



**The South African  
Pharmacy Council**

# **GUIDELINES AND MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR THE APPROVAL/ACCREDITATION AND REGISTRATION OF PROVIDERS, COURSES AND ASSESSORS**

Guidelines for providers of education and training who wish to deliver the National Certificate: Pharmacist Assistance and the Further Education and Training Certificate: Pharmacist Assistance learning programmes

**DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The South African Pharmacy Council ('the Council'), as a statutory health council established in terms of the legislature, is entitled in terms of the Pharmacy Act, 1974 (Act 53 of 1974), as amended, to establish, develop, maintain and control universally acceptable standards of pharmaceutical education and training. In order to achieve this objective, the Council may approve/accredit and register providers and approve/accredit courses in and assessors of pharmaceutical education and training.

To further this objective, the Council has been accredited as an Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) with the SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The Council's responsibility for education and training in terms of the Pharmacy Act is therefore strengthened by its work as the ETQA for pharmacy.

In terms of section 34 of the Pharmacy Act, 1974, no person shall be entitled to offer education and training for purposes of registration in terms of the Act unless such an institution or person and the education and training concerned have been approved/ accredited by the Council. Any person or institution who intends to offer education or training has to apply to the Council in the prescribed manner for the approval/accreditation of such education and training and of such institution or person.

The procedure for the approval/accreditation of providers and assessors is prescribed in the *Regulations relating to pharmacy education and training*, as well as the *Regulations relating to the registration of persons and the maintenance of registers*. In terms of the above-mentioned regulations, only providers who comply with the minimum criteria for the approval/accreditation of providers of pharmacy education and training are entitled to offer education and training for purposes of conferring a

qualification in pharmacy, namely a certificate of qualification for purposes of practising as a pharmacist's assistant.

This document describes the policies and procedures for the approval/accreditation and registration of providers, the approval/accreditation of courses and the registration/accreditation of assessors by the South African Pharmacy Council. The document deals particularly with learning programmes leading to a certificate of qualification as a pharmacist's assistant. It also provides guidelines for the development of these programmes by providers, as well as for the assessment of learners.

Further details regarding the unit standards and training for the National Certificate: Pharmacist Assistance and the Further Education and Training Certificate: Pharmacist Assistance may be found in the respective SAQA qualification documents of August, 2008 (Qualification IDs 62249 and 62589).

For ease of reference, a number of definitions which are included in the regulations to the Pharmacy Act, 1974, as amended, are included in this document as Annexure 4.

## **2 POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE APPROVAL/ACCREDITATION OF PROVIDERS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PURPOSES OF A CERTIFICATE OF QUALIFICATION**

### **2.1 Purposes**

The purposes of the evaluation and approval/accreditation of providers of education and training are to:

- advance the quality of education and training, thereby advancing the quality of the provision of pharmaceutical services;
- establish criteria and characteristics for approved education and training experiences;
- provide pharmacy employers and personnel with a dependable basis for selecting approved/accredited providers of education and training;
- provide for a uniform basis of provision of education and training, facilitating the portability of credits and qualifications among pharmacy sectors and providers; and
- provide feedback to providers about their courses and encourage self-evaluation with a view towards the continual improvement and strengthening of the education and training activities of pharmacy personnel.

The minimum requirements for the approval/accreditation of providers of learning programmes for pharmacy personnel are based on the criteria set out in Section 2.3.1 below. Private providers that offer full qualifications, e.g. the National Certificate and the FET Certificate, must be accredited by the Department of Education (DOE) as a provider.

## **2.2 The evaluation and assessment of providers**

The evaluation of a provider is conducted by persons and/or institutions appointed by the Council and could include specialists in the fields of pharmacy practice and education and/or any *ad hoc* committee appointed by the Council for this purpose. Evaluators are required to receive appropriate training from the Council about the requirements for the evaluation of courses. This includes that the language used must be appropriate to the level of the course(s) being offered as well as guidance on the way in which the requirements must be applied in order to ensure consistency across providers, particularly in respect of the assessment of outcomes, so that qualified learners are able to perform their designated tasks in the workplace.

The evaluation of prospective providers of education and training includes measuring the applicant against various criteria to assess the capacity of the provider, using compliance with the respective unit standards as the main point of reference. The evaluators will be trained by the Council and will be pharmacists.

## **2.3 Criteria for approval/accreditation**

The criteria for approval/accreditation of a provider of education and training are based on an evaluation of:

- the provider of education and training; and
- the course in question, including the curriculum and method of instruction.

The criteria also apply in instances where a principal provider may contract or delegate to a third party or sub-provider of education and training the provision of specified component parts of the course structure. The overall accountability for the quality of the delivery of learning programmes by a contracted third party rests with the principal approved provider, as does the responsibility for ongoing learners if the contract is terminated.

### 2.3.1 Evaluation of prospective providers of education and training

The following criteria would *inter alia* be considered by the Council when evaluating a prospective provider in relation to a specific course:

- **registration as a provider** with the Department of Education and in terms of any other applicable legislation;
- adequate **strategic planning**;
- a demonstrable **quality management system**;
- competent **facilitators of learning**;
- an appropriate **system for the assessment** of learners;
- **courses** of a suitable quality; and
- appropriate **practical training**, where applicable.

#### 2.3.1.1 Registration as a provider

Providers are required to be recorded with the South African Qualifications Authority through the relevant ETQA (in the case of pharmacy, the SAPC). Where whole qualifications will be offered by providers other than public education institutions, such institutions will be required to register as private providers/educational institutions with the Department of Education, as indicated above.

### **2.3.1.2 Strategic planning processes**

The provider should demonstrate strategic planning processes which encourage, and provide opportunities for, participation at all levels in the organisation to include both short- and long-term plans that are consistent with the goals of the institution.

The provider's current mission and purpose must be clearly stated. The provider must have an operational plan in place which includes the following elements:

- goal-setting;
- human resource development;
- curriculum and instruction methodologies;
- the use of technology; and
- quality management systems.

Individuals at all levels in the provider organisation should be involved in the planning process, which should be continuous and flexible to allow the provider organisation to be dynamic and responsive.

The needs of the external customer (e.g. the State, hospital and community pharmacies, the manufacturing industry and pharmacists) must be identified, prioritised and used to provide direction for the organisation.

