



## APTUK Position Statement

### Deployment of Final Accuracy Checking and Medicines Optimisation Skills on completion of new GPhC approved qualifications/courses

The Association of Pharmacy Technicians United Kingdom (APTUK) leads, advocates, and represents the Pharmacy Technician profession for the benefit of patients, the public and their members.

APTUK provides advice, information and support to members; championing and safeguarding the Pharmacy Technician profession.

This position statement relates to pharmacy technicians undertaking final accuracy checking of dispensed medicines and products, and medicines optimisation underpinning knowledge and skills assessment within their pre-registration training. It provides information and guidance around the safe deployment of final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation skills post-qualification, following the changes to qualifications and courses in line with the [2017 General Pharmaceutical Council \(GPhC\) initial education and training standards for Pharmacy Technicians \(IETs\)](#).

The position statement aims to provide employers with information the changes around the new pharmacy technician skill set in view of the revised IETs and provide reassurance and guidance around the safe deployment of these skills in practice post-registration.

NB: GPhC registration is not currently required for pharmacy technicians in Northern Ireland, however this guidance would be applicable to all pharmacy technicians in Northern Ireland who have completed a GPhC accredited qualification/course that meets the 2017 IETs.

### Background

Historically, the role of a pharmacy technician did not include the final accuracy checking of dispensed medicines and products and medicines optimisation. Over time, to capitalise on the skill mix of pharmacy teams and in response to service needs, the final accuracy check of medicines and products and medicines optimisation became extended roles for pharmacy technicians. NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee (NHS PEDC) developed competency frameworks of education, training, and reaccreditation to enable pharmacy technicians to demonstrate the skills required for these extended roles and maintain ongoing competence.

In 2011 pharmacy technicians became a regulated profession with GPhC within England, Scotland and Wales. With registration comes professional accountability and pharmacy technicians are required to revalidate annually to demonstrate they have the required skills and knowledge for activities that form part of the scope of their practice.



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This negated the need for the final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation revalidation/reaccreditation that had previously formed part of the NHS PEDC framework requirements.

Following the disbandment of NHS PEDC, stewardship of the framework for final accuracy checking was passed to APTUK as the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians. APTUK launched the [National Education Framework for the final accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products](#) in 2019.

APTUK have developed a process by which education and training providers can submit their Final Accuracy Checking programmes for mapping and approval against the APTUK national framework standards. A robust approval process ensures a standardised and consistent approach to the training and assessment of final accuracy checking skills across the different providers and programmes.

In [2017 the GPhC published new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacy technicians](#). The new standards placed a renewed emphasis on person-centred professionalism, communication and team working, through the integration of learning and experience during the training period. The knowledge and skills required to undertake an accuracy check of medicines and products, and medicines optimisation activities (assessment of patients own medicines (PODs), supply of medicines and medicines reconciliation) are included within these standards. This represents a shift from accuracy checking and medicines optimisation roles being considered extended or enhanced, to a recognition that form part of the core skills required for pharmacy technicians. The first cohort of pharmacy technicians to complete qualifications/courses that meet the 2017 GPhC IET standards registered with the GPhC in November 2021 and the list of approved qualifications and courses can be found at the GPhC site [here](#).

Previous experience of upskilling pharmacy technicians with final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation skills involved a rigorous assessment for a 1-year post qualification/registration pharmacy technician so the evolution of a newly registered pharmacy technician undertaking these roles represents a substantial shift to what was seen as 'standard practice' for many years and a model that has formerly provided employers with confidence and assurance regarding safe deployment of these skills.

APTUK recognise the need to support pharmacy technicians completing the new qualifications/courses to apply these skills in new settings, as well as to provide employers with information relating to the changes around the final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation skill sets and to provide some reassurance around the safe deployment of these skills in early years practice post-registration.

## Considerations

### Pharmacy technicians completing programmes that met the GPhC IETs prior to 2017

Any pharmacy technician that has completed a GPhC approved qualification/course that meets the **former** GPhC IET standards (pre-2017) will be required to complete additional education and training to gain the required underpinning knowledge and skills to undertake the final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation role. This can be provided as a standalone final accuracy checking (ACPT) or medicines optimisation accreditation, course or qualification. It is anticipated that education and training providers who deliver final accuracy checking, and medicines optimisation training will continue to do so for as long as the demand exists to upskill the legacy workforce.



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## Pharmacy technicians completing programmes that meet the GPhC 2017 IETs

Where pharmacy technicians have completed a GPhC approved qualification/course that meets the 2017 GPhC IET standards, employers should be aware and understand the differences in the qualifications and courses delivered in terms of interpretation and inclusion of **final accuracy checking** and **medicines optimisation** underpinning knowledge and skills.

### Medicines Optimisation

The following standards relating to medicines optimisation activity within the GPhC 2017 IETs:

- 30. Confirm the suitability of a person's medicines for use
- 31. Accurately retrieve and reconcile information about a person's medicines
- 32. Assess a person's present supply of medicines and order appropriate medicines

are listed as outcome level 'Does', based on the established competence and assessment hierarchy known as 'Miller's triangle'.

Pharmacy technicians that have completed a GPhC approved qualification/course that meets the 2017 IETs should therefore have completed underpinning knowledge **and** skills assessment in these areas of **medicines optimisation** practice relevant to their training setting.

### Accuracy Checking

Standard 40 within the GPhC 2017 IETs:

- Carry out an accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products

is listed as outcome level 'Does', based on the 'Miller's triangle'.

Pharmacy technicians that have completed a GPhC approved qualification/course that meets the 2017 IETs should therefore have completed underpinning knowledge **and** skills assessment in the **accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products** relevant to their training setting. It is expected that, as a minimum, all programmes will include knowledge and skills assessment relating to in-process, self-checking and checking of others prior to a final accuracy check.

