



Pharmacy Qualifications Support Team (QST)

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1 May 2025 (via Microsoft Teams)

Present

Angela Cannon	NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Colin Sinclair	NHS Fife
Karen Liles	NHS Education for Scotland
Laura Gibson	SQA
Monica Hunter	NHS Education for Scotland
Suzanne Thompson	West College Scotland

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Susan Roberts.

1. Minimum English language requirements for PTs

QST members discussed whether the current English language entry requirements for the Diploma in Pharmacy Services (GR2H 47) are suitable for learners whose first language is not English or if they are set too high. The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) requires international applicants to achieve a minimum score of 7 in each of the four components (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) of an approved English language test in order to register. SQA has aligned its entry requirements for the Diploma in Pharmacy Services (GR2H 47) with this GPhC standard. After careful consideration, QST members agreed that the current requirements are appropriate to ensure safe practice and should remain unchanged.

Suzanne noted that the Diploma in Pharmacy Services (GR2H 47) is positioned at SCQF levels 7 and 8, which means the expected level of English language competency is higher than that required by some other awarding bodies. Suzanne emphasised the importance of ensuring that this requirement does not become a barrier to access. Measures are in place to support potential learners in demonstrating their English language competency before applying for trainee pharmacy technician roles. Colleges offer a range of ESOL qualifications, provide ESOL support as an enhancement for current learners e.g. pharmacy support workers undertaking the SVQ in Pharmacy Services (GT0E 23), and many also offer ESOL testing.

Monica noted that a more formalised approach to supporting English language development at the pharmacy support worker level could be beneficial and may be explored as part of the ongoing employer workforce review processes.

2. Work-based assessor guidance

Monica raised concerns about work-based assessors finding it difficult to determine a learner's competence, and suggested that additional guidance and support could help build their confidence in making such decisions. QST members agreed that the SQA External Verifiers would collaborate to

develop additional standalone guidance for work-based assessors. Once this guidance is finalised, Laura will share it with QST members for feedback.

3. Employer scoping survey

Monica shared the results of the employer scoping survey. The aim of the survey was to estimate potential future learner numbers for each current or proposed course. The results indicated a good range of responses across the courses, and discussions focused on the viability of the identified options below:

- Standard knowledge course to underpin the SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 (GT0E 23), to be included within the Modern Apprenticeship in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6
- Supporting Medicines Reconciliation by pharmacy support staff
- Final Accuracy Checking by pharmacy support staff
- PDA in Assessment and Supply of Individual Patients' Medicines (GE7D 47)
- Final Accuracy Checking by Pharmacy Technicians 1 (H9NP 34) / 2 (H9NR 34)

QST members agreed that the survey highlights particular interest in the standard knowledge course to support the SVQ in Pharmacy Services at SCQF level 6 (GT0E 23). Monica advised that a Task and Finish Group has been created to review the findings and determine next steps, and will share any developments with QST members.

4. GPhC data collection

Laura invited feedback from centres regarding the GPhC data collection task. Suzanne confirmed that West College Scotland had encountered no issues with collecting the data. Suzanne also noted as a centre working in partnership to deliver the training programme they have introduced a collaboration step and agreed on a shared process for collating the data.

Laura noted, as the collection of EDI data is a requirement for the recognition of the Diploma in Pharmacy Services (GR2H 47), centres must ensure this data is gathered, as 'data not available' will not be accepted in future data collection exercises.

5. AOB

Suzanne raised concerns about delays in responding to employer needs for new or revised qualifications. QST members agreed that these delays are largely due to ongoing workforce reforms and evolving education standards. QST members noted that progress is dependent on employers clearly defining their requirements and timelines.

QST members discussed whether employers are able to deliver individual, freestanding SVQ units. Laura to confirm whether the following SVQ units can be delivered as freestanding units:

- Pharm 28 Undertake the Final Accuracy Check of Dispensed Medicines and Products (J44T 04)
- Pharm 29 Retrieve and Reconcile Information about an Individual's Medicines (J44V 04)
- Pharm 33 Order Medicines and Products for Individuals (J44X 04)
- Pharm 31 Confirm the Suitability of an Individual's Medicines for Use and Ensure Sufficient Supply (J78K 04)

Laura advised that the next meeting of the pharmacy QST would be arranged for later in the year and will issue a poll to confirm most suitable date and time for the next meeting.

Action grid

Action	Date completed
SQA External Verifiers to get together and develop additional guidance for the work-based assessors.	
Laura to share the additional guidance for the work-based assessors with the QST members for feedback.	
Monica to share the Task and Finish Group's findings with QST members.	
Laura can confirm that SVQ units can be delivered as freestanding units.	07/05/2025
Laura to send QST members an online poll to ascertain the best date/time for the next meeting.	