



Support for External Research Requests

1. Introduction

APTUK regularly receives requests from researchers, academic institutions, healthcare organisations and professional bodies to distribute surveys, advertise research or recruit participants from our membership.

While APTUK is committed to supporting high quality research that advances pharmacy technician practice, we must also protect our members from excessive requests, minimise burden and ensure all supported work aligns with APTUK values and strategic priorities.

All external research requests are first reviewed by the APTUK Board of Directors. Where additional expertise is required, the Board may consult a panel of research expert Fellows of the Association.

This policy sets out how APTUK reviews, prioritises and responds to external research requests.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

Ensure APTUK members are not overburdened with frequent or low value research requests

- Promote high quality, ethical and relevant research
- Support projects that align most closely with APTUK's goals and professional values
- Provide a consistent, transparent decision-making process
- Safeguard members' privacy and uphold data protection legislation
- Clarify the types of research APTUK can and cannot support

3. APTUK Values Embedded in this Policy

Research requests will be assessed through the lens of APTUK values:

- **Professional:** Supports high quality, evidence-based development of pharmacy technician practice
- **Visionary:** Contributes to the future direction and evolution of the profession
- **Committed:** Benefits APTUK members and strengthens the professional leadership body
- **Integrity:** Transparent, ethical and responsible handling of member engagement
- **Collaborative:** Encourages meaningful partnerships that respect APTUK's purpose
- **Inclusive:** Reflects and involves the diverse pharmacy technician workforce

4. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to requests from external parties asking APTUK to:

- Circulate surveys, questionnaires or invitations
- Share research calls via newsletters, social media or email
- Advertise participation opportunities e.g., interviews, focus groups
- Collaborate on research projects
- Provide subject matter expertise or represent the pharmacy technician voice

This policy does not apply to:

- APTUK-commissioned research
- Internal member consultations
- Freedom of Information requests
- Requests where APTUK is a formal project partner, grant co-applicant or named collaborator (covered by separate agreements)

5. Principles Underpinning APTUK's Approach

APTUK will only support research where:

5.1 The research is relevant

The topic must clearly relate to pharmacy technician practice, workforce development or medicines optimisation.

Requests that primarily focus on pharmacists or wider pharmacy teams may be considered only if they include specific questions targeted at pharmacy technicians.

5.2 The research aligns with APTUK strategy and values

Projects should advance the profession or improve patient care.

5.3 Member burden is kept to a minimum

APTUK will limit the number of external research requests circulated each quarter. Priority will be given to requests that have high relevance and clear professional benefit.

5.4 The research meets quality and ethical standards

The following are required:

- Clear research aims and methodology
- UK-recognised ethics approval (for academic/clinical studies)
- Named supervisor for student projects
- Transparent data handling and GDPR compliance
- Clarity on sample requirements and recruitment methods

5.5 APTUK protects member privacy

APTUK will never share member email addresses or personal data with researchers. If agreed, APTUK will distribute approved messages on behalf of the researcher.

6. Eligibility Criteria for Support

APTUK will consider supporting research where **all** the following criteria are met:

6.1 Relevance to pharmacy technicians

- The research must relate directly to pharmacy technician roles, education, scope of practice, workforce development or professional identity.
- Projects where pharmacy technicians are a minor subgroup will be considered, but may not be supported.

6.2 Ethical approval

Required for:

- Academic studies (undergraduate, Masters, PhD, professional doctorate, postdoctoral)
- NHS or health/social care research
- Any study collecting personal or sensitive data

Evidence must be provided before circulation, this may include details of application for ethics not yet awarded.

6.3 Organisational credibility

Researchers must be affiliated with:

- A UK university, NHS organisation, health policy body, regulator or recognised research institution
- Supervisors must be identified for student-led research
- PhD/Masters projects may be supported where the question is significant and high quality

6.4 Clear member benefit

The research should demonstrate tangible benefit to:

- The advancement of pharmacy technician practice
- Workforce planning
- Education and training
- Person-centred care and medicines safety

6.5 Low operational burden on APTUK

Requests must:

- Provide finalised text for circulation to APTUK members
- Require no survey redesign or significant administrative support from APTUK
- Have realistic timescales, bearing in mind the 20-day turnaround from submission of the Research Request Form.

7. Types of Support APTUK May Offer

Depending on priority, relevance, and capacity, APTUK may offer:

Level 1 – High priority support

- Inclusion in APTUK member newsletter
- Social media posts from the APTUK accounts
- Email distribution to a targeted subset of APTUK members
- Endorsement as "APTUK Supported Research", this may include letters of support

Level 2 – Standard support

- APTUK social media post only
- Listed on APTUK research opportunities webpage

Level 3 – Declined

Where criteria are not met, APTUK will decline requests and may offer signposting e.g., other networks.

8. Requests the APTUK will Normally Decline

APTUK will not support requests that:

- Do not specifically include pharmacy technicians
- Lack ethics approval (where required)
- Are primarily commercial or marketing driven
- Seek access to APTUK member contact details
- Impose high member burden with unclear benefit
- Duplicate existing APTUK or national research
- Have unclear, poor-quality, or unfeasible methodology
- Involve sensitive topics without robust safeguards

9. Application Process for Researchers

Researchers must submit:

- Completed APTUK Research Request Form
- Full participant information sheet (if available)
- Evidence of ethics approval (if applicable)
- Final survey link and agreed wording for circulation to APTUK members
- Contact details of responsible researcher and, where appropriate, their supervisor
- Summary of how pharmacy technicians are represented in the research study

APTUK will respond within **20 working days**. Where expert panel review is required, this may extend the review period. Researchers will be notified if this applies.

10. Decision-Making Process

Requests will be reviewed by:

Stage 1: Board of Directors Decision

The APTUK Board of Directors review all external research requests and makes the initial decision based on relevance, alignment with APTUK values, ethical robustness and member burden. A minimum of two Directors will review the Research Request information.

Stage 2: Expert Panel Consultation (if required)

If the Board of Directors identifies a need for specialist methodological, ethical or subject-matter expertise, the request will be referred to the APTUK Fellowship members, with research expertise, to create a Research Expert Panel.

Stage 3: Final Board Approval

The Board of Directors considers the panel's advice and makes the final decision.

Decision criteria:

1. Relevance
2. Ethical robustness
3. Alignment with APTUK values

4. Potential member burden
5. Strategic importance
6. Organisational capacity

11. Conditions of APTUK Support

If APTUK supports the research:

- APTUK must be acknowledged appropriately
- Findings should be shared with APTUK, when available
- APTUK may request change to communication wording to their members
- Support may be withdrawn if concerns arise

12. Monitoring

APTUK will track:

- Number of research requests received
- Number accepted / declined
- Topics and trends
- Number of cases requiring expert panel review
- Member feedback on burden
- Details will be included in the annual report.

13. Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

Review date	Significant policy changes	Updated by (name and job title)	Approved by (name and job title)	Effective date	Version number
12.04.2026	New policy	Gail Hall (Vice President)	Amy Laflin (President)	12.04.2026	HR028.01

Next review date: 12/04/2029