

Hospital Pharmacy Pre-registration Training

National Recruitment Scheme 2011

Recruitment timetable & FAQs for Schools of Pharmacy

All applications for NHS pre-registration training in England and Wales are made online via www.pharmacytraining.nhs.uk

Version 2 – May 2010

Changes for the 2011 intake

The following changes have been made for the 2011 intake:

1. Applicants from the Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Course (OSPAP) are exempt from UK Academic references because they will have already had the following validated by the Pharmacy regulator:
 - A letter of registration and good standing from the regulator in their own country
 - An academic transcript
 - Two references - one from their most recent employer, and one from either their academic tutor in their own country or another professional e.g. employer
2. The application period for the 2nd round has been extended from one week to two weeks

Exemption from UK Academic references For OSPAP Applicants

We usually ask for an academic referee from a UK School of Pharmacy tutor which is provided to the hospitals alongside the students' application form. Applicants also provide details of an employment / character reference on their application form – these references are followed up by the hospital after the interviews when offering pre-registration training posts.

The OSPAP course starts after the first round of recruitment and only shortly before the second round of recruitment. The recruitment timetable makes it difficult if not impossible for OSPAP students to obtain an academic reference at the time of application. Therefore, in previous years we have given the OSPAP students other reference options at the time of application (with the UK academic reference followed up by the hospital at a later date).

One of the options that we have given in the past was for the OSPAP students to use an employment reference instead of a UK academic reference at the time of application (with the UK academic reference followed up by the hospital at a later date). However, recent NHS Employers guidance states that employment references should not be used during short listing (this guidance relates specifically to employment references, not to academic references). Therefore for the 2011 intake we had to withdraw this option.

The other option used previously was to give the OSPAP students the option not to provide any referee details at the time of application and for Pharmedica to inform the employer that the applicant had references validated by the pharmacy regulator (the UK academic reference was followed up by the hospital at a later date).

The NHS regional pre-registration training managers have decided to exempt OSPAP applicants from having to provide an academic referee because overseas pharmacists must provide the pharmacy regulator with the following documents in order to secure a place on the OSPAP course:

- A letter of registration and good standing from the regulator in their own country
- An academic transcript
- Two references - one from their most recent employer, and one from either their academic tutor in their own country or another professional e.g. employer

The employer will receive notification on the application form if the applicant is from the OSPAP course and exempt from a UK Academic reference. As the NHS requires a minimum of two references in order to employ an individual we will be asking OSPAP applicants to provide details of two employment / character references on their application form. The applicant may choose to use an employer or a university tutor or someone else who can

vouch for their suitability as their employment / character referee. The hospital will need to follow both of these references after the interview if they wish to appoint an OSPAP applicant.

Extension of application period for the 2nd round

We received following feedback from Universities, students and employers that one week for 2nd round applications was insufficient. We have therefore extended the application period to 2 weeks which is in line with the application period for most other NHS jobs.

Recruitment timetable (2011 intake)

All applications for NHS pre-registration training in England and Wales are made online via www.pharmacytraining.nhs.uk It is important for students to get started on their applications as soon as possible after the website goes live in March as there are several deadlines that will approach quickly.

First Round

By 30th June 2010

MPharm students submit the name and contact details of their academic referee to prevent delays in getting references. Students need to ensure that they enter the correct email address for their academic referee to ensure their referee receives the reference request.

As soon as the academic referee's details are entered by the student the website will automatically generate an email requesting the academic reference. It is important that the students meet this deadline so as not to delay the collection of the academic referee. Hospitals do not look favourably on students who do not meet deadlines.

By 1st August 2010

This is the deadline for the academic referees to submit the reference for their student.

By 6th August 2010

Pharmalife (the company that administers the recruitment website on behalf of the NHS) will identify which students do not have an academic reference. Pharmalife will contact the academic referees and remind them to send the reference. Pharmalife will also contact the students and ask them to check the accuracy of the academic referee details they submitted. If the details are correct Pharmalife asks that the students chase the reference. If the details are incorrect the students are asked to inform Pharmalife of the correct details and a new reference request will be sent.

By 16th August 2010

Pharmalife will contact the University Pre-registration Co-ordinator with a list of students without references and the name of their nominated academic referee. Pharmalife will ask that the University Pre-registration Co-ordinator chases these references or provides a substitute referee (e.g. if the referee has left the university, is on maternity leave or long term sick etc..) If a substitute referee is nominated, Pharmalife will email them a reference request. N.B. Pharmalife will be able to accept any academic referees that are received after the 1st August deadline up until 31st August 2010.

