General Pharmaceutical Council

Pearson Education Limited pharmacy technician qualification re-recognition event report, October 2025



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Event summary and conclusions

Awarding organisation: Pearson Education Ltd

Qualifications: Pharmacy technician qualifications

Names of qualifications:

Qualification 1: Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians

Qualification 2: Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Apprenticeship)

Event type: Re-recognition

Event date: 22 October 2025

Approval period: January 2026 – January 2032

Relevant requirements: **Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians, October 2017**

Outcome: The recognition team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the Pharmacy Technician qualification (including apprenticeship pathway) provided by Pearson Education Ltd should be re-recognised for a further period of six years with an interim event at the mid-way point, subject to 1 condition.

Conditions:

Pearson, working with centre providers, must devise a robust process to collect the views of a patients and the public. This is because the recognition team could not see evidence of how patients and the public views are being sought and engaged consistently through the ongoing design and delivery of the qualification. This is to meet criterion 5.5.

Evidence of how you Pearson has addressed the condition must be sent to the GPhC, for approval by the recognition team. This must be done by 5 December 2025.

There are **minor amendments** required which are detailed below. Pearson must confirm formally to the GPhC once these have been addressed, but does not need to submit documentary evidence.

Standing conditions: Find here **the standing conditions of accreditation**.

Recommendations: No recommendations were made

Minor amendments:

- UK ENIC (European Network of Information Centres) replaced UK NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) after the UK exited the European Union (the awarding organisation may want to use the updated name unless their materials specifically reference an older version) (appendix 11 page 18)
- Pharmacy_technician_(re)accreditation_and_recognition_submission_2025-26_final_v1.0 Pg 83: Provider's commentary Section 5 of the resource requirements gives guidance to centres that tutors for Pharmacy Technicians must meet the following requirements:

- be a pharmacist in part 1 of the GPhC register; - Note to provider: ***Should also include GPhC registered Pharmacy Technicians.***

Registrar[1] decision:

Following the event, the awarding organisation submitted a response to the condition and the recognition team agreed that it had been met satisfactorily.

The Registrar is satisfied that Pearson has met the requirement of continued recognition in accordance with Part 5 article 42 paragraph 4(a)(b) of the Pharmacy Order 2010, in line with the Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians, October 2017.

The Registrar confirms that Pearson is approved to continue to offer the Pharmacy Technician qualifications for a period of 6 years with an interim event in 3 years. The Registrar noted that the condition as outlined in the report has been met.

Key contact (provider):

Dionne Broughton. Product Manager Healthcare, Childcare and Education and Training

Recognition team:

Dr James Desborough (Team leader) Associate Professor in Pharmacy Practice, School of Pharmacy, University of East Anglia*

Clarissa De Souza (team member – pharmacy technician), EPMA Pharmacy Technician, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Charlotte Patterson (team member – pharmacy technician), Pharmacy Technician Facilitator, Birmingham and Solihull training hub and Clinical Pharmacy Technician in primary care network

Liz Harlaar (team member – lay), Independent Business Consultant

*****also attended the pre-event meeting on 7 October 2025

GPhC representative: Chris McKendrick, Senior Quality Assurance Officer (Education), General Pharmaceutical Council*

Rapporteur: Ian Marshall, Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology, University of Strathclyde; Proprietor, Caldarvan Research (Educational and Writing Services)

[1] Registrar or appointed delegate

Introduction

Role of the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in England, Scotland and Wales (the countries of Great Britain). In order to practise in Great Britain, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must be registered with the GPhC and have satisfied us that they meet our detailed requirements. If you are a training provider or awarding body, you will need to follow the process set out **Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians, October 2017** to have your pharmacy technician competency and knowledge-based programme/qualification approved by us.

The powers and obligations of the GPhC in relation to the accreditation of pharmacy education are legislated in the Pharmacy Order 2010. For more information, **visit the Legislation page on our website**.

