
**Report on the first round of recruitment for the 2010 intake of NHS
pre-registration trainee pharmacists (England & Wales)**

Introduction

The National Recruitment Scheme is the system through which pharmacy undergraduates apply for pre-registration 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 2009 for the 2010 intake, and suggests aspects of the scheme that the NHS Pharmacy Education & Development Committee (NHS PEDC) may wish to discuss.

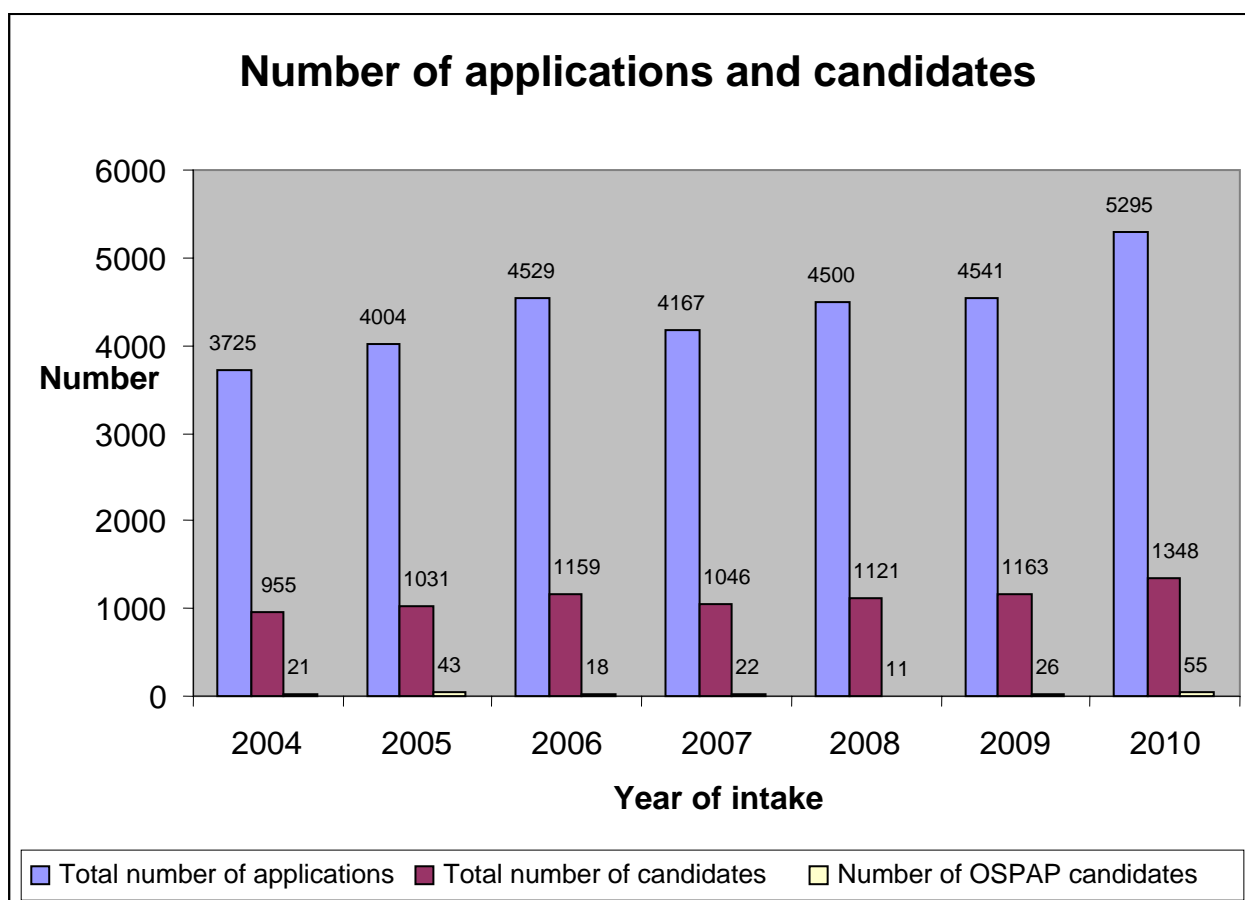
Number of applications

There were a total of 5295 applications for posts, from 1348 candidates for the 2010 intake of NHS pre-registration trainee pharmacists. This is a 16.6% increase in applications compared with the 2009 intake (4541 applications and 1163 candidates). This increase is higher than the expected increase in number of graduates (Expected number of graduates: 2009 n = 2776; 2010 n = 3114 therefore 12.18% more graduates expected in 2010 compared with 2009).

56 candidates were from the Overseas Pharmacist Assessment Programme (OSPAP course) compared with 29 for the 2009 intake and 11 for the 2008 intake. This increase may be a result of improved marketing of the National Recruitment Scheme to OSPAP students via collaboration with the RPSGB overseas division which has enabled us to provide information to the OSPAP students at an earlier stage. Another explanation may be that more OSPAP students applied to hospital pharmacy because of the removal of community pre-registration trainee pharmacists from the Shortage Occupation List. Due to advice from NHS Employers we were unable to gather data on the number non UK/EEA applicants who required permission to work in the UK for the 2010.