By 31st August 2010

Students submit their applications to four hospitals of their choice. Students can choose whether to rank their applications from 1 to 4 to indicate their first, second, third or fourth choice of hospital. They can choose to rank only some hospitals, or none of them.

By 1st September 2010

Pharmalife will contact the University Pre-registration Co-ordinator with a list of students who applied for NHS Pre-registration training (England & Wales). Pharmalife will ask the University Pre-registration Co-ordinator to check this list to:

- Confirm the academic referees are genuine
- Check that the students on the list are enrolled with the university and that there are no duplicate or fraudulent applications. If any applicant does attempt to make fraudulent or duplicate applications, Pharmalife will inform Helen Middleton, the Lead Pharmacist for the National Recruitment Scheme. Helen will make a decision on the actions to be taken.

By 6th September 2010

Applications will be sent electronically to hospitals.

By 7th September 2010

Pharmalife will email the University Pre-registration Co-ordinator a list of the students from the university who applied for NHS Pre-registration training (England & Wales) in the first round and their choices of hospitals.

September 2010

Hospitals aim to shortlist for interview in early September and should complete the interview process before the end of September.

By 1st October 2010

Students should accept or reject any offers of employment that have been made.

Second Round

A second round of recruitment takes place in October to match remaining vacancies and unplaced students.

15th October 2010

A list of unfilled vacancies will be on the website by 15th October 2009 and a second round of recruitment will begin. Academic references for students who applied in the 1st round will be carried over to the 2nd round. If a student applies for the 1st time in the second round their academic referee will receive a reference request.

By 22nd October 2010

MPharm students who are applying for the 1st time in the 2nd round of recruitment submit the name and contact details of their academic referee.

By 29th October 2010

Students submit their applications to four hospitals of their choice. Academic references for MPharm students must also be submitted by this date.

By 2nd November 2010

Applications will be sent electronically to hospitals.

By 4th November 2010

Pharmalife will contact the University Pre-registration Co-ordinator with a list of students who applied for NHS Pre-registration training (England & Wales) and their chosen hospitals.

November 2010

Hospitals aim to shortlist for interview in early November and complete the interview process before the end of November if possible.

Later in the year

After the 2nd round, the National Recruitment Scheme closes for 2011 intake applications although the web site remains active for prospective students to see. There are sometimes unfilled places after the 2nd round has closed. Hospitals advertise these places on the website www.pharmacytraining.nhs.uk and students can apply directly to the hospital by CV.

Students who have not secured a pre-registration placement after the 2nd round can register with Pharmalife to be informed of any vacancies by email.

FAQs

Academic References

Who is the academic referee?

The MPharm student's academic referee is either their pharmacy university tutor or another academic at their school of pharmacy who is familiar with their work. Applicants on the Overseas Pharmacists Assessment Programme (OSPAP course) DO NOT need to provide a UK academic reference because they will have already had the following validated by the Pharmacy regulator:

- A letter of registration and good standing from the regulator in their own country
- An academic transcript
- Two references - one from their most recent employer, and one from either their academic tutor in their own country or another professional e.g. employer

The employer will receive notification on the application form if the applicant is from the OSPAP course and exempt from a UK Academic reference.

What is the process for requesting academic references for MPharm students?

MPharm Students must submit the name and contact details of their academic referee online by **30th June 2010** (for the **1st round** of recruitment). Academic references will be carried over from the 1st to the 2nd round of recruitment. Students applying for the 1st time in the **2nd round** of recruitment must submit the name and contact details of their academic referee online by **22nd October 2010**. It is important that the students meet these deadlines so as not to delay the collection of the academic referee.

As soon as the academic referee's details are entered by the student the website will automatically generate an email requesting the academic reference.

What information is needed in the academic reference?

The reference form asks the academic referee to rank the students performance in key areas. Academic referees are also encouraged to comment on the student's particular strengths and weaknesses. Please use this comments section as the academic reference is a very important part of the application process. There is an option not to comment – however if the referee opts for this it is important that they explain the reasons why they are unable to comment.

What is the deadline for submitting an academic reference?

The academic reference must be completed electronically and submitted to Pharmalife by **1st August 2010** (1st round of recruitment) and by **22nd October 2010** for the 2nd round of recruitment.

Pharmalife will chase outstanding academic references in early August for the 1st round of recruitment. It is important for the students and the academic referees to appreciate the importance of this part of the application process. The employer is informed on the application form whether the academic reference is missing because the student missed the deadline or because the nominated referee did not send the reference.

What do I do if I have lost the reference request email?

