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Advancing the UK Pharmacy Workforce: The Design of the UK's First Degree for Pharmacy Technicians

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Introduction

- In the UK, legislative expansion of pharmacy practice is increasing demand for clinically capable pharmacy technicians ¹.
- A 2024 National Pharmacy Technician Group Scotland (NPTSG) consultation identified significant clinical knowledge gaps (figure 1) limiting potential progression into advanced clinical practice roles².
- This highlighted the need for structured degree-level clinical education.

SCQF Levels	Qualifications	Pharmacy profession entry to practice
11	Master's Degree (MPharm)	Pharmacist
10	Honour's Degree	? GAP
9	Bachelor's Degree	? GAP
8	Higher National Diploma (HND)	Pharmacy Technician
7	Higher National Certificate (HNC)	
6	Skills for Work Higher	Pharmacy Support Staff
5	Skills for Work National 5	
4	Skills for Work National 4	
3	Skills for Work National 3	
2	Skills for Work National 2	
1	Skills for Work National 1	

Figure 1: Pharmacy profession credential GAP identified by NPTSG ²

The Why: Aim

To bridge the identified knowledge gap between Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 9 -10 (figure 1) ³.

- We designed and developed the Bachelor of Science with Honours in Clinical Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (BSc (Hons) CPPT) degree
- The first of its kind in the UK.

Method

- A multi-stakeholder co-design approach was utilised.
- Curriculum mapping aligned to
 - four pillars of practice (figure 2) &
 - SCQF levels 8,9 and 10.



Figure 2: The four pillars of practice

Results

- The resulting curriculum provides a comprehensive, clinically oriented pathway that strengthens clinical reasoning, therapeutic knowledge, leadership & evidence-based practice.
- Students to develop competence across the 4 pillars of clinical practice and gain the knowledge required for Level 5 practitioner roles, aligning with the rest of the healthcare family.
- It is fully online for accessibility & to support digital skill development.
- Launched in September 2025

Conclusion

- The BSc (Hons) CPPT is a transformative innovation in UK pharmacy workforce education.
- By aligning with national frameworks & workforce priorities, it supports service redesign, enhances clinical capacity, & contributes to a sustainable, future-ready pharmacy technician workforce.

References

1. APTUK. Position statements on pharmacy technician practice. 2024.
2. NPTSG. Development pathways consultation. 2024.
3. SCQF Partnership. SCQF explained. 2021.

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