



PRESCRIBING SAFETY  
ASSESSMENT (PSA) GUIDANCE  
FOR FOUNDATION TRAINEES  
AND TRAINERS IN SCOTLAND

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
The PSA.....	2
Sitting the PSA .....	2
Learning in Foundation Training (LIFT).....	3
Feedback provided by the PSA .....	3
After PSA sitting .....	3
The Scottish Foundation School .....	4

## Introduction

The Prescribing Safety Assessment (PSA) has been jointly developed by the British Pharmacological Society and MSC Assessment. The PSA is intended to be a valid and reliable tool to demonstrate that medical graduates have achieved the core prescribing competencies outlined in the Outcome for graduates 2018 published by the GMC. This guide should be used in conjunction with guidance and any subsequent versions published on the [UKFPO website](#).

It is a national requirement to demonstrate a pass of the PSA by the end of F1 training. All F1 trainees will be required to pass the PSA and it is one of the requirements before being signed off as having successfully completed the F1 year and being awarded F1CC.

All UK medical schools either mandate or offer 5th year medical students the opportunity to complete PSA prior to starting Foundation training. This guidance does not apply to pre-registered doctors who have successfully completed the PSA exam. As long as the trainee has passed the PSA, it is valid indefinitely once they are an F1 trainee. The time limit only applies at the point of entry.

It is recommended that trainees who are appointed to a F2 standalone post who hold full registration should sit the PSA, if not already completed at medical school.

## The PSA

The PSA is an online assessment, delivered on a secure platform. The assessment is nationally developed but conducted locally by medical schools and Foundation Schools. The content of each item is relevant to the prescribing tasks expected of an F1 doctor, i.e. the questions refer to conditions and drugs likely to be encountered in year one of the Foundation Programme. The PSA includes 60 items and is 2 hours in length.

## Sitting the PSA

There will be several opportunities to sit/resit the PSA and details of the sittings can be found on the [Scottish Foundation School webpages](#).

The Scottish Foundation School Administrator will contact trainees to advise them that they have been registered to sit the PSA and it is the responsibility of the trainee to adequately prepare for these exam opportunities. In the training year August-July there will be the opportunity to sit the PSA exam 3 times.

The Foundation School would expect that, as this is a mandatory requirement for successful completion of ARCP and hence registration with the GMC, trainees should be allowed to take leave to sit the assessment. The School would expect that trainees should not be required to swap shifts or sit during annual leave. The dates are publicised well in advance to allow planning. If there are challenges in rotas, then the FPDs/Consortium Leads should be expected to support the trainee in securing time to sit the assessment. Trainees are advised to contact the Scottish Foundation School at the earliest opportunity regarding any issues in being released to sit the assessment.

### Learning in Foundation Training (LIFT)

The Scottish Foundation School has developed a number of e-learning modules in [LIFT](#) to support in the preparation for the PSA exam.

1. General Prescribing
2. General Prescribing 1
3. General Prescribing 2
4. General Prescribing 3
5. General Prescribing 4
6. Paediatric Prescribing
7. Paediatric Prescribing 1
8. Paediatric Prescribing 2
9. Pregnant Patients
10. Pregnant Patients 1
11. Pregnant Patients 2
12. Elderly Patients
13. The Elderly 2

Trainees should make **every attempt** to sit the PSA exam at all available opportunities. Failure to attend a scheduled PSA exam will be reported to the regional Associate Postgraduate Dean for Foundation, Consortium Lead (if relevant) and the trainee's FPD.

Repeated failure of the PSA may trigger a face to face meeting with the trainee's FPD who can provide support and guidance and the creation of an action plan which will be documented in the trainee's portfolio.

It is important to note that failure to pass the exam prior to commencement of the Foundation Programme will not impact on your employment. Individuals will commence their allocated programme as scheduled but will be required to meet with the FPD to agree an action plan and to complete the LIFT modules listed above. As the PSA is required for the end of FY1 and not the entry point, any trainee who has yet to pass should not be required to have a different level of prescribing supervision unless the clinical/educational supervisors or FPDs have identified a prescribing concern. All FY1 trainees irrespective of their PSA status require to have their prescribing supervised by the clinical team.

### Feedback provided by the PSA

PSA feedback is provided for each candidate regarding the total percentage mark gained in the assessment together with the performance data for each section. Trainees and their supervisors should use the feedback to focus training on the areas which require further development.

### After PSA sitting

The PSA pass mark fluctuates and changes at each sitting. As such, successful trainees **must** download their certificate at the time of receiving the results and upload to their Turas Portfolio. If the certificate is not downloaded until a later date, it may flag as a fail (if a subsequent sitting had a higher pass mark and your score was borderline).

### [The Scottish Foundation School](#)

At the beginning of the training year (August) the Foundation School team will inform FPDs of incoming trainees who have not completed PSA prior to entry into Foundation training.

Each Foundation School will have a PSA lead and administrator. Foundation doctors should receive information on the details of the assessment from the June before the first assessment that will include:

- Date of the assessment
- Location and time of the assessment
- How to activate your account
- Items needed on the day of the assessment
- How you will receive your results
- Point of contact if you have concerns

Any questions or queries regarding the PSA should be emailed to [The Scottish Foundation School](#) ([sfas@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:sfas@nes.scot.nhs.uk))