

Register as a pharmacist in New Zealand

Information booklet for overseas pharmacists who wish to apply for registration via the Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualifications Route (Non-REQR)*

**This route is for pharmacists
who DO NOT have an initial pharmacy qualification from
Australia, Canada, Ireland, the UK or the USA*

Contact us at:

Email: enquiries@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

Website: <http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.nz/>

Courier Address: Pharmacy Council of New Zealand
Level 8, Kordia House
109/125 Willis Street
Wellington 601
New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

The Pharmacy Council is a regulator of pharmacists and was established under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (HPCAA) 2003. It is essential to ensuring high standards of competence in pharmacists and ensuring public wellbeing through safe and effective pharmacist practice.

The New Zealand health system has a strong focus on primary health care and clinical pharmacy. The Pharmacy Council assists overseas trained pharmacists through an assessment process towards registration to enable them to practise in this environment.

The practice of pharmacy is necessarily broad and is wider than pharmacists working directly with patients, given that such roles influence clinical practice and public safety. In a clinical role, the pharmacist acts as a medicines' manager, providing patient-centred medication therapy management, health improvement and disease prevention services, usually in a collaborative environment. Pharmacists ensure safe and quality use of medicines and optimise health outcomes by contributing to patient assessment and to the selection, prescribing, monitoring and evaluation of medicine therapy.

It is a legal requirement under the HPCAA for all **practising** pharmacists, including intern pharmacists, to be both **registered** with the Pharmacy Council and hold a current **annual practising certificate**.

NOTE: Practising without meeting this legal requirement is an offence.

The pharmacy profession in New Zealand includes pharmacists, pharmacist prescribers, intern pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and retail pharmacy assistants. Pharmacists work in community or hospital pharmacy as an integral part of the healthcare team, or they work in specialised roles such as education, research or the pharmaceutical industry.

Pharmacy technicians and retail pharmacy assistants are not covered in the regulatory function of the Pharmacy Council. A specific course must be completed to qualify as a pharmacy technician. Please see the [Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand](#) (PSNZ) website for further information and contact details.

Not all industrial pharmacist roles require an applicant to hold registration as a pharmacist. Please confirm requirements with individual employers. If you are still unsure please contact the [Practice Advisor](#) to discuss your situation.

INITIAL ENQUIRIES AND STARTING THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

For initial enquiries, please contact the Registrations Officer:

Telephone: +64 4 495 0901

Email: enquiries@pharmacycouncil.org.nz

To start the registration process, please send your [application for initial consideration for registration](#) and supporting documentation, by courier to the following address:

**The Registrations Officer
Pharmacy Council
Level 8, Kordia House
109/125 Willis Street
Wellington 6011
New Zealand**

SUMMARY OF THE NON-REQR PROCESS

STEP 1 – Application for initial consideration

You must submit documentation which meets the set requirements for you to continue with the registration process. This includes (but is not limited to) evidence of your primary qualification, evidence of your current registration status, references from professional colleagues and an acceptable standard in an English language assessment.

STEP 2 - Knowledge assessment of pharmaceutical sciences (KAPS) exam

You must demonstrate you have the knowledge and skills deemed equivalent to the New Zealand Bachelor of Pharmacy (BPharm) degree by passing the KAPS exam. It consists of two papers of multiple-choice questions covering pharmaceutical chemistry, pharmacology and physiology, pharmaceuticals and therapeutics.

STEP 3 - New Zealand pharmacy legislation course

Understanding New Zealand pharmacy legislation and the ethical framework underpinning the code of ethics, as they relate to pharmacy practice, forms the basis of knowledge and application of law and ethics. You are required to successfully complete the Pharmacy Council approved law and ethics course, "*New Zealand Pharmacy Legislation*," which is provided by the school of pharmacy at the University of Auckland.

STEP 4 – Intern registration and supervised practice

Once you have met the first three steps of the non-REQR process, you will be eligible to register as an intern pharmacist and enter the EVOLVE intern programme. When you have completed the EVOLVE programme you will attend a Council assessment which is the final assessment for intern pharmacists.