Background

Pearson Education Ltd. (Pearson) approached the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) in 2019 with an application for recognition of a qualification to train pharmacy technicians. Pearson had worked as part of a group of awarding organisations, facilitated by Skills for Health, and supported by Health Education England, in the development of the qualification. The development process included working closely with pharmacy technicians and pharmacists to design the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and indicative content, underpinned by an external consultation.

A recognition event (Stage 1) relating to the GPhC learning outcomes was held on 11 April 2019. In line with the GPhC's standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians, October 2017 (integrated knowledge and competency), a Stage 2 event took place on 8 November 2019 to review the Pearson qualification's suitability for recognition; this event concentrated on the fulfilment of the GPhC accreditation and recognition standards and criteria and the awarding organisation's ability to deliver the qualification through their centre providers. In line with the GPhC's methodology for recognising awarding organisations delivering pharmacy technician qualifications. The recognition team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the GPhC that the L3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Qualification) provided by Pearson Education Ltd should be recognised for a period of six years with an interim visit in three years. There were no conditions or recommendations.

The interim event took place on 20-21 February 2023 at which the recognition team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the pharmacy technician qualification (including apprenticeship pathway) provided by Pearson should continue to be recognised for the remainder of the recognition period, subject to two conditions and three recommendations. The conditions were:

1. that Pearson must develop and implement a process to ensure that centre providers use equality and diversity data while designing and delivering courses, this is to ensure that centre providers policies and procedures are fair and do not discriminate against trainees or applicants, and may include analysis of the data to identify themes, trends, and actions based on protected characteristics. This must be monitored in a meaningful way by Pearson. This was because although the team could see evidence that Pearson encourage centre providers to collect equality

and diversity data, it was unclear how that data was used by centre providers, and monitored by Pearson, to ensure it was being utilised in delivery of the qualification. This was to meet criterion 2.2, and

2. that Pearson must develop and implement a process to obtain views from a range of stakeholders, specifically patients and the public. This was because the team could see no meaningful engagement with patients and the public since the last recognition event. This was to meet criterion 5.5.

The current submission explained that the specification for the Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians was updated in September 2023 with amendment to unit assessment guidance. Centres delivering the qualification were informed of the updated specification.

The submission stated that additional guidance has been provided to centres on the Dispensing and Accuracy Checking Log for Unit 8 Assemble and Check Dispensed Medicines and Products, updated in 2024, on Assessment guidance for Level 3 Pharmacy Technician qualification and Apprenticeship from Open Awards and Pearson.

In addition, two face-to-face observations, one per year over a two-year period on programme, will now be accepted for the Level 3 Pharmacy Technician Diploma and Integrated Apprenticeship. These will need to be accompanied by an additional Expert Witness Testimony (EWT) completed during the last three months on programme to include evidence of observation of the learner completing accuracy checking work.

Documentation

Prior to the event, the provider submitted documentation to the GPhC in line with the agreed timescales. The documentation was reviewed by the recognition team and was deemed to be satisfactory to provide a basis for discussion.

Pre-event

In advance of the main event, a pre-event meeting took place via videoconference on 07/10/2025

The purpose of the pre-event meeting was to prepare for the event, allow the GPhC and the provider to ask any questions or seek clarification, and to finalise arrangements for the event.

The event

The event began with a private meeting of the recognition team and GPhC representatives on 21 October 2025. The remainder of the event took place via videoconference on 22 October 2025 and comprised a series of meetings with the provider staff and stakeholders involved in the design of the programme/qualification.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

Schedule

1. Meeting with awarding organisation
2. Meeting with sample of centre providers and associated IQA representatives
3. Meeting with qualification EQA representatives
4. Delivery of outcome to awarding organisation

Awarding organisation representatives:

Dionne Broughton, Product Manager Pearson*

Susie Ray, Senior Standards Verifier Pearson

Chris Oley, Senior Assessment Leader Pearson*

Michael Phun, Assessment Leader Pearson*

Deb Cooper Cunningham, Lead Internal Quality Assurer Level 2 and 3 Pharmacy Apprenticeship standards Pearson