### **2.3.1.3 Quality management system**

A quality management system which includes at least the following aspects must be in place:

- quality management policies defining the provider's quality aims;
- quality management procedures which enable the provider to implement the defined policies;
- standard operating procedures for all learning, assessment and record-keeping activities;
- review mechanisms which ensure that the defined quality management policies and procedures are applied and remain effective; and
- reliable and valid research, which is incorporated into the quality management processes of the provider to ensure continued improvement in course structure, content and presentation.

The provider must also be able to demonstrate through its quality management system that:

- it has the capacity and ability to develop, deliver and evaluate learning programmes;
- resources are used to good effect;
- appropriate policies and practices exist for student entry, guidance and support;
- the effectiveness of learning is regularly monitored;
- practices are enhanced in the light of what is learnt from monitoring activities;

- systems are in place to collect sufficient authentic, current and valid evidence pertaining to the quality achieved;
- the resources needed to meet quality expectations (including financial, physical and staff competent in learning facilitation and assessment) are or will be available;
- well designed and effective mechanisms exist to review regularly how well courses, qualifications and standards meet existing and potential learners' needs;
- mechanisms exist whereby facilitators of learning and assessment, learners, tutors, assessors, moderators and employers can register apparent inadequacies in the courses, qualifications and standards; and
- a mechanism of reporting progress against identified goals exists.

Providers should share with the Council their quality enhancement achievement and goals for each characteristic. This information will be reviewed periodically for its validity and currency at the time of auditing and monitoring visits.

Note: Providers are encouraged to establish quality management systems which comply with ISO 9000.

#### **2.3.1.4 Facilitators of learning**

With regard to facilitators of learning –

- appropriate policies and practices for staff selection, appraisal and development must be in place; and
- facilitators must have the requisite skills.

### **2.3.1.5 Assessment system**

Assessment processes must be valid, reliable, current, appropriate and fair, with –

- appropriate policies and practices for the management of the assessment of learners, including provision for recognition of prior learning (RPL);
- the capacity and ability to produce reports on the learning process and progress of the learner when required;
- assessment of specific unit standards being performed by assessors, with moderation by moderators;
- methods for ensuring that providers employ registered assessors who undertake suitable ongoing training Continuing Professional Development (CPD); and
- an appeal process with clear policies and procedures being in place, whereby candidates can seek independent assessment in cases of disagreements regarding the outcome of an assessment.

Assessment records should include at least details of the unit standards and/or respective Specific Outcomes being assessed, dates and methods of assessment and/or evidence used to demonstrate competence, the outcomes of the assessment, comments which include action plans and the signature of the assessor(s), and details of the provider, learner and assessor(s).

### **2.3.1.6 Courses**

The goal is to have each course developed into a complete plan for instruction with measurable objectives directed towards assisting the

learner to master a set of specific, relevant competencies that are based on the current and future requirements of pharmacy practice.

Since the instructional process revolves around individual learners, the provider must offer appropriate services to support them during the education and training process. Additional counselling should be available to identify and serve the needs of learners throughout the learning period.

The following points may be regarded as criteria for approval/accreditation of the curriculum and method of instruction:

- There is a complete plan of learning for each course or module in a programme, in which:
  - the curriculum is based on competencies needed for the learner to perform successfully his/her tasks in the workplace;
  - course pre-requisites are clearly defined;
  - curriculum and course requirements are consistent regarding content, text books and materials/tools;
  - learners may receive advanced standing and/or credit for past experiences in education in occupations related to the programme;
  - an optimum class size is established for structured contact sessions for each course (where applicable) (max. 30);
  - an optimum ratio of tutor to learner is established for each course, where applicable (a maximum of three learners per tutor for NC or two for FETC). Any combination not stated in the Regulations Relating to Practice of Pharmacy will require a motivation, and each case will be dealt with on its own merits; and

- assessments, examinations and/or other evaluations, where applicable, have criteria with a direct link to the performance objectives.
- Programmes are structured to permit multiple entries and multiple exits;
- Programmes, where applicable, provide some type of practical experience related to the learner's training;
- Providers use a variety of teaching techniques to meet the unique needs of the learner;
- Curricula and methods of instruction are customised for courses as appropriate;
- There are formal articulation and/or transfer agreements with other providers wherever necessary;
- Learners are aware of the expectations for each course through syllabus, attendance and safety requirements;
- In terms of the provision of instruction and training:
  - providers, instructors and learners comply with established timelines;
  - classes and other contact sessions occur regularly;
  - a minimum of 280 hours (which are equivalent to 35 days) of contact time apply;
  - where applicable, grades are submitted to the Council promptly; and

- records are updated regularly;
- Courses are linked to unit standards and integrate theory and practice; and
- Suitable learning and assessment processes for the prescribed Learning Outcomes are used.

### **2.3.1.7 Practical training component**

In cases where a practical training component, e.g. in-service training of pharmacist's assistants, is necessary, appropriate policies and practices for the management of off-site practical/work-site components of the learning must be in place, including log-books or other appropriate records, validated and signed by learner, tutor and provider representative.

## **2.4 Period of approval/accreditation and review processes**

### **2.4.1 Period of approval/accreditation**

The Council may approve/accredit a provider of education and training for purposes of conferring a certificate of qualification for a maximum period of five years. Thereafter, the approval/accreditation of the provider will be reviewed, with the proviso that the Council may evaluate and/or assess a specific provider at any time at least once a year. The Council may furthermore require a provider to respond to specific queries and/or submit reports of responses about specific requirements by the Council from time to time.

## **2.4.2 Conditions of approval/accreditation**

Approval/accreditation may be granted subject to defined conditions. Approval/accreditation may also be granted at various stages of the development of training courses. Where specified conditions are necessary, such as, for example, those relating to the testing of an untried assessment system, the period of approval/accreditation may be shorter than five years. Where necessary, plans for updating standards and improving quality will be required prior to the extension of approval/accreditation.

Approval/accreditation may be extended when the initial period of approval/accreditation ends. It will be subject to satisfactory compliance with the applicable criteria as prescribed by the Council. Quality assurance records of providers will be considered in detail. Providers will be required to apply for an extension of approval/accreditation and provide evidence of results achieved in the previous period of approval/accreditation.

The fees determined by the Council will be payable for the registration of providers and courses. Annual fees are also payable by providers by June 1 of each year to ensure continuity of courses.

