

**Criteria for  
registration as a  
pharmacist in Great  
Britain**

**November 2024**

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# About the GPhC

## Who we are

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

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

## What we do

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

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

We ask pharmacy professionals and pharmacies for evidence that they are continuing to meet our standards, and this includes inspecting pharmacies.

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

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



# About this document

This document sets out the education, training and experience requirements for:

- initial registration as a pharmacist with the GPhC, in Section A
- return to registration as a pharmacist with the GPhC, in Section B

As well as the requirements set out below, our registration requirements and processes also include health, competence and identity checks.

All applicants to the register must intend to practise as a pharmacist in Great Britain, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man to be eligible to register with the GPhC.

# Section A: criteria for initial registration as a pharmacist with the GPhC


The criteria for initial registration as a pharmacist are set out below.

- Applicants with pharmacist qualifications obtained in Great Britain must meet all the requirements set out in section 1.
- Applicants registered in Northern Ireland must meet all the requirements in section 2.
- Applicants with eligible pharmacist qualifications obtained within the European Union (EU) must meet the requirements in section 3.
- Applicants with pharmacist qualifications obtained in European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states (Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein) must meet the requirements in section 4.
- Swiss nationals and UK nationals with pharmacist qualifications allowing them to practise in Switzerland must meet the requirements in section 5. Please note this route will close on 31 December 2024 and this section will be updated before then. Section 6 provides further information for EFTA and Swiss applicants.
- Applicants with other pharmacist qualifications should follow the Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP) route and must meet the requirements in section 7.
- Applicants who are a refugee or a stateless person must meet the requirements in Section 8.

## 1. Applicants with pharmacy qualifications obtained in Great Britain and Northern Ireland

This route does not include applicants who completed foundation training in Northern Ireland, or are registered with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland, who should see section 2 below.

- 1.1 This route to registration requires successful completion of:
- a. one of the following Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degrees accredited by the GPhC:
    - i. MPharm degree (four-year)
    - ii. MPharm degree taught in-part overseas (MPharm 2+2) (four-year)
    - iii. MPharm degree with preparatory year (five-year)
    - iv. MPharm degree with year 1 taught over 2 years (five-year)

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- v. MPharm degree with sandwich foundation training (five-year)  
(Until 2025/26, Year 1 is delivered as a separate 2-year foundation degree in pharmaceutical and chemical sciences and accredited by the GPhC to permit entry to year 2 of the University's accredited MPharm degree)
  - vi. MPharm degree with integrated foundation training (five-year)
  - vii. MPharm degree taught in-part overseas with integrated foundation training (MPharm 2+3) (five-year)
- b. A 52-week programme of foundation training in Great Britain (referred to as 'pre-registration training' prior to 2021), either as a 52-week standalone training programme or as part of a GPhC-accredited MPharm degree with integrated or 'sandwich' foundation training (1.1a v-vii as listed above).
- c. the registration assessment conducted by the GPhC.
- 1.2 For applicants who started training in 2025 or later, foundation training must have been approved by a statutory education body and accredited by the GPhC.
- 1.3 Applicants who completed their education and training in Great Britain must complete the requirements set out in 1.1 and apply to register as a pharmacist within the time frames set out below. Extensions may be granted where there are legitimate, documented grounds.
- a. Within **eight years** of the commencement of a GPhC-accredited MPharm degree, or within **two years** of passing a registration assessment, whichever is sooner. This relates to education and training that includes the MPharm degrees:
    - i. MPharm degree (four-year)
    - ii. MPharm degree taught in-part overseas (MPharm 2+2) (four-year)
    - iii. MPharm degree with sandwich foundation training (five-year)
    - iv. MPharm degree with integrated foundation training (five-year)
    - v. MPharm degree taught in-part overseas with integrated foundation training (MPharm 2+3) (five-year)
  - b. Within **nine years** of the commencement of a GPhC-accredited MPharm degree, or within **two years** of passing a registration assessment, whichever is sooner. This relates to education and training that includes the MPharm degrees:
    - i. MPharm degree with preparatory year (five-year)
    - ii. MPharm degree with year 1 taught over two years (five-year)  
(Until 2025/26, Year 1 is delivered as a separate 2-year foundation degree in pharmaceutical and chemical sciences and accredited by the GPhC to permit entry to year 2 of the University's accredited MPharm degree)

