

Guidance on workplace suitability for pharmacy technician training towards the new IET standards.

This guidance is designed to help employers understand the range of experiences required in the workplace to allow a trainee pharmacy technician to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours to complete the training programme.

Common training settings for pharmacy technicians include hospital and community pharmacy. These settings generally provide a trainee with the opportunity to work both within a dispensary environment and a patient-facing environment, under the supervision of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician. As such, the trainees are able to complete the new programmes entirely in their main workplace.

However, pharmacy technicians are also being trained in pharmacy environments where they may only have limited exposure to specific aspects of pharmacy services, for example, internet pharmacies, primary care, and pharmacy manufacturing units. If you intend to enrol a trainee pharmacy technician, we will need to ensure the full range of experience required to complete the programme can be provided by the employer before we complete the enrolment process.

The table below shows the areas that are often an issue, so we have provided possible solutions to help facilitate the training programme.

Issue	Requirements in the standards (PTTP or PT(I))	Solution
Patient-facing experience This will often be a problem in internet or delivery pharmacies, and aseptic or manufacturing units.	There are significant learning outcomes within both standards that will require the trainee to communicate with patients face to face, particularly around medicines optimisation and patient counselling.	Trainees will need to have a placement(s). Ideally, this should be linked to short placements in periods 7 or 8 of around 1-2 weeks, followed by regular placements during periods 9-19, which could be accommodated as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-2 days each week• 1 week each period• 1 month in every 3-4 periods e.g. placement in periods 11, 15, 19. Each of these options works out to about 12 weeks of patient-facing contact, the exact amount of time will depend on the trainee's ability to learn and their prior experience of communication and consultation skills.

<p>Dispensing of medicines</p> <p>This is most likely to be an issue in a primary care setting where the role is predominately medicines review and optimisation with patients.</p> <p>Note, those working in manufacturing, aseptics or assembly hub environments could complete these learning outcomes in those environments, providing there is dispensing for named-patients occurring across a range of medicines and formulations.</p>	<p>The trainee will need to be able to show they can accurately dispense and manage the supply processes including stock.</p> <p>In the PT(I), the apprentice will also be observed in their end-point assessment for the qualification, dispensing medicines.</p>	<p>Trainees will need to have a placement. Ideally this should be during periods 3-6 when they learn the related theory in the programme.</p> <p>During this time, we would expect at least 50% of their hours to be dispensing, either as blocks or split days. If the trainee is not already a qualified dispensing assistant then this time may need to increase to nearer 100% during these periods.</p> <p>In addition, for a few days each period during periods 9-11,13-15 and 17-19 it would be beneficial for the trainee to experience specific drug dispensing practices when they are completing the therapeutic drug modules.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that if the trainee is doing the PT(I) programme this will be within scope for the end-point assessment, so employers will also need to facilitate a dispensing environment for the observation part of the assessment process.</p>
<p>Accuracy checking of others' work (ACPT role)</p> <p>This is an optional extra for the programmes, and will require time in a dispensing environment.</p>	<p>There is flexibility here for what an employer may want to do because the standard for the PTPP programme only needs to be covered at a knowledge level.</p> <p>The standard for the PT(I), however, can include this at the competency level if this is required by the employer.</p>	<p>If an employer would like their day one qualified pharmacy technician to be competent to do the final accuracy check of a dispensed medicine then we can add additional activities to their training programme to reflect the national ACPT framework, which will ensure they also get an ACPT certificate on completion (further fee applicable for PTPP).</p> <p>Alternatively, we can work with the employer to add their established accuracy checking requirements to the training plan, to meet their existing training standards for accuracy checking within their organisation.</p> <p>If accuracy checking skills are to be included as part of the programme then the trainee will need experience in a dispensing environment towards the end of the programme, ideally periods 21-23, where there will be sufficient staff for them to not dispense but instead check under supervision of another qualified accuracy checker.</p> <p>If it is included in the PT(I) programme, this would be within scope for the end-point assessment, so employers should be aware that the observation assessment will need to include accuracy checking.</p>

<p>Competency for manufacturing medicines</p> <p>This is an optional extra for the programmes, and will require time in an aseptic environment.</p>	<p>There is flexibility here for what an employer may want to do because the standard for the PTTP programme only needs to be covered at a knowledge level.</p> <p>The standard for the PT(I), however, can include this at the competency level if this is required by the employer.</p>	<p>If an employer would like their day one qualified pharmacy technician to be competent to work in the manufacturing unit then we will need to assess what range and scope of skills needs to be covered, then we will design activities into the training plan (if this is required for the PTTP then there will be an additional fee).</p> <p>If aseptics skills are to be included as part of the programme then the trainee will need experience in this environment for at least three periods during periods 1-6 and ideally another three months during periods 20-24.</p> <p>If it is included in the PT(I) programme, this could be within scope for the end-point assessment so employers should be aware that the observation may need to be done in this environment to reflect the trainees experience of dispensing.</p>
<p>Inadequate supervision by a pharmacist or pharmacy technician</p> <p>In some environments where medicines are dispensed, it is completed under the supervision of a doctor, such as the armed forces or a dispensing doctors practice.</p>	<p>The standards require the trainee to be under the supervision of a pharmacy registrant for a minimum of 14 hours per week.</p>	<p>For the PTTP programme, the employer can arrange a 14 hour per week placement in an appropriate environment for the duration of the course, under the supervision of a suitable pharmacy registrant. The registrant in the placement would also need to agree to act as the workplace training supervisor.</p> <p>This arrangement is not possible with the PT(I) programme because the sign off for the apprenticeship must be with the employer.</p>

NB - any period mentioned above translates to the month of the training programme assuming the learner is targeted to complete in 24 months.

Placement agreements

Any employer that is able to facilitate placements for their trainee as outlined above can proceed to enrolment for the programmes. As part of enrolment we will need a formal agreement in place to confirm these arrangements and who is accountable for them.