

# Verifier guidance

## Requirement

Every pharmacist has one verifier who is another registered practising or non-practising pharmacist.

You are expected to have at least two conversations with your verifier about your recertification activities and prior to the end of the recertification year, the verifier will confirm a statement within your online portfolio to confirm<sup>1</sup>

- They have read your portfolio of recertification evidence
- They have had at least two conversations with you about activities or requirements you have recorded
- To the best of their knowledge, you have taken appropriate actions to remain competent for your role and pharmacy practice setting

## What is the purpose of the verifier?

The **primary purpose** of the verifier role is to have someone other than you provide Council with assurance that the professional development activities you have undertaken are appropriate for maintaining competence for your role. This assessment of the appropriateness of development activities is far more meaningful when undertaken by someone who understands you, your role and the context in which you work within the health system.

In addition to this quality assurance role there is a **secondary purpose** in the potential for the pharmacist - verifier relationship to develop a support and mentoring aspect over time with significant benefits for development and professional connectedness.

## What is a verifier?

A verifier is an experienced registered pharmacist who is familiar with your **type** of practice – and preferably knows you well. The primary responsibility of the verifier is to provide assurance that you have undertaken the required recertification activities and that these represent meaningful professional development for your role. This is a verification of your professional development process and the appropriateness of your development activities.

You ask someone who meets the criteria to be your verifier and, if they want to, that person will agree. You will confirm who your verifier is in April at the start of recertification year by sharing your portfolio with them in MyRecert.

## Who can be a verifier?

Another registered pharmacist with similar or greater experience than you who is **familiar with your type of practice** and ideally familiar with you. If you are unable to identify a person who is directly familiar with your work, then find someone who is familiar with the typical activities you undertake,

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<sup>1</sup> 2021-2022 is a transition year. A verifier confirmation is not required but an option will be available to provide it voluntarily.

the issues, challenges and constraints you work within e.g. a locum pharmacist could look for another locum pharmacist, a pharmacy manager (community or hospital) could look for another pharmacy manager in a similarly sized business or department, an academic pharmacist would look for another academic pharmacist.

The choice of verifier is entirely yours. The pharmacist - verifier relationship should be trustful and supportive and may naturally develop a coaching or mentoring aspect over time. Some pharmacists may wish to choose a verifier who will actively challenge their ways of working or thinking. You have the option to choose your manager if you wish, however there is no obligation to do so. You may find that a member of your peer support group is a suitable person to become your verifier. You can in turn be a verifier for your verifier, however, it is worth considering that this forms a closed loop with reduced opportunities to introduce new ideas and ways of working into your thinking.

The role of verifier is likely to be most effective if a verifier is not a personal partner or close friend of yours but this is not prohibited. Look to consider and manage any other conflicts of interest or power imbalances that may result from a pharmacist verifier combination.

### Can the verifier be a different health care professional?

No. The verifier must be a registered pharmacist. This is to ensure that the verifier understands the broader skills, context and standard of pharmacy practice and can guide you as a pharmacist accordingly. Pharmacist competence pertains to practice in the Pharmacist or Pharmacist Prescriber scope of practice, focusing on the pharmacist competence standards. Having a verifier who is a pharmacist assists in narrowing the focus of recertification activities to those relevant to the scope.

### How many verifiers do I have?

Each pharmacist has only **one verifier at a time**. This is because your verifier quality assures and supports your overall professional development planning and review of actions. The role is not to be your coach or teacher (subject matter expert) on particular learning topics (in the way that a group 3 learning partner tended to be in the past). In contrast, your verifier may help you to think through who might be a suitable coach or teacher for a particular learning goal you have identified e.g. a medical / nursing or pharmacist specialist in a clinical topic or practitioner in rongoā Māori.

