



Pharmacy technician registration: Guidance for countersigning pharmacists

You should read this document if you are a pharmacist who is intending to countersign an application for registration as a pharmacy technician. It provides information on the registration process and your responsibilities when countersigning the application.

We started to register pharmacy technicians on a voluntary basis in January 2005. From **1 July 2011** it will be a legal requirement for pharmacy technicians to be registered with us.

What are my responsibilities as the countersigning pharmacist and in what circumstances may I sign?

Applications for registration must be countersigned by a UK registered practising pharmacist. If you are not currently registered as practising with us (or with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland) you cannot countersign the application.

By countersigning an application you are confirming that you judge the applicant to be competent to practise and a fit and proper person to be registered as a pharmacy technician. You are also confirming that, to the best of your knowledge, the information provided by the applicant is true and accurate.

Normally, the applicant will be someone working under your supervision, direction or guidance. However, you may also countersign an application for registration for a pharmacy technician who is not working under your supervision, direction or guidance in the following circumstances:

- If the applicant has work experience in one of the areas outlined below; or
- If you have a professional relationship with the applicant's supervisor and/or line manager.

Unless the applicant is working under your supervision, direction or guidance the application for registration will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*. Information on types of application can be found on page 5.

Pharmacy technicians working for NHS primary care organisations (PCOs)

As a PCO pharmacist you may countersign applications for registration on behalf of applicants who are working under your supervision, direction or guidance. Provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

You may also countersign applications for registration on behalf of applicants who are not working under your supervision, direction or guidance provided that you have a professional relationship with the pharmacy technician's supervisor and/or line manager. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians working within the pharmaceutical industry

As an industrial pharmacist you may countersign applications for registration for pharmacy technicians who are working for the same company on the same site as you. If the pharmacy technician is working under your supervision, direction or guidance then

provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

You may also countersign applications for registration on behalf of applicants who are working for the same company as you but are not working under your supervision, direction or guidance or are working for the same company on a different site, provided that you have a professional relationship with the pharmacy technician's supervisor and/or line manager. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians working for providers of health information or pharmacy-related IT systems

As a pharmacist working for a provider of health information or pharmacy-related IT systems you may countersign applications for registration for pharmacy technicians who are working under your supervision, direction or guidance. Provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

You may also countersign applications for registration on behalf of pharmacy technicians who are working for the same company as you but are not working under your supervision, direction or guidance or are working for the same company on a different site, provided that you have a professional relationship with the pharmacy technician's supervisor and/or line manager. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to screening and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians working for pharmaceutical wholesalers

As a pharmacist working for a pharmaceutical wholesaler you may countersign applications for registration for pharmacy technicians who are working under your supervision, direction or guidance. Provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

You may also countersign applications for registration on behalf of pharmacy technicians who are working for the same company as you but are not working under your supervision, direction or guidance or are working for the same company on a different site, provided that you have a professional relationship with the pharmacy technician's supervisor and/or line manager. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Military pharmacy technicians

We expect that the Senior Pharmacist for the Defence Medical Services Department will countersign applications for registration from pharmacy technicians working in the armed forces, including the RAF and Navy. Provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

You may also countersign applications for registration on behalf of pharmacy technicians working for the RAF or Navy if you are providing formal pharmacy services to the Service at the time of the application. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians working in civilian posts for the Ministry of Defence (MoD)

Regional and practice pharmacists working in primary care posts may countersign applications for registration. Provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

Pharmacy technicians working within schools of pharmacy, further education colleges involved in pharmacy technician education and training or other pharmacy training providers

As a pharmacist working within a school of pharmacy, a further education college involved in pharmacy technician education and training or other pharmacy training provider, you may countersign applications for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician working in the same organisation. If the pharmacy technician is working under your supervision, direction or guidance then provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be treated as a *route a* application.

