

## Recertification Framework for Practising Pharmacists

The Health Practitioner Competence Assurance Act 2003 states that for the purpose of ensuring pharmacist competence the Pharmacy Council may set a recertification programme.

This document is a pre-publication draft of the recertification framework to be implemented during 2021. It is provided so that pharmacists can provide feedback to the Pharmacy Council (the Council) on the framework. A feedback survey will be made available to pharmacists in June/July 2020. Paragraphs are numbered for easy reference.

Implementation date for this framework is 1 April 2021<sup>1</sup>.

Please be aware that the framework may be amended before final publication.

### The Framework

1. The Framework comprises
  - general information about the purpose of the framework and Council's approach to setting requirements,
  - roles of pharmacists and Council
  - annual recertification requirements and reasons for inclusion of each.
2. Council is confident the vast majority of New Zealand pharmacists practise competently and safely and also that each pharmacist would be comfortable making an annual declaration to Council that they are competent for their role. However, Council's confidence and pharmacists' self-declarations are not enough. Evidence is needed of the actions pharmacists take to remain competent and, where possible, even evidence of competence itself. The public must have confidence in the evidence.
3. Each year Council will ask you to complete activities that have a positive impact on your competence for your workplace role. We understand your time is precious and that there is no point in unnecessary duplication, so it will be fine for one action to satisfy more than one of the requirements as long as it meets the criteria; it will also be fine to meet a Council requirement through a recent action that was undertaken for another purpose; for example, training required by an employer.

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<sup>1</sup> This framework replaces the previous Recertification Framework and Guidelines (June 2012). Council reserves the right to apply its usual processes under the 2012 framework to address non-compliance during the period ending 31 March and to conduct a Quality Review (recertification audit) on documentation of professional development up to 31 March 2021.

4. You will record evidence of meeting Council requirements online.
5. Council wants pharmacists to feel supported in their selection and documentation of professional development activities and our assurance processes require confirmation your choices of activity relate to your workplace role. We are introducing someone else into the Framework to help with that; another pharmacist who will be a sounding board and support as you complete recertification requirements and who will verify for Council that your activities have been relevant to practice in your own role and setting. We are calling this other pharmacist a verifying pharmacist, or verifier. A practising pharmacist will have a verifier throughout the April-March recertification year.
6. To get a verifying pharmacist, you will invite an experienced pharmacist who is familiar with your type of practice – and preferably knows you well. For some, their verifier will be their workplace manager if that person is also a pharmacist. For others, a verifier will be an experienced peer from another, similar, pharmacy practice situation. Many pharmacists will be verifiers; some may be verifiers for several pharmacists.
7. Guidance will be provided to verifiers and pharmacists about the pharmacist-verifier relationship. For example, published role descriptions and frequently-asked questions. Guidance will include what to do in different scenarios such as when the relationship isn't working out, or if a pharmacist changes jobs during the year.
8. The pharmacist who agrees to be your verifying pharmacist will be able to view your online recertification evidence for the current year. They will be in contact with you to check that a plan has been made to enhance skills and knowledge and that professional development activities align with the goals in your plan. Conversations will be opportunities to discuss reflections and learnings, too.
9. Once you have completed requirements for the year and had at least two conversations with your verifier, the verifier will complete a statement within your online portfolio to confirm:
  - they have read the portfolio of recertification evidence,
  - they have had at least two conversations about activities you have recorded, and
  - to the best of their knowledge, you have taken appropriate actions to remain competent for your role and pharmacy practice setting.
10. If your verifier is your direct manager and works with you in the same workplace, they will have **an option** to make an additional statement that gives Council even more assurance:

“[your name] demonstrates competence in his/her role or is substantially competent and we have agreed a plan for achieving full competence.”
11. Council encourages experienced pharmacists to accept invitations to be verifiers. We want verifiers to enjoy the process of supporting their colleagues and peers and assisting Council towards better assurance of the competence of the profession. If you become a verifier you must commit to:

