

# Guidance on tutoring for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

January 2014

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in England, Scotland and Wales. As part of our role, we set the standards for the practice of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. This includes setting standards for initial education and training.

## About this guidance

This guidance supplements the GPhC's standards of conduct, ethics and performance, which all pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must follow. These standards apply to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians at all times.

## The status of this guidance

This document gives guidance to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who act as tutors for pre-registration trainee pharmacists and pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians.

The guidance applies to all sectors of practice.

## How this guidance is organised

This guidance is in three parts:

### 1 Initial education and training, and tutoring roles in pharmacy

This part describes initial education and training for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and explains tutoring roles in pharmacy.

### 2 The core requirements of the standards of conduct, ethics and performance

This part sets out the main areas of the GPhC's standards of conduct, ethics and performance you must follow as a tutor, and gives guidance on how to meet your obligations as a tutor.

### 3 Guidance to help tutors in their role

This part gives you guidance that you should follow as a tutor, particularly in the areas of trainee induction, assessment, feedback, support and guidance.

The core requirements and guidance are equally important.

## Related core documents

Pre-registration trainee pharmacists must follow the GPhC's standards of conduct, ethics and performance, which they should read alongside this guidance.

Pre-registration trainee pharmacists and tutors should also read the GPhC's *Pre-registration manual* alongside this guidance. The manual sets out the detailed requirements of the GPhC's pre-registration training scheme and a tutor's responsibilities within the scheme.

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must follow the GPhC's code of conduct for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians, which they should read alongside this guidance.

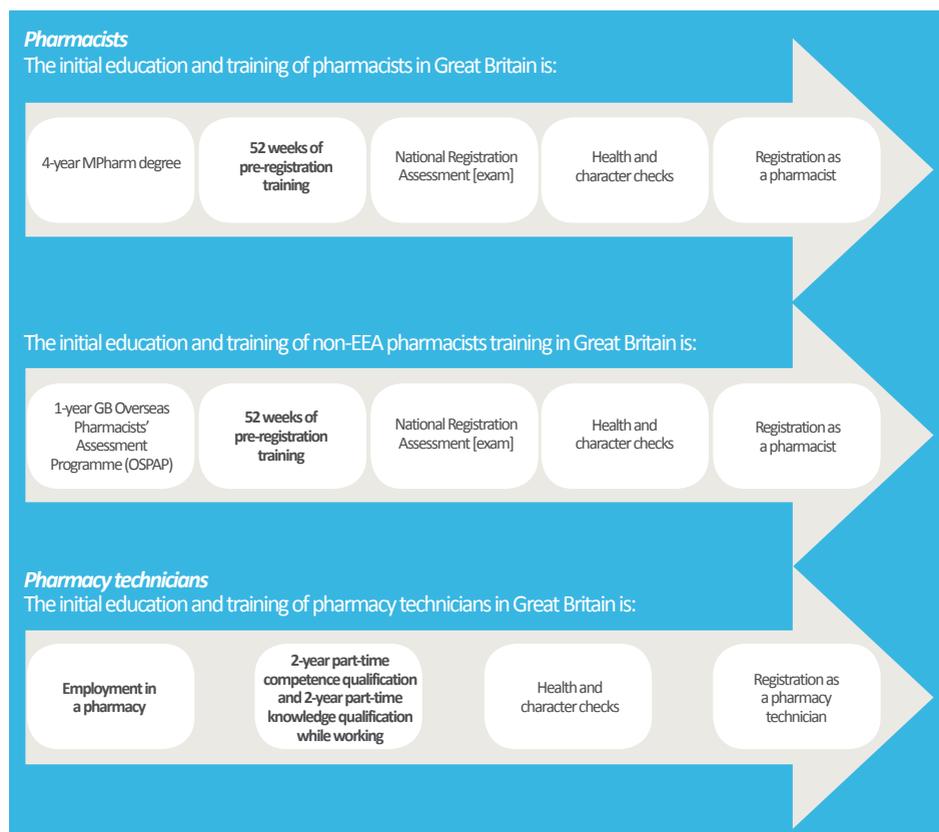
# 1 Initial education and training, and tutoring roles in pharmacy

## 1.1 The initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

The initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians includes:

- 1 academic or vocational study, and
- 2 vocational and professional pre-registration training.

Periods of pre-registration training are shown in bold in the diagrams below.



