



Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Helping pharmacists achieve excellence

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Pre-registration Tutors

These FAQs are written to serve as a reference point for Pre-registration Tutors regarding their role and accountabilities throughout the training year and also to provide practical information about various procedures involved in the administration of the training programme. The Pre-registration Division receives numerous calls from tutors with similar queries and so we felt that it would be beneficial to post the most frequently asked of these on the website for tutors and prospective tutors to use as a basic guide to the Pre-registration year. This could be particularly useful for new tutors.

Applying to become a Pre-registration Tutor

1) What do I have to do to be approved as a Pre-registration Tutor?

There are several requirements that you should meet in order to become a tutor. These are as follows:

- The tutor should be a pharmacist on the practising part of the Register AND have been working in the field of pharmacy in which they wish to tutor for at least three years in Great Britain (G.B.).
- The tutor should be able to work for a minimum of 28 hours a week over a minimum of four days with the trainee in an approved premises (see question 2).
- The tutor must not be subject to fitness to practice proceedings, which could lead to a hearing by one of the Society's three Fitness to Practise Committees, or be under criminal investigation by the Police.

2) What do I have to do to register my premises for Pre-registration training? How long does this take?

You must apply on the application form provided

You can obtain this by either:

- Downloading this from our website at: www.rpsgb.org.uk/acareerinpharmacy click on 'Preregistration training', then 'Training sites' and follow the link, OR
- Contacting the Pre-registration Division (Tel: 020 7572 2370; Email: prereg@rpsgb.org) and the relevant form will be sent to you.

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Hospitals applying for training approval need to fill in Section A of the form and also submit a training plan/ training rota.

Those calling from a **multiple** or **mini-multiple site*** (these must be approved as multiples or mini-multiples by the Society, see below) need to complete a Section A form and Head Office must provide the RPSGB Pre-registration Division with an up-to-date training plan on a yearly basis. Also a complete section B must be completed on a quinquennial basis.

If you work in an **independent pharmacy** you will need to fill in both Section A and Section B of the forms, which includes a training plan.

For applications from **industrial premises** please call the Pre-registration Division to discuss this further. All applications must be made as a joint scheme with either a hospital or community site.

Following receipt and checking of the initial application from **all community sites**, a second form is sent out to you entitled 'Information Required for the Approval of Premises for Pre-registration Training', which is a (tutor) self declaration form regarding the premises themselves. This is in lieu of an inspector visit, which was previously part of the application process. Once this form is returned and checked then the premises may be approved for up to a maximum of 5 years. A letter stating that your premises are *approved for the purposes of Pre-registration training* will be sent to you stating the expiry date of this approval. Your premises are NOT approved until you receive this letter. Once your premises are approved they will be listed on the Society's website on the List of Approved Training Sites (www.rpsgblist.org/prereqprem.asp).

We ask all applicants to allow up to **eight weeks** for the premises approval process. This is to take account of any issues that may need addressing as well as the workload of the Pre-registration Division.

**In order to apply for mini multiple status, a company must have a minimum of 5 premises that are currently or wish to be approved for the purposes of Pre-registration training (this does not include any that have been approved in the past). This mini multiple status ONLY applies to community premises offering the full 52 weeks of Pre-registration training; it does not apply to joint or split training programmes.*

To apply for mini multiple status, the company representative should put their request in writing and include a completed Section B together with a training plan. Both the training plan and the operations detailed in section B should be followed in all of the training sites.

The benefit of mini multiple status is that a company Pre-registration training programme can be used at all premises without the need to tailor this to individual sites. This may however change in the future, once the Section 60 Order is implemented and rules are in place.

3) What should be included in the 'in-house' training plan? (requested in Section A of the application)

The specifics of a training plan will vary between pharmacies. You should look at the Performance Standards (www.rpsgb.org/acareerinpharmacy , click on 'Preregistration training', then 'Preregistration trainees' and follow the link) as your template for providing a training programme. The Performance Standards are essentially learning outcomes that must be met during the 52 week training programme in your pharmacy.

It may be easiest for you to think of this as a month-by-month training guide to outline how the core competencies will be covered.

4) Do I need to go on any courses to be a tutor?

Currently the Society currently does not provide any specific training course. However, you have an ethical obligation to be adequately and appropriately trained, prepared and experienced to take on the role as a Pre-registration tutor.