Lisa Minshull, Stoke College; Michelle Whitehead, IQA, Woolwich College; Dan Dicker Assessor/IQA, Woolwich College

Samantha Bradshaw, Pharmacy Skills lead Bradford College

James Firth, Pharmacy Academic Lead Bradford College

Lesley Johnson, Delivery Manger Capital City College

Lauren Partridge, Sheffield College; Sam Knox, Pharmacy Lecturer, Assessor, Lead IQA Nottingham College

John Moore, Head of Department South West College; Sheila O Driscoll, Assessor/IQA IPU Professional Academy

Katie Foster, Training and Assessment Facilitator Pharmacy Sheffield College

Charlotte Wright, Bradford College

Pia Fennell, Assessor IQA IPU Professional Academy

Janice Burke, Assessor/IQA IPU Professional Academy

Jude Jeschke, Belfast Met College and

Marianna McBride, Belfast Met College

Key findings - Part 1 Learning outcomes

The structure of the qualification and the separate apprenticeship have not changed since the original recognition event, and both remain registered with Ofqual. Updates to the qualification and apprenticeship units, as well as the assessment strategy, were reviewed as part of this recognition event. On this basis, the recognition team is satisfied that the pharmacy technician **learning outcomes continue to be met.**

Domain: Person-centred care and collaboration (learning outcomes 1 - 12)

Table 1: Learning outcomes' assessment decision for learning outcomes 1 to 12

Learning outcomes	Met	Not met
Learning outcome 1 - 12	✓	☐

Domain: Professionalism (learning outcomes 13 - 25)

Table 2: Learning outcomes' assessment decision for learning outcomes 13 to 25

Learning outcomes	Met	Not met
Learning outcome 13 - 25	✓	☐

Domain: Leadership and management (learning outcomes 26 - 48)

Table 3: Learning outcomes' assessment decision for learning outcomes 26 to 48

Learning outcomes	Met	Not met
Learning outcome 26 - 48	✓	☐

Domain: Leadership and management (learning outcomes 49 – 53)

Table 4: Learning outcomes' assessment decision for learning outcomes 49 to 53

Learning outcomes	Met	Not met
Learning outcome 49 - 53	✓	☐

Key findings - Part 2 Standards for the initial education and training

Standard 1: Selection and entry requirements

Table 5: Standard 1 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 1	✓	☐

The team was satisfied that all four criteria relating to the selection and entry requirements are met.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that all four criteria relating to the selection and entry requirements continued to be met**.** The submitted documentation confirmed that there have been no amendments to the selection and entry requirements since the interim recognition event in 2023.

Centres must ensure that their learner recruitment process is conducted with integrity. This includes ensuring that applicants have appropriate information and advice about the qualification to ensure that it will meet their needs. The team was told that centres are expected to check selection requirements, which include academic qualifications, for example, GCSEs in English, mathematics, and science, along with references for good character, and a self-declaration for health. The team noted an inconsistency in the submitted documentation concerning the requirement for a science qualification and was told that the guidance indicated that science was desirable. The team was told that there are ongoing discussions with other awarding organisations about a science requirement and that substantial experience of working in a pharmacy may be considered as an equivalent entry qualification.

Centres should review not only applicants' prior qualifications but their experience, considering whether their profile shows that they have the potential to achieve the qualification. The team was told that the requirement that trainees are directly supervised by a pharmacy professional registered with the GPhC is emphasized. Entry requirements must ensure that applicants are fit to practise as trainees at the point of selection. Centres will need to check fitness to practise through a self-declaration for health and a reference from school or employer for good character. The team was told that selectors must apply the selection criteria, including EDI principles, consistently, in an unbiased way and in line with relevant current legislation. They should be trained to do this and training should include equality, diversity and inclusion. It was confirmed to the team that all personnel involved in assessment, verification, and quality assurance are required to declare any conflicts of interest. Pearson's quality assurance (QA) processes include checks for conflicts of interest as part of the centre approval process and ongoing monitoring.

