

# Teach-out period for old qualification comes to an end

Pharmacist's assistant learner basic: SAQA ID19825, and pharmacist's assistant learner post-basic: SAQA ID19819

The old pharmacist's assistant qualification ended on 20 August 2013. Learners who registered before 20 August 2010 are considered to have been registered on the old qualification. As of 18 November 2013 there were 878 pharmacist's assistants learner basic (PALB) and 446 pharmacist's assistants learner post-

basic (PALPB) registered on the old qualification in Council's register.

Council will be removing all PALB and PALPB learners registered on the old qualification who have not registered as pharmacist's assistant basic (PAB) or pharmacist's assistant post-basic (PAPB) by 1 January 2014. To remain in Council's active register, the following submissions must be made to Council by 15 December 2013:

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Pharmacy Support Personnel Scope of Practice SAPC 2013		Pharmacist's Assistant Basic	Pharmacist's Assistant Post Basic	Pharmacy General Assistant	Pharmacy Technical Assistant	Pharmacy Technician
<b>SCOPE OF PRACTICE</b>						
1.	General housekeeping and administrative tasks in the pharmacy as specified by the responsible pharmacist	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.	Assist with packaging and re-packaging of Schedule 0 to Schedule 5 (excluding Specified Schedule 5) medicines	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3.	Picking, packing and dispatching of orders for Schedule 0 to Schedule 5 medicines provided that orders that contain Schedule 5 medicines are validated by a pharmacist prior to release thereof	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.	Assist with the management of stock of Schedule 1 to Schedule 5 medicines; provided that orders that contain medicines which fall into Schedule 5 are validated by a pharmacist	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.	Assist with the compounding, manipulation, preparation and manufacturing of non-sterile Schedule 1 to Schedule 5 medicines; provided that the pharmacy general assistant is not involved in the planning of the production process, interpretation and evaluation, validation and quality assurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6.	The provision of information to individuals to promote health	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
7.	The sale of Schedule 1 medicines without the prescription from an authorised prescriber; provided that supply of a Schedule 1 medicine takes place in consultation with a pharmacist	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
8.	The sale of Schedule 1 and 2 medicines without a prescription from an authorised prescriber; provided that the supply of a Schedule 2 medicine takes place in consultation with a pharmacist	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
9.	The dispensing of Schedule 1, 2, 3 and 4 medicines (i.e. the selection, manipulation or compounding of the medicine, the labelling and packing of the medicine in an appropriate container and the provision of information to a patient, caregiver or the agent of a patient regarding the correct use of medicine to optimize therapeutic outcomes) on the prescription of an authorised prescriber; provided that the pharmacist interprets and evaluates the prescription	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
10.	Work under indirect supervision in a primary health care clinic	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
11.	The checking of orders containing Schedule 1 to 4 medicines in closed packs, prior to the packing and dispatch thereof, which have been picked by a pharmacist's assistant, as well as the supervision of such persons; provided that this function may only be performed in a manufacturing pharmacy, wholesale pharmacy or bulk store of an institutional pharmacy	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
12.	Assist with the manufacturing, compounding, manipulation or preparation of sterile medicine or scheduled substance, in accordance with the Medicines Act	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
13.	Assist with the selection or preparation of a Schedule 1 to Schedule 5 medicine or scheduled substance prescribed by an authorised prescriber and the labelling of an appropriate container, following the interpretation and evaluation of the prescription by a pharmacist	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
14.	The provision of information to a patient, caregiver or the agent of a patient to optimise therapeutic outcomes resulting from the use of medicines which have been dispensed at a pharmacy and sent to the primary health care clinic for supply to the patient or the patient's agent or caregiver	No	No	No	No	Yes
15.	The ordering and receipt of Schedule 1 to Schedule 5 medicines; provided that orders that contain Schedule 5 medicines are validated by a pharmacist	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
16.	The sampling, or supervision of the sampling of medicines in accordance with Good Manufacturing Practice	No	No	No	No	Yes
17.	The packaging and re-packaging of Schedule 0 to Schedule 5 (excluding Specified Schedule 5) medicines, in accordance with the Medicines Act, provided that the functions of the pharmacy technician may include - (i) checking and signing the identity of the bulk product and printed packaging material in accordance with the Batch Manufacturing Document and in compliance with standard operating procedures (ii) start-up line clearance and opening of the packaging line in accordance with the Batch Manufacturing/Packaging Document and in compliance with standard operating procedures; and detailed checklist, provided that the pharmacist has provided the necessary signed authorisation thereof (iii) in process control during packaging and re-packaging of Schedule 0 to Schedule 5 (excluding Specified Schedule 5) medicines, provided that the pharmacist does periodic checks in accordance with standard operating procedures and that final line closure is signed off by the pharmacist	No	No	No	No	Yes
18.	Supervision of pharmacy support personnel as specified by the responsible pharmacist	No	No	No	No	Yes
19.	The provision of technical support in the provision of screening tests provided that where an interpretation of results is required this is done by a pharmacist	No	No	No	No	Yes

