Apply pharmaceutical principles to the safe and effective formulation, preparation and packaging of medicines and products	<b>Knows how</b>
36. Issue prescribed items safely and effectively and take action to deal with discrepancies	<b>Does</b>

37. Carry out an accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products	<b>Does</b>
38. Accurately perform pharmaceutical calculations to ensure the safety of people	<b>Does</b>
39. Ensure the quality of ingredients to produce and supply safe and effective medicines and products	<b>Knows how</b>
40. Recognise adverse drug reactions and interactions and respond appropriately	<b>Knows how</b>
41. Safely and legally dispose of medicines and other pharmaceutical products	<b>Knows how</b>
42. Respond appropriately to medical emergencies, including providing first aid	<b>Knows how</b>
43. Understand the importance of recording and learning from errors and near misses	<b>Knows how</b>
44. Understand the concepts of clinical governance and working effectively as part of multi-disciplinary teams	<b>Knows how</b>
45. Take part in audit and quality-improvement strategies and implement recommendations effectively	<b>Knows how</b>

## 4 . Collaboration

### Learning outcomes

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will:

46. Demonstrate effective team working	<b>Does</b>
47. Communicate and work effectively with members of the multi-disciplinary team	<b>Does</b>
48. Check their own and others' work effectively	<b>Does</b>
49. Take part in the learning and development of others	<b>Does</b>
50. Prioritise time and resources effectively to achieve objectives	<b>Does</b>

## Part 2: Standards for IET course providers

### Domain 1 – Selection and entry requirements

**Standard 1.1: Selection processes must be open, clear, unbiased and keep to relevant legislation.**

**Standard 1.2: Processes must be designed to identify applicants with the right attributes for training as a healthcare professional.**

**Standard 1.3: Entry requirements must ensure that applicants are fit to practise as trainees at the point of selection.**

#### Criteria to meet these standards

- 1.1 Selection criteria must be clear and unambiguous. They must include as a minimum:
  - meeting specified English language requirements
  - meeting specified numeracy requirements
  - taking account of good character checks
  - taking account of health checks
- 1.2 Applicants must be working in a pharmacy environment and be supervised by a pharmacist or pharmacy technician.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 Applicants must be given the guidance they need to make an informed application.

## Domain 2 – Equality and diversity

**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 to meet this standard

- 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 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 to meet this standard

- 3.1 All courses must be backed up by a defined management plan which must include:
  - 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.
- 3.5 In all the learning and training environments, there must be:
  - appropriately qualified and experienced staff
  - enough staff from relevant disciplines to deliver the course and support pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians' learning
  - enough resources to deliver the course
  - facilities that are fit for purpose
  - access to appropriate learning resources
- 3.6 Everyone involved in managing and delivering the course must understand their role and must be given support to carry out their work effectively.
- 3.7 Each pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician must be supported as a learner in the workplace. There must be systems in place for liaising with course providers regularly about the progress of a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician.

## 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 to meet this standard

- 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 to meet this standard

- 5.1 Courses must be designed and delivered using strategies which bring together knowledge, competence and work.
- 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 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 carry out only 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 to meet this standard

- 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 Assessment of competence must take place in the workplace.
- 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.
- 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. Causes for concern must be dealt with as soon as possible.
- 6.6 Agreements must be in place between course providers, the workplace and pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians. These must describe roles and responsibilities in the assessment of pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians.
- 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.
- 6.9 Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must receive appropriate and timely feedback on their performance, to support their development as learners 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 learners and professionals during their initial education and training.**

### Criteria to meet this standard

- 7.1 There must be a range of systems in place to support trainees to achieve the learning outcomes in part 1 of these standards, including:
  - 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 pharmacists and pharmacy technicians 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 multi-disciplinary environments.
- 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.

## Changes to the criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician

As well as developing revised IET standards for pharmacy technicians we have reviewed the criteria we set for pharmacy technicians to be entered in the register. The criteria set out the route to and requirements for registration. Many of the requirements in the criteria were put in place when pharmacy technicians were eligible to join the voluntary register in 2005, and they need updating.

The criteria are in two parts. Part 1 sets out the qualifications and work experience requirements for initial registration as a pharmacy technician with the GPhC. Part 2 sets out the requirements for those wanting to return to registration as a pharmacy technician.

We are considering some changes to part 1 as a result of feedback we have received from stakeholders, and to reflect our governing council's commitment to being an outcomes-focused and proportionate regulator.

The changes we are considering are:

**a. Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will be able to train under the direction, supervision or guidance of a pharmacy technician or pharmacist.**

Under the present criteria, pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must train under the direction, supervision or guidance of a pharmacist only. Now that pharmacy technicians are an established registrant group, we think that pre-registration trainee pharmacy

technicians should be able to be supervised by the registrant group they intend to join. This also takes into account the fact that pharmacy technicians may train legitimately in pharmacy environments where a pharmacist may not be present.

