

MEDIA RELEASE

12 December 2023

Excellent Assessment Centre results welcomed by Pharmacy Council

The Pharmacy Council welcomes the pass rate of 86 percent for interns who participated in November's Assessment Centre 2023, with 198 interns having now met the requirements to register for the pharmacist scope of practice and practice independently.

"This is an excellent result, which has affirmed the robustness and integrity of the Assessment Centre," says Pharmacy Council CEO Michael Pead.

"We congratulate the interns who were successful and can now contribute to supporting patients in our communities as safe and competent pharmacists."

All 198 interns were advised earlier in the week of their success.

The assessment, an objective structured clinical examination, is the final step for pharmacy interns to register to practise, without supervision, as pharmacists. Interns work through ten cases that replicate real-life situations that occur in pharmacy practice. Each case is written and reviewed by at least 30 different pharmacists from the profession, and on the assessment day, 60 pharmacists take part as assessors.

Mr Pead says that this very positive November result is hopefully a return to the typical pass rates previously experienced by interns participating in the Assessment Centre. Education providers and Council had met last year and agreed that last year's low pass rate was most likely multifactorial.

"This year's result is reassuring and perhaps supports the view that last year's outcome was an outlier."

He adds that although the number of interns who passed in November 2022 was below normal levels, it was important to recognise that the majority went on to pass the May 2023 Assessment Centre.

"The additional time to prepare for resitting the assessment was important to assure their fitness and competence to practise as an unsupervised pharmacist."

Mr Pead says that Council understands that there is a high demand for pharmacists in our health workforce, however it is critical that the profession's high standards are not compromised.

"The credibility of the profession is ultimately dependent on every pharmacist being fit and competent to practise."

Most interns who did not pass this year's Assessment Centre will be able to re-sit the exam in six months' time. Mr Pead says Council encourages those who have not been successful to take the time to reflect and prepare themselves for the May 2024 Assessment Centre. "Often the extra six months preparation for the Assessment is enough for interns to pass and meet the requirements to become superb pharmacists."

He says that Council acknowledges and appreciates the efforts of the Universities of Auckland and Otago and the Pharmaceutical Society to prepare students to meet the standards expected to become excellent pharmacists.

“We especially recognise the additional initiatives the Pharmaceutical Society took to again help and support another group of interns to be eligible to register as pharmacists.”

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