## 1.2 Tutoring roles in pharmacy

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians can have a number of tutoring roles while they support colleagues at various points in their careers. Some of the guidance in this document can be applied to all tutoring roles, but it is aimed more specifically at pharmacists and pharmacy technicians supporting pre-registration trainees during their initial education and training.

### **Pre-registration pharmacist tutors**

Pre-registration trainee pharmacists training in Great Britain have a designated tutor, who must be a pharmacist. Their tutor is responsible for supervising their training and signing them off as competent at specified points during the training year. If their training is split between different sectors of practice or split between training sites in the same sector, a trainee will have more than one designated tutor.

During training, trainees may be supervised by more than one person but their designated tutor or tutors have overall responsibility for supervising them.

### **Pre-registration pharmacy technician educational supervisors**

The GPhC recommends that a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician's employer chooses a pharmacist or pharmacy technician to act as the trainee's designated educational supervisor. That person should have oversight of the trainee's training and should be a source of advice and guidance. The educational supervisor might have another role as well, such as being an assessor.

Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians can have a variety of people actively involved in their training. These can include mentors, assessors, work colleagues and line managers. Some will be pharmacists or pharmacy technicians. It is intended that people in these roles will use this guidance when it is relevant to them. The tutoring element of these roles will vary and will depend on the training arrangements for a trainee.

*In the rest of this guidance, the term 'tutor' will be used to mean pre-registration pharmacist tutor, pre-registration pharmacy technician educational supervisor and other people involved in training.*

## 2 Core requirements of the standards of conduct, ethics and performance

The standards of conduct, ethics and performance set out the key requirements that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must follow. There are five key standards that are particularly relevant to your role as a tutor. They are:

### 2.1 You must put patient safety first at all times

For example:

- make sure your trainee follows and understands safe and effective pharmacy practice
- make sure your trainee is supervised appropriately
- make sure your trainee always works within the limits of their competence.

### 2.2 You must practise as a tutor only if you are fit and competent to do so

For example:

- reflect on the training and development you need if you are to act as a tutor
- reflect on your performance as a tutor
- deal with any developmental needs identified by you or someone else.

### 2.3 You must make sure that a trainee is training safely and effectively

For example:

- make sure your trainee is inducted appropriately so that they understand local working practices
- get feedback from your trainee about the training environment
- act on feedback as appropriate
- raise concerns about the training environment with your line manager, employer and/or superintendent.

Note: Superintendents and employers are responsible for making sure that pharmacies are suitable training environments. This is explained in the GPhC's standards for registered pharmacies.

## 2.4 You must take appropriate action when a concern is raised by or about a trainee

For example:

- discuss the concern with your trainee and try to resolve it
- document the concern and get further information if you need it
- assess the concern and raise it at the appropriate level with your line manager, employer or superintendent
- if the concern is serious and cannot be resolved locally, raise it with the GPhC or another relevant person or body. Serious concerns include those which may be criminal or may have safety implications for:
  - patients
  - members of the public
  - your trainee
  - you
  - other pharmacy staff.

## 2.5 You must maintain confidentiality in relation to your tutoring role, but disclose relevant information about a trainee when it is in the public interest to do so

For example:

- respect your trainee's right to confidentiality
- if necessary, advise your trainee to contact another organisation or person if they need help, advice or support
- if necessary, advise your trainee to disclose relevant information to another organisation or person
- if necessary, get consent to disclose relevant information about your trainee to another organisation or person before disclosing it
- if it is in the public interest to do so, disclose relevant information about your trainee to another person or organisation without the consent of your trainee
- tell your trainee if you have disclosed, or intend to disclose, information about them to another person or organisation.

### 3 Guidance to help tutors in their role

This section gives you guidance that you should follow as a tutor, particularly in the areas of trainee induction, assessment, feedback and support. You should follow all the guidance in this section.

#### 3.1 Being a professional role model

As a tutor you are in a position of responsibility. You are responsible for guiding your trainee through their training to become a registered healthcare professional. It is important that you act as a professional role model at all times.

You should:

- act as a professional role model for your trainee
- act as a mentor to your trainee, offering constructive feedback and advice throughout their training.

#### 3.2 The pre-registration training programme

All trainees train according to a personal plan. This can include a set training programme, or a course or courses taken while working. The plan should be agreed by you and your trainee. For pre-registration trainee pharmacists the training plan must cover the performance standards in the GPhC's *Pre-registration manual*.

