

Training Provider Guidance: Pre-employment Checks

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Introduction

Recruitment of trainee pharmacists for the 2023-24 FTY training year concluded in December 2022 with the release and acceptance of matching outcomes. This included a 'handover' of candidate files including a copy of application forms, supporting documents and the candidates' matching outcome email. The handover was carried out via the TPI online recruitment system with Training Providers able to access trainee files via their online account.

As the employer of trainee pharmacists, it is the Training Provider's responsibility to carry out pre-employment checks and to ensure that all checks are satisfactory in accordance with local procedure. Whilst NES HR processes photographic and ID documents as part of the longlisting process, it does not have a remit in carrying out and ensuring pre-employment checks are satisfactory, nor for issuing unconditional offers or contracts of employment.

In order to provide support to Training Providers and to help achieve a consistent training experience for all FTY trainees, this guidance document provides information and advice regarding the completion of pre-employment checks ultimately enabling Training Providers to issue an unconditional offer and contract of employment to trainee(s) commencing with their organisation.

Links to further sources of information are available throughout the document.

Pre-employment Checks

The following checks should be carried out and fully completed by the Training Provider prior to issuing an unconditional offer and contract of employment. As per any other employee, trainees cannot start in post until all checks are fully complete and an unconditional offer of employment has been issued. Preferably, the trainee pharmacist will also have signed and returned the employment contract prior to their first day. It is strongly recommended that Training Providers seek advice from local HR support prior to trainee pharmacists commencing post, to ensure all legal requirements have been met, thus minimising risk to the organisation.

1. Verification of Identity

Copies of photographic and address ID were processed as part of the longlisting process. Copies of these documents are attached to Training Providers' online account. This includes three forms of ID, i.e. two photographic documents such as passport & driving licence and an address document such as a bank statement or utility bill. Training Providers are advised to download these documents and retain a local copy. As these documents were not sighted by a member of our team, it is the responsibility of the Training Providers to check and verify these documents and ask for additional documents if required.

2. Right to work in the UK

Similar to verification of identity, as part of the longlisting process, NES HR processed right to work documents for all applicants, it is the responsibility of the Training Providers to check applicants' current status and verify their documents prior to trainees starting in post.

UK & Irish Citizens

For UK & Irish citizens, their right to work document will be their Passport.

For UK citizens without a passport at longlisting, we accept their Birth Certificate along with notarised photographs and proof of National Insurance number.

EU/EEA/Swiss Citizens

At the time of longlisting, EU/EEA/Swiss citizens had the right to work based on their Passport and/or National ID card. As you will be aware, after 30th June 2021, EU/EEA/Swiss citizens who were in the UK prior to 31 Dec 2020 will be required to show evidence of settled or pre-settled status on the EU Settlement Scheme in order to have the right to live and work in the UK. EU/EEA/Swiss citizens who are not eligible to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme are likely to require sponsorship under a Skilled Worker visa.

Non-UK/EU/EEA/Swiss Citizens

Candidates who are on a Tier 4/Student visa are eligible to apply for a Skilled Worker visa or a Graduate visa to allow them to work during their FTY. Candidates can only apply to UKVI for a Skilled Worker Visa once they are in receipt of a Certificate of Sponsorship from an approved UKVI sponsor. Training Providers are required to apply for a Certificate of Sponsorship no more than 3 months prior to start date and once the trainee is in post, comply with UKVI regulations regarding the employment of migrants.

There are other visa categories that may give your candidate the right to study and/or work in the UK. In these cases, please refer to Home Office guidelines for further details. In all instances, Training Providers must ensure they are satisfied that the candidate has the right to work in the UK, seeking [advice from UKVI](#) where required.

In all cases, Training Providers should ensure they are following Home Office guidance on right to work checks and employer responsibilities for sponsored workers.

[Employer's Guide to right to work checks](#)
[Sponsorship: Guidance for Employers](#)

3. Qualifications

At the application stage, based on information supplied by candidates on their application form, NES HR checks that candidates are due to complete an MPharm qualification or equivalent by the post commencement date. However, for the majority of candidates, graduation takes place following the conclusion of the recruitment process; the Training Provider must therefore check that trainees commencing employment with them, did achieve their qualification.