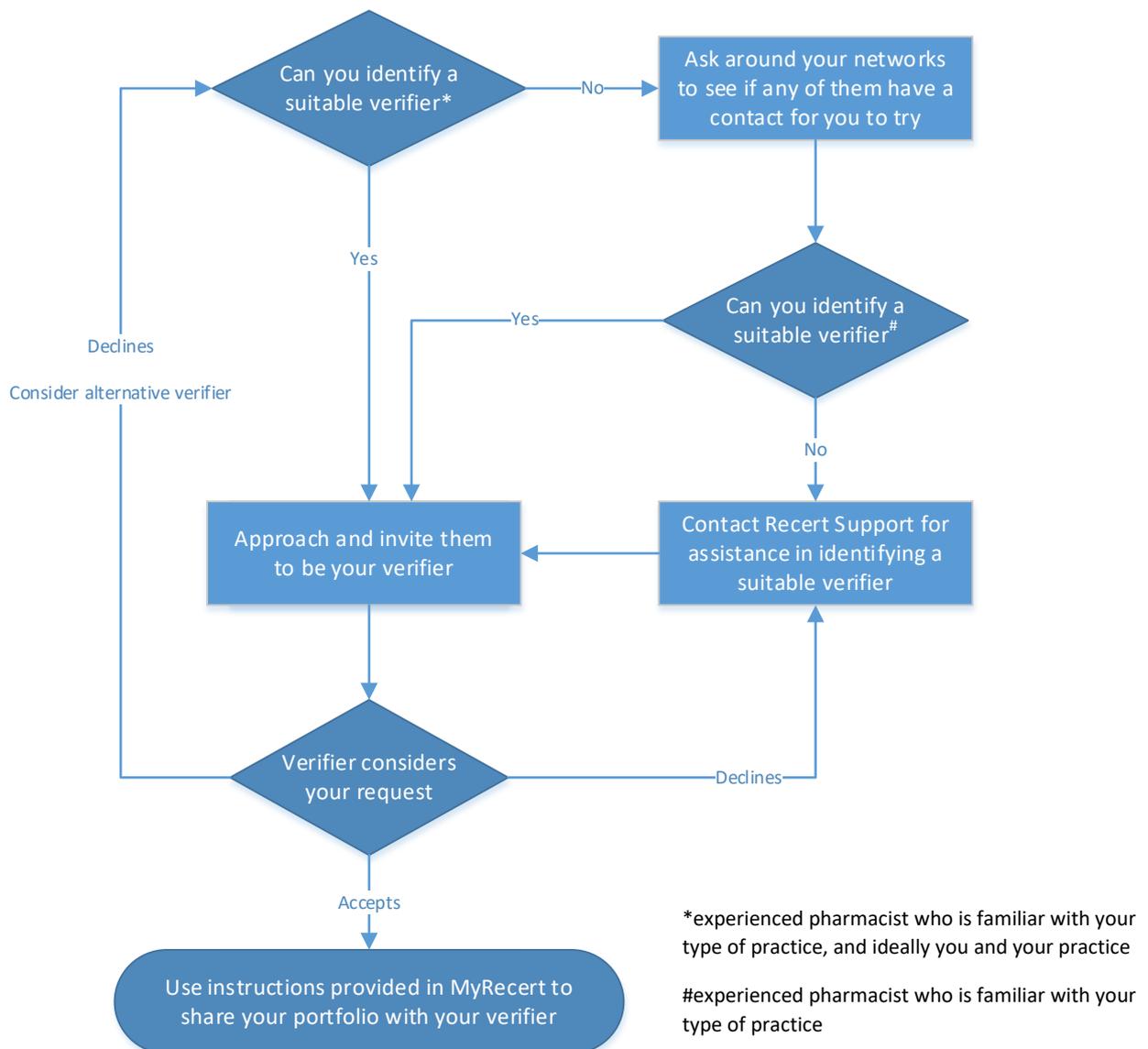
### How do I notify Council who my verifier is?

Your verifier is identified in MyRecert when you make your portfolio of evidence available to them to read. If you have more than one verifier, sequentially through the year, your action of sharing your portfolio with them tells the MyRecert system when each verifier is active.

If you need to change your verifier due to change in circumstances or the relationship isn't working, a short transition time ( less than a month) between verifiers is acceptable. In the background, the MyRecert system records such gaps between verifiers.

## How do I get a verifier?

The choice of verifier is entirely yours and the flowchart below suggests how you go about finding one. The first place to look is likely to be within your workplace and immediate professional networks. If there is no-one suitable or willing in that group then you may need to access your wider professional networks. If you are unable to find anyone suitable this way, then contact Recert Support for assistance using the contact details provided on MyRecert.



## Roles and responsibility of a verifier

A verifier helps protect public safety by supporting a pharmacist to remain competent for their role in their pharmacy or health system setting. They do this by providing support for and an assurance of the process and appropriateness of development activities of professional development.

In order to do this a verifier commits to:

- Constructive, timely, supportive interactions with their pharmacist
- Respectful, fair and thoughtful consideration of portfolio entries
- Timely completion of confirmation statements in their pharmacist's portfolio

Verifiers are not held responsible for a pharmacist's competence. If, for example, a pharmacist enters into a Pharmacy Council process because Council has become concerned about their competence, the Pharmacy Council will not make contact with the pharmacist's verifier, or hold the verifier responsible, in regard to that competence matter.

You may find it helpful to think of the verifier as a sounding board or facilitator of the pharmacist's thinking. They are there to ask questions to stimulate discussion of the pharmacists' reflections, identification of learning needs, how they will go about meeting those needs, what activities they have done and how they have documented them. They can encourage if there is a bit more to do and celebrate the achievements of the pharmacist! They aren't there to judge or problem solve for the pharmacist, nor are not expected to plan or undertake any of the professional development activities for their pharmacist.

Pharmacists are expected to act professionally in all aspects of their role, which will include that of verifier.

You can be a verifier for more than one pharmacist. It is up to you to assess your own capacity to act as a verifier.

## Verifier activities

### Conversations

A verifier will hold **at least two conversations** with their pharmacist, spread through the year, to discuss the contents of the evidence portfolio.

These are intended to be supportive conversations to help ensure that professional development activities relate to the Pharmacist or Pharmacist Prescriber scope of practice and are relevant to the pharmacist's own role and setting. There is no requirement to document the content of these conversations.