The team learned that the outcomes of monitoring are recorded on the Standards Verifier's (SV) visit report and Lead Standards Verifier's (LSV) report. An additional SV planner ensures that all requirements of the professional and regulatory bodies are met and that all SVs are consistently checking and monitoring these over and above the standard SV requirements. All SVs were trained to use this process before the qualification was launched, and centres are guided through this process through LSVs.

Applicants must be currently working in a pharmacy environment and/or have secured a placement as a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician. Applicants must also provide evidence they have completed a minimum of two years' relevant work-based experience in the UK under the supervision,

direction or guidance of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician to whom the applicant was directly accountable for not less than 14 hours per week.

Standard 2: Equality, diversity and inclusion

Table 6: Standard 2 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 2	✓	☐

The team was satisfied that all three criteria relating to equality, diversity and inclusion requirements are met.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that two of the three criteria relating to equality, diversity and inclusion requirements continued to be met with one criterion subject to a condition.

The submission stated that Pearson develops qualifications and assessments that are inclusive and accessible to all learners, and that learners, parents and teachers are able to see this clearly. Pearson has developed a single set of principles and guidelines that can be used by internal colleagues and external senior associates to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of the qualifications and assessments. Equality and diversity must be embedded in programme design and delivery. Equality and diversity data must be used in designing and delivering programmes, and in planning the whole experience of being a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician. The team wished to know how EDI has continued to be embedded, updated and amended in qualification design and delivery and was told that this concept was new to some centres. Centre providers interviewed were uncertain of their roles and responsibilities in terms of collecting and analysing EDI data. However, centres and LSVs have examined the data as a whole with a view to considering the issue for the next revision of the specification.

In response to the condition from the interim event that Pearson must develop and implement a process to ensure that centre providers use equality and diversity data while designing and delivering courses, it was explained that as part of the Verification process, SVs review EDI with centres. There had been no concerns about the data and hence no action has ensued apart from sharing of information and agreeing that the EDI review should be an annual exercise. The data collected show that new trainees represent a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, illustrating significant diversity in enrolment, that a significant number of trainees fall within 25 to 44 years, reflecting diverse age participation, that trainees come from diverse ethnic backgrounds with some declaring disabilities, reflecting inclusivity in the programme, and that successful trainees represent a range of religions. From the 2024 data collection, Pearson has encouraged centres to amend their data collection to include information on protected characteristics in line with GPhC requirements.

Centres can make adjustments to assessments to take account of the needs of individual learners in line with the guidance for reasonable adjustments and special consideration in vocational internally assessed units. The team was told that centres have freedom to make reasonable adjustments and that to date centres have not requested assistance from Pearson with adjustments. However, if there are major issues, centres would seek guidance from Pearson, although the team was told that Pearson has not experienced this for pharmacy to date. It was stressed that although reasonable adjustments can be made, the learning outcomes cannot be modified.

Standard 3: Management, resources and capacity

Table 7: Standard 2 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 3	✓	☐

The team was satisfied that all seven criteria relating to management, resources and capacity requirements are met.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that all seven criteria relating to management, resources and capacity requirements continued to be met. Two recommendations were made.

The submission explained that there has been one amendment to the Management, resource and capacity requirements since the interim event that GPhC was informed of in January 2024, the appointment of new Senior Standards Verifier (SSV). The team learned that, additionally, four sector advisors have been appointed responsible for carrying out live, detailed observation of the assessment practice in Level 2 and 3 programmes, reporting back findings to the SVs, but not directly to centres. The team was told that Standards Verification team members and sector advisors have yearly training written by the SSV to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities. It was confirmed that the LSV is not subject-specific but has to have had experience as an SV. It was also confirmed that if an SV has too much workload or is sick then the SSV picks up the role or another SV is used, or tasks are offloaded to sector advisors.

The team wished to know how frequently lead standard verifier reports on a provider are submitted and what the process is when issues are identified. It was told that non-sector-specific LSV reports are a set procedure completed twice yearly followed by monitoring of centres. The LSV makes centre risk rating when end of year SV reports are submitted. The team was told that Pharmacy will remain high risk, with this status fed back to SVs and then to centres.

