



British Pharmaceutical Students' Association
The Official Student Organisation of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society

2021 Registration Assessments and Provisional Register Statement

As we begin 2021 in another national lockdown, we urge the GPhC to revisit the important subject of the registration assessment and the conditions under which Pre-registration Pharmacists can join the provisional register.

It is apparent from many of our members that once again they find themselves under additional pressures due to the current global pandemic, which is enhanced by the anxiety of sitting the registration assessment. Whilst we support the GPhC's decision to hold an assessment sitting in March to allow those who were not eligible to provisionally register, and those who feel fit to do so, to complete the assessment, we believe that additional adjustments now need to be made for both the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 cohorts of pre-registration pharmacists.

Firstly we believe that the provisional register should be extended past July 2021 and should continue for at least six months post-pandemic to ensure that each candidate can have adequate preparation time without the current additional pressures. This should include allowing the 2020/2021 cohort to join the provisional register on successful completion of their pre-registration year. Whilst we appreciate that logistics may have been resolved to allow the sitting of the assessment in March 2020, when the assessment was initially postponed, the reasoning was significantly due to candidates not being able to prepare for the assessment adequately with the increased pressures on the health service. This is still ongoing and needs to be taken into account.

We would also ask that an amendment is made to allow provisionally-registered pharmacists who choose to sit the assessment in March, to not be removed from the provisional register if they are not successful in passing the assessment. Sitting an assessment under such tough conditions and in a new environment and setting is certain to lead to competent pharmacists falling below the required standard on the day. Removal would prevent a large number of candidates deferring their first sitting due to the risk of being removed if they are not successful. Whilst we understand the reasoning behind the decision to not allow those who had previously been unsuccessful in the assessment to join the provisional register, we feel that with the additional pressures that the health service and staff are under, it would be reasonable to make this adjustment to allow those that practise as provisionally-registered pharmacists to continue to do so if they were to not be successful in the assessment during the pandemic in their first or second attempts.



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Following the announcement of Pearson Vue as the assessment centre and the restriction on taking water into the assessment, we feel that it is only fair to allow an additional ten-minutes on each assessment sitting so that candidates are not penalised by requiring a drink of water under such intense circumstances. This is a life-changing assessment for the candidates, and additional time pressure to take a drink if required is fundamentally unjust.

Finally, we would ask that the GPhC allows a refundable cancellation period after booking the assessment as the situation is rapidly ever-changing, plus personal circumstances and/or implementation of the recommendations that we have outlined above could alter a candidate's decision.

Instilling these amendments into policy will allow each candidate to make a decision that is right for them, based on their individual circumstances whilst also protecting the integrity of the pharmacy profession. We urge the GPhC to review this issue urgently and give candidates peace of mind and the choice to make the right decision for them.

Yours Sincerely,
On behalf of the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association

Sean Brannen
President 2020 - 2021

Bella Shah
Vice President 2020 - 2021