In situations where no pharmacist is employed you may countersign applications for registration if you are a pharmacist associated with a course provided by that organisation, for example, a member of the course board or a pharmacist “purchaser”. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians working within pharmacy organisations, other national health-related organisations, professional bodies and employment agencies

As a pharmacist working within a pharmacy organisation, other national health-related organisation, professional body or employment agency, you may countersign applications for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician working in the same organisation. If the pharmacy technician is working under your supervision, direction or guidance then provided the other entry requirements are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

In organisations where no pharmacist is employed you may countersign applications for registration if you are associated with that organisation and have a professional relationship with the pharmacy technician’s supervisor or line manager. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians employed within a hospital environment but not accountable to the chief pharmacist

Applicants may include pharmacy technicians employed by medical physicists to undertake radiopharmaceutical dispensing. Although these technicians work within a hospital environment they are not employees of the pharmacy department. In this scenario you may countersign applications for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician if you are a pharmacist working within the same hospital/NHS Trust provided that:

- the technician works within the same hospital environment or NHS Trust as you;
- you have a professional relationship with the technicians’ supervisor and/or line manager.

In this situation the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b* since the pharmacy technician will not be working under your supervision, direction or guidance.

Pharmacy technicians working as journalists

Work experience as a journalist is only considered relevant if the technician is working for a pharmacy-related publication and able to maintain a working knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians in the major practice settings and developments in practice. You may countersign applications for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician if you are a pharmacist working in the same organisation. If the pharmacy technician is working under your supervision, direction or guidance then provided all other criteria for registration are met, the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

In situations where no pharmacist is employed, you may countersign applications for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician if you are a pharmacist associated with the publication, for example, a member of the editorial board or commissioning body. Unless you are countersigning an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician who is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

Pharmacy technicians working as locums

Work experience is considered relevant if it falls within the scope of any of the work areas described previously. You may countersign applications for registration if you are a pharmacist who has previously commissioned the services of, or have had a previous professional relationship with the pharmacy technician.

In this situation the application will normally be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*. This is because the period of time for which the pharmacy technician has worked under your supervision, direction or guidance for a period of time is unlikely to meet our work experience requirements. The only exception is where the pharmacy technician has been working under your supervision, direction or guidance for a period of time that meets or exceeds our *route a* work experience requirements, in which case the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

Pharmacy technicians working as consultants

Work experience is considered relevant if it falls within the scope of any of the work areas described previously. You may countersign applications for registration if you are a pharmacist who has previously commissioned work or services from or have had a previous professional relationship with the pharmacy technician.

In this situation the application will normally be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*. This is because the period of time for which the pharmacy technician has worked under your supervision, direction or guidance for a period of time is unlikely to meet the Society's work experience requirements. The only exception is where the pharmacy technician has been working under your supervision, direction or guidance for a period of time that meets or exceeds our *route a* work experience requirements, in which case the application can be submitted as a *route a* application.

Pharmacy technicians with a recognised qualification working for GPs, including dispensing GPs

You may countersign an application for registration on behalf of a pharmacy technician whose recent work experience is within a GP practice, including a dispensing GP practice in the following circumstances:

- The applicant has a qualification that is acceptable for registration purposes;
- The applicant meets the route b work experience requirements;
- You have a professional relationship with the GP practice at which the applicant currently or has recently worked.

Unless you are employed by the GP practice and the pharmacy technician is working under your supervision, direction or guidance, the application will be subject to evaluation and must be submitted under *route b*.

The following qualifications, developed for dispensing doctors assistants are not recognised by us as acceptable qualifications for registration as a pharmacy technician:

- Edexcel BTEC Intermediate Certificate for Doctors Dispensers, People's College Nottingham,
- Edexcel BTEC Dispensing Doctors Assistants Professional Development Award.

What will I need to do?

Applicants must provide evidence that they meet our entry requirements. As the countersigning pharmacist you are required to complete a declaration stating that, to the best of your knowledge, the information given in the application, and in any supporting documents, is true, complete and accurate.

While the register is still voluntary we have transitional arrangements and four different types of application. The type of application depends on the applicant's qualification(s) and work experience. After the register becomes mandatory there will be a single entry requirement. The entry requirements are set out below.