- constructive, timely, supportive interactions,
  - respectful, fair and thoughtful consideration of online entries, and
  - timely completion of confirmation statements in your pharmacist's recertification portfolio.
12. Both pharmacist and verifier may elect to discontinue the relationship at any time. This might result from changed circumstances such as a new role, or the relationship may simply not be working out.
  13. Pharmacists apply online for their practising certificate each year. During the online application you will confirm to the Pharmacy Council that:
    - your online recertification evidence shows that you are compliant with the requirements,
    - your verifier has completed confirmation statements in your portfolio,
    - you are competent for your role.
  14. If you cannot make a confirmation, you will be able to state that truthfully during the application. Council may seek additional information from you prior to issuing an APC.
  15. Each year, the Pharmacy Council will audit the recertification entries of a sample of pharmacists. If you are selected for audit, auditors will check that online documentation supports declarations you made to Council when you applied for your practising certificate. Auditors will also provide de-identified information of a general nature which will be aggregated by Council to tell us about how the framework is working.
  16. A verifier will have already read your portfolio entries and discussed professional development with you by APC renewal time. This means you will have already received feedback on your choice of activities and documentation. An auditor may also provide additional comment within your portfolio. If your records do not appear to support the your declarations, the Pharmacy Council may ask you for more information.
  17. As is currently the case, Council team members will be able to view pharmacists' recertification documentation for verification purposes. Council may also undertake general monitoring of the framework using aggregated, de-identified information. For example, it would be of interest to Council to know how many pharmacists are verifiers for more than one pharmacist, or to see the profession-wide pattern of completion of requirements through the year. This type of information informs later decisions about the framework.
  18. Council will follow up with pharmacists who are unable to meet the requirements for recertification. The process will depend on the nature of their non-compliance and whether declarations to Council have been truthful. In these respects, Council's compliance actions will be along similar lines to existing ones.
  19. Recertification requirements give Council and the public confidence that a pharmacist is remaining competent and that the public's trust is well-placed; however, it is not our intention to use recertification requirements to assess whether individual pharmacists are meeting all competence standards for the profession.

## Recertification activities

20. Each year we ask pharmacists to record evidence of actions they have taken to maintain their competence. We use Epstein and Hundert's definition of competence: the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served<sup>2</sup>.
21. We know from literature and the experience of regulators across countries and professions that engagement with professional peers, culturally safe practice, keeping up-to-date, reflecting on one's own practice and structured quality improvement cycles are likely to strengthen the skills, knowledge and attributes pharmacists bring to their roles. The value of making a professional development plan that arises from self-evaluation of competence is also well-established.
22. Council has worked with practising pharmacists to ensure our new requirements are reasonable and achievable for busy pharmacists, regardless of their role and place of work.
23. We will ask you to undertake the following types of activity each year. We will provide guidance and, where appropriate, templates and examples so you know what is expected.
  - Professional development plan
  - Professional development cycles
  - Reflective account
  - Progress towards cultural safety
  - Keeping up to date with medicines, services and technology
  - Engagement with professional peers
24. **Professional Development Plan:** your assessment of your own competence is most valuable when it leads to a plan for improvement. Council will provide a straightforward template to plan professional development for the year ahead. Alternatively, if your employment appraisal includes goals for development that relate to practice in the Pharmacist scope, then that document could double as the professional development plan for recertification; no need to duplicate effort. The plan should lead to two professional development cycles in which a pharmacist takes action and then documents changes arising from the action.
25. **Professional development cycles:** each cycle arises from a goal in your professional development plan. It is a quality improvement activity focusing on competence - evaluation, planning, action, monitoring and adjustment of skills and knowledge in practice. These might be similar to previous Group 3 activities, but shorter to allow completion of two within a 12-month period.