## **2.4.3 Withdrawal of approval/accreditation of providers**

The approval/accreditation of a provider may be withdrawn if, in the opinion of the Council, it fails to perform its functions satisfactorily, or fails to comply with the requirements of such approval. Similarly, a provider may request that its approval/accreditation status be withdrawn.

#### **2.4.4 Registration certification**

Approvals/accreditations will be confirmed on registration of the provider as a provider of education and training, the payment of the applicable fees and the issue of a registration certificate by the Council.

#### **2.4.5 Register of providers**

The Council will maintain a register of providers of education and training. Providers who have been given approval/accreditation to provide a qualification in pharmacy, i.e. the schools/departments/faculties of pharmacy at the institutions listed in Annexure C to the Regulations relating to pharmacy education and training in terms of the Pharmacy Act, 1974, as amended, will be deemed to be providers of a certificate of qualification.

#### **2.4.6 Revision of criteria for approval/accreditation of providers**

The Council recognises that pharmaceutical education and practice are evolving rapidly and that the standards of education and training will continually require revision. Whenever a formal revision of the criteria for the approval/accreditation of providers is indicated, the Council will consult with providers of education and training, stakeholders and relevant role-players.

#### **2.5 Application for approval/accreditation as a provider and/or for approval/accreditation of a course**

Applications for approval/accreditation as a provider must be submitted to the Council on the applicable form for the approval/accreditation of providers approved and provided by the Council in terms of the

*Regulations relating to the registration of persons and the maintenance of registers* published in terms of the Pharmacy Act, 1974, as amended. Similarly, applications for the approval/accreditation of courses must be submitted to the Council on the applicable form approved and provided by the Council. The forms include the criteria with which a provider and/or course must comply. Applicants are required to perform a self-assessment against the applicable criteria and indicate whether they comply, partially comply or do not comply. Documentary evidence of compliance must be attached as applicable. Confidentiality of information will be maintained by the Council.

Separate application forms for the approval/accreditation of each course to be offered must be submitted by providers.

### **3 POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE REGISTRATION OF ASSESSORS**

One of the conditions for approval/accreditation as a provider of learning programmes for pharmacy personnel is that the provider must have an assessment system in place. This condition implies that the providers must have access to registered assessors.

The Council and providers have distinct responsibilities with respect to the assessors:

- **The Council** is responsible for the approval/accreditation and registration of assessors, who have themselves been appropriately assessed and can provide evidence of competence; and
- **Providers** are responsible, at their own cost, either to enable their own staff to be trained as assessors by recognised assessor trainers or to employ registered assessors.

Assessors fall into three categories, namely internal assessors, external assessors and moderating assessors. (Refer Annexure 3)

#### **3.1 Registration of assessors**

In terms of the provisions of the Pharmacy Act, 1974 (Act 53 of 1974) as amended, assessors are required to be registered with the South African Pharmacy Council as assessors for the purposes of assessing outcomes of pharmacy education and training. Registration occurs when the applicant has submitted evidence of the following matters to the satisfaction of the Registrar:

- An application for registration as an assessor on an application form provided by the Council;
- Payment of the applicable registration fees determined by the Council;
- Proof of registration as a pharmacist with the South African Pharmacy Council;
- Experience in the practical application of the criteria against which the level of competence will be measured; and
- A certificate of competence indicating that the applicant is competent against the unit standards for assessors registered on the National Qualifications Framework (when available) at either the Further Education and Training (FET) band or the Higher Education and Training (HET) band, as applicable, issued by an assessor training institution recognised by the Council or accredited by a relevant ETQA.

Applications for approval/registration as an assessor must be submitted to the Council on the form entitled *Application for the registration of an assessor in terms of the Pharmacy Act, 1974, as amended*, approved and provided by the Council. The Council will maintain a register of assessors. Assessors will be required to pay an annual fee in order to retain their registration.

NOTE: The Code of Conduct for pharmacists applies equally to their role as assessors.

#### **4 POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ISSUE OF CERTIFICATES OF QUALIFICATION**

The Council has delegated to providers the responsibility for the issue of Certificates of Qualification for the National Certificate and the Further Education and Training Certificate in Pharmacist Assistance. These certificates form the basis of the registration of holders in these particular categories. As such, they confer on holders the opportunity to practise a particular 'restricted' occupation, restricted in the sense that only registered persons may be employed in or practice them. The importance of these certificates is therefore self-evident. Even greater care and more stringent quality assurance procedures must be applied to the control and issue of certificates regarding all aspects of learning and assessment. In this case a specific standard operating procedure (SOP) must determine the ways in which the certificates are stored, issued, numbered and named. The SOP, and an example of the certificate, must be included in the documentation provided to the Council in support of an application for approval/accreditation as a provider. Refer to the Council document 'Policy and Procedure for Certification' for further information.

#### **5 CONCLUSION**

The policies and procedures for the approval/ accreditation of providers of education and training as described in this document will ensure that the standard of education and training delivered to the learner by the provider is in accordance with the minimum criteria laid down by the South African Pharmacy Council.

It is not the purpose of these criteria to exclude any person or organisation from presenting itself as a provider of education and training, but rather to

ensure that all providers delivering education and training do so under defined circumstances and standards.

Co-operation among the Council, providers, learners and employer bodies will ensure that the learning programmes offered to candidates are meaningful, that acquired knowledge and skills can be applied in practice and that the assessment of learners will provide a guarantee to the profession and the public of the competence and capability of all pharmacy personnel to provide safe and effective pharmaceutical services in South Africa.

# **ANNEXURE 1**

## **ROLE-PLAYERS IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The effective education and training of pharmacy personnel relies on close co-operation among the role-players involved in this process. These players are the learners, tutors, employers, providers, assessors and statutory regulators of both the pharmacy profession and education and training.

### **1 The learner**

Aspirant learners require education and training for a number of reasons, including:

- the need to acquire knowledge and skills;
- the need to develop a systematic career path from novice through various levels to expert, irrespective of previous formal or non-formal qualifications or workplace experience;
- the ability to enhance performance in the work setting by improving cognitive, affective and behavioural attributes; and
- the need to participate on equal foot in a community in terms of education and training, employment opportunities and personal development.

