



Hospital VT Programme

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is vocational training?

Vocational training helps learners to acquire the practical knowledge and skills necessary for them to participate fully in their job role. The emphasis is on developing competence (*the ability to perform consistently to the required standard*) using authentic activities in the workplace (*rather than classroom activities*).

What is the purpose of the hospital vocational training (VT) programme?

The purpose of the VT programme is to provide structured work-based training and experience for junior hospital pharmacists, enabling them to deliver safe and effective pharmaceutical care.

Who can enrol on the hospital VT programme?

The VT programme is open to all junior pharmacists who are working as a hospital pharmacist in a trust in Northern Ireland.

What are the benefits of the hospital VT programme for individual pharmacists?

Completing the VT programme will gain pharmacists exemption from the first year of the Queen's Diploma and Masters Programme in Clinical Pharmacy. (*Exemptions may also be possible from other UK University Diploma/Masters programmes*).

The VT programme has been designed to help junior hospital pharmacists to achieve their NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) outline. The KSF is used for the annual development review of all health service staff, and may form the basis for revalidating health service staff in the future. The VT competencies have been linked to the Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists (GHP) KSF outline for Agenda for Change band 6 pharmacists, and the VT programme is compatible with the KSF Development Review Process. This means that VT pharmacists will automatically meet KSF requirements.

The VT programme will also help pharmacists to meet their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements. It is compatible with the CPD process, reflective practice is encouraged, and VT pharmacists are required to undertake a minimum of 40 hours of CPD to develop their underpinning knowledge during the programme.

What are the benefits of the hospital VT programme for hospital pharmacy?

The VT programme provides a framework which can be used to structure and target work-based training and experience for junior hospital pharmacists efficiently and effectively.

The VT programme covers the areas outlined in the Northern Ireland Clinical Pharmacy Standards. Pharmacy departments will have evidence that VT pharmacists are able to perform a broad range of tasks competently.

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How will the VT programme work?

The main focus of the VT programme will be on in-practice training and experiential learning in the workplace. VT pharmacists will develop a portfolio and undertake practice activities, which will help them to develop and demonstrate their competence in four different rotational areas. VT pharmacists will be supported by a workplace mentor throughout the programme, and local trainers will facilitate their learning as they rotate through each area. There will also be workshops and online courses for VT pharmacists, and a formal assessment process.

What will the in-practice training entail?

The in-practice training provides VT pharmacists with the opportunity to gain knowledge, skills and experience in the following four rotational areas:

- **Dispensary**
- **Technical services**
- **Clinical / medicines management**
- **Clinical effectiveness** (*medicines information, medicines governance, formularies and procurement*)

For each rotation there are a specified set of competencies and behavioural statements which will be used to plan, conduct and evaluate the VT pharmacist's in-practice training. There are also rotational practice activities which the VT pharmacist must complete, which will help them to develop and demonstrate their competence in the rotational competencies and behavioural statements. **(NB. VT pharmacists are expected to provide a minimum of 2-3 pieces of supporting evidence for each rotational competency and behavioural statement).**

How long will the VT pharmacist spend in each rotational area?

The workplace rotations are intended to be flexible to accommodate individual learning needs and service requirements. It is suggested that VT pharmacists spend between 3 and 6 months in each rotation to enable them to cover all the rotational competencies and practice activities. We have not been prescriptive about the duration of each rotation, so that the programme is flexible enough to accommodate the needs of the individual and the service. For example, experienced VT pharmacists moving into hospital practice from another area of pharmacy, such as community, may be able to demonstrate their competence in some rotations in a shorter time than a newly qualified pharmacist.

What competencies are used for the VT programme?

The VT competencies and behavioural statements have been derived from the pharmacy-specific General Level Framework (GLF) (www.codeg.org) and adapted for use in Northern Ireland. The GLF dovetails into the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), which is used for the annual development review of all health service staff, and may form the basis for revalidating health service staff in the future.

What practice activities will VT pharmacists undertake?

VT pharmacists will undertake the following practice activities during the course of the VT programme:

A. Dispensary rotation practice activities:
Final checking accuracy log - 200 items checked accurately <i>(covering the range of items normally dispensed in your pharmacy)</i>
Clinical screening accuracy log - 50 items clinically screened accurately <i>(covering the range of prescriptions normally dispensed in your pharmacy)</i>
Intervention records / medication incidents - a minimum of 20
CPD - a minimum of 10 hours <i>(demonstrating that you have developed relevant underpinning knowledge in the rotational area)</i>
B. Technical services rotation practice activities:
Dispensing accuracy log - 200 items dispensed accurately <i>(covering the range of items normally prepared in your unit)</i>
Final checking accuracy log - 200 items checked accurately <i>(covering the range of items normally prepared in your unit)</i>
Clinical screening accuracy log - 50 items clinically screened accurately <i>(covering the range of prescriptions normally prepared in your unit)</i>
Intervention records / medication incidents - a minimum of 20
CPD - a minimum of 10 hours <i>(demonstrating that you have developed relevant underpinning knowledge in the rotational area)</i>
C. Clinical / medicines management rotation practice activities:
Accompanied ward visits - 5 <i>(minimum one surgical and one medical)</i>
Pharmaceutical care plans – 12
Oral case presentations – 2 <i>(one surgical and one medical)</i>
Significant intervention records (grade 4-6) - a minimum of 20
CPD - a minimum of 10 hours <i>(demonstrating that you have developed relevant underpinning knowledge in the rotational area)</i>
D. Clinical effectiveness rotation practice activities:
MiCAL/UKMi workbook - completion of relevant sections
MI queries answered satisfactorily - 20 <i>(covering a range of queries)</i>
Risk assessment report, or a critical incident reflective record
Procurement report or reflective record
Audit presentation
CPD - a minimum of 10 hours <i>(demonstrating that you have developed relevant underpinning knowledge in the rotational area)</i>

