

# Guidance for students involved in GPhC accreditation or recognition events

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## Introduction

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the independent regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy premises in Great Britain.

It is our job to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the public by upholding standards and public trust in pharmacy.

Our principal functions include:

- approving qualifications for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and accrediting education and training providers;
- maintaining a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy premises;
- setting standards for conduct, ethics, proficiency, education and training, and continuing professional development (CPD);
- establishing and promoting standards for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy at registered pharmacies;
- establishing fitness to practise requirements, monitoring pharmacy professionals' fitness to practise and dealing fairly and proportionately with complaints and concerns.

## Education and training

The GPhC sets standards – including learning outcomes - for the initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, as well as education and training standards for pharmacist independent prescribers and pharmacy support staff.

The GPhC also approves courses against these standards through its accreditation and recognition processes to allow people to demonstrate that they have met the course requirement to apply for registration or annotation. The full list of courses that the GPhC approves is below:

- 4-year MPharm degree
- 4-year MPharm degree taught in-part overseas (2+2)
- 5-year MPharm degree with preparatory year
- 5-year MPharm degree (MPharm year 1 taught over 2 years)
- 5-year MPharm degree with integrated foundation training
- 5-year MPharm degree with sandwich foundation training
- 5-year MPharm degree taught in-part overseas with integrated foundation training (2+3)
- Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programmes (OSPAPs)
- Pharmacist independent prescribing programmes
- Pharmacy technician qualifications/courses

*The GPhC also accredits courses for pharmacy support staff, such as dispensing, and medicines counter assistant courses, that permit those working in pharmacies to undertake a range of activities for the safe supply of medicines to patients and the public under the supervision of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician.*

## Questions and answers

### What is accreditation/recognition?

Accreditation/recognition means that all processes around a course have been reviewed for quality assurance purposes to ensure that the course of education or training meets the relevant GPhC standards, accreditation/recognition criteria or training policies.

### Who is part of the accreditation/recognition team?

The team is made up of a number of members of the GPhC's accreditation and recognition panel. Each accreditation/recognition team will include pharmacists and lay members, and depending on the course being accredited/recognised, may additionally include pharmacy academics, pharmacy technicians, and newly qualified pharmacists.

### What is an accreditation/recognition event?

It is a series of meetings between a GPhC accreditation/recognition team (accompanied by a GPhC staff member), and the course provider which takes place over one or more days, in which the course provision is reviewed to check that it meets the GPhC education and training standards. The event may be held on-site at the course provider's teaching facilities, for example at a university, or it may be held virtually via videoconference.

Before the event, the course provider will have submitted documentation to the GPhC to show how their course provision meets the standards. This will be reviewed by the accreditation/recognition team and discussed further during the event.

During the event the accreditation/recognition team will meet with staff and students, and if the event is on-site, they may also view teaching facilities and equipment, and observe teaching sessions.

The accreditation/recognition team will consider all they have seen and heard to help them to make an informed view on the course provision.

### Why have I been asked to take part?

As part of the overall quality assurance processes for accrediting/recognising a course we seek views of current/recent students to help inform the accreditation/recognition processes and allow the accreditation/recognition team to gain an overall view on the course provision. Course providers seek volunteers from students currently on the course, or those who have recently completed the course, to take part.

### Do I need to attend a meeting?

If you are currently studying on an MPharm degree (or any variation of an MPharm degree) or an OSPAP, and you agree to meet with the accreditation team, you will be asked to attend a meeting along with your fellow students who have also volunteered. This may mean attending a meeting face-to-face at your university, or you may be invited to attend a meeting by videoconference.

For some courses, such as independent prescribing courses\*, pharmacy technician courses, and support staff courses, we seek views before the event through an online evaluation. If you agree to take part, we will email you a link to the survey and let you know the date by which we will need you to complete it to make sure your feedback is received in time to be considered as part of the accreditation/recognition event.

*\*For independent prescribing course monitoring events, you may also be asked to attend a meeting along with fellow pharmacists who have also volunteered. This will mean attending a meeting by videoconference.*

### How long will I be needed?

For MPharm degrees and OSPAP courses where students meet as a large group the meeting may last between 1-1.5 hours. For other course types, please allow around 30-45 minutes.

If you are sent the link to an online evaluation, it should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete.

### Do I need to prepare?

Before the meeting you may wish to reflect on the course and any areas that you found to be particularly good, or areas that you feel need improvement.

### What sort of questions might I be asked?

The main things an accreditation/recognition team will want to know are your general views on:

- The course
- The student experience
- whether you think the course is preparing you for practise
- teaching
- support
- facilities
- resources
- opportunities to engage with the development of the new programmes
- strengths of the course
- areas for improvement

The accreditation/recognition team won't:

- quiz you about your pharmacy knowledge

- ask you specific questions, such as your assessment results
- ask you questions about specific members of staff
- ask unprofessional questions which invite you to be indiscreet

### **Will course staff be told about my views?**

After the student meeting, the accreditation/recognition team may feedback the main points to staff in summary format, such as 'students have told us xxx, what is your view?'. However, feedback will not be linked to individuals in any way.

### **How will my views be recorded?**

It is important to remember that what is said in the meetings is confidential and that the GPhC doesn't make a note of who says what. You won't be mentioned by name in the accreditation/recognition report, the report will simply state that the accreditation/recognition team met with a group of students; and depending on the course you are studying, x number of students in year 1, x in year 2 etc.

The report will provide a summary of the views of you and your fellow students, for example: 'the majority of students that met with the accreditation/recognition team reported that they had good access to online journals'.

### **Can I find out the outcome of the accreditation/recognition event?**

Yes. Once the accreditation process is complete, the report of the event will be available to view on our website at: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/approved-providers-education-and-training>

### **Where can I find our more information about the GPhC's accreditation/recognition processes?**

You will find more information at <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/approval-courses>

### **Where can I view the GPhC's education and training standards?**

You will find these at: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/education-standards>