General Pharmaceutical Council

Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland
Protecting Registering Regulating

Common Registration Assessment development process

About the Common Registration Assessment

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) runs an online computer-based Common Registration Assessment (hereinafter 'the assessment') in collaboration with the Pharmaceutical Society Northern Ireland (hereinafter 'the Society').

The purpose of the assessment is to assure the public that trainee pharmacists have met a common threshold of applying the knowledge and skills necessary for safe and effective person-centred care and professional practice in the UK, at the point of registration.

The **Board of Assessors** (hereinafter 'the Board') primary purpose is to protect patients and the public by maintaining the assessment at the appropriate standard for safe and effective pharmacy practice at the point of registration. This will take precedence over all other considerations. To make sure that each assessment is consistent, the questions are set and moderated by the Board. All decisions about questions, assessments, trainee pharmacist outcomes, and pass marks are made by the Board.

This document outlines the stages in developing the assessment and the robust quality assurance (QA) mechanisms which are in place (see figure 1).

Additional information on the mark awarding algorithm and the process for marking papers and issuing of results can be found on the **GPhC Common Registration Assessment webpage**.

Figure 1: Assessment development process



Glossary of terms

Board of Assessors

To ensure consistency and integrity, all assessments are developed and moderated by the Board of Assessors, an independent body appointed by the GPhC and the Society.

The Board's core role is to protect patients and the public by maintaining the assessment at the appropriate standard for safe and effective pharmacy practice at the point of registration. It oversees all aspects of the assessment, including content, structure, pass marks and outcomes. The Board comprises a pharmacist chair, registrant pharmacist members and non-registrant assessment experts.

Question writers

All assessment questions are written by a diverse group of practising pharmacists from across the UK, representing different healthcare settings. These writers are familiar with the IETP 2021 standards, and the knowledge and skills expected of pharmacists at the point of registration. They regularly engage with trainee pharmacists and include both early-career and experienced pharmacists.

Question writers are trained to create high-quality, authentic questions that follow a consistent style and format, aligned with best practices in assessment design. Questions focus on applying knowledge to realistic patient scenarios, assessing higher-order thinking. To ensure fairness, questions avoid content that varies by country or region and only topics relevant across all four UK nations are included. All questions undergo peer review and rigorous quality assurance. Further details on question style and format are available in the ***Common Registration Assessment: question writing manual*** on the GPhC website.

Common Registration Assessment framework

The framework outlines the topics, skills, and knowledge areas that may be assessed in the assessment, with all assessment content directly derived from it. The framework explains the overall scope and structure of the assessment.

Standard setting

The GPhC works with a broad network of standard setters who are practising pharmacists from across the UK nations and healthcare settings and who have current knowledge of foundation and newly registered pharmacist practice. They include both newly registered and experienced pharmacists, all with significant patient-facing roles and who are trained to make informed judgements.

The assessment is set at a level appropriate for registration. The GPhC uses recognised assessment methodologies and psychometrics to ensure reliability, validity and fairness. The passing standard is periodically set using a modified Angoff methodology with the addition of one Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) and maintained through Item Response Theory (IRT). Pass marks vary between sittings to reflect question difficulties, but the passing standard remains the same. Trainee pharmacists must meet the pass mark or greater in both Part 1 and Part 2 in the same sitting, compensation between parts is not permitted. The GPhC does not set target pass rates; those who pass do so on merit, having met the required standard for safe entry to the register.