To prepare for your role as a Pre-registration tutor the Society issues extensive distance learning materials as part of the tutor workbooks and other material sent to tutors. Tutors must be familiar with these materials, and meet the criteria set out in them, if they are to be able to carry out their duties effectively. The materials also contain references to other sources of information and guidance and tutors should follow these up. Most larger employers will also run in-house training for tutors. Some universities run “training for trainers” courses. Any general certificate relevant to work-based teaching at the higher education level would also be a great asset for tutoring.

5) Is there anything I need to do with regard to a student’s application to become a Pre-registration trainee?

You need to fill in part B of the **trainee’s Notification Form** for Pre-registration training, which includes a tutor declaration. The trainee is provided with this form by their university during the final year of their MPharm degree. It is the trainee’s responsibility to ensure that this form is fully completed and returned to the Society at least 8 weeks prior to commencing Pre-registration training.

6) I have been a Pharmacist for less than 3 years- can I still apply to be a tutor?

Pharmacists working in approved premises, who have been qualified in G.B. for less than 3 years, or who have not been working in the relevant sector for three years, may apply in writing to the Society to be considered as a Pre-registration tutor. The applicant needs to include evidence of any previous experience that they have had, particularly tutoring experience within a pharmacy setting, which would support their application. They should also provide evidence of any accredited postgraduate education and training (courses/days) that they have undertaken in support of their application. This can include all topics relevant to pharmacy. The Pre-registration Division will respond to the application in due course and you should wait for this response before commencing tutoring.

7) I only work part time / less than 4 days - can I still be a tutor?

If you are unable to spend a minimum of 28 hours over a minimum of four days a week working with a trainee, then a joint tutoring arrangement may be possible. You would need to apply to the Pre-registration Division in writing or by email for this. Both tutors would need to meet the Society’s conditions of being a tutor (see question 1). This means that the total tutoring hours must meet the full-time requirement. It may be that one tutor takes on a lead tutor role and works for more hours with the trainee, or that both tutors work equally with the trainee. Both of these are fine as long as there is a tutor working alongside the trainee for at least 28 hours a week over a minimum of 4 days.

In addition, both tutors and the trainee will need to send in a letter to the Society stating that they are happy with the arrangement.

8) Can there be two trainees working at the same community training site?

Yes there can, provided that:

- There are two pharmacists working in the pharmacy who meet the requirements of question 1 (i.e. working full-time etc). AND:
- That the premises is registered for two trainees - this should be made clear in the Section A part of the application form and each pharmacist must fill out a separate *‘Information Required for the Approval of Premises for Pre-registration Training’* form. OR:
- If you wish to apply for approval for two trainees having already been approved for one and the expiry date is still valid then you should put your request in writing to the Pre-registration Division stating the pharmacists names and hours of work. The Division will

then send each tutor a self-declaration form and the premises will be sent a new approval letter to run until the date of the current expiry.

- If a trainee wishes to start Pre-registration training but there is another trainee still in place finishing their training year, there can be an overlap period of a maximum of 13 weeks, as stated in the Byelaws (www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/byelaws.pdf).

The Pre-registration year

9) What are my main responsibilities in training the Pre-registration trainee?

Your role as a tutor is to provide education and training to your trainee in order for them to meet the requirements of Registration. In order to join the Register of Pharmaceutical Chemists your trainee must complete two main requirements:

- Part 1 - Reach a base-line standard expected for a newly registered pharmacist- i.e. demonstrate competence in all of the performance standards.
- Part 2 - Pass the Registration Examination

The tutor is responsible for the Part 1, which includes ensuring that the trainee has achieved competence in all of the Performance Standards and attaining the behaviour, attitudes and values of a newly registered pharmacist. Whilst the Society is responsible for setting and checking the Part 2, the tutor can aid by providing learning opportunities.

10) Does my trainee have to be in (full-time) paid employment?

Yes, the Byelaws are explicit about this. Pre-registration training cannot be undertaken on a voluntary basis and the trainee must also be an employee in legal terms with a contract of employment. The Society does not advise on employment law or on terms and conditions of employment, so the circumstances of each trainee are for the employer and employee to decide. However a trainee must be undertaking full-time training- i.e. 35-45 hours per week.

It is possible to approach the Society about carrying out the training on a part-time basis and the Registrar can exercise discretion if an appropriate case is made. The full period of training equivalent to the minimum of 52 weeks full time must still be carried out. Requests must be made in writing and must be approved prior to any training being undertaken.

11) How do I get funding for my Pre-registration trainee?

