
National Recruitment for NHS Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacists (England & Wales)

The National Recruitment Scheme is the centralised system through which pharmacy undergraduate students apply for the nearly 700 pre-registration trainee pharmacist posts in NHS hospitals in England and Wales. More than 40% (1350) of UK pharmacy students apply for these hospital-based placements; twice the percentage of the pharmacy workforce employed within the acute sector. The Scheme is commissioned and managed by the NHS Pharmacy Education & Development Committee (NHS PEDC) on behalf of participating Trusts. Webstar Health (Pharmalife) is commissioned to provide the online application system via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the NHS and a Lead Pharmacist is responsible for the delivery and monitoring of the Scheme.

The number of applications for hospital placements has increased by 42% over the past six years and the Scheme now processes more than 5000 applications each year. In 2009 there was an average of 30 applications per NHS Hospital and 8 applications per advertised post with a total of 1350 candidates for 676 advertised posts. In 2009, 56 candidates applied from the Overseas Pharmacist Assessment Programme (OSPAP course).

Posts are advertised on the Webstar Health website (www.pharmacytraining.nhs.uk) every March and students are required to register and submit academic referee details before the end of June. Applications are accepted up to the end of August for posts due to commence the following summer. Students are interviewed by the hospitals in September and a second recruitment round takes place in October to match remaining vacancies with unplaced students.

The Scheme performs well against an agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA), with hospitals receiving their applications within defined timescales. Communication and referral of queries by Webstar Health to the National Recruitment Scheme Lead, Helen Middleton, are timely and all queries are answered within 2 working days. Planned service improvements/developments are agreed between Webstar Health and the NHS PEDC at an annual review meeting. Participating Trusts are satisfied with the scheme which is efficient and responsive to their requirements and those of their students.

More information about the National Recruitment Scheme is available on the Committee's website at www.nhspecd.nhs.uk.

Clive Moss-Barclay,
Chair, NHS Pharmacy Education and Development Committee

Helen Middleton,
Lead for the National Recruitment Scheme for NHS Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacists
(England and Wales)

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