

Feedback from the September 2016 registration assessment

About this document

This document contains feedback drawn from candidate performance in the General Pharmaceutical Council's (GPhC's) September 2016 registration assessment. It has been released by the Board of Assessors, the independent body that sets and moderates the registration assessment. It is aimed at pre-registration trainee pharmacists, pre-registration tutors and anyone involved in pharmacist education and training.

The registration assessment framework

All questions in the registration assessment are derived from the assessment framework. The different outcomes have different weighting and candidates should use the framework as the basis for preparation.

Overall

Candidates are not expected to use information provided in one question or set of questions to answer another question within the paper. For example when an equation is provided for a particular question, it is intended for use only with that question. Where information from the resource pack should be used then this is clearly marked using the book icon:



It seems from the pattern of non-responses in the September 2016 assessment that some candidates did not answer the questions that required the use of the resource packs. The resource packs are available to use in up to 25% of questions in each part of the assessment.

Part 1

Candidates performed less well in questions that related to:

- infusion rates, especially if the duration of infusion was less than 24 hours. Candidates tended to miss the information on the duration of the infusion
- questions where dose rounding was required to calculate an individual dose before calculating the total supply needed. For example, if a dose of a medicine is calculated at 490 mg and the medicine is available as a 500 mg tablet, rounding should occur for an individual dose rather than at the end when calculating a 28-day supply
- displacement values
- dilutions
- ratio strengths

Sometimes candidates gave answers that were incorrect by 1 or more factors of 10.

Sometimes candidates gave answers that were illogical. These included:

- a 2-week supply of 80 500 mL of a liquid medicine for the treatment of epilepsy in a 7 year-old child
- diluting a 9% solution with water and getting a more concentrated solution
- adding 20 000 g of a substrate to make a total of 100 g of an ointment

Candidates should review each answer to check that it is realistic and makes sense.

Sometimes candidates did not read the question carefully leading to an incorrect answer. Examples included:

- where the answer required was a single dose the candidates provided the total daily dose
- where the answer was required to be rounded to the nearest whole number, candidates provided an answer to one decimal place

Normal mathematical rules about rounding apply to the registration assessment. Candidates must read each question carefully and consider for each individual question where any rounding should occur. In some questions, the rounding should occur at the end of the calculation, but in other questions rounding should occur earlier in the calculation. For example when calculating the total amount of a medicine that should be supplied, rounding should occur for an individual dose before then calculating a final amount. If a question asks for the number of whole vials required to provide a particular dose and the candidate calculates 3.2, then 4 vials are needed to provide the required dose.

Part 2

Candidates performed well in questions assessing:

- pharmacy legislation
- identification of skin conditions
- recognition of side effects of common medicines
- emergency first aid

Candidates performed less well in questions assessing:

- the differences between an adverse drug reaction and an allergy, particularly in relation to antibiotic prescribing and choosing the most appropriate antibiotic for a particular patient
- knowledge of the duration of anticoagulation required for different indications
- knowledge of the route of administration for vinca alkaloids. Some candidates chose intrathecal as the route of administration for vincristine. If vincristine is administered intrathecally, patient death is the most likely outcome
- what to do when a problem has been identified, for example, an interaction or a side effect

Resource packs

Separate resource packs are provided in part 1 and part 2 of the registration assessment. These packs will contain a variety of reference sources including photographs, extracts from reference sources such as the BNF and BNFC, summaries of product characteristics (SPCs), guidelines or extracts from guidelines and worksheets.

Candidates are expected to be familiar with the structure of resources commonly used in practice so that they are able to efficiently extract the required information.