### **2 The providers of education and training**

Providers of education and training will generally fall into one of three categories:

- public educational institutions;
- private providers of education and training; or

- employer groups, or even employers themselves.

The provision of training is, however, not restricted to the above categories. Any potential provider that complies with the requirements for approval/accreditation by the Council as a provider of education and training could offer training for pharmacist's assistants.

The main responsibility for effective education and training rests with the provider, although the co-operation and active participation of learners, tutors and employers are essential for success. The provision of instruction, learning materials, practical integration of theory and equitable assessment in the learning process falls within the responsibilities of the provider. The sustainability and continuity of course presentation are essential to ensure that all learners have equal opportunities in accessibility, learning opportunities and the achievement of qualifications.

The provision of education and training must incorporate a quality management system which emphasises a number of key components in working towards a positive training outcome for the learner. These include the components discussed below.

## **2.1 The assessment of training needs**

Providers of education and training should develop systems whereby the needs of training may be assessed in terms of:

- the learner, by establishing the content of the training required, the profile of the learner and the Learning Outcomes required;
- the organisation where training is needed; and
- the profession or community that would benefit from such training.

## **2.2 The development and design of learning programmes**

This process focuses on:

- the determination of learning objectives;
- the development of appropriate learning activities and the sequencing of training materials;
- the identification of methods to maximize learning;
- the use of language which is appropriate to the level of the respective course(s);
- the development of the overall learning plan, including establishing broad learning aims and specific outcomes; and
- the establishment of assessment criteria.

## **2.3 The evaluation of the results of learning programmes**

A self-assessment system is necessary for providers to be able to determine whether the provision of education and training has been successful, especially in terms of:

- the transfer of knowledge to the learners, in which assessment of the learner indicates whether gains in knowledge, skills, and capabilities have been achieved;
- whether the results of education and training can or have been applied by the learner in the workplace; and
- whether the learner is competent to perform in the workplace according to the scope of practice as stated in the *Regulations Relating to the Practice of Pharmacy* published in terms of the Pharmacy Act 53 of 1974 as amended.

## **2.4 Qualification**

Education and training programmes should, where applicable, ensure that a nationally accepted qualification is conferred upon successful completion of the learning programme.

### **3 The Council as a statutory regulator of education and training**

In terms of section 3(e) of the Pharmacy Act 53 of 1974 as amended, the Council has a responsibility to establish, develop, maintain and control universally acceptable standards in pharmaceutical education and training.

In addition, in terms of section 33 of the Pharmacy Act 53 of 1974 as amended, the Minister of Health may, in consultation with the Council, make regulations to:

- *“require any institution or person intending to provide education and training to apply for the approval of such institution or person;*
- *evaluate and authorise any institution or person to offer education and training to qualify a person for registration in terms of the Act;*
- *lay down the conditions upon which such education and training may be provided and amend such conditions from time to time, or cancel or withdraw such authority;*
- *make rules regarding the evaluation of a person applying for registration in terms of this Act to ensure competence;*
- *prescribe the unit standards for pharmaceutical education and training required from a person entitled to be registered in terms of this Act;*
- *recognise qualifications, competencies and skills for purposes of registration in terms of this Act;*
- *investigate or cause to be investigated any institution or premises recognised by the Council for purposes of education and training in*

*terms of this Act, or request such information as may be deemed necessary from such an institution to enable the Council to establish compliance with the requirements prescribed by the Council relating to such education and training;*

- *appoint or accredit examiners or moderators needed for purposes of conducting any examination or evaluation prescribed by the Council;*
- *award, cancel or withdraw certificates or documents issued in respect of any examination or training provided or recognised by the Council;*
- *upon notice to the institution and pharmacy students who may be affected thereby, and after furnishing reasons, withdraw further recognition for purposes of registration in terms of this Act on such conditions as the Council may deem fit;*
- *require any person registered in terms of this Act to remain competent in the manner prescribed;*
- *make rules as to the additional qualifications, specialities or titles that may be registered in terms of this Act”.*

This statutory obligation is fulfilled by *inter alia*:

- Establishing criteria for :
  - the approval/accreditation of providers of education and training and courses offered;
  - the approval/accreditation of assessors of education and training;
  - the registration of a person holding a qualification offered by a provider of education and training; and
  - the accountability of providers;
- The approval/accreditation and registration of a provider and the conferring of a certificate of approval/accreditation;

- Monitoring and reviewing the approval/accreditation of a provider and/or courses offered to ensure the quality of education and training and the withdrawal of such approval/accreditation as necessary;
- Encouraging self-evaluation by providers, with a view to continual improvement and strengthening of their educational and training activities;
- The promotion of quality amongst these providers;
- The approval/accreditation and registration of assessors;
- The evaluation of assessment and moderation among constituent providers;
- Maintaining registers/records of:
  - learners registered for learning programmes;
  - unit standards successfully completed by learners;
  - providers and courses approved by the Council; and
  - assessors registered with the Council; and
- Performing such other quality assurance functions as may be required in the carrying out of the Council's statutory responsibilities, or as may be delegated to it from time to time by authorities such as SAQA.

#### **4 Role of the tutor**

The tutor is responsible for mentoring and coaching the learner in terms of his/her practical training. The providers of education and training must ensure that the tutors are trained in the 'Facilitation of Learning' unit standard.

# ANNEXURE 2

## GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDERS

### 1 The components of a learning programme

A learning programme may be divided into -

- structured learning; and
- structured practical experience.

The **structured learning** component is often composed primarily of classroom or institutional learning, including distance learning. **Structured practical experience** is that part of learning that is connected to continuous performance in a practical situation, to ensure that the knowledge and skills acquired can be applied effectively. Both components should feature in the assessment procedures utilised.

The language in which the learning programme is written must be comprehensible by learners at the respective level, and the required embedded knowledge, both theory and practice, must be appropriate to the level of the qualification.

In some cases, provision may have to be made for ensuring that learners have the basic educational qualification required for access to general, further and/or higher education in the terms set out in the entry requirements for the specific qualification. Learners may have to undertake extra education and training to deepen their knowledge base in areas which are required for specific fields of learning.

## **2 The development of a learning programme from unit standards**

A unit standard is the minimum requirement for skills, knowledge, attributes, attitudes and values. In the case of, for example, prospective providers of a certificate of qualification, the applicant must have the ability and capacity to develop learning programmes from the unit standards for pharmacist assistants accepted by the Council at both National and Further Education and Training Certificate levels.