Despite an increase in number of applicants the proportion of potential graduates applying remains lower than desired with only 43.29% of students applying to hospital pharmacy (compared with 41.5% last year).

The application statistics are shown in the graph on page 2.



Applications per hospital

There was an average of 30.1 applications per hospital (range 2 – 163). This is significant increase compared with the average number of applications last year (n= 25.5).

676 pre-registration training positions were advertised for the 2010 intake (compared with 633 places for the 2009 intake and 616 places for the for the 2008 intake).

On average there were 7.83 applications per advertised post (compared with 7.17 applications per advertised post last year). There were a total of 1348 candidates for 676 advertised posts (1.99 candidates per advertised post for the 2010 intake compared with 1.83 candidates per advertised post last year).

Charing Cross and St Mary's hospital received the highest number of applications for the first time (due to the merger of 2 large teaching hospitals). One non-London hospital was in the top 10 (compared with two last year), and 7 were in the top 20. All hospitals had at least two applications.

Timing of applications

2.8% of applications (146) had been made by the end of June. 64% (3388) of applications were made in the last three days. The numbers of “last minute” applications were similar to the last 2 years when the figure was 58.7% (2009 intake) and 60% (2008 intake).

Despite being instructed NOT to accept “late” applications, Webstar Health accepted an additional 29 after the closing date on 1st September. This number is higher than last year (n = 10). Webstar

Health were contacted by 8 candidates and the reasons given for late applications were: requests to change the ranking after submission (Webstar Health had to un-submit the applications, change the ranking and then re-submit); One student that was in Canada and mixed up the time difference; a few students said they had technical problems when submitting their applications i.e. computer crashed. I only became aware that these “late” applications were accepted when I reviewed the statistics reports in mid September. I have contacted Webstar Health and explained that these are not valid reasons to allow “late” applications and re-iterated that “late” applications should not be accepted under any circumstances.

Applicants from Schools of Pharmacy

Applications were made from the following Schools of Pharmacy. Two new schools of pharmacy (Wolverhampton and Keele) will produce their first graduates in 2010.

Intake	Number of applicants - MPharm course							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Aberdeen	36	36	31	43	45	43	45	39
Aston	65	82	66	92	90	62	68	65
Bath	63	83	70	87	70	52	67	64
Belfast	6	2	3	7	9	8	6	5
Bradford	8	8	25	41	33	48	42	58
Brighton	55	57	70	69	80	75	85	65
Cardiff	62	68	58	66	61	67	44	66
Hertfordshire							22	49
Keele								23
Kingston						30	47	52
Leicester	41	45	48	59	54	65	47	44
Liverpool	40	68	56	66	48	42	77	45
London Kings	59	83	62	71	52	72	50	69
London School of Pharmacy	93	103	155	112	126	116	99	98
Manchester	75	64	73	98	99	107	89	94
Medway						47	42	88
Norwich (UEA)					28	53	43	56
Nottingham	84	89	94	98	85	82	79	111
Portsmouth	50	70	82	91	58	46	67	64
Reading							20	54
Strathclyde	18	11	14	22	18	8	10	17
Sunderland	71	65	81	94	90	87	77	49
Wolverhampton								17

Intake	Number of applicants - OSPAP course							
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
International *	15	21	43	21	22	11		
Aberdeen							0	2
Aston							9	35
Brighton							11	11
Sunderland							6	8
Total number of applicants (MPharm + OSPAP)	841	955	1031	1137	1068	1121	1163	1348

* The 2009 intake was the first time that we had a breakdown of the Schools of Pharmacy for the OSPAP course.

Academic references

References were not requested for a total of 66 candidates. In addition, 27 references were requested but not received by the deadline, making a total of 93 candidates with missing references. This compares with a figure of 139 last year and 102 the year before.

Candidates were told they needed to register by 30th June in order for their referee to be contacted. In practice, references were requested for any candidate who registered on the system up until 1st August (over a month after the stated deadline). 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. Referees and candidates were contacted on 7th August to chase outstanding references. In addition a list of outstanding referees was sent to the pre-registration co-ordinator at each school of pharmacy to ask them to follow up the referees or find a replacement referee if necessary.

Validity of applications

Webstar Health confirmed the validity of all applications.

Conclusions

The scheme appears to have performed well with hospitals receiving their application details in the agreed timescales and with no major problems being reported. Communication and referral of queries by Pharmalife to the National Recruitment Scheme Lead has been timely and all queries are answered within 2 working days. Pharmalife has been efficient and responsive and has agreed to all service improvements requested. These include:

- Revision of the coding page
- Removal of the questions related to immigration part way through the recruitment period and purging of data on student's immigration status in order to comply with NHS Employers advice
- Enhancement of equality monitoring to include:
 - Age, gender and disability status in addition to ethnicity
 - Equality monitoring reports for hospitals as well as for NHS regional pre-registration co-ordinators
 - Equality monitoring reports for candidates short-listed for interview as well as for applications

Suggested areas for discussion by NHS Pharmacy Education & Development Committee

An analysis of these statistics highlights a number of issues that the committee may wish to discuss including:

- Acceptance of late applications
- How to increase the proportion of students who apply for hospital pharmacy training

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