The Society is not responsible for paying the training grant. The Society will send a 'Training Record' to your trainee in September. This gives details of where the trainee is working and the dates. You need to send a copy of this to the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), NHS Education Scotland (Pharmacy) (NES) or Local Health Board (LHB) (for trainees in Wales), who are responsible for paying the grant.

Note: If a trainee changes premises and only works for part of the year at your premises you will receive partial funding for the year through the PCT, NES or LHB. It is your responsibility as the tutor to inform the Society (and the PCT, NES or LHB) of any changes in training details.

12 a) How much sickness / holiday leave can the trainee take off in the year and what happens if they exceed this amount?

Trainees are allowed to take a maximum of 30 working days off within their Pre-registration Training year. The Byelaws state that trainees can take the normal annual leave of the premises and a maximum of one week of sickness leave. This means that the trainees should take a maximum of 5 days off as sick leave and 25 as holiday. However, as long as the trainee does not exceed 30 days in total then this will not affect their Pre-registration training. Tutors should advise the Division if a trainee exceeds five days sickness leave.

If a trainee does exceed 30 days the following can be considered:

- Where possible, the trainee can stay on in the premises and make up the extra time after the original 52 weeks of training ends. They will have to do this before they can be signed off at their 52 Week final declaration.
- In the case of Bradford Sandwich students who have to go back to university, it may be possible for a trainee to make up additional time missed at the end of the training or on completion of the undergraduate training, but this needs to be discussed with the Society and the University.
- If it is not possible for the trainee to continue at the premises then they will need to start arranging a new approved Pre-registration training placement to continue their training (see question 17), but this may result in a longer period of training and may affect their eligibility to sit the Registration Exam.

If you are unsure about these criteria please contact the Division.

12 b) Does time at Preregistration courses, e.g. First Aid and study time, count as absence from work?

No, attendance at a study day, or ring-fenced time for project work is not counted as absence from work. However, taking time away from work, e.g. to prepare for the registration examination, should count as absence. Trainees are advised to use annual leave for this.

13) Can the amount of sickness / holiday leave affect my trainee's eligibility to sit the registration examination?

Yes. A trainee must undertake a minimum of 45 weeks of pre-registration training before they sit the registration examination. A trainee may take a maximum of 30 days off within these 45 weeks. If they exceed the 30 day period then you must calculate whether the trainee meets the criterion of 45 weeks of training (minus the 30 days) at the point of sitting the exam. If they do not then they are not eligible and must wait until the next sitting of the exam. They must also add the extra time on to the end of their training period.

14) I don't feel that I can sign my trainee off as being satisfactory at their Progress Report 1/ 2/ 3, what happens if I decide not to?

For each of the Progress Reports, please tick **one box only** regarding the trainee's overall performance at the particular stage of training. Please remember that you are signing a trainee's progress report based upon the level they are at in terms of Pre-registration training, not based on being a qualified pharmacist.

The Society supports a tutor's decision not to sign a trainee off as satisfactory or above in any of their Progress Reports. Should you decide that they are not at the appropriate level for the stage in their training and so decide not to mark the trainee as satisfactory or above then the following actions apply:

- **For Progress Report 1 and/or 2-** If the trainee is not performing to a satisfactory standard at either of these points, you will need to plan a strategy with the trainee to try and help them to improve and achieve the required standard. At this stage we will do no more than keep the appraisal on file but ask that you could keep us informed if you have any concerns that the trainee's performance is not improving sufficiently.
- **For Progress Report 3-** *A satisfactory Progress Report 3 is vital for the trainee to be eligible to take the Registration Examination.* Therefore if you do not feel confident that the trainee is ready to take the exam or that they are not at the appropriate level based on 39 weeks of training then you should not mark their Progress Report 3 as satisfactory. You still need to return the appraisal to us even if it is not marked as satisfactory.

If the 39 week assessment is not satisfactory then the trainee will need to complete a further period of training with you, after which another 39 week appraisal should be carried out. The duration of this period should be agreed upon between the tutor and trainee with a clear action plan. You should also inform the Pre-registration Division of any changes to the training period. If progress after completing a second Progress Report 3 is satisfactory then the trainee will be eligible to sit the exam, provided that all other requirements are met. If the trainee is still not considered satisfactory at this point then you will need to get in touch with the Society to discuss further options. This could entail the trainee carrying on training at your premises until you feel able to sign them off as satisfactory, or the trainee may need to move to a different premises (see question 17).

15) I do not feel able to sign my trainee's 52 week Final Declaration, what should I do?