The submission explained that expert witness testimony (EWT) contributes to evidence presented for assessment. The role of the expert witness is to submit evidence to the assessor on the competence of the learner in meeting units. This evidence must directly relate to learner's performance in the workplace which has been seen by the expert witness. Centres are responsible for ensuring that all expert witnesses are familiar with the standards for the relevant units. They must also understand the centre's recording requirements and will need guidance on the skills required to provide evidence for the units. It is not necessary for expert witnesses to hold an assessor qualification because the qualified assessor makes all assessment decisions about the acceptability of evidence regardless of source.

The team wished to know how, with the expansion of potential training sectors for pharmacy students/trainees, for example, prison and GP practices, Pearson ensures that learning agreements are suitable and reflect the placement environment. It was told that their various sectors used include GP practice, there are currently no trainees in prisons and that learning agreements would be revised for differing sectors.

The team noted that It was recommended at the interim event in 2023 that the strategy for communication with centre providers be strengthened by Pearson and wished to know what changes had been made and how this is being reviewed. The team was told that there are regular meetings with centres and that all information is on shared drives. Issues can also be discussed internally within Pearson Risk Management Meetings to determine whether further action will be required, including

additional scrutiny in the form of visits, reviews, or enhanced/customised sampling and verification of learner evidence and centre delivery. Where external reports touch upon relevant delivery or quality concerns for a sector the assigned SVs and LSV will double-check those concerns during their reviews and assign actions where necessary to ensure the centre and its delivery reach compliance.

The team was given an example of one centre wishing to move from three down to two face-to-face assessments plus external witness testimony (EWT); this now applies to all centres. Support had also been provided to one centre finding the units too repetitive.

Standard 4: Monitoring, review and evaluation

Table 8: Standard 4 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 4	✓	☐

The team was satisfied that all five criteria relating to monitoring, review and evaluation requirements are met.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that all five criteria relating to monitoring, review and evaluation requirements continued to be met. The submission stated that there have been no amendments to the Monitoring, review and evaluation requirements since the interim event.

The team learned that centre can decide how to run the course, either on an academic year basis or using a roll-in/roll out approach at any time of the year. Attrition rates have shown that rates are higher in the non-apprentice route, with some learners taking more than 2 years to complete. The team was told that some SVs sample monthly if trainees are enrolled on a roll-on/roll-off basis.

The team was told that there will be a one-off feedback process from centres until the new proposed GPhC standards for pharmacy technician education and qualifications are approved. Issues from feedback include that of assessment burden and the requirement for three practice observations. In response, centres have been provided with support and clear guidance that for both Level 3 Pharmacy Technician Diploma and Integrated Apprenticeship, two face-to-face observations, one per year over a two-year period on programme, will need to be accompanied by an additional EWT completed during the last three months on programme; this must include evidence of observation of the learner completing accuracy checking work. This can be backdated to learners who were registered on programme from January 2024. The Unit 8 guidance for accuracy checking logs has been amended to ensure patient safety. The team learned that there had been a liaison meeting with Open Awards in September 2025 to begin the review of the findings from feedback. The Feedback had shown some repetition but it had been decided to wait for the new GPhC standards before making changes. Nevertheless, the team was told that Pearson is responsive to changes in practice, with updated guidance for accuracy checking, communication with centres re DES and reporting public safety concerns.

Where serious quality issues are found with a centre's delivery, SVs may recommend sanctions on the centre which can temporarily remove approval and all certification for the programmes involved. These recommendations are automatically flagged internally and either reviewed by the Senior Standards Verifier or an internal Pearson Assessment Leader/Qualification Delivery and Awarding Manager. In this respect, the team asked, in the light of the closure of one of the centres delivering the pharmacy qualification, what lessons had been learned? It was told that there are pre-existing measures and

processes for supporting displaced learners, and that actions taken are dependent on whether the learners are publicly or privately funded as employers also drive the decision-making process for the future of displaced learners where public funding is involved. In all cases displaced learners need to be transferred to an alternative provider. Thereafter, regular quality assurance process can be continued to support the learner's certification.

