
Minimum 450 hours practice

Keeping the standard high

Pharmacists must have practised for a minimum of 450 hours over the previous three years in order to be issued with an unconditional annual practising certificate for 2017-2018.

The Pharmacy Council (Council) has introduced this new standard to increase assurance that a pharmacist's competence and safety are not compromised by reduced hours of practice. The standard is in line with those of other national and international health regulatory authorities. When working fewer than 450 hours in three years, risks may increase as a result of reduced interaction with patients, practising in many settings, changing work roles, insufficient continuing professional development or time away from New Zealand pharmacy practice.

Beginning in 2017, Council will ask pharmacists to declare on their annual practising certificate renewal applications whether they have worked more than 450 hours over the previous three years. Council's audit processes will verify these declarations for pharmacists who have been registered in the Pharmacist scope of practice for three years or more.

Council is mindful that individual circumstances will vary for pharmacists who do not meet the new standard. In order that Council can consider these circumstances, a pharmacist who declares they have **not met** the 450 hour requirement will be asked to provide information about their practice over the three years and their plans for practising in the next 12 months. Council will provide a framework to assist pharmacists to provide this information, and to guide their reflection on which additional actions would be reasonable to assure public safety. The framework will include consideration of:

- time away from practice
- recency of practice
- type of work
- relevant experience while overseas
- professional development activities completed.

Create a plan

Council will also ask pharmacists to propose a plan to ensure their competence is maintained and public safety is protected during the period in which they return to a workload commensurate with an average of 150 hours per year.

The Registrar will consider the information provided, along with the pharmacist's plan for maintaining competence, and may place a condition on the pharmacist's annual practising certificate to provide further assurance that the pharmacist remains competent to practise. In some circumstances the Registrar may decide that a condition is not necessary, based on a pharmacist's practice arrangements.

The following examples of pharmacists practising fewer than 450 hours show that different levels of assurance are appropriate in different circumstances.

- **Pharmacist A** worked 40 hours per week for two months in an urban pharmacy in mid-2014. He completed his CPD requirements for 2014 then moved to the non-practising register in 2015 in order to travel and undertake voluntary (non-pharmacy) work overseas. He has recently returned to New Zealand and applied to return to practice from April 2017, full time, in a provincial community pharmacy. He will be expected to work sole-charge for two days a week and is one of two pharmacists in the pharmacy for the other three days a week.

Pharmacist A recognises that his lack of recent practice in New Zealand, his return to working full time after a long break, his responsibility as sole pharmacist for two days a week and the move from urban to provincial, create a need for greater assurance of his competence and safety as he settles into his new role. He submits a plan to Council for working in association with an experienced pharmacist for several weeks, and negotiates the necessary employment arrangements to bring this about. The Registrar considers this to be reasonable, and places a condition of working in association for four weeks, full time, on his practising certificate.

- **Pharmacist B** practised 10 hours a week for 40 weeks over the last three years, 30 of those weeks being in the last year. She has completed all the required CPD each year and has recorded it on ENHANCE. Over the upcoming 12 months she intends to work a minimum of 20 hours per week for at least the next six months in the same pharmacy as before, doing similar work. She will continue working with the same senior pharmacist as she has done for the past three years.

Pharmacist B is likely to be retaining competence through consistent practice in a familiar environment and continuing to work with the same senior pharmacist. Her plan includes ensuring that after a break of four or more weeks from work she works in association with an experienced pharmacist for at least two weeks. The Registrar may be satisfied with this voluntary undertaking and decide not to impose a condition on her practising certificate.