You may apply for registration as a pharmacist when ALL the above steps have been successfully completed.

PLEASE NOTE

Each step in this process must be completed in order.

The Pharmacy Council reserves the right to decline your application at any stage in the process.

STEP 1 - APPLICATION FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION

Time Limit: 3 Months

From the date your application for initial consideration is received at the Pharmacy Council, and the payment is processed, you have **3 months** to provide all the documents required to complete step 1. If the time limit is exceeded, a further fee may be charged.

Please read the **Supplementary Information** on page 9 of this booklet.

If your original documents are not in English, you must obtain an officially certified English translation. All documents must be supported by a statutory declaration to the effect that they are genuine and relate to you.

1. The following documents must be received in hard copy from the applicant:
 - 1.1 Completed [application for initial consideration for registration](#) as a pharmacist.
 - 1.2 Two passport photos - certified
 - 1.3 [Application fee](#) - the fee for initial consideration is non-refundable and will be processed when your application is received by Pharmacy Council.
 - 1.4 Curriculum vitae (CV) including your personal details, qualifications, work history and experience, achievements etc.
 - 1.5 Proof of identification - certified copy of the details page of your passport (including the photo).
 - 1.6 Evidence of your change of name (if applicable) - please ensure that all certified documents are signed by the same person.
 - 1.7 Evidence of your application to register as a pharmacist in any other country and the outcome of your application if unsuccessful (if applicable).
 - 1.8 Disclosures of a health matter or conviction, and/or details of any professional conduct issues (if applicable).

2. The following documents must be received in hard copy **DIRECTLY** from the specified authority(s):
 - 2.1 Confirmation of completion of your initial pharmacy degree and a copy of your academic record (degree transcript). The university must send these directly to the Pharmacy Council.
 - **Note:** a 2-year qualification in pharmacy does not meet the qualification requirement for registration. Applicants who graduated after 1 January 2006 must have completed at least a 4-year degree.
 - 2.2 Certificate(s) of current and past registration. Each authority where you have been registered or licensed must send a certificate directly to the Pharmacy Council.
 - **Note:** You must maintain registration with your current authority until you are granted registration in New Zealand.
 - 2.3 Statement(s) of good standing. Each authority where you have been registered or licensed must provide a statement directly to the Pharmacy Council.
 - **Note:** The date of issue must be within six months of the date of your application.

3. References / Verification of Employment

Two references are required to verify your recent post registration clinical practice. Each one must be from an employer or manager (or a registered health professional who has worked closely with you) who can confirm that you have worked in a pharmacy situation, where you have had direct contact with patients. This must have been for at least 12 months within the past five years.

Referees must hand write the references themselves on the [verification of employment form](#) and attach a copy of their business card.

4. English Language

Clear communication with members of the public and other health professional is essential for safe pharmacist practice. Therefore, you must satisfy the Pharmacy Council that you can communicate effectively in English. This can be done by submitting either a recent IELTS or OET test result (no older than **two** years), which demonstrates your competence in English language.

- 4.1 [IELTS](#) - A minimum score of **7.0** in **each** of the four bands (listening, reading, writing and speaking) with a minimum overall band score of **7.5** in the **Academic** category, is required.
- The results must be achieved at **ONE** sitting of the test only.
 - Arrange for the Test Centre to send your results **DIRECTLY** to the Pharmacy Council
- 4.2 [OET](#) - An **A** or **B** score in **each** of the four bands (listening, reading, writing and speaking) is required.
- The results do not need to be achieved at one sitting.
 - You send your own results to the Pharmacy Council where they will be verified against OET records.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Your complete application for initial consideration (including all supporting documents) will be assessed and authenticated by the Pharmacy Council and you will be advised of the outcome. This can take several weeks.

If you meet ALL the step 1 requirements, you will be invited to proceed to step 2.

