EUROPE · NETHERLANDS · NON-EEA PHARMACY DEGREE ROUTE

# NL Pharmacist registration in Netherlands

To work as a pharmacist you must be registered in the BIG-register. With a degree from outside the EEA you first need a verklaring van vakbekwaamheid (certificate of professional competence), issued after an assessment by the CBGV expert commission. Facts checked against official sources on **20 November 2026**.

**ROUTE CHANGED IN 2024** The AKV test was removed on 1 January 2024. You now send Dutch (B2+) and English reading (B2) certificates with your application. The BI-toets applies only to doctors, dentists and nurses, not pharmacists. The application is free now, but costs €102.86 from 1 January 2027.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dutch B2+ | English B2 | Apply | CBGV | Extra training | BIG-register |
| four skills | reading only | Mijn BIG-register | expert assessment | only if advised | registration |
| 12–24 months (est.) | 1–3 months (est.) | next step in 4 weeks | 6–18 months overall | 3 months–2 years | 1–2 months (est.) |

## The route, step by step

1. **Reach Dutch at level B2+**
   Pharmacy is an academic profession, so you need B2+ in reading, writing, speaking and listening from a BIG-listed provider, or CNaVT abroad. Certificate under 2 years old.
   **Time: 12–24 months (est.) · Cost: set by provider**
2. **Prove English reading at B2**
   IELTS 5.5–6.0, TOEFL 72–94, Cambridge 160–179 or British Council EnglishScore, with a reading part. Certificate under 2 years old.
   **Time: 1–3 months (est.) · Cost: set by test body**
3. **Apply for the verklaring van vakbekwaamheid**
   Apply online with a BIG login or DigiD. Send diploma, course overview, syllabus, proof you may practise, language certificates and translations.
   **Time: next step in 4 weeks · Cost: free until 31.12.26**
4. **Assessment by the CBGV**
   Nuffic may evaluate your diploma. The commission reviews your education and experience, may interview you, then advises. There is no BI-toets for pharmacists.
   **Time: 6–18 months overall**
5. **Complete any training the CBGV sets**
   If there are gaps, the decision can require extra training, an adaptation internship or a practical skills test. Courses last 3 months to 2 years.
   **Time: 3 months–2 years · Cost: set by provider**
6. **Register as apotheker**
   With a positive certificate, register in the BIG-register before you start work. Fee €85.00, rising to €124.46 on 1 January 2027.
   **Time: 1–2 months (est.) · Cost: €85.00**

| Official fees | Amount |
|---|---|
| **Certificate of competence application**<br>Application and CBGV assessment are free in 2026 | **€102.86 from 2027** |
| **BIG registration**<br>One-off registration fee after a positive certificate; €124.46 from 1 January 2027 | **€85.00 (2026)** |
| **Language certificates**<br>Dutch B2+ and English reading B2, paid to the exam provider; not set by CIBG | **set by provider** |
| **IND highly skilled migrant permit**<br>First application, usually filed by the employer as recognised sponsor | **€423.00** |
| **IND orientation year permit**<br>Only for eligible graduates, see the visa section | **€254.00** |

## Exam pattern: online or onsite?

**Dutch language certificate (B2+)** TEST CENTRE
Reading, writing, speaking and listening · Level B2+ for academic professions · Only BIG-listed B2+ providers or CNaVT · Pass grade needed; under 2 years old

**English reading certificate (B2)** TEST CENTRE
Must include a reading component · IELTS 5.5–6.0 or TOEFL 72–94 · Cambridge 160–179 or EnglishScore · Certificate under 2 years old

## Timelines

- After you submit, CIBG tells you the next step within 4 weeks. The full certificate procedure takes 6 months to 1.5 years on average.
- Without a BI-toets, the commission decides within 6 weeks of receiving your file for advice. You then have 2 weeks to respond to the intended decision.
- Extra training, if required, lasts 3 months to 2 years. Language study before applying usually takes longest.

**Typical total: About 2–4 years (est.)**

## Keep these separate

- Certificate ≠ registration ≠ visa ≠ job. The verklaring is not a licence: you must still register in the BIG-register, and neither gives a right to live or work.
- Pharmacists may not work as a pharmacist before BIG registration. Residence is decided by the IND, and hiring by the employer.
- Highly skilled migrant permits need an employer who is an IND recognised sponsor and a salary at the yearly threshold. Nothing in this process is guaranteed.

## How ASGHCA supports you

- International Career Mapping: consult, assess, roadmap, prepare
- Documentation and registration guidance
- English test preparation: IELTS, PTE and OET
- 1-on-1 mentorship, CV and interview support
- Webinars, CPD sessions and a lifetime community

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**Sources (checked 20 November 2026):** english.bigregister.nl: certificate of competence procedure, tests, Dutch language proficiency, English reading skills, supporting documents, processing time and costs, CBGV, AKV news (18 Jul 2023) · knmp.nl: recognition of foreign diplomas, Cao Apothekers in Dienstverband · uu.nl: master Farmacie, non-Dutch diploma · ind.nl: required amounts 2026, orientation year, fees · netherlandsworldwide.nl: MVV apply Pakistan, legalisation of Pakistani documents. **Important:** general information prepared from official sources, not legal or immigration advice. Fees, rules and dates change; always confirm with the competent authority before paying or applying. Durations marked (est.) are ASGHCA planning estimates, not official figures. ASGHCA provides education and career guidance and is not a regulator, law firm or licensed immigration adviser. ASGHCA does not guarantee exam success, registration, employment, sponsorship, visas or residence. For visa matters consult the official mission or an authorised adviser.