

Foundation Trainee Pharmacist Recruitment Newsletter



Welcome to the October Foundation Trainee Pharmacist recruitment newsletter. We are now in the fifth year of the National Recruitment Scheme (NRS) and our applicants have just completed their assessments. As the process of analysing the results begins, we look back at another year severely impacted by the pandemic, some early NRS numbers, and look at what the future holds in store.

Welcome to our October 2021 Newsletter which provides the latest news on the Foundation Trainee Pharmacist Recruitment Scheme.

Inside this issue:

- Covid disruption continues
- The early numbers
- Welcoming Scotland
- Supporting our applicants
- Evaluating and Evolving the NRS
- And finally...

Queries: Who to contact

If you are an applicant and have an enquiry, you should go to the enquiries portal at: [HEE London and South East Support Portal](#). On the portal you will see a list of Frequently Asked Questions. If these do not answer your query, you can submit a question. This will be responded to within 48 working hours.

If you are an employer or University, please contact your local Pharmacy or Recruitment Lead if it is a local query e.g. about your Oriel entry. If it is a national query, please contact the Pharmacy National email inbox via foundationpharmacyrecruitment@hee.nhs.uk. Applicant queries will not be answered via this route.



Adapting to the Covid-19 Challenge

As we entered 2021 the pandemic continued to exert its grip on the nation.



For the NRS team this meant working with our partners to predict in January what the landscape would look like come assessment time. We were all of the opinion that large-scale Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs) would continue to be problematic as the prognosis for COVID-19 remained unclear, and that our pharmacy workforce would still be heavily engaged on the frontline.

This proved to be correct as our pharmacy teams, including thousands of trainees, continued to rise to the challenge and supported their patients across all areas of professional practice, and then later in the year played a key role in vaccinating the country. It meant that for a second year we enacted a contingency plan to utilise SJTs and cancel the MMIs. Once again, our partners were magnificent; we worked closely with our employers and representatives, the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association (BPSA), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Pharmacy Schools Council to work through all our options and find the best, fairest solution for applicants to demonstrate their capabilities regardless of where in the world they may be.

This allowed us to be able to offer SJTs to applicants across almost every continent on the planet, during a pandemic. We thank our partners for their support and all our applicants for their determination to successfully complete their SJT and numeracy assessments despite the trying circumstances.

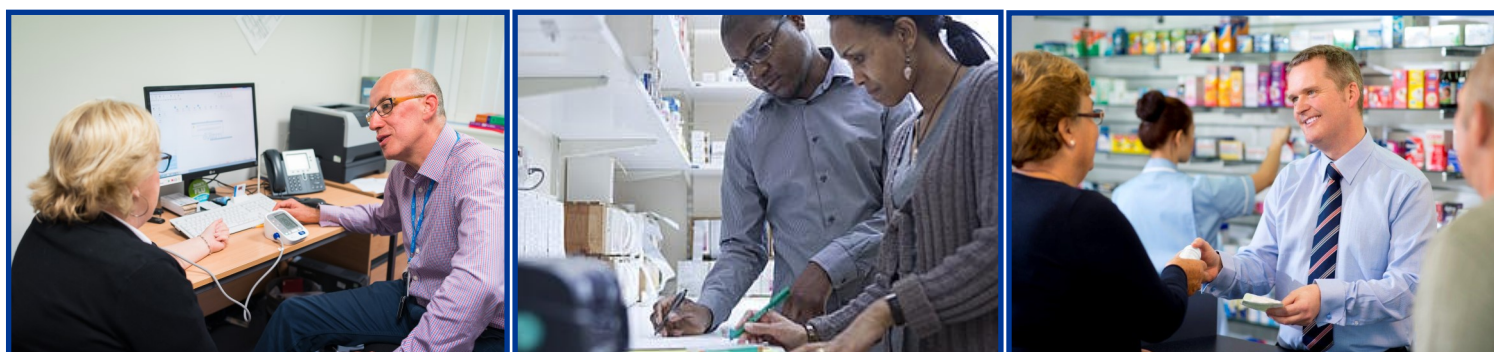
The Early Numbers

This year saw the highest number of applications ever seen for sitting the NRS assessments. This was very encouraging to see as the number of employers within the Scheme continues to outweigh the number of people to fill them, and a greater number of quality applicants allows a greater number of quality places to be filled. The current numbers are as below:

Total number of applicants to the NRS	2833
Total number of applicants attending assessment	2450
Total number of places within the NRS	3508
Community places	2572
Hospital places	936
Multi-sector places (at least 3 months in another sector)	702

Welcoming Scotland

Last year, due to the impact of COVID-19, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) joined us and shared our assessment platforms and processes. We enjoyed the collaboration so much that NES decided to join us on a permanent basis, meaning that the majority of places across England, Wales and Scotland can now be accessed by sitting just one assessment process. Never in the field of pharmacy recruitment have so many places been available across so many countries to so many trainees!



Supporting our applicants

Our [Student Zone web page](#) continues to be a popular drop-in point for applicants seeking updates and information. This year the page contained an informative webinar conducted in partnership with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Health Education and Improvement Wales, NES and the BPSA that attempted to answer the majority of the queries we were receiving from employers and applicants.



Other resources included FAQs, articles and a sample SJT paper with fully-worked answer keys and rationales. All resources are free to access and can be found [here](#). For anything that the Student Zone page couldn't answer, the NRS teams were busy answering hundreds of queries sent in to the support portal.

Evaluating and Evolving the NRS: an Iterative Process

The NRS is constantly reviewed and evaluated to ensure it meets the standards we would expect, even during such unforeseen circumstances as a pandemic. As part of this process a full post-round analysis is conducted and published on the NRS website each year. Alongside this yearly review, more focused analyses are conducted on a periodic basis to ensure the NRS is able to evolve its processes as the profession itself evolves.

As part of broader changes to the Pre-registration/Foundation Trainee Pharmacist role, one such analysis currently being undertaken is a review of the Professional Attributes Framework (PAF), to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The project is being run by Work Psychology Group, in collaboration with Health Education England and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

The project methodology includes (1) an exercise to review and map the current PAF to the new Initial Education and Training Standards and Learning Outcomes and the Foundation Pharmacist Framework, (2) stakeholder interviews and (3) stakeholder panel review of updated framework.

It is anticipated that the new version of the PAF will be an evolution of the existing framework (rather than a completely new framework), with updates made to ensure it remains in line with the changes across the profession. The updated PAF will be used to inform selection into the Pre-registration/Foundation Trainee Pharmacist role, from 2022 onwards.

And Finally...

As we continue to weave our way through a pandemic that has fundamentally affected all aspects of our private and working lives, the spirit of collaboration and can-do attitude within the National Recruitment team and all internal and external partners continues unabated. Feedback is an essential component of our review cycle; please continue to get in touch with your comments and suggestions, and we look forward to providing another update in early 2022.



Once again, we are indebted to our national operations team, regional pharmacy leads and associated HEE teams, employers, schools of pharmacy, professional and representative bodies, evaluation teams and pharmacy students across three nations for the successful running of the Scheme. Thank you all!