**b. Introducing some flexibility into the two-year work experience and set minimum hours requirements for the training period.**

Under the present criteria, a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician must undertake at least two years' work experience in the UK, and this includes a set minimum hours requirement for their work experience period. We would like views on whether this should remain, or whether some flexibility should be introduced so that trainees able to meet all the learning outcomes in less than two years could be allowed to do so, with appropriate safeguards.

**c. Removing the option that current or recently registered pharmacists in Great Britain or Northern Ireland are able to register as a pharmacy technician automatically.**

Current or recently registered pharmacists can automatically register as a pharmacy technician. Although there are many similarities between the professions, there are also differences. We do not think it appropriate that one healthcare professional can simply register as another without some independent

assessment. We suggest that pharmacists wanting to register as pharmacy technicians should have to complete the same initial education and training as pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians, although they could apply to have their prior learning and experience recognised by the course provider.

We have included a question on these proposed changes as part of the consultation.

**Read our present criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician on our website at:**  
[www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/Registration%20criteria%20for%20pharmacy%20technicians%20Dec%202013.pdf](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/Registration%20criteria%20for%20pharmacy%20technicians%20Dec%202013.pdf)



## Consultation response form

### Response to the consultation on initial education and training standards of pharmacy technicians

#### How we will use your response

Following the consultation, we will publish a report summarising what we heard. We may quote parts of your response in that report or in other documents but if you respond as a private individual, we will not use your name unless you give consent for us to do so. We will also publish a list of organisations that respond to this consultation.

If you want your response to remain confidential, you should explain why you believe the information you have given is confidential. However, we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

You may use my name in the report.

Yes

No

I give the GPhC permission to quote from my response in the consultation report.

Yes

No

We may have to publish all information in responses under access to information legislation (usually the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If your response is covered by an automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system, this will not in itself, be binding on the GPhC.

Any diversity monitoring information you give us will be used to review the effectiveness of our consultation process. It will not be part of a published response.

Please tell us if you have any concerns about

our publishing any part of your response:

#### Background questions

First, we would like to ask you for some background information. This will help us to understand the views of specific groups, individuals and organisations and will allow us to better respond to those views.

#### Are you responding:

- as an individual – please go to section A
- on behalf of an organisation – please go to section B

## Section A – Responding as an individual

**Please tell us your:**

name:

---

address:

---

email:

---

**Where do you live?**

- England
  - Scotland
  - Wales
  - Northern Ireland
  - other (please give details)
- 

**Are you responding as:**

- a member of the public
  - a pharmacy professional – please go to section A1
  - a pre-registration trainee
  - a student
  - other (please give details)
- 

## Section A1 – Pharmacy professionals

**Are you:**

- a pharmacist
- a pharmacy technician

**Please choose the option below which best describes the area you mainly work in:**

- community pharmacy
  - hospital pharmacy
  - primary care organisation
  - pharmacy education and training
  - pharmaceutical industry
  - other (please give details)
-

## Section B – Responding on behalf of an organisation

**Please tell us your:**

name:

job title:

organisation:

address:

email:

a contact name for enquiries:

**Is your organisation a:**

- pharmacy organisation
- non-pharmacy organisation

**Please choose the option below which best describes your organisation:**

- body or organisation representing professionals
- body or organisation representing patients or the public
- body or organisation representing a trade or industry
- community pharmacy
- corporate multiple pharmacy
- independent pharmacy
- NHS organisation or group
- research, education or training organisation
- government department or organisation
- regulatory body
- other (please give details)

## Consultation questions

We are particularly interested in your views on the following points, although we welcome your comments on any issues that you want to raise about the IET standards for pharmacy technicians.

### Part 1: IET standards for pharmacy technicians – learning outcomes and part 2: standards for IET course providers

The standards focus on high-quality care, of which safety is a key part. Safety is at the heart of the education and training of all pharmacy professionals, and is embedded in these standards.

The standards also reflect how some elements of the pharmacy technician role, which were once seen as advanced practice, are now basic to that role. This includes:

- the ability to carry out accuracy checking
- the requirement for newly qualified pharmacy technicians (like pharmacists) to be able to understand core safety concepts such as clinical and corporate governance, as well as audit, and
- their ability to work both within and across teams

The draft standards should also reflect improved links between providers and employers.

#### 1. IET standards for pharmacy technicians – learning outcomes: Are these the right outcomes, at the right level?

#### 2. Standards for IET course providers: Are these the right standards and criteria?



## Part 3: Changes to the criteria for registration as a pharmacy technician

We also outlined changes in three particular areas:

### a. Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians will be able to train under the direction, supervision or guidance of a pharmacy technician or pharmacist.