Recommended practice is that the original degree certificate is sighted, and a copy is obtained and held on file. As detailed in the [PIN Policy: Safer Pre and Post Employment Checks](#), it is not appropriate to assume that the qualification check is satisfied by application to the GPhC:

"For all posts for which a specific qualification is a requirement, evidence of the necessary qualifications should be verified. Even if relevant statutory regulatory bodies check qualifications as part the registration process, Boards must still separately verify an individual's qualifications."

Furthermore, as detailed below, notification of successful application to the GPhC is unlikely to be provided to trainees until immediately prior to post commencement and, therefore, is not a suitable means of satisfying this pre-employment check.

NB: whilst the PIN Policy refers to 'Boards' it is expected that all Training Providers participating in the NES funded FTY abide by this principle.

4. GPhC Application to participate in the Foundation Training Year

All candidates must successfully apply to the GPhC to enable participation in the Foundation Training Year; applications are submitted to the GPhC in accordance with procedure and timescales stated on the GPhC website. NES issues correspondence directly to trainee applicants, including links to further information and how to access the GPhC application form.

Upon successful application, a training record is issued by the GPhC directly to the trainee; NES is not provided with a copy of the training record. The record will be issued very close to the trainees' start date and in accordance with the timescale detailed in the GPhC application form which can be found [here](#);

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist-pre-registration-training-scheme/pre-registration-training-placement/applying>

With this in mind, it is recommended that Training Providers encourage candidates to submit their application promptly.

Training Providers should sight the original training record and retain a copy on file, this should be checked by employers prior to allowing training to commence.

5. PVG Scheme Membership (Disclosure Scotland)

Foundation Training Year posts are considered to be 'regulated work' and NES therefore continues to recommend that Training Providers carry out a PVG check of all trainee pharmacists commencing employment with their organisation, thus helping to uphold the protection of vulnerable groups and also to mitigate any risk to the Training Provider organisation. Further information regarding PVG and how to apply, is available [here](#).

6. References

In accordance with the [PIN Policy: Safer Pre and Post Employment Checks](#), at least two references should be taken covering a period of three years. As the majority of candidates will have very recently graduated with minimal work experience, it is anticipated that at least one referee will be a lecturer/tutor from the School of Pharmacy.

Training Providers should ask trainee applicants for their referee contact details and seek their permission to take up references. Training Providers should use their standard reference template, however bearing in mind that many organisations might have a policy which only permits the completion of their own template.

7. Occupational Health Check

Please ensure you thoroughly check application forms and make sure the required support is provided during the training year for candidates who have provided additional information under the 'Disability & Special Arrangements' section. It is recommended that a pre-employment health assessment is carried out, thus ensuring good occupational health practice and the opportunity to identify any support or reasonable adjustments which might be required to be made for the trainee. Training Providers should follow their local procedure when doing so; this might include providing a copy of the Job Description to an Occupational Health Provider – the Job Description is available within the Educational Agreement.

Terms & Conditions

The terms and conditions detailed below are applicable to all FTY trainees. To ensure a consistent training experience for all trainees, the following terms and conditions must be included in the contract of employment between the Training Provider organisation and the trainee.

Further details of terms and conditions, including handling discipline and grievance and the performance management procedure, are detailed in the Educational Agreement.

All other terms and conditions are as per the Training Provider's local arrangements and policy.

8. Start date

The start dates for training posts are Monday 31st July - Friday 4th August 2023. Having all trainee pharmacists start on the same date enables continuity of service and a consistent training experience for all trainees. However, NES is aware not all trainees will be able to commence on the above dates, therefore has added an additional cohort starting date to be used for those trainees with university resits or exceptional circumstances only, which is Monday 6th November - Friday 10th November 2023.

9. Salary

The salary payable to each trainee pharmacist is currently £30,229 per annum. This rate is in accordance with Agenda for Change Band 5, a copy of the salary scale is available [here](#). Any uplift will be communicated directly to training providers.

10. Hours

Trainee pharmacists should be contracted for 37.5 hours per week. These hours will be worked as part of the normal weekly opening hours of the training base. 'Out of Hours' placements are defined as work undertaken between 18:30 and 08:00, all day at weekends and on Public Holidays.

11. Annual Leave and Study Days

Trainees will receive 27 days annual leave and 8 days public holidays. Trainees should also be allocated one half-day per week (or equivalent) protected time for study time.