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<sup>2</sup> Epstein RM, Hundert EM. Defining and assessing professional competence. JAMA. 2002;287(2)226-235

26. **Reflective account:** reflections on practice encourage a pharmacist to think about how they meet competence standards applicable to their role. You may
- write a reflection on how you have demonstrated one or more of the professional competence standards. To help ensure pharmacists reflect on a range of standards across the years, we will ask you to select the standards from a limited range that will be different each year.
  - use your reflective account to think more deeply about a critical incident in your own practice of pharmacy; how you reacted and how you might act differently if faced with a similar situation in future. This type of reflection can assist discussions about the incident with a peer and help a pharmacist to move on from a difficult experience.
27. **Towards culturally safe practice:** pharmacy practice that is culturally safe protects users of pharmacy services. Pharmacists must document evidence of their progress from cultural competence - the acquisition of knowledge, attitude and understandings related to Hauora Māori and practice in New Zealand's culturally diverse environment - towards pharmacy practice that is culturally safe in every workplace interaction.
28. **Keeping up-to-date:** you will record evidence of action that keeps you abreast of new medicines, technology, professional practice and services, and that ensures optimal outcomes for users of their services.
29. **Peer engagement in groups:** professional connectedness is recognised as important to prevent competence diminishing over time. Council requires pharmacists to join or start a group of at least four professional peers that meets at least twice a year to support each other professionally and share learnings from successes, mistakes, innovations, case studies and published research.

30. Table 1: **Recertification framework**

Pharmacist		Verifier	Council
Action	Each year*	Each year	
Reflective statement	One written statement. Focused on a competence standard or a critical event	Through the year, read entries in the pharmacist's online record of recertification evidence.  Hold conversations with the pharmacist and satisfy themselves that the actions reported in the portfolio have been appropriate to maintain and develop competence for the pharmacist's role.	Set recertification requirements  Monitor the Framework
Professional development plan	One plan		
Professional development cycle	Two cycles that address goals from professional development plan.		
Towards culturally safe practice in New Zealand	One activity		
Peer group engagement	Two meetings, each with four or more people		
Keeping up to date	One activity		
	<p><b>At APC renewal</b></p> <p><b>confirm</b> compliance with requirements</p> <p><b>declare</b> competence for role</p> <p>Name Verifier</p> <p><b>confirm</b> verifier has made statements</p>	<p><b>Prior to APC renewal</b></p> <p>Statements of confirmation</p> <p>i. if Verifier is manager of pharmacist:  <b>Pharmacist has taken appropriate actions to remain competent for their role and is competent for role</b> or  <b>Pharmacist is substantially competent for his/her role and we have a plan in place to ensure competence is achieved.</b></p> <p>ii if Verifier is an experienced professional peer of pharmacist:  <b>To the best of my knowledge, [pharmacist name] has taken appropriate actions to maintain competence for their role</b></p> <p>Verifier may also communicate concerns or phone Council to discuss.</p>	<p><b>At APC renewal</b></p> <p>Online collection of pharmacist confirmation statements/declarations</p> <p><b>After APC renewed</b>  Audit evidence of actions for a sample of pharmacists</p> <p>Sample will be weighted towards pharmacists whose roles have a direct impact on patient safety</p> <p>Follow up non-compliance and where evidence does not support claims of compliance</p>

\*recertification year: 1 April to 31 March

Pharmacists are not prevented from undertaking more than the stated number of activities.

### **Technology and other preparation: June 2020 – March 2021**

31. Council will make arrangements for an online place for pharmacists to record evidence they have met our recertification requirements. Development of the Framework was the first priority and we have now begun development of technology options.
32. The Council team is preparing for implementation of the new framework from 1 April 2021:
  - Support and Guidance – guidance for pharmacists and their verifiers will be developed during the remainder of 2020,
  - Audit – Council audit processes and guidance for auditors will be developed January 2021 – April 2021,
  - Compliance and Registration – processes relating to fraudulent declarations, non-compliance with recertification requirements and application of requirements to registration pathways such as Return to Practice will be developed October 2020 – March 2021,
  - Transition and implementation – processes for transitioning from the existing recertification framework to the new one will be developed from July 2020 to January 2021,
  - Monitoring and enhancement – we will develop a plan to monitor the effectiveness of the Framework and use quality improvement methods to adjust and improve in response to monitoring and feedback.