

Frequently Asked Questions on Progress Tests

As part of ongoing development of the Postgraduate Diploma in General Pharmacy Practice, a regular progress test is being introduced starting from February 2010. This is intended to monitor individual practitioner's progress throughout the full 3 years of the programme.

Why are progress tests being developed?

Progress tests have been introduced in response to requests from stakeholders to test knowledge more regularly and in more depth. They are intended to monitor individual practitioner's progress throughout the full 3 years of the programme.

What is the purpose of the progress test?

The progress test and feedback provided will help practitioners (with the support of their tutor) to identify knowledge gaps therefore helping practitioners to direct their learning. It also allows JPB and the Training Centres to monitor the individual's progress throughout the programme.

What will the progress test involve?

This will be in the form of a determinate-style MCQ paper lasting one hour. Determinate MCQ questions involve a statement or 'stem' with 5 further related statements that are either 'True' or 'False'. One mark will be awarded for a correct answer, and one mark will be deducted for an incorrect answer. No marks are deducted for a 'Do not know' response. The progress test will be syllabus-based across the four core curriculum guides.

When will the progress tests be undertaken?

The test will be administered shortly after entry to the programme followed by every January and July across the three years of the programme (i.e. even during DAPs). Continuing to test into the DAP stage of the programme will allow practitioners at this stage to evaluate the maintenance of their foundational knowledge-base.

What preparation do practitioners need to undertake?

Practitioners are not expected to prepare for the progress tests.

Is this a formal assessment?

No and there is no pass mark for practitioners to attain.

What feedback can practitioners expect?

Early progress tests will be paper-based and administered during learning sets. Over time we hope to migrate to a remote, electronic format. We plan to analyze completed papers for trends and to provide feedback on areas for practitioners to concentrate in their learning. Early progress test feedback is likely to be basic. In the future we hope to be able to disseminate more sophisticated findings to all stakeholders in order to inform development needs for each cohort.

Why are all practitioners taking the same progress test?

By allowing practitioners to sit the same test they will be able to monitor their learning development through the programme. Practitioners in the earlier stages of the programme are expected to find the tests more challenging because they may not have covered certain areas of the syllabus but should find that their confidence and ability increase each time a test is taken.