

Nigel Clarke
Chair
General Pharmaceutical Council

By email

18 September 2020

Dear Nigel,

Delayed 2020 registration assessment

We are writing this letter jointly to ask you to urgently clarify when the delayed 2020 registration assessment will take place and to ensure that any decision takes into account the concerns of trainees on how the delay will impact them. This delay and the lack of progress updates are causing considerable additional anxiety for those waiting to sit the exam. It is vitally important that you communicate regularly with trainees who are feeling increasingly frustrated.

We appreciate the challenge of securing an online provider and that the assessment requires rigorous quality assurance. However, this prolonged uncertainty and the likelihood that the delay will extend into 2021 is deeply troubling. We urge the GPhC to urgently address this and communicate more regularly and openly with trainees and both the BPSA and RPS are keen to support you with this.

You will be aware that many trainees are concerned about how the delay is going to affect them. Some have been left unemployed, or on short term contracts and others have visas that will expire before the assessment takes place. It is essential that arrangements are put in place to ensure that no one is left disadvantaged by the delay.

This has already been a challenging year. Provisional registrants have dealt with unprecedented challenges in the face of a global pandemic and will need to balance working as a responsible pharmacist alongside revising for the registration assessment.

We recognise that the GPhC is working to understand its role and impact on equality, diversity and inclusivity in the pharmacy profession and we are keen to help support this work. With the difference in pass rates between black African and white British trainees taking the registration widening by four percentage points since 2018, and with the exceptional circumstances of this year, it is more important than ever that we have a clear and transparent understanding of the equality impact of the assessment process. It is essential that we all work together to ensure that there are no biased outcomes for anyone sitting the assessment.

Trainees need to know what the arrangements for the assessment are so that they can start preparing and can understand how the delay will impact on their circumstances. Regular communication is essential to allay their concerns and to make them feel engaged and valued. We want to work with you to minimise the impact the delay has and to ensure that trainees are prepared to move on to the next chapter of their careers.

Yours sincerely,



Regan McCahill
President
British Pharmaceutical Students' Association



Sandra Gidley
President
Royal Pharmaceutical Society

cc Duncan Rudkin, Chief Executive & Registrar, GPhC