If you are unable to meet ALL the requirements of step 1, it is likely that your application for initial consideration will be declined.

STEP 2 - KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT OF PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES (KAPS) EXAM

You must successfully meet the requirements of step 1 to be eligible to attend the KAPS exam (step 2).

Time limit: There is no set time limit to pass the KAPS exam. But the Pharmacy Council has an expectation that you will sit the exam within a realistic timeframe (eg within 2 years). The documentation you submit to meet the step 1 requirements confirms your pharmacist practice overseas. While your work history is current and recent you are encouraged to make progress in your path to registration in New Zealand.

General information

The KAPS exam is computer-based, in a multiple-choice question (MCQ) format. It is designed to test your knowledge of basic pharmaceutical sciences related to present day pharmacy practice. The exam consists of two papers of 100 questions each, covering both theory and practice. Each paper is two hours long, and both are held on the same day.

The KAPS exam is delivered by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC), who will process all exam applications, liaise with candidates on administrative details, and advise candidates of their results.

For more detailed information on the KAPS exam, please visit the [APC website](#)

Pass mark

The overall pass mark for the KAPS exam is 50% in Paper 1 and 50% in Paper 2. In addition, candidates must pass each of the sub-sections in Paper 1 and Paper 2.

Number of attempts and Validity

Candidates are allowed **two** attempts to pass the KAPS exam. A subsequent attempt may be allowed at the discretion of the Registrar. Both papers must be passed within a two-year period.

A KAPS result remains valid for **two** years. This may only be extended at the discretion of the Registrar.

PLEASE NOTE

After you have passed KAPS a maximum of two years is allowed, to:

- **complete the pharmacy legislation course (step 3) AND**
- **register as an intern pharmacist and commence the EVOLVE intern programme (step 4).**

STEP 3 - NEW ZEALAND PHARMACY LEGISLATION COURSE

You must have successfully passed both papers of the KAPS exam (step 2) to be eligible to enrol in the online course, New Zealand Pharmacy Legislation (step 3).

Course Information

The [New Zealand Pharmacy Legislation](#) course is run twice a year - February and August - and applications to enrol, and payment are made directly to Auckland University. We will provide further information when you are eligible for step 3.

Course content

The course will be delivered through 10 modules over 10 weeks, with revision and assessment in weeks 11 and 12. These modules will cover legal, ethical and professional obligations in areas such as:

- Regulating Medicines
- Labelling and Compounding Medicines
- Prescribing Medicines
- Dispensing Medicines
- Selling Medicines over the Internet
- Regulating Health Professionals and Pharmacists
- Pharmacy Ownership
- Controlled Drugs
- Privacy
- Consumer Guarantees and Advertising

The modules will introduce pharmacists to why regulations for medicines exist and what protections they afford. They will also provide opportunities to explore the legal, ethical and professional obligations in situations reflecting practice. Each of the modules will draw upon and focus on three overarching themes: medicines, the pharmacist and the patient.

STEP 4 – INTERN REGISTRATION & SUPERVISED PRACTICE

You must have successfully passed the New Zealand Pharmacy Legislation course (step 3) to be eligible to register as an intern pharmacist and enrol in the EVOLVE Intern Training Programme (step 4).

Registration as an intern pharmacist

Before practising as an intern pharmacist, you will need to:

- be registered by the Pharmacy Council in the intern pharmacist scope of practice, and
- be issued with an annual practising certificate (APC).

We will provide further information when you are eligible for step 4.

EVOLVE intern programme

When you are an intern pharmacist you will need to enrol in the [EVOLVE Intern Training Programme](#). You will be working full time, with a preceptor pharmacist in a community or hospital pharmacy, to develop your competence and confidence in New Zealand practice. The programme commences on 1 February each year and runs for a minimum period of 37 weeks.

Programme fees are payable to the Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand Inc (PSNZ).

Assessment centre

The final assessment will be when you have completed the EVOLVE Intern Training Programme. Assessment centre is an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), to assess your ability to apply your pharmacy knowledge.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

When ALL the steps in the non-REQR process have been completed you will be eligible to apply for registration as a pharmacist.