If you have serious doubts about a trainee's ability to be a practising pharmacist (possibly in sole charge of a pharmacy) then you should not sign the declaration and contact the Division. By signing the 52 week Final Declaration you are signing to say that you feel confident that the trainee is ready to become a practising pharmacist.

16) I do not feel as though I would want to employ my trainee in my pharmacy at the end of the Preregistration year. Does this mean I should refuse to sign off the 52 week Final Declaration?

No. Decisions about a trainee's fitness to practise are separate from recruitment decisions. You may well have serious doubts about a trainee's ability to fit into your particular pharmacy long-term, but that may not make them an unsafe pharmacist.

Mailings

17) What documents need to be sent to the Society during the year?

- Learning Contract – at start of training year
- Progress Report 1 and copy of Assessment Summary- at 13 weeks
- Progress Report 2 and copy of Assessment Summary- at 26 weeks
- Progress Report 3 and copy of Assessment Summary- at 39 weeks
- Registration Examination entry forms
- Final Declaration by Tutor- from week 49 of training
- Letters outlining any changes in circumstances if applicable

These are all found in the Trainee Workbook.

Changes in Circumstances

18) What happens if the trainee has to move premises/ change tutor?

If a trainee has to change tutor or branch within the same company then the tutor should ensure that a Change of Training Details form (found in the Trainee Workbook) is sent to us as soon as possible along with a new Learning Contract if appropriate.

Unless unavoidable, moving to a different company altogether is not recommended. If it does have to be considered then various factors need to be taken into account:-

- The trainee needs to understand that there is a presumption against recognising previous training under a different tutor at a different site because of the lack of continuity.
- Only experience that has been signed off as satisfactory can ever be considered for "transfer" with the trainee to a new site, and no experience can be considered unless the trainee has achieved at least 26 weeks of satisfactory training.

- In most cases the trainee should expect to have to undertake more than 12 months of Pre-registration training in total if they change company.
- If the trainee has been signed off as satisfactory or above at the Progress Report 2 then they can still apply to the Pre-registration Division in writing to have previous training recognised – but a strong case demonstrating continuity would have to be made.
- The trainee's personal merits, feelings and circumstances are not relevant to the assessment of any application, which has to be an objective process and based on the integrity of the training.
- If the trainee has not been signed off as satisfactory at the Progress Report 2 (26 week) then they would need to start training in the new premises from day one (i.e. complete a further 52 weeks of Pre-registration training).
- If the trainee has been signed off as satisfactory at the Progress Report 3 (39 weeks) they will always need to complete a minimum of 6 months further Pre-registration training in the new premises, to allow sufficient opportunity for the new tutor to assess the trainee against all the Performance Standards (see question 13).

All new tutors must meet the Society's regulations (see question 1) and complete and return a Learning Contract for the new trainee.

19) The tutor in the store is leaving / going on long term sick / going on maternity leave- what shall we do?

If a tutor is unlikely to be able to work with a trainee for the required amount of hours then it would be necessary for a different tutor who meets the Societies requirements (see question 1) to take over the role. If this is not possible then the trainee would need to change premises (see question 18 for further specifications).

20) My trainee has been cautioned or has been convicted in a court of law. What should I advise them and should I continue with his/her training?

The question over whether you or your company still want to employ them despite the conviction is a matter for employment law and for your own HR procedures. Whether or not you want them to stay with you, though, you should notify the Society of the caution or conviction. Cautions and convictions are a matter of public record, so there are no data protection or privacy issues.

Although the Society does not have a formal legal relationship with trainees, it can exercise proportionate powers upon receipt of information about cautions and convictions should there be an increased risk to the public.

21) My trainee has been cautioned or convicted in a court of law. Will the Society still register them?

The trainee must understand that they must make a full disclosure to the Society when they apply to join the Register*. For this reason, trainees who have cautions or criminal convictions to declare are advised to return their registration documents as early as possible (from week-49 onwards). Please bear in mind that each case and the circumstances of the offence will be different and will therefore require separate investigation and decision. Trainees may be contacted to provide more information. A decision over their fitness to practise will be made and this will be communicated to the trainee. The decision will either be to register them, that further investigation is required or that they will not be registered.

** By virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and Schedule 4 of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exclusions and Exceptions) (Scotland) Order 2003, trainees are exempt from the provisions of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Trainees are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the Act, and failure to disclose such convictions could result in disciplinary action by the Society.*