### What could be discussed in these conversations?

A range of topics can be covered during these conversations and can be influenced by things such as timing in the recertification year, priorities and concerns of the pharmacist.

At the beginning of recertification year conversations about planning of professional development activities may be helpful. This could involve asking questions to encourage reflection and planning, ask questions, help you to develop a plan that addresses your needs; and conversations towards the end of the year may focus more on progress towards achieving the plan.

Other topics that could be discussed could include

- Talking through their written reflective account with them and probing further
- Discussing peer group meetings and how those are contributing to their development
- How they are progressing with developing their culturally safe practice
- What has been their most satisfying learning experience recently
- Has there been an situation that has stayed with them that they could learn from
- What have they learned or applied from learning activities
- What they feel are the main concerns for them for their development
- How have their development needs changed since they wrote their professional development plan – does it need tweaking to reflect this

Being a sounding board can also mean helping people to put situations in context or help them break big learning goals into manageable bite size chunks.

### **First meeting**

The first meeting you have with your pharmacist is an opportunity to start to develop the relationship and clarify your expectations and set ground rules. For example to get to know them you find out what

- Makes them tick?
- Are their career aspirations?
- Their own perceptions of strengths and learning goals
- Ways they learn best?
- Learning and development do they think they need, what have they had / looked for so far, what works best for them?
- Concerns or issues do they have?
- Do they want to get from this relationship?

Discuss ground rules e.g.

- Privacy, confidentiality
- Either can walk away if relationship not working or change in circumstances for either with no fault
- Accepting that you won't always agree on aspects of practice and that it's healthy and supportive to be able to have more challenging conversations about different work practices. Accepting, too, that frank, open conversations may at times be helpful in ensuring practices are safe if you have concerns.

### **Frequency**

You are only required to have two meetings with your verifier; however you may have more if you would both like to.

### **Valuable skills in a verifier**

- Listening
- Asking probing and curious (open) questions to encourage pharmacist to reflect, identify and plan their own professional development
- Be non-judgemental - recognise that people do the best they can with what they have
- Be thoughtful, fair and kind

## Location of meetings

Conversations can be held in person or online.

## Portfolio access and review

Through the year, access and read entries in the pharmacist's portfolio of recertification evidence for the current recertification year (only the current year's records will be accessible to the verifier). Between reading the portfolio and conversations with the pharmacist a verifier is looking to satisfy themselves that

- The pharmacist has undertaken the required activities for the year
- The actions reported in the portfolio have been appropriate to maintain and develop competence for the pharmacist's role.

## Confirmation statement<sup>2</sup>

When the verifier is satisfied that the above conditions have been completed verifier ticks the confirmation statements within the pharmacist's portfolio.

*I have read this portfolio of completed requirements and had at least two conversations about it with this pharmacist. To the best of my knowledge, they have taken appropriate actions to maintain competence for their role.*

## Timing of confirmation

You can make your verifier confirmation when both the following are true

- All the recertification requirements have been documented for the year, and
- You are in the period 1 December – 31 March

If your pharmacist has documented their activities by 1 December, you will have four months to complete your confirmation in their portfolio.

## How much time will it take to be a verifier each year?

As this is a new role, the following is an estimate and should be used as a guide only

Activity	Estimated time commitment
2 meetings a year	2-3 hours
Review of portfolio of recertification activities	2-3 hours
Log on and undertaken verification signoff	5 minutes
<b>Total</b>	<b>4-6 hours per year</b>

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<sup>2</sup> 2021-2022 is a transition year during which time the completion of the verifier statement is voluntary.

### What if the verifier relationship isn't working?

For the verifier role to be most effective it will develop into a trusting and supportive relationship. If the relationship is not working for whatever reason, either pharmacist or verifier may elect to discontinue the relationship at any time with no fault.

### What if I change roles or my circumstances change?

If roles or circumstances change for either the pharmacist or verifier, then you should review the ongoing viability and appropriateness of the relationship.

It is important to recognise that the verifier role has the potential to develop a type of mentoring relationship and that these relationships can have a natural lifespan. If your changes roles significantly or you develop past or away from the verifier then it makes sense to look for another verifier that can understand and help you develop your new practice. Have this conversation openly.

### What if as a verifier I have significant concerns about the pharmacist's competence

We do encourage open and frank conversations with the pharmacist about your concerns if you have a relationship where this is possible. Ideally a conversation can remedy a situation. Information disclosed in a conversation between pharmacist and verifier in the course of meeting recertification requirements is protected under the law and you as verifier are not required to notify it to the Council.

## Documentation

The Council does not require you to document details of your conversations. However, the verifier will confirm to Council that they have had at least two conversations with their pharmacist.

## Link with other recertification activities

Discussion with your verifier can help inform

- The identification of your development needs to include within your **professional development plan**
- Reflections on the **cultural safety** of your **practice**
- Reflections for your **written reflective account**
- The choice of **keeping up to date** activity
- Your verifier may be part of your **peer support group**

