

**What is the purpose of the ACPT programme?**

The ACPT programme offered by NICPLD conforms to a national framework and the accreditation is recognised across the United Kingdom in both primary and secondary care sectors.

It provides pharmacy technicians with the skills and knowledge to confirm the dispensing accuracy of any prescription that has been clinically screened/approved by a registered pharmacist. It also develops the technician's professional awareness of pharmacy practice, communication skills and professional interactions thereby supporting appropriate skill-mix within pharmacy departments.

**What are the benefits of the ACPT programme to individuals?**

During the course of the programme individuals will develop a range of skills including checking accuracy skills, effective communication skills, and team working skills. It is also recognised as relevant continuing professional development for pharmacy technicians.

**What are the benefits of the ACPT programme within the practice setting?**

The ACPT programme supports the role of the pharmacist by allowing pharmacy technicians to take over the final accuracy check, thereby allowing the pharmacist more time to focus on their clinical role. It creates a career structure for pharmacy technicians in the community and hospital settings and motivates others to aspire to the checking role of the qualified pharmacy technician.

**Who can enrol on the ACPT programme?**

All pharmacy technicians interested in applying for the programme are required to meet the following criteria:

- candidate is a qualified pharmacy technician
- candidate must be registered with NICPLD
- candidate must have at least two years' experience as a qualified pharmacy technician working in NI
- candidate has a minimum of six months dispensing experience within the twelve months prior to commencing this programme
- candidate must have demonstrated their ability to dispense accurately according to locally agreed Standard Operating Procedures
- candidate has identified a designated mentor who meets the mentor criteria and has supported their application.

#### **How long will it take to complete the ACPT programme?**

This will depend on the individual pharmacy technician. The minimum completion period is three months (twelve weeks) as individuals need to demonstrate that they can consistently work within the procedures at their work-base and the ACPT framework. The programme must be completed within a twelve month time frame.

#### **How do I apply?**

To apply you should go online and download an application form from the NICPLD website. The application form must state the name of a mentor who will support you through the programme and must be endorsed by your employer/manager. Completed application forms must be received by NICPLD by the closing date.

#### **What does the ACPT programme entail?**

The ACPT programme consists of a number of elements:

- pre – course work (all candidates are required to submit a dispensing log of 200 items to demonstrate their ability to work within SOPs) and complete a learning agreement
- attendance at a two-day workshop
- practice activity – development of portfolio of evidence
- final assessment
- probation
- certification

#### **How do I complete the pre-course work?**

The ACPT section of the NICPLD website has a dispensing log form (13 ACPT 1 part b)) which should be downloaded and used to record the required evidence of 200 items which have been dispensed by you and are 100% accurate. This dispensing log must be sent to NICPLD at least one week before the ACPT workshop date.

The learning agreement (13 ACPT admin 1) should be downloaded, read and signed by the candidate and the mentor and brought to the workshop to be signed by a NICPLD representative. This is to ensure that all parties are aware of the commitment required to complete the programme.

#### **What information will be covered in the workshop?**

Following this two day workshop candidates will be able to:

- describe the legal requirements for dispensing of medicines and medicinal products,
- state the laws and guidance relating to the dispensing of medicines and medicinal products,
- discuss the legal and ethical implications of technician checking,
- describe the consequences of dispensing/checking errors,
- realise the importance of SOPs for safe and effective practice,

- demonstrate the communication skills required in the process of final accuracy checking,
- explain the necessity of referral to colleagues in the final accuracy check, and
- perform the final accuracy check of dispensed items which must have been clinically screened/approved by a pharmacist and annotated according to local procedure.

#### **What is the practice activity?**

Each pharmacy technician undertaking the ACPT programme must complete a range of practice activities, including a log of 1000 items which have been double checked. For full details relating to the practice activities please see the programme booklet.

