

## Entry to the Register with non-UK qualifications: the Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programmes

### 1. Introduction

The normal route to registration in Great Britain (GB) is a four-year, full-time degree, the MPharm plus a year's supervised and assessed preregistration training with the registration exam at the end. This meets the European Union's (EU) minimum training requirements for pharmacy. EEA nationals have an EEA pharmacy qualification have the right to practise in the UK through EU acquired rights and the Society has a mechanism for checking their qualifications then accepting them onto the Register. In June 2006 a limited number of reciprocal agreements outside the British Isles will end and pharmacists from the countries with which we have had agreements will have to apply in the same way as other overseas pharmacists not covered by EU law. This process is discussed in the following section.

### 2. The Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP)

All applicants must have a bona fide pharmacy qualification and be registered or eligible to register in their country of origin. Once accepted, applicants are required to complete a conversion course, the Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP). If they pass the course successfully they can enter the preregistration year. If that, and the registration examination, is completed successfully they can apply to enter the Register. This process applies to all pharmacists with qualifications gained outside the EEA whether or not their holders are EEA nationals. In a few cases this process includes an interview by the Adjudicating Committee.

The OSPAP course is one year long, full time and cost around £12000 for fees plus subsistence. Currently there are four courses in Great Britain: at Aston, Sunderland, Brighton and the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. The focus of the OSPAP is underpinning scientific knowledge, GB pharmacy practice, law and ethics. In essence it is an orientation to practice in GB and raises students to Masters level, which is now the requirement for entry to the Register.

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