We define relevant work experience as carrying out the roles and responsibilities of a pharmacy technician in the United Kingdom, Isle of Man or Channel Islands under the supervision, direction or guidance of an accountable pharmacist. This may include work experience the applicant has carried out as part of their pharmacy technician course but does not include work experience before the start of the course.

Applicants are required to submit a number of supporting documents to us. Further information on this is provided in Application Pack. Photocopies of the following documents are accepted provided you certify them as true copies:

- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate or other acceptable document(s) (if applicable)
- Qualification certificate
- Passport

If you are asked to countersign a photocopy of one or more of these documents you must write the following words "*I certify that I have seen the original document and that this is a true copy*", sign, date and state your registration number on the back of each one. No liquid paper amendments or alterations of any kind are allowed.

Entry requirements under transitional (voluntary) arrangements

There are four types of application:

Route a applicants must have:

- An acceptable UK qualification (see list below); and
- Work experience as a pharmacy technician, or student technician, carried out under the supervision, direction or guidance of an accountable pharmacist for
 - At least 14 hours a week for four out of the last eight years; or
 - At least 28 hours a week for two out of the last four years.

Route b applicants must have:

- An acceptable UK qualification (see list below); and
- Work experience as a pharmacy technician, or student technician, carried out under the supervision, direction or guidance of a pharmacist of an accountable pharmacist for at least 14 hours per week for at least two years.

Overseas (non-EEA) applicants must have:

- A recognised overseas pharmacist or pharmacy technician qualification; and
- Work experience as a pharmacy technician in the United Kingdom carried out under the supervision, direction or guidance of an accountable pharmacist for
 - At least 14 hours a week for four out of the last eight years; or
 - At least 28 hours a week for two out of the last four years.

EEA applicants are EEA (European) nationals with a recognised EEA qualification and/or work experience.

We accept the following UK qualifications under transitional (voluntary) arrangements:

- Pharmacy Services NVQ level 3 (City & Guilds)
- Pharmacy Services NVQ level 3 (Edexcel)
- Pharmacy Services SVQ level 3 (Scottish Qualifications Authority)
- BTEC National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Sciences
- BTEC National Certificate in Science (pharmaceutical)
- BTEC National Certificate in Applied Science (pharmaceutical)
- BTEC National Certificate in Pharmacy Services
- SCOTEC National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science
- SANCAD Pharmacy Technicians Certificate (2 year)
- SCOTEC Pharmacy Technicians Certificate (2 year)
- SCOTVEC National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science
- SQA National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science
- City & Guilds of London Institute, Dispensing Technicians Certificate
- Certificate of the Society of Apothecaries
- Dispensing Certificate of the Royal Army Medical Corps or the Royal Air Force
- NPA 2-year Dispensing Technicians correspondence course completed prior to 1998
- Boots 2-year dispenser training programme completed prior to 1993
- Boots 1 year dispensing assistants' course completed after 1993 plus accredited top-up training module plus assessment of competence
- National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science, Stow College 1984-1992
- National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science, Aberdeen 1990-1991
- National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science, Dundee 1985-1987
- National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science, Edinburgh Telford College 1984-1992
- National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Science, James Watt College 1991-1992
- University of Sunderland National Certificate in Pharmaceutical Services (BTEC) 1994-1998

Current or recent UK registration as a pharmacist is also accepted.

Post-transitional (mandatory) entry requirements from 1 July 2011

Applicants must have:

- A UK qualification (or qualifications) meeting our requirements. The current requirement is:
 - S/NVQ level 3 in Pharmacy Services; and
 - An accredited underpinning knowledge programme; and
- Work experience as a pharmacy technician, or student technician, carried out under the supervision, direction or guidance of a pharmacist of an accountable pharmacist for at least 14 hours per week for at least two years.

During these two years, the applicant must have completed at least 1260 hours of work experience (excluding sickness absence, maternity leave and holidays) and at least 315 hours of work experience in each year.