SUMMARY OF COSTS

	Fees*
Step 1: Application for Initial Consideration for Registration as a Pharmacist NB: Fee payable to Pharmacy Council (non-refundable)	NZ \$690.00
Step 2: Knowledge Assessment of Pharmaceutical Sciences (KAPS) exam – per attempt NB: Fee payable to Australian Pharmacy Council	A \$2,110.00
Step 3: New Zealand Pharmacy Legislation course NB: Fee payable to Auckland University.	NZ \$2,400.00
Step 4: Registration as an intern pharmacist NB: Fee payable to Pharmacy Council (non-refundable)	NZ \$690.00
Step 4: EVOLVE Intern Training Programme NB: Fee payable to PSNZ	NZ \$4,400.00

* the fees specified are approximate, and are subject to change without notice

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR YOUR APPLICATION FOR INITIAL CONSIDERATION

- a) This information booklet explains the process for registration as outlined in the Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualification Route (Non-REQR) for Registration Policy
- b) The Pharmacy Council reserves the right to decline an application at any stage in the process.
- c) A **certified copy** is a photocopy of the original document that has been certified as a true copy. In New Zealand this can be by a JP, Solicitor or NZ Court Registrar. A statutory declaration must be signed by the same person who certifies your documentation.

The following extract from the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957 (s.11) explains who can make a statutory declaration or certify documents outside of New Zealand:

1. **A declaration made in a Commonwealth country** other than New Zealand shall be made before a Judge, a Commissioner of Oaths, a notary public, a Justice of the Peace, or any person authorised by the law of that country to administer an oath there for the purpose of a judicial proceeding, or before a Commonwealth representative, or before a solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.
2. **A declaration made in a country other than a Commonwealth country** shall be made before a Commonwealth representative, or before a Judge, or before a notary public, or before a solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.
3. Any document purporting to have affixed, impressed, or subscribed thereon or thereto the seal or signature of any person authorised by this section to take a declaration shall be admitted in evidence without proof of the seal or signature being the seal or signature of that person or of the official or other character of that person.

- d) Only **original copies** of applications for initial consideration, sent by mail or courier, will be accepted.
- e) **Identification:** Select the ethnicity you identify most with from the list below:

New Zealand European/Pakeha	Niuean	Indian
New Zealand Maori	Tokelauan	Other Asian
Other European	Fijian	Middle Eastern
Samoan	Other Pacific Island Groups	Latin American/Hispanic
Cook Island Maori	South East Asian	African (or cultural group of African origin)
Tongan	Chinese	Other

- f) **Disclosures:**

Under Section 16 of the HPCAA, disclosure of information concerning competence and fitness to practise is required to enable the Council to carry out its principal purpose of 'protecting the health and safety of members of the public'

It is in your interest to disclose anything which may affect your future registration as an intern. Please download a [disclosure form](#) from our website and forward it with your application in an envelope marked "Confidential to the Registrar".

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I have a 2-year Diploma in Pharmacy and have done a six-month internship; can I apply for registration?

A: No. This does not meet the qualification requirement for initial consideration for registration.

Q: I am a pharmacist from an EU country, and I am now registered in the UK, which registration process do I apply for?

A: If you gained registration in the UK through the EU mutual recognition agreement, then you apply under the Non-REQR process. However, if you gained registration in the UK through the OSPAP programme, then you can apply under the [REQR process](#).

Q: I have my registration certificate and academic record with me, will it be acceptable if I send these to you?

A: No. Confirmation of your registration and good standing must be sent DIRECTLY to the Pharmacy Council by your registration authority(s). Confirmation of completion of your pharmacy degree and a copy of your academic record (degree transcript) must also be sent DIRECTLY to the Pharmacy Council by your university.

Q: I have passed the TOEFL exam. Will you accept this in lieu of the IELTS?