Further information for VT pharmacists, trainers and mentors, including downloadable forms, are available at www.nicpld.org.

What workshops will there be for VT pharmacists?

The following NICPLD workshops support the VT programme:

W1	▪ Introduction to hospital pharmacy & VT Programme
W2	▪ Case notes in clinical pharmacy
W3	▪ Clinical Lab Tests
W4	▪ Haematology
W5	▪ Teamwork & effective communication
W6	▪ Time management & prioritisation

VT pharmacists are encouraged to attend these workshops, as they are designed to help them to cover the VT competencies and behavioural statements. They may also wish to attend additional workshops and training events to address their individual learning needs.

What online courses will there be for VT pharmacists?

The following NICPLD online courses support the VT programme:

- Aseptic Dispensing (eAD)
- Medicines Governance (eMG)
- Controlled Drugs in Clinical Practice (eCD)
- The Responsible Pharmacist (eRP)

These courses can be accessed via the NICPLD website, www.nicpld.org. VT pharmacists may also wish to undertake additional online and print-based distance learning courses to address their individual learning needs.

What assessments will there be for VT pharmacists?

There are two types of assessment associated with the VT programme:

- **Formative** assessments (*to aid the VT pharmacist's development*)
- **Summative** assessments (*to check that the VT pharmacist has met the required standard*)

At the start of each rotation, the workplace mentor will use the rotational competencies and behavioural statements to carry out a formative assessment, which will help the VT pharmacist to identify their learning needs and to develop a Personal Development Plan (PDP) for that area. They will meet regularly with the VT pharmacist to monitor their progress.

At the end of each rotation, the workplace mentor will use the rotational competencies and behavioural statements to carry out a summative assessment. For each rotational competency and behavioural statement, they will check that the VT pharmacist has met the required standard and has provided a minimum of 2-3 pieces of supporting evidence.

When the VT pharmacist has successfully completed all four rotations, they will have an external summative assessment. They will be asked to submit their portfolio to the Northern Ireland Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) for verification purposes, and to attend an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) assessment.

What happens on successful completion of the VT programme?

On successful completion of both parts of the external VT assessment process (portfolio and OSCE assessment), the VT pharmacist will be issued with a Certificate of Completion. This certificate will enable them to progress onto the Queen's University Diploma/MSc in Advanced Pharmacy Practice (with Independent Prescribing) programme. Exemptions may also be possible from other UK University Diploma/Masters programmes.

How long will it take the VT pharmacist to complete the full VT programme?

The full VT programme is intended to take two academic years (approximately 20 months) to complete. This will depend on the individual and the needs of the service, and some VT pharmacists will take longer than this. There may also be some VT pharmacists coming from other areas of pharmacy, such as community, who already have experience and evidence of competence in some aspects who may complete the programme in a shorter time. This will be dealt with on an individual basis.

How can junior pharmacists enrol on the hospital VT programme?

Junior pharmacists wishing to enrol on the hospital VT programme must complete and submit an application form (available at www.nicpld.org). The application form must also be signed by their designated workplace mentor and Trust Pharmacy Manager.

Who can be a workplace mentor for the hospital VT programme?

The workplace mentor should be a pharmacist with experience in supporting and assessing trainees, who is competent to take on the role of VT mentor. The workplace mentor must sign the VT pharmacist's application form to indicate that they will support and assess that pharmacist on the VT programme. The application form must also be signed by the Trust Pharmacy Manager.

What is the role of the workplace mentor for the hospital VT programme?

The VT mentor will have a supportive role, and will be involved in facilitating the VT pharmacist's learning and assessing their development. They will do this by:

- helping the VT pharmacist to identify their development needs
- supporting, advising and encouraging the VT pharmacist during their training
- undertaking
 - I. formative assessments (*to monitor and review the VT pharmacist's progress*)
 - II. summative assessments (*to check that the VT pharmacist has met the required standards*)

VT mentors will not be expected to observe the VT pharmacist's practice on a day-to-day basis; they will be aided by local trainers in this. A checklist for VT mentors is available at www.nicpld.org.

Who can be a workplace trainer for the hospital VT programme?

The workplace trainer should be a specialist in the rotational area, who is able to support the VT pharmacist's training and development and observe their practice on a day-to-day basis.

What is the role of the workplace trainer for the hospital VT programme?

The role of the VT trainer will be to identify the VT pharmacist's training needs for the rotation, then plan, conduct and evaluate their training. They will also be responsible for signing off their rotational practice activities. A checklist for VT trainers is available at www.nicpld.org.