#### **What does the final assessment consist of?**

The final assessment is a three-fold process:

- The ACPT test – the candidate must check a total of twenty dispensed items and identify all errors.
- Portfolio review – the candidate's portfolio is reviewed by the NICPLD panel and, if all the required criteria are met, the candidate may proceed to the final interview.
- Final interview with the NICPLD panel - requires each candidate to reflect on their journey through the ACPT programme.

#### **What happens if I miss an error during the ACPT test?**

The candidate is required to complete a further log of 100 items that must be double checked. The candidate then needs to re-apply for their second attempt at final assessment. Candidates have a maximum of two attempts at the final assessment.

#### **What is probation?**

Probation is the final required element of the ACPT programme. Following successful completion of the final assessment, all candidates are required to continue to get double checks for a period of two weeks or ten working days (depending on the number of hours usually worked by the candidate).

Double checks are required on all items at the start of probation, and then the frequency of double checks should decrease. By the end of the two week period the candidate should have random checks carried out on their work but ask every time if the pharmacist or ACPT wants to double check the dispensed item.

During the probation period, no errors are permitted.

**What happens if an error is missed by the candidate during probation?**

If an error is discovered, which has been missed by the candidate during their final check, the candidate is required to re-start their probation period so that they complete a full ten days of accuracy checking with no errors. If the candidate misses further errors their mentor should contact NICPLD.

**What happens when I complete the programme?**

Successful candidates will receive a certificate of completion which will list the competency areas in which the pharmacy technician may accuracy check.

**What happens after I am accredited? Post accreditation**

In order to maintain the ACPT competencies all ACPTs are required to:

- work a minimum of two hours weekly as an ACPT to maintain their competency
- work within the National Framework ie.:
  - ensure that the prescription has been previously clinically screened/ approved and annotated by a pharmacist
  - only perform the final accuracy check if not involved with any part of the dispensing of the product
  - check items within the range of their current competencies
- maintain a log of discovered errors which will be used as part of the review process when they require re-accreditation.

**My accreditation expires soon, how do I reaccredit?**

All ACPTs seeking to be re-accredited must complete the following:

- maintain an on-going log of any errors identified and document these according to their department error recording policy (13 ACPT 10)
- reflect on any errors made and record a reflection. These reflections should be reviewed periodically by the mentor to ensure they are within Trust error reporting limits (13 ACPT 12)
- provide documentation to confirm the opportunity to work within the scope of the role on a regular basis, defined as at least two hours weekly (13 ACPT 11)
- provide evidence of an appraisal which has reviewed their role over the last two years and includes a summary of performance by a senior manager (13 ACPT 11).
- The ACPT, the mentor and the senior manager must sign and date the re-accreditation document
- Post all original documentation to NICPLD before expiry of your current certificate.

### What happens if I am not working as an ACPT for a period of time?

If a pharmacy technician is unable to work as an ACPT for a minimum of two hours per week on a regular basis. It is recommended that before re-commencing the checking role they undertake a review of the SOPs and re-familiarise themselves with the role.

If the pharmacy technician is absent from this role for a longer period of time, it is recommended that they undertake the minimum quantity of accuracy checks which are double checked by a pharmacist or a valid ACPT as described in the table below. All accuracy checks must be endorsed by their mentor. A record of return to the role should also be recorded (13 ACPT 11) and forwarded to NICPLD.

<i>Period of absence</i>	<i>Required quantity of double checks</i>
< 6 months	log of 100 items
6 – 12 months	log of 200 items
12 – 18 months	Log of 300 items
18 - <24 months	Log of 500 items
≥ 24 months	Must restart the accreditation

### What happens if I move from one Trust or Community Pharmacy to another?

Prior to a ACPT moving from one Trust to another it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure their certificate is valid, i.e. current, and authentic and lists the competencies that the ACPT is currently checking.

When an ACPT moves to another Trust they should be allowed a period of time to become familiar with the SOPs and to demonstrate competence should collate a log of approximately 200 items within the same competency ranges listed on their certificate.

The ACPT should inform NICPLD to allow updating of records.