You should:

- induct your trainee at the beginning of their training so they know what is expected of them and when it is expected
- identify your trainee's training and development needs at the beginning of their training
- involve trainees in planning their progress while they are training
- set realistic targets for your trainee that you have agreed with them
- monitor your trainee throughout their training
- review your trainee's progress regularly
- discuss the performance of your trainee with other people when this is appropriate.

### 3.3 Assessing your trainee's performance

Assessing your trainee is a key part of their development. It is important that the ongoing assessment of your trainee is fair and objective and helps them understand:

- how they are performing in line with the requirements of their training plan, and
- how they are performing as a professional.

You should:

- discuss with your trainee how they will be assessed while they are training
- discuss what evidence your trainee will need to produce to help you evaluate their performance
- consider a range of evidence as part of the assessment process
- give your trainee a range of opportunities to demonstrate their competence
- consider your trainee's performance and behaviour against the GPhC's standards of conduct, ethics and performance if they are a pre-registration trainee pharmacist or against the GPhC's code of conduct for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians if they are a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician
- review your trainee's progress regularly and adapt their personal plan as appropriate.

### 3.4 Giving feedback to your trainee

One important aspect of the tutoring role is to give feedback to help your trainee to develop their competence during their training and to become competent by the end of their training.

You should:

- give your trainee regular constructive feedback to help them develop during their training
- give feedback in time for your trainee to use the feedback to improve their performance
- give feedback to your trainee that is specific and based on evidence
- encourage your trainee to get feedback from sources other than you
- give your trainee the opportunity to reflect on their feedback and then discuss it with you
- give feedback to your trainee in a suitable environment
- give your trainee the opportunity to give feedback on you as a tutor.

### 3.5 Supporting your trainee

As a tutor you should encourage and support your trainee to help them achieve their full potential. Support may be pastoral (that is, emotional support) or linked more directly to their competence or professionalism.

You should:

- use regular meetings to identify good practice and any problems or difficulties which may be affecting your trainee's progress
- take all reasonable steps to respond to a request for support from your trainee and record:
  - requests for support
  - what is said in meetings when support requirements are discussed
  - further actions planned to resolve matters
  - final outcomes of requests for support
- not make assumptions or be judgemental about your trainee's difficulties, lifestyle or opinions, and should give them opportunities to explain any difficulties to you
- refer your trainee elsewhere for support if you cannot help them. This could include referring them to professional bodies, careers advisers or other pharmacy organisations and support services.

### Raising serious concerns about a trainee

On 4 December 2013 the GPhC introduced a procedure for dealing with serious concerns raised about a trainee. Usually concerns will be dealt with by the trainee, their tutor and perhaps their employer or superintendent. The GPhC expects most concerns to be dealt with in this way. The GPhC will become involved if a concern cannot be, or has not been, dealt with locally. The new procedure is in the 2013 version of the GPhC's *Education procedures for the initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians*.

If you want to raise a serious concern about a trainee with the GPhC, phone **020 3365 3400** or email **info@pharmacyregulation.org**.

## Useful GPhC documents

All these documents are available on our website at [www.pharmacyregulation.org](http://www.pharmacyregulation.org)

### Standards

- *Standards of conduct, ethics and performance* (GPhC, 2012)
- *Code of conduct for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians* (GPhC, 2011)
- *Education procedures for the initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians* (GPhC, 2013)
- *Future pharmacists: standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists* (GPhC, 2011)
- *Pre-registration manual* (GPhC, updated annually):  
The manual includes the pre-registration performance standards and the registration assessment syllabus
- *Standards for continuing professional development* (GPhC, 2010)
- *Standards for the education and training of non-EEA pharmacists wanting to register in Great Britain* (GPhC, 2011)
- *Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians* (GPhC, 2011)
- *Standards for registered pharmacies* (GPhC, 2012)

### Guidance

- *Guidance on consent* (GPhC, 2012)
- *Guidance on maintaining clear sexual boundaries* (GPhC, 2012)
- *Guidance on patient confidentiality* (GPhC, 2012)
- *Guidance on raising concerns* (GPhC, 2012)

## More information

If you would like copies of this document in other formats or in Welsh, please contact our communications team:

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

If you have questions or comments about the content of this guidance, please contact our education team:

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