

Information for preregistration trainees

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Pharmacist Support

working for pharmacists & their families

Introduction

This fact sheet gives information on a range of common enquiries we receive from preregistration trainee pharmacists.

Setting up preregistration training: the contract of employment

We suggest that you get a written copy of the contract of employment before your training begins and read it through carefully. Note you are entitled to a written statement of your main terms and conditions of employment within two months of starting work.

The contract sets out rights and responsibilities of the employer and employee. The rights set out in the contract are in addition to rights under law such as the right to paid holiday and the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, or gender reassignment.

Note that the contract of employment can give additional rights, for example, more paid holiday than the legal minimum, but it cannot take away or reduce legal rights.

On leaving employment employees are entitled to be paid any outstanding holiday pay and notice pay if applicable.

If you have queries about your contract of employment, Pharmacist Support may be able to help by referring you to a specialist Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) adviser. The Pharmacists Defence Association may also be able to help (see Employment problems section below).

No income before or after training programme

You may be without income, for example:-

- after the end of your university course and before you have started a training programme; or
- after your training programme has finished but before you start work; or
- if you fail your exams and are not working.

If you are available for work and actively seeking work, you may be entitled to receive jobseeker's allowance (JSA), but *you will have to be able to demonstrate that you are both available for work and actively seeking work*. You may also be entitled to housing benefit for help with rent and council tax benefit. If you are not a British citizen you may not be entitled to claim benefit

and we suggest you seek advice from a benefits adviser.

If you are entitled to benefit it will be payable from the point you start your claim so it is important to do this as quickly as possible. You can start a claim by ringing a 'contact centre'. Your local Jobcentre Plus office will be able to give you the correct telephone number.

Your local CAB can help with information on benefit entitlement and Pharmacist Support can also refer you to a specialist CAB adviser for free and confidential telephone or email advice.

Financial difficulties before, during and after preregistration training

Pharmacist Support may be able to provide financial assistance in the form of grants to preregistration trainees facing particular hardship. All applications for grants are considered on a case by case basis and will take into account income and outgoings as well as additional circumstances. We will also need to be sure that you have claimed any benefits to which you are entitled. Please contact us on 0800 168 2233 to find out more.

Problems with debts

Pharmacist Support can provide free and confidential advice from a Citizens Advice Bureau specialist debt adviser. The adviser can help with managing debt. For example, if you have multiple debts and are facing pressure from creditors, the adviser can help with negotiating with creditors and rescheduling payments.

Employment problems

You may be experiencing employment problems, for example, unauthorised deductions from your wages, disciplinary issues, bullying and/or harassment.

In this case you may find it helpful to contact the Pharmacists Defence Association (PDA) for advice and support.

The PDA offers free membership to preregistration trainees which includes legal defence insurance, professional indemnity insurance and trade union membership.

Contact the PDA at:

The Old Fire Station
69 Albion Street
Birmingham
B1 3EA
Tel: 0121 694 7000
Email: enquiry@the-pda.org
Web: www.the-pda.org

Pharmacist Support can also refer you to a Citizens Advice Bureau specialist employment adviser for free and confidential advice.

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) gives approval to pharmacies to carry out preregistration training. If you are experiencing problems such as bullying, harassment or discrimination, you may wish to contact the Preregistration Department prereg@pharmacyregulation.org or the Preregistration Training Facilitators (email: ptf@pharmacyregulation.org).

Problems with your training programme

If you are experiencing problems with your training programme, the GPhC suggests that you initially contact your preregistration tutor or preregistration manager (if different). There may also be regional training leads or teacher practitioners who are able to help. If you are still unable to resolve the issue, contact the GPhC Preregistration Department on 020 3365 3620 or prereg@pharmacyregulation.org who will discuss the case with you.

Stress

Listening Friends is a free and confidential listening service for people suffering from stress. It is staffed by pharmacists who are familiar with the particular pressures on those working in pharmacy.

In the past they have taken calls from preregistration trainees about many issues, for example, anxiety about the Registration exam, dealing with ill health or bereavement, difficult situations in the workplace.

Listening Friends can be contacted direct on: 0808 168 5133. A caller is asked to leave a name and contact telephone number on the voicemail service and a Listening Friend will ring back.

Illness

If you are ill and unable to work you may be paid by your employer for the first three days of absence but this will depend on whether this is part of your employment contract. After the first three days of absence, you may be entitled to

statutory sick pay (SSP). You may be entitled to claim benefit – Pharmacist Support can refer you for advice on benefit entitlement and may be able to help with some financial support.

If you are likely to be off work for more than one week, the Preregistration department ask that you contact them for further advice.

I need some help with an addiction problem

If you have an addiction problem – drug, alcohol, gambling or any other kind of dependency – or if you know of a friend or colleague with a problem, you can contact the Pharmacist Health Support Programme (PHSP) for advice. This service is completely confidential.

The PHSP can be contacted directly on:
0808 168 5132.

When do I have to start repaying my student loan?

Student loan repayments are due from the April following the end of your course. However, you will only be required to make repayments if you earn more than £15,000. If you are employed, repayments will be deducted from your salary. If you are self-employed, you are responsible for calculating and making your own repayments.

For further information on repayment of student loans, see the Education and Learning pages on the Direct Gov website:
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

The Registration exam

The GPhC Trainee Manual contains information about the *Registration Assessment*, including syllabus, guidance notes, frequently asked questions, resits and exam regulations. There is a copy of the manual in the preregistration section of the GPhC website (look for the information on *Training year* in the *Trainees* section):
<http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/>

Am I eligible for support from Pharmacist Support

Anyone who is a preregistration trainee is eligible for help from Pharmacist Support services. This includes someone who is undertaking their training year, someone who has finished their training prior to taking their exam and someone who has failed their exam, as long as they intend to resit the exam and have made arrangements with the GPhC in this respect.

Working in the UK

Overseas students who are not from an EEA country and who successfully complete their MPharm course and wish to apply for a preregistration training placement may need to apply for permission under the points-based system to allow them to work in the UK.

The UK Borders Agency website has information on the rules on working in the UK.

www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) has a wealth of information on its website on working in the UK, including answers to frequently asked questions and information sheets on the rules and applying to stay. If you cannot find the information you need, UKCISA also runs an advice line Mon-Fri from 1.00pm to 4.00pm.

Tel: 020 7107 9922 <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>