If you have lost the email requesting the reference, please contact Pharmalife by email prereg@pharmalife.co.uk and they will resend the reference request.

Can the student see a copy of their academic reference?

Under Data Protection laws the student has the right to see their academic reference upon request. Pharmalife is unable to provide a copy of the reference and the student would need to request a copy of the reference directly from their academic referee.

I am concerned about the security of providing an academic reference online. Can I complete a reference on paper?

Completing an electronic reference is just as safe as sending it through the post. Pharmalife has the following procedures that are designed to prevent mistakes or fraud:

1. A reference can only be completed once. If you need to update your reference, you have to contact Pharmalife to do so.
2. Once a reference is completed, a copy of the reference is emailed to you for your records.
3. All academic referee email addresses are validated with the relevant School of Pharmacy before the applications are sent to the hospitals.
4. Pharmalife does not provide copies of references to students. If a student requests a copy, as may be their right under Data Protection legislation, Pharmalife directs the student back to the academic referee for a copy.

If, despite these safeguards, you still prefer to send your reference by post you can do so. To complete the reference on paper you will need to print off the reference form (by opening the webpage as outlined in the reference request email and printing it from your Internet browser). Please post it to Pharmalife Pre-registration, 336 Pinner Road, North Harrow, Middlesex HA1 4LB.

Can the student change their academic referee details after submitting?

The student is unable to change the academic referee's details online after the academic reference has been requested. If the student submits incorrect details e.g. the student spells the email address incorrectly they should contact prereg@pharmalife.co.uk to make the correction. If there is a need for the academic referee to be changed for other reasons e.g. the referee has left the university or has gone on maternity leave, the student should contact prereg@pharmalife.co.uk to explain the changes and reasons.

Academic Reference status online

Students can track the status of their academic reference online:

- The Academic Referee status will be shown as either: 'Incomplete', 'Pending' 'Complete' or 'Late' (or 'Exempt' in the case of OSPAP applicants)
- The Academic Reference status will be shown as either: 'Incomplete' or 'Complete'

There is information for the students on what these terms mean by clicking on the pop up boxes online.

Recruitment etiquette

Best Practise Guidelines for recruitment of pre-registration trainee pharmacists in the NHS

The NHS Regional Pre-registration Training Managers have developed guidelines for the best practice for recruitment of pharmacy students into pre-registration training posts. These guidelines are in accordance with guidelines produced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB). The guidelines outline the expectations of students and employers. Both parties are expected to comply with these guidelines.

Students best practice guidelines are that they will:

- Confirm with their nominated non-academic referees that they are a) willing and b) permitted by company policy to provide a reference before completing their application
- Properly research opportunities and organisations and concentrate on those organisations in which they have a genuine interest when making applications
- Be prompt, courteous and honest in all dealings with employers and notify them immediately if they decide not to proceed with their applications at any stage
- Be honest with employers about their preferred aspect of practice for pre-registration training, other applications made or existing offers of pre-registration employment
- When attending interviews at employer's premises, seek only repayment of reasonable expenses incurred
- Only accept offers of employment if conditions and terms of employment have been explained and are acceptable
- Clearly state at the time of acceptance if they wish to qualify their acceptance in any way (the possibility of further study represents such a qualification) and recognise that such a qualification may affect the terms of the offer
- Recognise that both the offer of a post and its acceptance (whether verbal or written) form a legally binding contract. Verbal and written acceptance must be honoured other than in the most exceptional circumstances i.e. those which are beyond their control or which they could justify as being professionally acceptable
- Once an offer has been accepted, decline all other offers and inform all other potential employers to whom they have applied that they have made a commitment elsewhere

See also the RPSGB letter on recruitment of pre-registration trainee pharmacists
<http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/preregrecruitguid10.pdf>

Employers best practise guidelines are that they will:

- Make available material to give students an objective picture of their organisations and to provide information about specific pre-registration training opportunities
- Offer equality of opportunity and avoid in their literature or application forms for employment in the UK any reference that might be construed as unfair discrimination
- Inform students whether or not they are to be invited for interview
- Make clear to applicants whether and what expenses will be paid for attendance at interviews
- Agree referees with the candidate and not seek references from a person not so designated without the candidate's agreement
- Notify the result of an interview promptly to a student
- Indicate clearly to the candidate and to the referee whether or not the offer is conditional on the reference
- Explain clearly the terms and conditions of service in offer letters and state the condition(s) on which an offer is made