### Final Accuracy Checking

The following variation exists between PTPT education providers in relation to standard 40 and the delivery of knowledge and assessment for **final accuracy checking**:



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- Some providers will include both knowledge **and** skills assessment elements for **final accuracy checking** as part of their **mandatory** programme, with the intention of producing a pharmacy technician able to undertake final accuracy checking upon registration with the GPhC.
- Some providers will **only** deliver the underpinning knowledge relating to **final accuracy checking** and will therefore require the pharmacy technician to undertake additional skills assessment post-qualification.
- Some providers will provide the assessment of skills for **final accuracy checking** as part of the core 2-year programme as an **additional option**, i.e., the employer can request its inclusion at the point of trainee enrolment.

Employers should be aware of the variances between education provision and have a responsibility to ensure that any pharmacy technician deployed into a final accuracy checking role has completed both the underpinning knowledge **and** skills training and assessment related to final accuracy checking, whether this is as part of their initial education and training or post-registration. Examples of these variances and the recommended actions are outlined below:

Qualification/course completed	Recommended action
Pharmacy Technician registered with qualification/course that meets the <b>pre 2017</b> GPhC IET e.g., NVQ/BTEC	Complete additional education and training to gain the required underpinning knowledge and skills to undertake the final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation role, usually provided as an 'accuracy checking pharmacy technician (ACPT), medicines optimisation training/accreditation programme or qualification'
Pharmacy Technician registered with qualification/course that meets the <b>2017</b> GPhC IET and includes final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation knowledge <b>and</b> skills assessment	No further skills assessment required. Local orientation and support to enable safe, autonomous final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation roles (see safe deployment of skill sets)
Pharmacy Technician registered with qualification/course that meets the <b>2017</b> GPhC IET and includes final accuracy checking knowledge <b>ONLY</b>	Complete additional training to undertake final accuracy checking <b>skills assessment and demonstration of competence</b>

## Safe deployment of new skill sets post-registration

Safe deployment of the final accuracy checking, and medicines optimisation skill set is essential to patient care, and employers have a responsibility to ensure that final accuracy checking, and medicines optimisation activities are carried out by individuals that are appropriately trained, competent and confident.

It is recognised that the assessment processes for final accuracy checking within new pre-registration programmes may look different to that outlined within the [National Education Framework for the final accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products](#). It is important to note that the framework was designed to develop the knowledge and skills



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of pharmacy technicians who had completed pre-registration training programmes that preceded the new GPhC 2017 IETs and was therefore required to bridge gaps in the earlier IETs.

Where assessment of final accuracy checking skills is included in the new GPhC approved qualifications/courses, this is incorporated into a 2-year spiral curriculum where knowledge and skills required to meet the new IETs are developed over time.

There is **no expectation** that a pharmacy technician that has **demonstrated competence** through formal assessment of **final accuracy checking** skills within their pre-registration training programme should be required to 'top-up' this assessment post-registration to bring it in line with the assessment processes and number of items reflected in the national framework.

Employers should ensure that appropriate governance is in place when delegating these roles to newly qualified pharmacy technicians that have demonstrated competence during their training period, and that local guidance is available to support a structured approach to reducing supervision post-registration until the pharmacy technician feels confident to carry out the tasks autonomously.

Pharmacy technicians who are new to the setting in which they are being asked to carry out these roles will require local orientation and familiarisation with the setting. Local guidance may be used to inform any necessary activities related to this supervised 'probationary period' along with recognition that different pharmacy technicians may require different levels of support to reach the confidence required for autonomous final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation practice.

Any local guidance should ensure that:

- pharmacy technicians are not subject to any *unnecessary* additional assessment and that any probationary process considers the extent of the final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation underpinning knowledge and skills assessment that has been included in the pharmacy technician qualification/course undertaken.
- any additional assessment or probationary process is proportionate to the IETs and its intention to produce a pharmacy professional enabled to undertake an accuracy check and undertake medicines optimisation activities post-qualification.

As registered healthcare professionals, pharmacy technicians should make a professional judgement about their competence and practice; and are responsible for keeping their own knowledge and skills up to date. If there is a lapse in competence e.g., a break in practice due to a change in role or period of extended leave, pharmacy technicians should not be expected to repeat previous formal qualifications or courses to regain competence in final accuracy checking or medicines optimisation. Pharmacy technicians can achieve this by updating their knowledge and skills in the workplace with support and guidance from their employer.



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## Key Summary

Pharmacy technicians that have completed a GPhC approved qualification/course that meets the 2017 GPhC IET standards will have completed the underpinning knowledge required to undertake a final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation role, however not all programmes include a requirement for any practical assessment of the skills required to undertake a 'final' accuracy check. It is therefore the employer's responsibility to check that assessment of skills and demonstration of competence was included in the qualification/course provided before a newly qualified pharmacy technician can be delegated these tasks.

Pharmacy technicians that did not complete any practical assessment or demonstration of competence of these skills during their qualification/course, will be required to undertake additional education and training to gain the required skills and demonstrate competence in final accuracy checking and medicines optimisation.

As accuracy checking and medicines optimisation were a new addition to the IETs in 2017, any pharmacy technician that completed a GPhC approved qualification/course that met the GPhC IETs prior to 2017 will be required to complete additional education and training to gain the necessary underpinning knowledge and skills to undertake the final accuracy checking role and medicines optimisation activities where these skills form part of their job role.

As registered professionals' pharmacy technicians must make a professional judgement about their competence and practice; and are responsible for keeping their own knowledge and skills up to date.