Standard 5: Course design and delivery

Table 9: Standard 5 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 5	☐	✓

The team was satisfied that nine of the ten criteria relating to course design and delivery requirements continue to be met with one criterion subject to a condition.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that nine of the ten criteria relating to the course design and delivery requirements continued to be met, with one criterion subject to a condition. One recommendation was made. The submission stated that there have been no amendments to the qualification assessment criteria, learning outcomes and delivery requirements since the interim event.

The submission explained that the specification was updated In 2023 including Information being added to the penultimate and final bullet points in the Qualification Objectives section, reflecting updates to the GPhC's Standing conditions of accreditation and recognition. Additional content has been added to ensure that the qualification maps fully to the Pharmacy Technician (Integrated) Apprenticeship Standard, to unit 4 to map to Skills England (formally the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)) Digital Skills Framework, to unit 6 to map to Skills England Sustainability Framework. Additionally, Annexe G has been added, mapping the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) of the Pharmacy Technician (Integrated) Apprenticeship Standard to the content.

If Pearson's SV/LSV visits highlight any situation where safe practices are not being followed and patient safety is being compromised, this is reviewed during the annual SV standardisation and training. The annual SSV report may contribute to any changes to the qualification, working with other Awarding Organisations jointly to make changes as appropriate.

The submission explained that In 2025 Pearson asked centres to provide constructive feedback on the Diploma, helping to identify areas for improvement and ensuring that the qualification continues to support high-quality delivery. Eight centres responded and provided with several key insights. Thus, there was a consensus that many units contain repetitive content, especially regarding legislation, governance, and scientific principles. Respondents suggest that these could be streamlined or merged to reduce overlap and improve efficiency. The overall volume and scope of the qualification were considered excessive by several respondents, leading to high workload and stress for both students and staff. Many recommended condensing units and reducing the number of assignments to better align with the practical requirements of the job role. Some units and assessment criteria were viewed as not directly relevant to the pharmacy technician role, particularly those involving specialist manufacturing, aseptic techniques, and detailed microbiology. There was a recommendation to focus more on practical skills and core competencies that reflect real workplace needs.

In September 2025, Pearson provided centres with updated guidance from the GPhC on supervising pharmacy learners in practice and process for public safety concerns: Where fitness to practise issues

arise, supervisors have a duty to report to the relevant course provider and therefore follow the disclosure procedures set by the provider. Serious concerns must also be reported to the GPhC. When a fitness to practise concern arises, the centre must contact Pearson. This will be logged and the Standard Verifier will be in contact to discuss this issue further and provide guidance to centres.

The documentation indicated that there are systems that enable learners to meet regularly with workplace colleagues in order to discuss and document their progress, to have access to pharmacy professionals that are able to act as role models and give professional support and guidance, and the opportunity to work in multidisciplinary teams. The supervisor of pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians must be able to provide clear signposting to the support available to learners, covering academic study, general welfare and career advice. This support should be discussed at length at induction and revisited frequently throughout the course. In this respect, the team noted that Appendix 7 of the submission indicates that delegation of accuracy checking to the trainee is allowed to be based on an internal risk assessment by the employer. The team wished to know how this process of supervision ensures patient safety at all times. It was told that every provider liaises with employers but employers have different procedures although SOPs must always be in place. It was informed that trainees practise before starting to complete their logs which must be signed off by a GPhC registrant. If error reported some employers or providers require a total restart. The team was told that Pearson had introduced changes for providers to deal with concerns. This is done on a case-by-case basis and includes new guidance for logs, along with centres being approached to indicate that learners had not met requirements.