Under the present criteria, pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must train under the direction, supervision or guidance of a pharmacist only. Now that pharmacy technicians are an established registrant group, we think that pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians should be able to be supervised by the registrant group they intend to join. This also takes into account that pharmacy technicians may train legitimately in pharmacy environments where a pharmacist may not be present.

### 3. Do you have any comments about this proposed change and its potential impact?

### b. Reviewing the two-year work experience and set minimum hours requirements for the training period.

Under the present criteria, a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician must undertake at least two years' work experience in the UK, and this includes a set minimum hours requirement for their work experience period. We would like views on whether this should remain, or whether some flexibility should be introduced so that trainees able to meet all the learning outcomes in less than two years could be allowed to do so, with appropriate safeguards.

### 4. Do you have any comments about whether we should keep the two-year work experience requirement or whether we should introduce a change, and about any potential impact?

**c. Removing the option that current or recently registered pharmacists in Great Britain or Northern Ireland are able to register as a pharmacy technician automatically.**

At present, current or recently registered pharmacists can automatically register as a pharmacy technician. Although there are many similarities between the professions, there are also differences. We do not think it appropriate that one healthcare professional can simply register as another without some independent assessment. We suggest that pharmacists wanting to register as pharmacy technicians should have to complete the same initial education and training as pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians, although they could apply to have their prior learning and experience recognised by the course provider.

**5. Do you have any comments about this proposed change and its potential impact?**

**Feedback on workplace training and quality assurance for the IET of pharmacy technicians**

At present, IET courses are quality-assured through accreditation by the GPhC. The accreditation process covers learning outcomes and requirements on course providers. We welcome any comments or feedback on the quality of workplace training, including support to pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians and any areas which respondents believe need strengthening.

**6. Do you have any comments about workplace training and the quality assurance of initial education and training?**



## Equality analysis

We haven't identified any areas where these standards or suggested changes to the criteria would discriminate against or unintentionally disadvantage any individuals or groups. However, we know from our own analysis that the pharmacy technician workforce is different to the pharmacist workforce. For example, the gender balance is different. We also realise that the way education and training is delivered may affect groups differently.

We invite views on any aspect of our proposals that might have an impact – positive or negative – in relation to equality. For example, we are aware that the change we are considering to the two-year work experience requirement may affect groups differently.

**7. Do you think there is anything in the standards or suggested changes to the criteria for registration that disproportionately affects any particular group over others?**

## Other comments

If you have any other comments, please add them here:

## Equality monitoring

At the GPhC, we are committed to promoting equality, valuing diversity and being inclusive in all our work as a health professions regulator, and to making sure we meet our equality duties.

We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to respond to our consultation on standards for pharmacy professionals. This equality monitoring form will provide us with useful information to check that this happens.

You do not have to fill it in, and your answers here will not be linked to your consultation responses.

### What is your sex?

Please tick one box

- Male
- Female
- Other

### What is your sexual orientation?

Please tick one box

- Heterosexual/straight
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Gay man
- Bisexual
- Other
- Prefer not to say

### Do you consider yourself disabled?

Disability is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as “physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. Please tick one box.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

### What is your age group?

Please tick one box

- 16 – 24 years
- 25 – 34 years
- 35 – 44 years
- 45 – 54 years
- 55 – 64 years
- 65 + years

### What is your ethnic group?

Choose the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background. Please tick one box.

#### White

- British
- Irish

- Gypsy or Irish traveller
- Other white background (please fill in the box at the end of this section)

**Black or Black British**

- Black Caribbean
- Black African
- Other black background (please fill in the box at the end of this section)

**Mixed**

- White and black Caribbean
- White and black African
- White and Asian
- other mixed background (please fill in the box at the end of this section)

**Asian or Asian British**

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- other Asian (please fill in the box at the end of this section)

**Chinese or Chinese British**

- Chinese or Chinese British
- Other ethnic group (please fill in the box at the end of this section)

**Arab**

- Arab

**Other**

- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group background (please give more information in the box below)

**What is your religion?**

Please tick one box

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- None
- Other (please give more information in the box below)
- Prefer not to say

## Appendix A: Collated consultation questions

1. IET standards for pharmacy technicians – learning outcomes: are these the right outcomes, at the right level?
2. Standards for IET course providers: are these the right standards and criteria?
3. Now that pharmacy technicians are an established registrant group, we think that pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians should be able to be supervised by the registrant group they intend to join. Do you have any comments about this proposed change and its potential impact?
4. Do you have any comments about whether we should keep the two-year work experience requirement or whether we should introduce a change, and about any potential impact?
5. We suggest that pharmacists wanting to register as pharmacy technicians should have to complete the same initial education and training as pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians, although they could apply to have their prior learning and experience recognised by the course provider. Do you have any comments about this proposed change and its potential impact?
6. Do you have any comments about workplace training and the quality assurance of initial education and training?
7. Do you think there is anything in the standards or suggested changes to the criteria for registration that disproportionately affects any particular group over others?



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