- Recognise that both the offer of a post and its acceptance form a contract unless conditions are attached to either make clear to the applicant that an offer of employment is subject to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society approving the programme of training and/or the premises and/or the tutor
- Not pressure students to give a formal acceptance to an offer prior to the date set by the RPSGB. See also the RPSGB letter on recruitment of pre-registration trainee pharmacists <http://www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/preregrecruitguid10.pdf> and NHS Regional Pre-registration Training Managers have developed guidelines
- When students have other possibilities to consider, inform them if the offer can be held open and for how long
- Not give an impression that any commitment to work after the pre-registration period is enforceable in law

Employment offers and contracts

Guidance for students on what to do if they are offered a pre-registration training position

The NHS timetable for recruitment of pre-registration trainee pharmacists in England and Wales may differ from recruitment timetables in community pharmacy. This could cause a dilemma for students if they are offered a pre-registration training place before being able to attend interviews with other organisations. Students may wonder if they should accept the post offered or not? What if it's not their 1st choice of hospital? What if they turn it down but then don't receive another offer? To help students, the NHS Regional Pre-registration Training Managers made the following agreement on accepting or rejecting offers. Below is a list of FAQs asked by students and answers. We wanted to draw your attention to this in case the students come to you for advice

When do I have to make my decision on whether to accept or reject an offer?

- The student must notify the employer of their decision to accept or refuse of an offer of a pre-registration training position on, or preferably before, **1st October 2010**
- Employers should not pressurise students to accept an offer prior to **1st October 2010** as this is in neither the student's best interests nor the employer's. However if the student is happy with the offer they can accept it prior to **1st October 2010** and refuse all other offers immediately
- If an offer is made after **1st October 2010**, the employer may ask the student to give them a definite decision within 24 hours of them making the offer

What do I do if I receive an offer but it isn't from my preferred employer?

Holding onto an offer is defined as neither accepting the offer nor refusing it. A student may hold onto one offer whilst they are awaiting the outcome of an interview with a preferred employer but should reject one offer if they are made a second offer, so they only ever keep one 'in hand'. This process can continue until they have heard from all their options, then they should make a final decision. They should inform the employer if they do not wish to accept the offer as soon as possible so that the position can be offered to somebody else.

What do I do if I receive two or more offers?

- If a student receives two or more offers, they should think very carefully before accepting one of them. By accepting an offer either verbally or in writing, they are entering into a legally binding contract. Once an offer is accepted the student is expected to honour their acceptance

- Students should not hold onto more than one offer at any time whilst making a decision. If a student holds onto multiple offers they deprive other students of receiving an offer of employment

Please note – The NHS honours this agreement and expects students to do so too. Standards of honesty and trust are expected of all pharmacy students as described in the Student Code of Conduct

If you are aware of anyone pressuring students to give formal acceptance prior to **1st October 2010** please inform Helen Middleton, Lead for the NHS National Recruitment Scheme for pre-registration trainee pharmacists (England & Wales) helen.middleton@chelwest.nhs.uk 020 7763 6585

What information should be included in written offers of employment and contracts of employment?

Employers are expected to ensure that any written offers of employment and contracts of employment clearly specify the terms and conditions of the employment offer / contract. Please note that the guidelines written by the RPSGB recommend that students only accept offers of employment if conditions are acceptable and ensure that terms of employment are provided in writing. Offer letters and contracts are issued by NHS Human Resources Departments and sometimes this is a lengthy process. If the hospital is only able to initially make a verbal offer, this must be explained to the student and the reasons why. All verbal offers should be followed up in writing and students should be notified of when they will receive a written offer or contract. Regardless of whether the initial offer is made verbally or in writing, the conditions of the offer should be clearly explained to the student. These conditions should include the following:

- Satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check*
- Occupational Health clearance
- Obtaining the MPharm or passing the OSPAP course
- Whether the employment offer is deferred or withdrawn if the candidate fails the MPharm or OSPAP course
- Whether the employment offer is deferred or withdrawn if the candidate defers sitting the MPharm or OSPAP exam
- For non UK / EEA applicants: Specify the permission necessary for the individual to work in the UK and who is responsible for obtaining this permission

* Employment contracts for positions which are eligible for a CRB check should include a statement which requires staff to disclose any criminal convictions, reprimands, cautions and warnings which may subsequently occur whilst they are in their employment.

Permission to work in the UK and Leave to Remain: Information on employment of overseas applicants

This information changes frequently and we endeavour to keep the FAQ for employers section of our website up to date with the latest policy and guidance from the Border and Immigration Agency (BIA). Please check our website for the most up to date information http://www.pharmalife.co.uk/prr/page_help_emp.php