Quality assuring the marking and issuing of results for the common registration assessment

About the common registration assessment

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) runs an online computer based common registration assessment in collaboration with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Eligible candidates sit the assessment in a Pearson Vue Test Centre or online using their own computer with online proctoring (when granted as a reasonable adjustment). The Board of Assessors maintain the standard and integrity of the common registration assessment and have responsibility for the marking, analysis and outcome awards.

This document outlines the process of marking the common registration assessment, issuing results to candidates and outlines the robust GPhC quality assurance mechanisms (see figures 1 and 2) which are in place for each part of the process.

No candidate marks have ever been changed during the quality assurance checks in 23 individual assessment sittings, and therefore candidates are not able to request a re-mark of their assessment.

Any candidate who fails the assessment continues to have the right to appeal their result due to either procedural grounds, or to exceptional circumstances that come to light after the sitting. Further information on how to appeal is provided in the guidance for unsuccessful candidates that will be sent to any candidate who is unsuccessful on results day.

Information recorded by a candidate during an exam is exempt from disclosure under schedule 2 (25)(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Additional information on the Mark Awarding Algorithm followed by the Board of Assessors can be found on the Assuring the registration assessment page of the GPhC website.
Figure 1: Marking the assessment

- Test centre Part 1 and Part 2 candidate answers recorded by Pearson VUE
- Remote sitters Part 1 and Part 2 candidate answers recorded by Pearson VUE

GPhC transfer candidate answers to marking and analysis contractor AlphaPlus Consultancy

AlphaPlus Consultancy conduct analysis and create a report for the board of assessors on the performance of the questions and the papers

GPhC manually quality checks candidate responses to ensure all answers are accounted for before sending for marking

If any discrepancies are identified a critical incident investigation would be launched with Pearson VUE for investigation
Figure 2: Analysing, issuing marks and quality assuring the assessment

- Board of Assessors – Post-assessment meeting
  1(a) Requests for clarification reviewed
  1(b) Review of individual question performance and paper reliability
  1(c) Review of sitting data

- Recalculation of results data based on decisions made at meeting

- Board of Assessors – Post-assessment meeting
  2(a) Review of the quality of the sittings
  2(b) Agreeing pass marks

- Recalculation if required of results data based on decisions made at meeting

- 3(a) Awarding passes and fails to candidates
  3(b) Confirming the marks
  3(c) Recording of final pass marks for Part 1 and Part 2 for communication purposes

- A range of candidates (at least 1%) are randomly selected for quality assurance checks of their answers and final marks

- The GPhC manually re-checks the selected candidates’ raw answers inputted into the Pearson Vue system

- The GPhC manually re-marks the selected candidates’ inputted answers for Part 1 and Part 2

- These marks are then checked against the final candidates’ marks awarded in stage 3(c)

- Manual check of results letters by GPhC staff to ensure correct mark and result outcome

- Results letters sent to candidates via MyGPhC (GB) & electronically for (NI)

If any discrepancies or errors are identified, the GPhC will conduct a comprehensive root cause analysis investigation to identify and resolve the source of these errors. The Board of Assessors will advise and make final decisions on any outcomes of the investigation.