

# Might sustainable assessment practices prepare trainee pharmacists for both registration assessment and lifelong learning to be safe, autonomous pharmacists?

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## Aim

General Pharmaceutical Council initial education and training (GPhC IE&T) standards are changing from 2025 to enable pharmacists to prescribe at point of registration. To maintain public entrustment, trainee pharmacists need to be competent to make sound judgements upon registration. This study wondered whether Boud's concept of 'sustainable assessment' could address seeming tensions in curriculum re-design to meet these new standards.

## Methods

This small-scale qualitative case study researched NES's 2022-2023 trainee pharmacist programme using an interpretivist worldview to identify and address evidence of effective sustainable assessment practices within pharmacy education. It explored the extent to which education practices currently support sustainable assessment and how this might be enhanced locally.

Purposive sampling of 14 interviewees from three differing stakeholder groups (trainee pharmacists, supervisors and curriculum developers) used semi structured MS Teams interviews to gather and transcribe values and beliefs regarding sustainable assessment and its relationship to safe, autonomous practice. Transcript upload to NVivo® 12 aided coding and analysis. Braun & Clarke's six-step process of thematic analysis generated umbrella themes and related sub-themes.

## Results

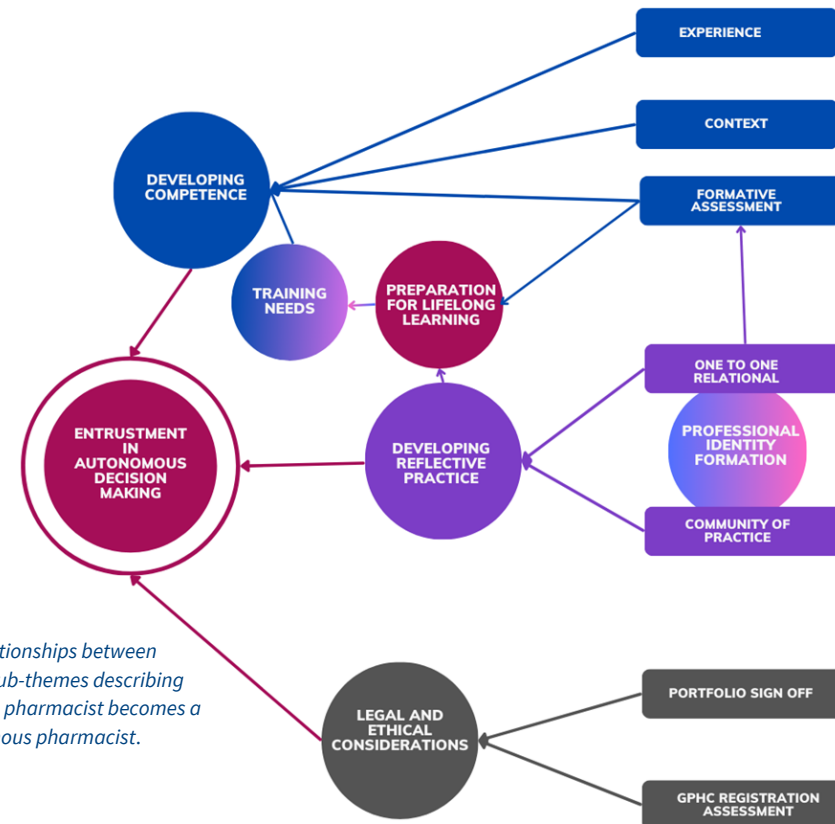


Figure 1: Relationships between themes and sub-themes describing how a trainee pharmacist becomes a safe autonomous pharmacist.

Findings suggest entrustment in trainee pharmacist capabilities by themselves, their supervisors and the public is underpinned by developing their competence and reflective practice alongside legal and ethical considerations (figure 1).

Some sustainable assessment practices were evident through a mix of formal study-day learning; informal workplace feedback dialogues; supervised learning events and occasional non-formal peer assessment. Utilisation of familiar assessment tool formats across undergraduate, trainee pharmacist and post-graduate frameworks was felt to enable sustainability of assessment.

## References

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## Conclusion

Findings illuminate stakeholder beliefs and perceptions of sustainable assessment. As NES plan curriculum and assessment changes to meet regulatory requirements for newly registered pharmacists being prescribers from 2026, ideally explicit integration of sustainable assessment practices based upon significant findings and relationships to current literature will inform these changes and stakeholder development. The conceptual map (figure 2) visualises how the interrelationship between findings and evidence based literature exposes the balance required to respond to these changing registration requirements.

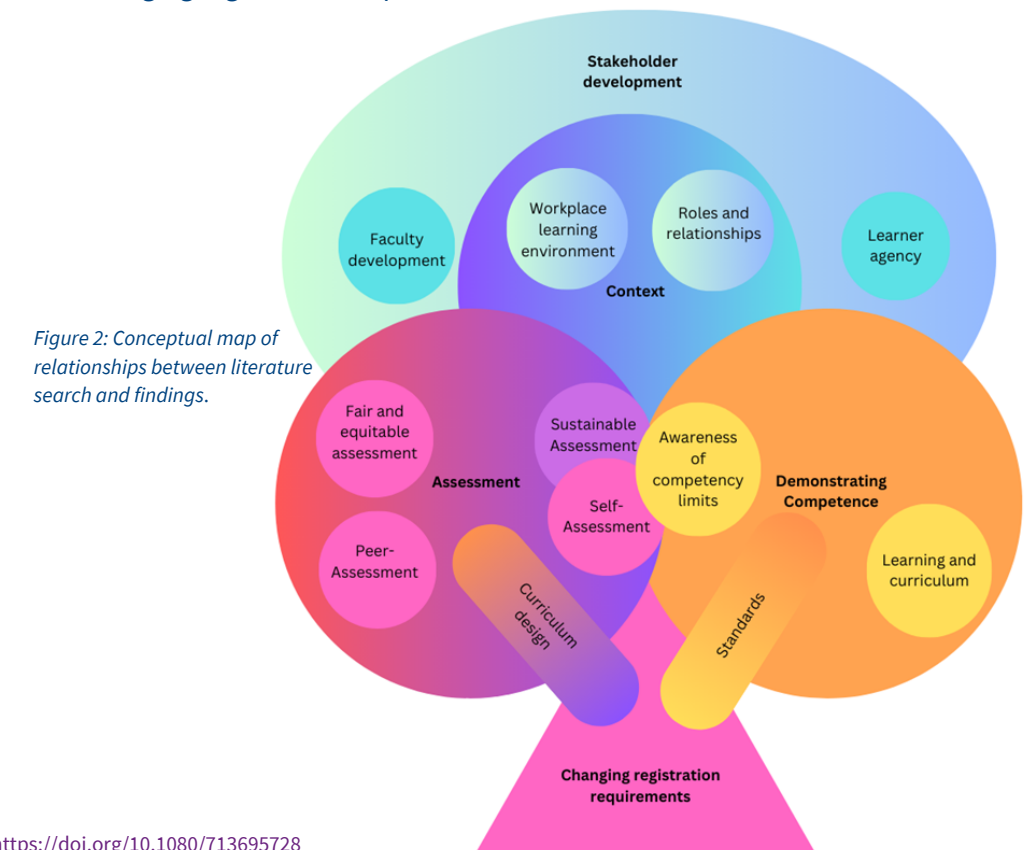


Figure 2: Conceptual map of relationships between literature search and findings.