The term 'curriculum' refers to a **documented education and training programme**, based on which institutions and/or providers will develop or acquire teaching/learning materials and design learning strategies. It is important for a curriculum document, which is to be used across a system, to provide enough scope for trainers, lecturers and facilitators to develop the learning strategies appropriate to their specific learners.

The curriculum should encompass all the experiences, planned and unplanned, which affect the learning of a student in an educational/training environment. It should take into account individual lesson plans, workplace experiences, specific teaching and training strategies, and learning materials. Learning activities should reflect the required outcomes and the respective scope of practice. Hence, the curriculum becomes the guide to the course for all stakeholders, including the providers themselves.

## **3 Outcomes as the focus of the standard**

The focus of learning within the National Qualifications Framework approach adopted by the Council is 'outcomes'. The most important outcome of training should be a highly skilled, productive workforce. For the individual, the outcome of training should be to acquire the knowledge,

skills and attitudes which will help him/her to gain employment and progress in a chosen career.

At NC and FETC levels, the stated purpose is to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values that will enable meaningful participation in and offer benefits for society, as well as providing a basis for continuing learning in higher education and training and enabling learners to be productive and responsible in the workplace.

The concept of competency focuses on the workplace capabilities that an employee has to acquire, rather than on the learning process. An individual's competency will be recognised, irrespective of how it was acquired. Where unit standards are available, courses should be based on the applicable unit standards.

#### **4 Determining the needs of the learner**

After a learner has registered with a provider, the provider is required to determine the learner's learning gaps through a process of diagnostic assessment (see page 33), which may include an evaluation of embedded knowledge levels. Attention must also be given to the learning process, particularly with respect to fundamental concepts.

#### **5 The implementation of learning programmes**

The method of implementation of a learning programme is the responsibility of the provider. The Council will not be prescriptive in the implementation of learning programmes in terms of course duration or presentation, but it does have a responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of learning programmes. It is recommended that the duration of the courses for the NC and FETC should be 14 months.

The following information is provided as a guide to the development of learning programmes by providers.

- The learning programme for a certificate of qualification must be determined by the provider: provided that a minimum period of twelve months of in-service training must occur under the direct personal supervision of a tutor approved by the Council. The Council's approval of the pharmacy where the in-service training will take place is also required. Such approval occurs after an evaluation of the tutor and the pharmacy by the Council. There should be a contractual agreement between the provider and the tutor to ensure effective support to the learners during training and to facilitate the identification of challenges experienced by learners.
- Where applicable, the organisation of learning in the workplace must be negotiated between the employer, the provider, the tutor and the learner. The purpose of experiential learning is to achieve specific practical outcomes. Providers are therefore required to develop structured guidelines for this training. Learners and tutors are required to be given appropriate contact time and support to ensure their active participation and learning of both theory and practical content. Contact time should include formal sessions and demonstrations, where necessary. Appropriate training should be given to tutors. Details of all these measures must be included in the curriculum.

NOTE: Practice environments vary greatly and may not always include primary health care (PHC) facilities, where pharmacist's assistants are most needed. Under such circumstances, release periods to such facilities must be arranged. The duration of these periods and the activities which learners carry out during them will

form part of individual learning records. It is recommended that a minimum period of two weeks of the training period be spent at PHC level.

- The methods of delivery of education and training by a provider must be in accordance with the identified needs of the learners and of the learning programmes offered and must facilitate accessibility to learning. Methods of delivery could include:
  - distance learning programmes;
  - modular systems;
  - assignment-based education and training;
  - tutorials and self-study;
  - day courses, with instruction at centralised venues;
  - *in situ* training, comprising both theory and practical components of a course, coupled with blocks of theoretical instruction; and
  - where different providers present the same material, e.g. in the case of a contractual agreement between two or more providers, the principal provider must ensure that presentation of material is uniform and of the appropriate standard across providers. Please note that every agreement has to be approved by the Council, and the secondary provider has to apply for accreditation/approval.
  
- The provider may determine the maximum time an individual learner may spend on a learning programme, on the basis of not blocking access to learning opportunities to new learners. This time should be less than thirty months, and thereafter the learner should not be allowed to enrol for the same qualification for two years. The Council

will automatically remove the learner from the Register after thirty months.

## **6 Review of learning programmes**

To ensure that learning programmes maintain their relevance and continue to ensure appropriate outcomes, providers will review and update them on an annual basis, with the review process and outcomes being documented. The updates will include the results of mechanisms for obtaining feedback from learners and other role-players such as employers and health service providers. The results of the review process, including course updates, will be made available to SAPC on request and during monitoring and validating visits.

The criteria for the approval/accreditation of providers by the Council are included in Chapter 2 of this document.

## **7 Provisional accreditation/approval**

Provisional accreditation/approval may be granted by the Council at its discretion, and each application will be considered on its own merits. This means that the conditions for such accreditation/approval will differ from provider to provider.

# **ANNEXURE 3**

## **GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT**

### **1 The unit standard in assessment**

A unit standard is the lowest component of the standards against which a qualification can be awarded. Assessment must be based on the outcomes of competence and the assessment criteria contained in the unit standards, including the related critical cross-field outcomes, where appropriate. Before individuals can be assessed as competent against the standards, sufficient evidence must be presented to show clearly that they have met the assessment criteria for each outcome.

### **2 Outcome-based assessment**

Outcome-based assessment that is well constructed and standardised provides for consistency, as well as for the quality of assessment. Assessment measures the range of knowledge and skills and their application against the applicable unit standards.

Formal assessment means that the assessment is planned and implemented in a structured way and is recorded. Informal assessment occurs when the assessment is implemented spontaneously as the need arises. Formal and informal assessment may involve diagnostic, continuous, formative and summative assessment techniques.

#### **2.1 Diagnostic assessment**

Diagnostic assessment is a learning needs analysis tool that may be used to determine what level of learning a learner has achieved or to determine what special needs a learner may have. The assessment is sometimes informal. The results indicate what special support the learner may need, the level of learning at which a learner may be placed or an appropriate

learning institution that the learner should attend.

## **2.2 Continuous assessment**

Continuous assessment may be formal or informal. It means that several assessments will take place over a period of time and are considered collectively to give a profile of the learner.