### 2. Applicants registered in Northern Ireland

- 2.1 Applicants must have:
- an accredited pharmacist qualification obtained in Great Britain or Northern Ireland
  - successfully completed a 52-week programme of foundation training (or pre-registration training) in Northern Ireland, and
  - passed a registration assessment conducted by the GPhC (on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI))
- 2.2 Northern Ireland-qualified pharmacists who want to register in Great Britain must register with the PSNI first.

### 3. Applicants with pharmacy qualifications obtained within the European Union (EU)

- 3.1 Applicants should hold a recognised pharmacist qualification awarded in an EU member state and which appears listed in Annex V point 5.6.2 of Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 as of 31 December 2020. The qualification must have been started after the reference date for the member state in which it was awarded. Where applicable, the qualification should be accompanied by the certificate listed in the 'Certificate accompanying the diploma' column in Annex V, point 5.6.2 of the directive. If your qualification is not listed, please see section 6.
- 3.2 Applicants must provide evidence that they have the necessary knowledge of English language skills which meet the **requirements described in the GPhC's published guidance**.

### 4. Applicants with pharmacy qualifications obtained in European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states (Iceland, Norway or Liechtenstein)

- 4.1 Applicants already practising as a pharmacist in an EFTA member state who hold a recognised European pharmacist qualification awarded in an EU member state which appears listed in Annex V point 5.6.2 of Directive 2005/36/EC as of the 31 December 2020, and the qualification was started after the reference date for the member state in which it was awarded, will follow the registration process for EU applicants set out in paragraph 3 above and are not required to carry out the evaluation exercise in paragraph 6 below.
- 4.2 Applicants must provide evidence that they have the necessary knowledge of English language skills which meet the **requirements described in the GPhC's published guidance**.



## 5. Route to registration for UK and Swiss nationals under the UK-Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement

- 5.1 Following the UK's exit from the EU, the UK and Switzerland entered into an agreement called the UK-Swiss Citizens' Rights Agreement which remains in force until 31 December 2024. Under this agreement, the following groups are eligible to apply to the GPhC for recognition of their pharmacy qualifications:
- a. applicants who are Swiss nationals holding pharmacy qualifications obtained in Switzerland or the EEA where training had begun on or before 31 December 2020.
  - b. Swiss nationals who hold pharmacy qualifications obtained overseas that have been recognised (or were in the process of being recognised) in Switzerland on or before 31 December 2020.
  - c. UK Nationals who hold:
    - i. A pharmacy qualification awarded in Switzerland, where training had started on or before 31 December 2020, or
    - ii. A pharmacy qualification awarded in the EEA, where training had started on or before 31 December 2020 and where the UK national is established in Switzerland, or
    - iii. A pharmacy qualification obtained overseas that has been recognised (or was in the process of being recognised) in Switzerland on or before 31 December 2020
- 1.1. Applicants who are Swiss nationals or UK nationals with pharmacy qualifications obtained overseas (not within the EU or Switzerland) which were recognised in Switzerland on or before 31 December 2020, should provide evidence of their pharmacy qualification and evidence of practising or their eligibility to practise as a pharmacist in Switzerland.
- 1.2. Applicants who are Swiss nationals or UK nationals holding Swiss or EU pharmacy qualifications should provide evidence that their training began on or before 31 December 2020.
- 4.3 All applicants must provide evidence that they have the necessary knowledge of English language skills which meet the **requirements described in the GPhC's published guidance**.