## New Pharmacy Midlevel Workers

The posters provide detailed career progression paths for four categories of pharmacy support personnel. Each poster includes a '1. Timelines' section with specific dates for training completion and registration. It also outlines the requirements for progression to higher levels, such as '2. Not completed PALB training' leading to 'Apply to pharmacist SAQA' and 'General Assistant (PAB)'. Career options are listed as 'Choose to further career' or 'Choose to remain PA [level]'. The posters also include a table of 'Pharmacist's assistants in the category' with columns for SAQA ID, Level, and Status.

These posters are available from Council. To request your copy, please send an e-mail to [customer care@sapc.za.org](mailto:customer care@sapc.za.org) with your P-number or Y-number and your delivery address



- Pharmacist's assistants learner basic (PALB) who did not complete the old qualification and who wish to retain their registration are advised to enrol for the revised qualification and apply to Council for registration as PALB.
- Pharmacist's assistants learner post-basic (PALPB) who did not complete the old qualification will maintain their registration status as pharmacist's assistant basic (PAB). Those who wish to retain their registration as a PALPB are advised to enrol with a Council-accredited provider for the revised qualification and forward Council a completed application form for registration as PALPB on the revised qualification as well as all supporting documents and prescribed fees.
- All PALB or PALPB who have applied for registration as PAB or PAPB and who did not complete the required in-service training due to erasure for non-payment of annual fees, are

advised to re-apply for the revised qualification and apply to Council for registration as PALB or PALPB.

**Learners who completed their qualifications on or before 20 August 2013 are advised to apply for registration as PAB or PAPB and must provide the following:**

- **Proof of payment for the full registration fee by 15 December 2013**
- **Evidence from the responsible pharmacist that in-service training was conducted in a facility registered or recorded with Council**
- **All progress reports signed by the tutor or responsible pharmacist.**

Council's register will be updated to ensure that only learners registered for the revised qualification (learners enrolled with providers after 20 August 2010) remain in the register of learners.

# Learners cannot be in training forever

Council maintains a register of pharmacist's assistants, basic and learner basic. The pharmacist's assistant basic and post-basic qualifications each have 140 credits, and it is expected that a person will take at least 14 months to complete each qualification.

Pharmacist's assistants register with an accredited provider and also as learners with Council before undergoing in-service training. On completion of the training they are registered as basic or post-basic, depending on their category. Unfortunately, not all complete the qualification and those who do not complete, remain in the register of pharmacist's assistants as learner basic or learner post-basic.

This puts tutors and employers at a disadvantage as they are restricted when it comes to training additional pharmacist's assistants as the *Regulations relating to education and training* limit the number of learners a tutor may train at a time. As tutors resign and move to other facilities, the learners are acquired by the remaining tutors, whilst the other learners become orphaned and never complete the qualification.

A document named '*Guidelines for providers of education and training who wish to offer the national certificate for pharmacist's assistant and the further education and training certificate for the pharmacist's assistant*' has been developed to address, amongst others, this anomaly.

According to the document, a learner basic or learner post basic, once registered for training, has thirty (30) months or less to complete the programme, and a learner who fail to complete the programme within the stipulated time will not be allowed to enrol for the same qualification for a period of two years. Council will automatically remove the name of such a learner from the Council register.

It is, therefore, an expectation from Council that all pharmacist's assistants who registered as learner basic or learner post-basic effective from 21 August 2010 complete their qualifications and register with Council within the prescribed timelines, that is within 30 months.