## **2.3 Formative assessment**

Formative assessment takes place before and during a learning programme to assist the learner. The main focus is to assist the learner in identifying his or her strengths and weaknesses. Results are not necessarily recorded, but may be used to develop additional knowledge and skills towards acquiring the required competence. Assessment is carried out by the most appropriate person. The assessments should be done by registered assessors.

## **2.4 Summative assessment**

Summative assessment occurs at the conclusion of the module, learning programme or practical training period. A planned assessment takes place and the results are recorded. The results will determine whether the learner is competent or not yet competent in the competence standards applied in the assessment process. The assessment is carried out by internal assessors, with moderation by moderators.

## **3 Guidelines for assessment**

Outcome-based assessment is the process of collecting evidence and making judgements as to whether or not the relevant assessment criteria have been met. It assesses what a person can actually do, not only what he or she knows. It is measured against the requirements of the workplace, not against any particular course curriculum, i.e. it is

performance- and not norms-based. The criteria selected for assessment need to be clearly defined, measurable and applied in such a way that 'competence' is evaluated consistently. A situation in which learners classified as competent are unable to carry out key aspects of their work performance must be prevented.

NOTE: Council-appointed evaluators of courses which are submitted for approval will give special attention to this matter to ensure consistency of outcomes across providers.

Assessment activities should be:

- **flexible** in providing for the special needs of both the candidate and the environment;
- **valid** in that they assess only the outcomes detailed in the standards;
- **reliable and consistent** in that the assessment accurately reflects the individual's outcomes, regardless of how, where and by whom the assessment is carried out;
- **transparent** in that all of the processes used, and their outcomes, are clear to both those assessing and those being assessed; and
- **recorded** accurately and completely in readily accessible format.

Measurement against a particular curriculum may also form part of an outcome-based assessment, provided that the learning outcomes of the curriculum are the same as the assessment criteria of the standards, and the assessment approaches and strategies are outcome-based.

Because assessment occurs against predetermined standards, each standard presents specific outcomes that must be achieved by the learner in order for the learner to demonstrate competence in that standard. There

are, however, different types of specific outcomes which can influence the assessment of the capability of the learner. These include:

- specific outcomes which describe a process or a skill that can be attained at different levels of competence. An example of this is the manufacturing of a medicine;
- specific outcomes which require different performance indicators, depending on the context in which they are attained, with the learner having to demonstrate competence in several contexts. An example of context is the provision of information on medicines to patients, the community and other health care professionals; and
- specific outcomes which are composite and require the attainment of a variety of skills, knowledge and attributes in order to demonstrate that competence has been achieved. An example of a composite outcome is the issuing of medicine on prescription.

**Effective outcome-based assessments must thus ensure the following:**

- Evidence of performance must be provided in the assessment of all outcomes, whether the outcomes are assessed individually or in clusters;
- Alternative forms of assessment, such as simulations, tests, work-based projects or assignments, must be provided, which will help to increase access to assessment;
- Care must be taken to ensure that all outcomes and assessment criteria have been covered, and that it is possible to predict that the competence assessed can be sustained in the workplace;
- Cognisance must be taken of the level descriptors in the standard

against which competence is assessed to ensure that the appropriate outcome levels have been achieved by the learner;

- Where it is not possible to carry out the assessment in the workplace, performance must be demonstrated and assessed under conditions as close as possible to those under which it would normally take place;
- Where evidence of skills is limited and does not permit reliable inference of the candidate's knowledge and understanding as required by the standards, skills must be assessed separately;
- All assessment methods must provide the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate full competence against the standards, and no unnecessary additional demands, such as supplementary tests, training or examinations, must be placed on them;
- Where applicable, some of the assessment for a qualification must be conducted in a language other than English, provided that clear evidence is available that the candidate is competent in English to the standard required for competent performance;
- Where appropriate, and in line with the requirements of the workplace, provision must be made for the assessment of candidates with special needs, such as physical or sensory disabilities, who may require special help to undertake assessment;
- A reliable system must be in place for recording evidence of competence across the full range of circumstances in which the skills and knowledge are required to be applied, and as specified in the applicable range statement. The assessment system should include a method for recording units and outcomes achieved as a result of the assessment, in order to provide for credit accumulation and

transfer; and

- Assessments should not be repeated *ad infinitum* until candidates are assessed as competent. Rather, a maximum number of re-assessments should be stated.

Objective assessment against clear assessment criteria, followed by accurate and honest feedback, is a vital tool in learning gained through the assessment process.

#### **4 Access to assessment**

Access to assessment which may ultimately lead to a statement of competence should be available to all who have the potential to reach the standards required. As such, assessment processes and procedures should be free from any barriers that may unnecessarily restrict access to assessment.

To achieve this objective, the following elements should be evident:

- assessment tools, including the unit standards and any assessment guides or materials, which are appropriate to the requirements of the workplace, free from jargon, and simple to use;
- access to assessment which is independent of any mode of learning, skills or knowledge prerequisites, and specified periods of time to be spent in education, training or work;
- facilities and resources that do not impose unnecessary physical and other barriers to assessment;
- systems, processes and assessment tools that meet specific criteria (such as format, terminology, etc.) and are free from bias either towards or against sections of the community; and

- assessment in a language that allows the learner to express himself/herself clearly in terms of the outcome competencies of the qualification.

## **5 Assessors and assessor training**

The quality of assessment is crucial to the success of any outcome-based assessment system. It is important, therefore, that assessors are trained in assessment techniques and are able to carry out assessments using nationally recognised competency standards. The question of who should carry out the function of assessor is, however, one best determined by the industry, enterprise or profession in which the assessment is carried out.

Selecting an assessor will see a balance being sought between the need for the assessor to have vocational competence in the occupational area being assessed, and his or her competency in the assessment process. Achieving such a balance will enable the assessor to create an environment where candidates can obtain a fair and honest evaluation of the evidence they are presenting, based on the commonly used methods of assessment and the assessor's own experience and knowledge.