The submission referred to an updated webinar for providers regarding the need for meaningful engagement with stakeholders including public and patients. The team wished to know how there was meaningful engagement with a range of stakeholders, including patients and the public, in designing and delivering the course at each centre. The team was told that centres work differently from each other and some have meetings with partners e.g. employers, with minutes recorded. However, observation of assessment practice may have no patients involved, for example, in hospital practice, and if patients are involved, no record is made of their direct comments, although comments may be reported in SV reports. Although comments from employers' staff can be reported, it was admitted that public contact is more problematic. Pearson expressed its willingness to go forward to obtain feedback from the public/patients but so far has relied on its SVs who document any concerns. There is no patient/public panel at Pearson, although SVs are told that they should interact with the public if possible. The team agreed that it be a **condition** that Pearson, working with centre providers, must devise a robust process to collect the views of a patients and the public. This is because the recognition team could not see evidence of how patients and the public views are being sought and engaged consistently through the ongoing design and delivery of the qualification.

Standard 6: Course assessment

Table 10: Standard 6 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 6	✓	☐

The team was satisfied that all ten criteria relating to course assessment requirements are met.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that all ten criteria relating to the course assessment requirements continued to be met. One recommendation was made.

The submission confirmed that programme and assessment regulations must be appropriate for a programme that leads to professional registration, prioritising professionalism, patient safety, and safe and effective practice. Learners must be supervised using an agreed system in all learning and training environments, to assure patient safety at all times. Learners must carry out tasks only in which they are competent, or that they are learning under supervision in which to be competent, so that patient safety is not compromised. SVs provide advice and guidance to enable centres to hold accurate assessment records and assess learners appropriately, consistently and fairly.

Evidence for the skills-based units can take a variety of forms; direct observation of the learner's performance by their assessor is the primary method of assessment but guidance is provided on the use of expert witness testimony, professional discussion, reflective accounts and questions and answers. The primary method of assessment for the skills-based units is observation in the workplace by the assessor. Across the qualification's skills-based units there must be at least three observations that cover the required skills. Evidence should be generated over a period of time to show consistent performance. For example, in Unit 8: Assemble and Check Dispensed Medicines and Products, a minimum of 500 items must be accurately dispensed by the learner with no errors being made and self-checked consistently over a period of time in a range of circumstances, with an additional minimum of 500 accurately checked items for checks of others.

The team wished to know how centres are continuing to align with the assessment strategy and how is this being monitored. It was told that the strategy may be different in skills units but that there was direct observation guidance. The number of observations was being reviewed, for example, one observation per skills unit, while meeting the overall need for three observations. The team also wished to know the impacts of artificial intelligence, AI, on the qualification assessment strategy in relation to the validity of a student's work. It was told that AI has no influence on assessment of the skills units as assessment is by primarily direct observation, but agreed that there was need for vigilance on the knowledge elements.

Centres must have the appropriate physical resources to support both delivery and assessment of the qualification. Learners undertaking this qualification will need access to a pharmacy and to a registered pharmacy professional to act as a supervisor or mentor. Staff should be occupationally competent and registered with the GPhC. They should have recent experience of pharmacy practice and be able to demonstrate evidence of continuing professional development. SVs provide advice and guidance to enable centres to hold accurate assessment records and assess learners appropriately, consistently and fairly. Pearson uses external quality assurance processes to verify that assessment, internal quality assurance and evidence of achievement meet nationally defined standards. This is conducted by an external and appropriately qualified person that is not an employee of the centre and is not involved with the learner in their day-to-day work. In this respect the team wished to know about the risk monitoring process/strategy for changing the frequency of SV visits and was told that the risk mode is based on the RAG, red, amber, green, approach that can be used to adjust the frequency of visits, with additional visits or sampling, including unannounced checks.

Standard 7: Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician support and the learning experience

Table 11: Standard 7 – outcome decision

Standards	Met	Not met
Standard 7	✓	☐

The team was satisfied that all seven criteria relating to pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician support and the learning experience requirements are met.

At the 2023 interim event the team was satisfied that all seven criteria relating to pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician support and the learning experience requirements continued to be met.