## 6. Routes to registration for other EFTA applicants and those with Swiss pharmacy qualifications who are not Swiss or UK nationals


- 1.3. This section sets out the GPhC's requirements to register:
- a. EFTA applicants whose qualifications do not appear in Annex V of point 5.6.2 of Directive 2005/36/EC as of 31 December 2020
  - b. applicants with Swiss pharmacy qualifications who are not Swiss or UK nationals

## Effective from 1 January 2021

- 1.4. We will provide applicants following this route with a document to complete and return to us, to evaluate and map their own pharmacy education, training and experience against our standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists (2021). When we receive the completed document and application form, it will be reviewed by an independent assessor appointed by the GPhC with relevant experience of pharmacy practice.
- 1.5. The independent assessor will advise the GPhC of similarities and differences between the applicant's own pharmacy education, training and experience and the pharmacy education, training and experience reflected in qualifications awarded in Great Britain.
- 1.6. Where the assessor identifies differences, they may recommend to the GPhC that the applicant complete:
  - a. an adaptation period (a period of work based supervised practice), or
  - b. an aptitude test (an exam), or
  - c. both
- 1.7. Where an applicant is required to complete an adaptation period or an aptitude test, they will need to provide the GPhC with evidence this has been successfully completed, to be eligible to join the register.

## **7. Route to registration via the Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP)**

- 7.1 The Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP) route applies to:
  - a. applicants with qualifications from countries not listed in sections 1-6 above and
  - b. applicants with EU qualifications not meeting the requirements in section 3.1 above
- 7.2 We will first assess if applicants are eligible to complete an OSPAP course. When we receive an eligibility application, we will check and evaluate the applicant's qualifications. We will confirm to the applicant whether or not they are eligible to complete an OSPAP course. Course providers may accept an applicant assessed as eligible.
- 7.3 Eligible applicants must begin an OSPAP within two years of being notified by the GPhC that they are eligible for the course. Applicants who do not do so will need to request an extension of up to two years, explaining why they were unable to begin an OSPAP within the original time limit. After four years from initial application, applicants will not be eligible to begin as OSPAP on the basis that their pharmacy qualification may no longer be current.
- 7.4 To be eligible to register via this route, applicants must successfully complete:
  - a. the one-year GPhC-accredited Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP), and

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- b. a 52-week programme of foundation training (called 'pre-registration training' before 2021) in Great Britain, and
  - c. the registration assessment conducted by the GPhC.

## **8. Applications from refugees and stateless persons**

- 8.1 Applicants who are unable to provide evidence their pharmacist credentials due to their status as a refugee or stateless person will have their application to register evaluated independently in a manner determined by the GPhC.
- 8.2 The GPhC will make all reasonable effort to obtain evidence of pharmacist credentials for a refugee or stateless person by contacting relevant competent authorities and awarding bodies.
- 8.3 Refugees and stateless people may be required to undertake education, training or experience determined by the independent evaluator. This may include accredited, formal education, training or experience.

## Section B: criteria for returning to registration as a pharmacist with the GPhC

### **9. Previous registrants of the GPhC or the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB)**

- 9.1 Previous registrants of the RPSGB or the GPhC must complete a return to registration application, if they want to practise as a pharmacist in Great Britain.
- 9.2 An application for return to registration will be subject to independent evaluation. This involves an assessment of applicants' professional competence. Applicants are required to submit a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their professional competence against the scope of practice within which they intend to practise.





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**General Pharmaceutical Council**  
1 Cabot Square, London E14 4QJ  
F 020 3713 8000  
E [info@pharmacyregulation.org](mailto:info@pharmacyregulation.org)

 [@TheGPHC](https://twitter.com/TheGPHC)  
 [TheGPHC](https://www.facebook.com/TheGPHC)  
 [/company/general-pharmaceutical-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/general-pharmaceutical-council)  
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