The assessor must be a person trained in assessment processes. The functions of the assessor may include the following:

- (a) Coordinating the assessment process by –
  - distributing information throughout the organisation;
  - gaining support for the processes from all sections of the organisation;
  - ensuring that key players are trained and competent in their functions;
  - ensuring that all documentation is complete and accurate;

- ensuring appropriate support for candidates with special needs;  
and
  - monitoring assessment and other processes to ensure quality;
- (b) Counseling and interviewing candidates by following up individual requests arising from information dissemination, and assisting candidates in overcoming any personal difficulties with the relevant processes;
- (c) Maintaining the appropriate records of assessment;
- (d) Motivating the candidate by -
- identifying needs in seeking assessment rather than formal training;
  - helping to maintain self-confidence when searching for evidence;
  - providing feedback on performance throughout the assessment process; and
  - assisting in developing realistic and attainable targets and action plans;

- (e) Advising and mentoring candidates in accessing resources and training by providing advice and guidance on processes and systems being followed;
- (f) Preparing the candidate for assessment by helping the candidate prepare an action plan and gaining commitment to follow the plan through, and by discussing the processes in full, including the standards, to ensure that candidates know how to achieve the outcomes successfully; and
- (g) Identifying and developing evidence from all possible sources to help candidates select the strongest possible evidence to support their claim of competence, providing advice and guidance as to where information of evidence can be found, and providing support in overcoming difficulties such as evidence that cannot be obtained or will not be released or provided by others.

## **5.1 Pharmacists as assessors**

The successful assessment of competence by the assessor requires an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the particular vocational characteristics of the area in which competence is to be demonstrated by the learner. Experience in the practical application of the criteria against which the level of competence is to be measured is also necessary. The assessment of competence of learners within the pharmacy environment thus requires that the assessor should be fully conversant with the practice needs in pharmacy, including the philosophy of pharmacy practice, legal and ethical requirements, and practice procedures. The assessor must thus be a pharmacist who is trained in assessment methodologies. It is the responsibility of the providers to ensure that all their assessors are up to date with the latest developments in the field of pharmacy.

## 5.2 Categories of assessment

Assessments fall into one of the following categories:

- **formative assessments**, which may be conducted by registered assessors;
- **summative assessments**, which are conducted by assessors who are accredited/registered as an assessor with the Council in terms of the relevant unit standard; and
- **moderating assessments**, which are conducted by assessors who are accredited/registered as a moderator assessor with the Council in terms of the relevant unit standard.

## 5.3 Selecting suitable assessors

The following attributes are required of a suitable assessor:

- He/she must be a pharmacist who is an expert in the field or subject to be assessed;
- Assessment of fundamental components of the qualification may be done by an assessor who is registered as such with the relevant ETQA;
- He/she must be trained and qualified as an assessor. Assessor training must have occurred at a level at least equal to or above that at which the assessor intends to assess. For instance, assessment of pharmacist's assistants at the Further Education and Training Band on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) requires that the assessor be trained as an assessor at least at the Further Education and Training Band, but preferably at the Higher Education and Training Band;

- He/she must be accredited and registered as an assessor by the relevant quality assurance body. Assessors are required to register as such with the South African Pharmacy Council as the authority tasked with the approval/accreditation of assessors in the pharmacy learning environment; and
- He/she must be well aware of the context within which he/she is assessing, e.g. the NQF system, the professional standards of pharmacists and pharmacist's assistants, and the applicable registration requirements.

Any pharmacist who has undergone appropriate training and satisfies the Council's requirements for the accreditation/registration of assessors may be so registered.

Besides the above attributes, a person trained and registered as an assessor is also required to —

- understand how evidence of competent performance can be demonstrated;
- judge the evidence of performance against the standards in a consistent manner;
- judge the evidence of understanding that supports the inference of competent performance; and
- make and record the assessment decisions.

#### **5.4 Assessor training**

Assessment in itself has become a job-role in which competence must be demonstrated. The purpose of training and qualification as an assessor is to enable the prospective assessor to show that he/she is competent as an assessor. In order to prove this, evidence must be demonstrated that

the assessment processes and the associated terminology are understood, that assessment of a variety of persons by a variety of means can be carried out, and that these skills can be applied to the relevant circumstances.

A trained assessor must be capable of demonstrating the following skills:

- observing the candidate as the job is done (performance evidence);
- asking questions, both orally and in writing, to determine the candidate's level of knowledge;
- judging evidence of competence provided by the candidate, such as video tapes, certificates, etc.;
- making judgements on the candidate's competence based on the evidence presented; and
- providing feedback on the achievements of the candidate and any perceived shortcomings.

The assessor will work with candidates with varying degrees of experience as well as with candidates whose assessment may require special arrangements. The assessment of the candidate may also occur at different levels of competence. Records of assessments undertaken must be maintained and a portfolio of evidence as an assessor built up.

The training of the assessor is essential for ensuring that both traditional assessment methods and competency assessment methods are understood by the assessor in order that effective assessment of the candidate may take place.

Inadequate training of assessors is demonstrated by a lack of consistency and reliability across courses and learners. It must be reduced and/or prevented by requiring assessors to achieve ongoing competence through

attendance at and assessment in training courses accredited by the ETDP SETA or relevant ETQA.

## **6 Quality assurance**

### **6.1 Moderation procedures**

The South African Pharmacy Council, as an Education and Training Quality Assurance body (ETQA), is responsible for ensuring the quality of pharmacy education and training. This includes the quality of assessment systems and methods. To contribute to the achievement of this objective, providers must ensure that appropriate moderating policies and procedures are in place and that they are administered by moderators who are registered/accredited with the Council.

### **6.2 Administrative system for assessment and recording of results**

Assessors of pharmacy education and training are required to maintain records of each successful assessment performed. These records should include the completion and maintenance by providers of report forms or learner assessment portfolios which should include at least the following information:

- units, outcomes and assessment criteria assessed;
- date/s and method/s of assessment and/or evidence used to demonstrate competency;
- outcomes of the assessment and details of the learner, assessor and moderator (if applicable);
- comments, which include agreed action plans for the achievement of outstanding skills and knowledge, where necessary; and
- the signatures of the learner and assessor and, where appropriate, the

person moderating or verifying the assessment outcome.

The assessment portfolio thus forms a record of the outcomes that have been assessed and the associated evidence involved. It must be retained by the provider for a period of five years.

### **6.3 Quality assurance and maintenance of standards for assessment**

The Council monitors and maintains the unit standards within the scope of practice of the pharmacy profession. This requirement includes both the competency standards developed and the standard of assessment carried out against them.