A: The Pharmacy Council does not recognise the TOEFL or PTE English language tests. You must pass either the IELTS or the OET.

Q: Why has the Pharmacy Council set the IELTS requirements at a minimum of 7.0 for each of the four bands and 7.5 overall?

A: The Pharmacy Council, together with most of the other health regulatory bodies in New Zealand, has to be assured that an intern pharmacist has reached a level of English to be able to communicate effectively and safely with their preceptor, other health professionals and members of the public (as per sections 16(a) and (b) of the HPCAA).

Q: What work experience must I have to be considered for registration?

A: You must have recent clinical (community or hospital pharmacy only) work experience. This means you have worked for at least 12 months' continuously as a registered pharmacist (unsupervised), within the last five years.

Q: After completing Step 1, is there a time limit in which I have to pass the KAPS exam?

A: No. There is not a set time limit to pass the KAPS exam, but the Pharmacy Council has an expectation that you will pass the KAPS exam within a realistic timeframe (eg within two years)

Q: I failed KAPS on my first attempt; how many times can I sit the KAPS exam?

A: You are allowed two attempts to pass the KAPS exam, and both papers must be passed within a two-year period.

Q: If I have passed the KAPS exam as part of the registration process in Australia, do I have to sit it again if I want to register in New Zealand?

A: No. However, to pursue registration in New Zealand, you will need to start the non-REQR process and meet the step 1 requirements. When your application has been accepted the Pharmacy Council will verify your KAPS result (step 2) with the Australian Pharmacy Council.

Q: Do I have to wait until I am registered as an intern pharmacist (step 4) before I can begin working in a dispensary in New Zealand?

A: No. Once you have completed step 1 of the registration process you are considered by the Pharmacy Council to be 'actively seeking registration in NZ'. From this time, you become eligible to work in the capacity of a pharmacy graduate and can dispense medicines (including

compounding) under direct supervision. However, the Pharmacy Council expects you to make progress and sit the KAPS exam within a realistic time (ie 2 years). It is not acceptable to work as a pharmacy graduate indefinitely without making any attempt to sit the KAPS exam, as this does not constitute “actively seeking” registration.

Q: I have been offered a job as a pharmacy technician, not a pharmacy graduate, is this ok?

A: No. The roles carried out by a pharmacy graduate are similar to those of a trainee technician, however, the purpose of carrying out those roles is different:

- A pharmacy graduate can dispense medicines (including compounding) under direct supervision, only if he/she is actively seeking registration as a pharmacist.
- A trainee technician is enrolled in, and actively progressing through a course to qualify as a pharmacy technician and is therefore carrying out these pharmacy roles as part of the training. If you are not enrolled in a technician training course, you cannot call yourself a trainee technician.

Q: Will the Pharmacy Council find me a pharmacy to do my internship (step 4)?

A: No. It is your responsibility to find an intern site but the following links may help you:

Website addresses for employment agencies that assist pharmacists to find work:

[NZ Pharmacy Employment Ltd](#)

[Medlink International Recruitment Centre Ltd](#)

A list of [public hospitals](#) in New Zealand:

Websites which advertise pharmacy jobs in New Zealand:

[Trade Me Jobs](#)

[NZ Hospital Pharmacists' Association](#)

As another suggestion, you could search for all the pharmacies in a particular area using the Search Facility of the [White Pages](#) telephone directory. In the 'Who' box type the word "pharmacy" and in the 'Where' box type for example "Christchurch" (or you could refine your search by typing in an area of Christchurch such as "Riccarton") and click on the find button. This will list all the pharmacies in the area with their contact details.

Q: What visa do I need when I begin working?

A: You must be legally entitled to work in New Zealand. At all times, it is your responsibility to ensure you have the necessary residency or work permits. Contact [Immigration New Zealand](#) to make visa enquires, or to clarify of your situation.

Q: Once I am registered as a pharmacist, are there ongoing requirements for continued registration.

A: Ongoing requirements for pharmacist registration can be found on [our website](#).

