

Pharmacy Apprenticeships – FAQ's

This guidance document is to support organisations to understand the Pharmacy apprenticeship scheme in more detail so that they can consider apprenticeships in their future workforce.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are apprenticeships?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes which are designed to help employers train people for specific job roles. At the same time, apprentices get a paying job with valuable training and experience, while they work towards a nationally recognised apprenticeship standard

In Pharmacy there are two approved apprenticeships, they are:

- [Level 2 Pharmacy Services Assistant Apprenticeship](#)
- [Level 3 Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship](#)

Who can do an apprenticeship?

Anyone in England aged 16 years old and above, whether employed, unemployed or leaving school, can do an apprenticeship. There is no upper age limit however where there is a statutory or professional body requirement for people in a particular role to be aged 18 or over, a minimum age limit would apply.

What is the length of time on course?

The level 2 Pharmacy Services Assistant Apprenticeship is typically 12-15 months in duration. The level 3 Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship is typically 24 months in duration.

Can I recruit part time apprentices?

Yes, the apprenticeship scheme can be undertaken on a part time basis if this is offered by the employing organisation, however staff would be expected to work a minimum of 30 hours a week to be eligible for the current training schemes. If an apprentice works less than full time, the apprenticeship duration will be extended accordingly.

What qualification will the learners receive on completion?

On successful completion of the level 2 Pharmacy Services Assistant Apprenticeship the apprentice will attain a GPhC recognised level 2 qualification or a GPhC accredited course. The apprenticeship will include dispensing as a mandatory unit; so, the apprenticeship may not be suitable for all assistants.

On successful completion of the level 3 Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship the apprentice will attain a GPhC recognised level 3 qualification or a GPhC accredited course.

How can I access apprenticeship funding?

All employers with a pay bill of over £3 million each year pay the apprenticeship levy and the levy can only be spent on apprenticeship training. Your organisation's apprenticeship lead, who normally works within the training or HR departments, will be able to help you access the apprenticeship levy and start apprentices on programmes.

My organisation doesn't pay the apprenticeship levy, how can I access funding?

If an organisation does not pay the apprenticeship levy it can still access government funding for apprenticeships. It can either:

1. Reserve government co-investment: organisations can reserve funding, where the government pays 95% of the training costs and the employer pays the remaining 5%.
2. Levy Transfers: levy paying employers can transfer some of their annual levy to other employers. These transfers cover 100% of the training costs of the apprenticeship.

Can I use apprenticeship levy funding to pay for my apprentice's salary?

Apprenticeship levy, reservations and transfers do not cover salary costs so your organisation will need to fund the apprentice's salary.

What is the HEE-led managed procurement framework?

The Managed Procurement team at Salisbury NHSFT are HEE's partner organisation for apprenticeship procurement. The Pharmacy procurement framework is a list of providers who have met approved quality criteria. The framework will give you assurance that all those providers have good Ofsted and financial track records etc.

Employers do not have to use the HEE procurement (if not they will have to carry out their own PCR2015 and internal financial instructions compliant procurement, and create their own contract or access provision via another DPS)

Who are the education providers?

The list of approved providers is expanding; to receive the most up to date list please contact Sft.commercial@nhs.net.

What are the entry criteria?

There are no specific entry criteria for the Pharmacy Assistant apprenticeship. Employing organisations will set their own requirements. Apprentices without level 1 English and Maths will need to achieve this level and take the test for level 2 English and Maths prior to taking the end point assessment.

Those wishing to undertake the level 3 Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship must meet, as a minimum, the [GPhC Evidence Framework - minimum selection and entry requirements](#) (*please note provider may have additional requirements*). This includes minimum entry qualifications, good character (DBS) and health checks.

Academic requirements:

- GCSE English at Grade C/Level 4, Scottish National 5 or above, or equivalent English language evidence;
- GCSE Maths at Grade C/Level 4, Scottish National 5 or above, or equivalent evidence of numeracy;
- the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of science suitable for entry to the course, for example, GCSE Science at Grade C/Level 4, or Scottish National 5 or equivalent.

What should I do if my learner can't find their English and Math Certificates?

If learners can't find their certificates, they can request new ones from the awarding body. If they aren't able to request new certificates, they will have to undertake Functional Skills level 2 prior to commencing the apprenticeship.

What do I do if my learner has overseas qualifications?

UK NARIC is the designated national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. NB: must be a "pass" grade or above. You can check your learners' overseas qualifications by contacting:

North East and Yorkshire – Apprenticeships.NE@hee.nhs.uk

North West – Gemma – levytransfer.nw@hee.nhs.uk

If you require further information about pharmacy apprenticeships, please contact medicinesoptimisation.north@hee.nhs.uk