The quality assurance process includes the monitoring of assessments to ensure that the standards continue to be useful to the profession in terms of individual learning, career achievements and organisational development.

### **6.4 Appeals procedure**

Assessment systems must include clearly described appeal policies and processes whereby candidates can seek independent assessment in case of disagreement regarding the outcome of an assessment. This process must form part of the quality assurance policy of providers.

Appeals against assessment decisions on the demonstration of competence by candidates will be considered in terms of the appeals processes of the Council or prescribed in the regulations to the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act 58 of 1995).

Appeals against assessments of competence may be an indication that the assessment standards do not meet the needs of the profession, or that the application of the standards is problematic in that-

- the standards may have become irrelevant and are no longer

applicable;

- the standards are relevant, but the quality of evidence being brought forward is poor;
- the standards are relevant and the evidence being brought forward is appropriate and sufficient, but the quality of advice given to the candidate and/or his or her actual assessment is poor; or
- the curriculum, where applicable, has not been correctly developed against the standards in order to meet the needs of the profession.

The following measures may be considered by the Council to overcome the difficulties arising from these appeals:

- A review and revision of the standards, or those parts that are affected, will be carried out by the SGB for Pharmacy and the Council to bring them in line with the needs of the profession;
- Workshops and information-sharing activities will be introduced to assist candidates to identify and present evidence that is applicable to the standards against which the assessment is being performed; and
- A curriculum identified as being defective will be reviewed and revised to ensure that it is correctly developed and aligned against the standards, and any further action necessary to ensure the correct delivery of the training and its valid assessment will be undertaken.

## **7 Recognition of prior learning**

Within a competency-based assessment process, recognition of prior learning (RPL) is applied to recognise existing competency, regardless of where and how such competency was gained. Recognition of prior learning thus concentrates on competency, and not qualifications or learning.

RPL assessment occurs within a wider range of evidence than simply workplace performance. It aims to show that the candidate's skills and knowledge are current and in line with the unit standards. RPL candidates must be assessed against the same standards of assessment as other learners. Successful assessment means that the candidate does not need to undertake further training or assessment in areas where he or she has already provided sufficient evidence of competency. It also encourages candidates to attempt further learning and assessment that may lead to qualifications or credits at a similar or higher level, as credit accumulation and transfer will underpin all assessments carried out against nationally recognised standards of competency.

When prior learning is considered, the term 'learning' needs to be clarified. In South Africa, 'learning' is often perceived to be the activity of committing facts to memory, as in rote learning. In the context of the recognition of prior learning, however, the word 'learning' has a wider meaning and includes experiential and theoretical learning. In this context, learning could have been gained through any means, such as work experience, life experience, reading, institutional studies and informal studies. Learning should thus be linked to the demonstration of competence in the workplace and to the assessment of qualifications and credentials.

The recognition of prior learning, whether formal or informal, is an essential component of the assessment of a person in determining competency and for purposes of awarding a qualification. It may be of great benefit to adult learners and those without formal training or qualifications, because –

- evidence can come from any source, including life experiences, self-study, open learning, or unstructured learning or training;
- most work environments can provide sufficient evidence of competency through either current work or previous employment;

- outside experiences can be used as evidence of competency against the standards, including volunteer or unpaid work, hobbies or other interests; and
- evidence from a number of areas can be combined to demonstrate complete competency against the outcomes of the unit standards.

The recognition of prior learning also provides an indication of the learning that is already in place at the onset of a learning programme. It identifies the competencies and performance outcomes that the learner may have achieved as a result of workplace or experiential learning over a period of time.

In seeking credit for current competence, the candidate must take the initiative in the provision of reliable and valid evidence. Because of this requirement, there may be significant time delays if such evidence is not available immediately or if there is any misunderstanding as to what constitutes reliable and valid evidence. Close supervision and guidance by a mentor in the development of a portfolio of evidence or other activities designed to show competence against the standards is often necessary.

Documentary evidence of competency should be gathered by learners and presented to the provider prior to registration of the learning programme. This evidence should satisfy the required entry assumptions of the course. If the evidence presented is deemed by the provider to be insufficient, the learner may be asked to complete a questionnaire to identify current competency and the learning acquired previously (prior learning).

If the candidate is deemed to be competent by the provider, the evidence should be sent to the Council for verification. The learner must be

informed of the results, but should also be informed that they are subject to verification by the Council.

## **ANNEXURE 4**

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

“**access**” means to provide ease of entry to appropriate levels of education and training for all prospective learners in a manner which facilitates progression;

“**articulation**” means to provide for learners, on successful completion of accredited prerequisites, to move between components of the delivery system;

“**assessment**” means the process of collecting evidence of learners’ work to measure and make judgements about the achievement or non-achievement of specified National Qualifications Framework standards and/or qualifications;

“**assessor**” means a pharmacist registered with the Council in accordance with criteria determined and published for this purpose by the Council to measure outcomes of pharmacy education and training;

“**certificate of approval/accreditation**” means a certificate issued by the Council to a person or institution which complies with the criteria determined and published by the Council for the approval/accreditation of providers;

“**certificate of qualification**” means documentary evidence of a qualification required for registration as a pharmacist’s assistant;

“**external customer/s**” means an external person, body or structure that is a beneficiary of the services or product of a particular organisation;

**“facilitator of learning and assessment”** means an individual who facilitates learning processes and activities and manages and administers assessment, such as an educator, teacher, trainer, mentor, etc.

**“moderation”** means the process which ensures that assessment of the outcomes described in National Qualification Framework standards or qualifications is fair, valid and reliable;

**“outcomes”** means the contextually demonstrated end-products of the learning process;

**“provider”** means any person or institution approved/accredited by and registered with the Council to provide education and training for purposes of conferring a qualification in pharmacy or a certificate of qualification or for purposes of continuing professional development;

**“qualification in pharmacy”** means a qualification prescribed for purposes of registration as a pharmacist;

**“quality management system”** means the combination of processes used to ensure that the degree of excellence specified is achieved;

**“tutor”** means the pharmacist approved by the Council to supervise the internship of a pharmacist intern or the in-service training of a pharmacist’s assistant;

**“unit standards”** means the education and training outcomes prescribed for the various categories of persons, for purposes of registration in terms of the Act.