

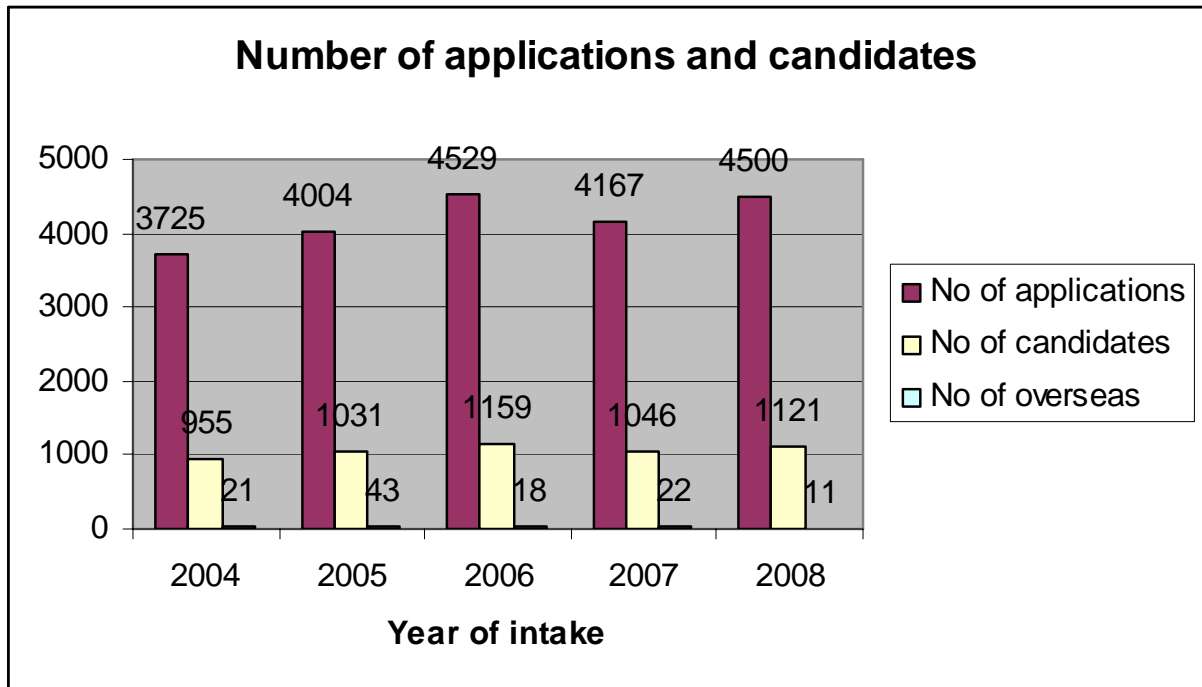
**Report for the NHS Pharmacy Education & Development Committee
on the first round of recruitment for the 2008 intake of
preregistration trainee pharmacists to the NHS**

Introduction

The National Recruitment Scheme is the system through which pharmacy undergraduates can apply for preregistration trainee pharmacist posts in NHS hospitals in England and Wales. This report provides a summary of the activity in the first round of recruitment in 2007 for the 2008 intake, and suggests aspects of the scheme that the NHS PEDC committee may wish to discuss.

Number of applications

There were a total of 4,500 applications for posts, from 1,121 candidates for the 2008 intake of NHS preregistration trainees. This includes 11 overseas candidates (Figure 1). 168 candidates required work permits (compared with 142 in 2007 and 123 in 2006 intakes).



There was an average of 25.8 applications per site (range 1 – 216) and an average of 7.3 applications per advertised post (compared with 6.8/post last year). There were a total of 1,121 candidates for 616 advertised posts (1.8 candidates per post compared with 1.67 candidates per post last year).

As in previous years, Guy's & St Thomas's received the highest number of applications. Three non-London hospitals were in the top 10 (including one group of hospitals using a regional admissions panel), and 11 were in the top 20. All hospitals had at least one application.

Timing of applications

Less than 10 % of applications (336) had been made by the end of June. 60 % (2,709) of applications were made in the last three days. This is a higher proportion of “last minute” applications than in the last three years when it had been around 53 – 57 %. An additional 49 “late” applications were made after the closing date in September. This number is much higher than in previous years. Approximately 9 candidates contacted Webstar Health in early September to say that they had been completing their application and tried to submit it after midnight on the 31st August, but had discovered that the system would not accept it. Webstar Health accepted late applications from these candidates if they were contacted by them.

Webstar Health also telephoned candidates who had draft applications in the system, but had not submitted them by the deadline, to see if they wanted to submit them, and so this accounts for a further number of late applications.

Applications from Schools of Pharmacy

Applications were made from the following Schools of Pharmacy;

Intake	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
School						
Aberdeen (MPharm course)	36	36	31	43	45	43
Aston (MPharm course)	65	82	66	92	90	62
Bath	63	83	70	87	70	52
Belfast	6	2	3	7	9	8
Bradford	8	8	25	41	33	48
Brighton (MPharm course)	55	57	70	69	80	75
Cardiff	62	68	58	66	61	67
Kingston						30
Leicester	41	45	48	59	54	65
Liverpool	40	68	56	66	48	42
London Kings	59	83	62	71	52	72
London School of Pharmacy	93	103	155	112	126	116
Manchester	75	64	73	98	99	107
Medway						47
Norwich (UEA)					28	53
Nottingham	84	89	94	98	85	82
Portsmouth	50	70	82	91	58	46
Strathclyde	18	11	14	22	18	8
Sunderland (MPharm course)	71	65	81	94	90	87
International	15	21	43	21	22	11
Total	841	955	1031	1137	1068	1121

References

References were not requested for a total of 69 candidates. In addition, 33 references were requested but not received by the deadline, making a total of 102 candidates with missing references. This compares with a figure of 31 last year and 53 the year before.

Last year, for one year only, a slightly different system had been in place where the candidates were required to complete a draft application in order to allow their referee to be contacted. This caused problems for candidates, so Webstar Health reverted back to the original system, where candidates only needed to register on the system in order to get the reference.

Candidates were told they needed to register by 1st July in order for their referee to be contacted. In practice, references were requested for any candidate who registered on the system up until August 8th (over a month after the stated deadline). After that date, a policy of no further new reference requests was strictly applied. Referees and candidates were contacted regularly (up to weekly) if nothing had been received.

A number of referees were uncontactable, either because the candidate had given an incorrect e-mail address, or in a number of cases the referee had left the institution. In some cases, the institution had SPAM filters in place which meant that the request for a reference was blocked.

Validity of applications

Webstar Health confirmed the validity of all applications. The validity of one candidate's MPharm degree was questioned and the NRS lead caretaker informed the relevant regional coordinators.

Suggested areas for discussion by NHS PEDS

The scheme appears to have performed satisfactorily with hospitals receiving their application details in the agreed timescales and with no major problems being reported. An analysis of these statistics and a review of enquiries dealt with by the NRS lead in August and September 07 highlights a number of issues that the committee may wish to discuss including:

- Availability of references
- Acceptance of late applications
- The need or otherwise for Webstar Health to consult with the NRS lead person about how to deal with the above or other issues.
- Grouping of hospitals into regional admissions panels
- Accessibility of the website for candidates with a disability
- Timeliness of response by Webstar Health to enquirers

Lynne Bollington
Caretaker lead of NRS (from 1st August 07)
September 2007