The submission stated that Section 5, Programme Delivery, in the specification provides centres with clear guidance of supporting learners to achieve the qualification including induction, effective supervision, an appropriate and realistic workload, personal and academic support, time to learn, and access to resources. Learners must also receive appropriate and timely feedback on their performance in order to support their development. In this respect the team wished to know how Pearson ensured that there are systems in place at each provider to meet and discuss trainees' progress and that these systems are utilised. It was told that learner interviews, preferably conducted on a face-to -face basis, are part of SV visits when the SV attempts to get a broad overview, checks who is the learner's assessor and how often they meet. It was noted that there is a schedule for the apprenticeship route making checking easier.

The individual learner must be directly supervised by a pharmacy professional registered with the GPhC. The learner must be supported by their supervisor in receiving sufficient training and experience in the workplace in order to work competently and safely as a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician. Learners are allocated a mentor in the workplace to assist them in the day-to-day working environment and to act as contact for the assessor/trainer.

Serious concerns that may affect a pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician's suitability for future registration, such as inappropriate or criminal behaviour, must be reported to the GPhC. There must also be clear procedures for learners to raise concerns. In addition, Centres must have a policy for dealing with appeals from learners. Appeals may relate to incorrect assessment decisions or unfairly conducted assessment.

The documentation also confirmed that Pearson had written to centres in September 2025 about the updated guidance from the GPhC on supervising pharmacy learners in practice**.** Centres were informed of the requirement to provide evidence of each learner's Designated Educational Supervisor (DES) and provide evidence that the DES holds pharmacist registration with GPhC/PSNI or pharmacy technician registration with GPhC.

External Quality Assurance (EQA) of the pharmacy technician (integrated) End Point Assessment (EPA) plan (apprenticeship pathway - England Only)

Pearson is the End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Apprenticeship).

Within the pharmacy technician (integrated) route, all centre providers use the fully integrated EPA plan. To ensure compliance with the assessment plan (and Skills England requirements), Pearson request that a copy of the Pharmacy Technician qualification is uploaded as part of the gateway process. Pearson work closely with colleagues who standards verify and allow certification, to ensure apprentices are not disadvantaged with any delays. Pearson centre providers use the Pearson level 3 qualification, which allows EPA Delivery to review and monitor gateway submissions in a timely manner.

Pearson use ACE360 as the EPA management information system. This system allows for each provider to upload the gateway evidence and then submit to Pearson for review, before entering the EPA period. As the system tracks each interaction, it confirms who has reviewed, who has added comments and allows for a clear picture for internal and external audit.

Once a centre provider submits for gateway review, an assessor is allocated to review the evidence by the Lead IQA. The assessor will verify the gateway evidence and approve for EPA. The assessor will then begin writing up their paperwork with their awarding decisions for the apprentice.

After the assessment process has been completed, the Independent End-Point Assessors have 48 hours to upload their assessment decisions, IQA has 48 hours to sample, and results are released on the system on day 5. With everything being contained in the ACE360 system, the system is able to lock any assessment related decisions until IQA has occurred.

As an EPAO, Pearson have established systems to ensure the Pearson EPA delivery is relevant, reliable, efficient, positive, and focused on learning. Assessments are aligned with the occupational standard and reviewed through annual Lead IQA activity to maintain occupational relevance. Reliability is supported through risk-based IQA sampling, annual moderation and standardisation, and a performance management handbook which sets clear expectations for assessor practice. Pearson works to defined SLAs (service level agreements) covering scheduling, assessment, and results release, with governance oversight from Pearson regulations team to ensure apprentices are not disadvantaged by delays or inconsistencies.

Structured feedback forms from apprentices, employers, and assessors are collected after each assessment and analysed to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Findings are shared through Lead IQA reviews and forums to embed learning, reinforce best practice, and inform continuous improvement. This cycle of feedback, sampling, review, and supervision ensures that the EPA remains fair, consistent, and continually improved in line with the Skills England EQA framework.

Annex A: Decision descriptors

Table 12: Decision making descriptors

Decision	Descriptor
Met/will be met	The accreditation team is assured after reviewing the available evidence that this criterion/learning outcome is met (or will be met at the point of delivery).
Not met	The accreditation team does not have assurance after reviewing the available evidence that this criterion or learning outcome is met.



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