

Stakeholder Briefing

Pharmacy Technician Qualification Development

This paper provides an update to the Pharmacy Technician Qualification Development – Oversight Group. Its purpose is to describe the work undertaken to date and aid members with responding to the public consultation.

Background

Health Education England (HEE) exists for one reason only: to support the delivery of excellent healthcare and health improvement to the patients and public of England by ensuring that the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours, at the right time and in the right place.

The Pharmacy Technician workforce has been recognised through various national policies and white papers as being essential. This workforce supports the required skill mix and service transformation in community and hospital pharmacy to ensure the Medicines Value Programme, Five Year Forward View and Community Pharmacy Forward View become a reality.

Pharmacy Technician education is fundamental to underpin the transformation and up-skilling of a large pharmacy technician workforce, enabling appropriate skill mix to support the infrastructure changes required to enhance the roles of clinical pharmacists and services across sectors. The recently revised General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) [Initial Education & Training Standards for Pharmacy Technicians](#) (IET) will ensure that pharmacy technicians have the knowledge and skills at the right level for current and future workforce requirements at point of registration.

The development of a new qualification which meets the IET is a key enabler to NHS and Pharmacy policy. The qualification will need to be robust, cost effective and transferable across home countries and will need to be developed in such a way that it will be able to be utilised across a range of funding models. To support the timely access to fit-for-purpose education programmes for pharmacy technicians, HEE is funding the collaborative development of a Pharmacy Technician qualification that meets the recently revised General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) IET Standards, and which will be able to be utilised from September 2019.

Project development overview and timelines

Health Education England have commissioned Skills for Health to establish and manage the collaborative development of the qualification. The project was initiated in March 2018, commencing with a market engagement event for Awarding Organisations and the Regulator.

The development of the qualification is led by Skills for Health, which has vast experience of working with healthcare professionals and Awarding Organisations in developing qualifications that meet regulatory, academic and workforce requirements.

Awarding Organisations following the market engagement event were invited to submit business cases to their organisations. The rationale for this, was to support commitment from those Awarding Organisations who are engaged in the development process to deliver the qualification following accreditation with Ofqual.

Development

On the 23rd March 2018, those Awarding Organisations* that had approval for their business cases were invited to attend a meeting at Skills for Health, to agree the methodology for developing the qualification.

The following principles were agreed by all. The qualification would be

- developed **to meet the Initial Education and Training Standards** <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/news/gphc-launches-new-education-and-training-standards-pharmacy-technicians> and regulatory requirements to register as a Pharmacy Technician post completion
- reflective of the knowledge and skills required for a **day 1 Pharmacy Technician** regardless of their working environment
- a **single** qualification to reflect the requirements of a blended course
- include **the underpinning knowledge requirements** with a focus on the science knowledge to reflect the patient centric standards
- based on the **National Occupational Standards** relevant to the role where available
- where possible utilise **existing units** from the current two qualifications which will be updated to meet the new IET Standards
- include **subject matter experts** during the development phase
- reflect any apprenticeship policy requirements as determined by the Institute for Apprenticeships
- meet the GPhC Evidence Framework for Initial Education and Training Course Providers

Skills for Health conducted a mapping exercise of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and the Initial Education and Training Standards and produced a document for Awarding Organisation to review. The mapping document also highlighted gaps where there weren't existing NOS and identified the underpinning knowledge required.

On the 2nd May 2018, Awarding Organisations and Subject Matter Experts met to develop units to reflect the IET standards which reflect the regulatory IET.

Awarding Organisations and Subject Matter Experts were split into groups of expertise to review themed units and produce draft units.

An initial standardisation exercise was then conducted to reduce any duplication and ensure language consistency across the units.

Public consultation

The Final Draft Pharmacy Technician Qualification was launched week commencing the 2nd July for a period of 4 weeks. It **closes at NOON on 30th July 2018**

The consultation is led by Skills for Health.

Home country engagement – Transferability

The development of the qualification has been based on meeting regulatory registration and workforce requirements.

Transferability of Pharmacy Technicians who are regulated by a UK organisation but are trained under individual national education pathways was a key consideration at point of development. It would not be economically viable or equitable to have PTs registering with the regulator under different initial education qualification levels.

HEE have invited Education representatives from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to attend monthly calls to share progress and common areas of work to reduce duplication.

Representatives discuss how the development will meet workforce needs and that the qualification will be fit for purpose. Representatives are responsible for feeding back discussion and outcomes within their own national education governance structures.

The Workforce Education Development Service in Wales has been integrated in the qualification development work so that England and Wales will use the same qualification to train future pharmacy technicians.

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) in conjunction with SQA Awarding Body and Skills for Health has developed a new SVQ Pharmacy Services qualification at SCQF Level 8. NES and SQA Awarding Body are currently working with training providers and key stakeholders to develop an underpinning knowledge qualification (SCQF level still to be confirmed). It is planned that both qualifications will be ready for delivery in August 2019. NES and SQA are also working closely with training providers to ensure delivery of training meets the needs of the remote and rural areas within Scotland.

Timelines

Online consultation – July

Meeting with subject matter experts to check final units and qualification structure – August

Awarding Organisations submit qualification to GPhC for approval – September

Awarding Organisations submit qualification to Ofqual for accreditation - December

Implementation plans

Post accreditation of the qualification with the regulator and Ofqual, Awarding Organisations will begin to support their Education Providers with course delivery plans for 1st September 2019.

Health Education England will facilitate two events in October/November 2018 to support stakeholders with the changes of the new qualification and to consider workforce areas that may need to develop new education pathways for example technical services.

Awarding Organisations have requested a draft proposed structure for delivery model. The below has been proposed by the Development Group. It is not final and does not reflect the full qualification at point of writing this paper.



*Units are not listed in any particular order.

**Additional registration requirements will need to be met, this infographic shows the education pathway for the qualification.

Summary Principles that underpin the development of the Qualification

- The qualification is **new and reflects** the Initial Education and Training Standards launched in October 2017.
- It is not intended to reflect the current PT workforce training requirements or entry routes
- The Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians that undertake the qualification will register in September 2021
- The qualification will be recognised by the GPhC as the registerable qualification (once approval processes met) for PTPTs in England and Wales
- The qualification level does not reflect an occupational level

Tips to support a consultation response

- **You do not need to respond to all 25 units – choose those that you have expertise/knowledge of and/or interest in**
- You will need to set aside at least 4 hours if you are reviewing the whole qualification and sending comments
- You can only send comments in via the Skills for portal
<http://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/news/latest-news/item/681-consultation-on-draft-qualification-units-for-pharmacy-technicians?highlight=WyJjb25zdWx0YXRpb24iXQ==>
- You can submit responses individually or on behalf of an organisation/group
- The indicative content will shape the curriculum including assessment and delivery model, you do not at this stage need to comment on this in detail. This will be the next phase of work once the qualification has been developed
- All comments and constructive feedback is welcomed
- Consultation closes at NOON on 30th July 2018

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