

Criteria for registration as a pharmacist in Great Britain - November 2025



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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, character 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 and Northern Ireland 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 (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway), or with Swiss pharmacist qualifications must meet the requirements in section 4.
- Applicants with other pharmacist qualifications should follow the Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP) route and must meet the requirements in section 5.
- Applicants who are a refugee or a stateless person must meet the requirements in Section 6.

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

This route does not include applicants who completed foundation training in Northern Ireland, or who are registered with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland. These applicants 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) 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)
 - v. MPharm degree with sandwich foundation training (five-year)
 - 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 completed 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 common registration assessment conducted jointly by the GPhC and Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 For applicants who started foundation training in 2025 or later, the training programme must be 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)

Applicants who have completed an MPharm degree awarded to the Initial education and training standards for pharmacists (IETP) 2021 will be annotated as an independent prescriber at the point of registration.

2: Applicants registered in Northern Ireland

- 2.1 Prior to applying to register with the GPhC, applicants must have:
- a. an accredited pharmacist qualification obtained in Great Britain or Northern Ireland
 - a. successfully completed a 52-week programme of foundation training (or pre-registration training) in Northern Ireland

- b. passed the common registration assessment conducted jointly by the GPhC and Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland
- c. registered first with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.

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 section 5.
- 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 the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) and Switzerland

On 31 December 2023, the UK’s free trade agreement with the EFTA member states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) took effect with the *Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Implementation of International Recognition Agreements (Amendment) Regulations 2023*. The regulations established the requirements for the relevant authorities in the UK, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway, to recognise each other’s professional qualifications.

The UK and Switzerland entered into a separate arrangement to recognise each other’s professional qualifications. This is called the recognition of professional qualifications (RPQ) agreement, which took effect in the UK on 1 January 2025 with the *Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Implementation of International Recognition Agreements (Amendment) (Extension to Switzerland etc.) Regulations 2024*.

We have set out our requirements for recognising professional pharmacy qualifications obtained in Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland below.

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 section 3 above and are not required to carry out the evaluation exercise in paragraphs 4.2-4.4 below.

- 4.1 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**.
- 4.2 Applicants must complete a document which we will provide to evaluate and map their own pharmacy education, training and experience against our standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists (2021). An independent assessor with relevant experience of pharmacy practice, appointed by the GPhC, will review the assessment.
- 4.3 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. Where the assessor identifies differences, they may make a recommendation to the GPhC:
 - a. For applicants with a qualification obtained in Iceland, Liechtenstein, or Norway, that the applicant completes either or both:
 - i. an adaptation period (a period of work-based supervised practice)
 - ii. an aptitude test (an exam)
 - b. For applicants with a qualification obtained in Switzerland, that the applicant completes either (but not both):
 - i. an adaptation period (a period of work based supervised practice), or
 - ii. an aptitude test (an exam)
- 4.4 Where an applicant is required to complete an adaptation period, an aptitude test, or both they will need to provide the GPhC with evidence this has been successfully completed, to be eligible to join the register.

5. Route to registration via the Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP)

The Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP) route applies to:

- d. applicants with qualifications from countries not listed in sections 1-4 above and
 - e. applicants with EU qualifications not meeting the requirements in section 3.1 above.
- 5.1.1 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.
 - 5.1.2 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. Applicants will need to apply again to the GPhC to confirm their eligibility to study the OSPAP and pay the fee
 - 5.1.3 To be eligible to register via this route, applicants must successfully complete:

- a one-year GPhC-accredited Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP), and
 - f. a 52-week programme of foundation training (called 'pre-registration training' before 2021) in Great Britain (for applicants who started foundation training in 2025 or later, the training programme must be accredited by the GPhC) and
 - g. the common registration assessment conducted jointly by the GPhC and Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.
- 5.4 Applicants who apply via the OSPAP route must complete the requirements set out in 5.3 and apply to register as a pharmacist in GB within **four years** of commencement of an OSPAP course, or within **two years** of passing a registration assessment, whichever is sooner. Extensions may be granted where there are legitimate, documented grounds.

6. Applications from refugees and stateless persons

- 6.1 We aim to be as flexible as possible to support pharmacy professionals with refugee status. We are aware there may be challenges such as obtaining documents. We will consider and talk through individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis. **Details of other organisations who may be able to provide you with help and support in relation to your application** to register with us are available on our website.
- 6.2 We will waive our application fees for applicants with refugee status. Please contact us at international@pharmacyregulation.org for further advice and support.

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

7. Previous registrants of the GPhC or the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB)

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

