OCEANIA · NEW ZEALAND · NON-REQR OVERSEAS PHARMACIST ROUTE

NZ How to register as a pharmacist in New Zealand

Pharmacists are registered by the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003. If you trained outside Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK and Ireland, you use the non-REQR route: preliminary review, two exams, an intern year, then registration. Licence or registration: **Registration in the Pharmacist scope of practice**. Regulator: **Pharmacy Council of New Zealand (Te Pou Whakamana Kaimatū o Aotearoa)**. Every fact was checked against official sources on **20 November 2026**.

INTERN ENTRY: 2028 The Council says applicants still awaiting a preliminary review decision, or applying from 2 July 2026 onwards, cannot meet all requirements in time for the 2027 intern programme and should plan for 2028. A 2026 Council consultation also proposes changes to this route, so check the Council page before applying.

Who decides what	
Pharmacy Council of New Zealand	Runs the preliminary review, intern and pharmacist registration, and the Assessment Centre.
Australian Pharmacy Council	Runs the OPRA exam for Council-approved candidates, including registration, fees and results.
University of Auckland and PSNZ	The University runs the NZPL course. The Pharmaceutical Society of NZ runs the Intern Training Programme.
Immigration New Zealand	Decides work and resident visas. Separate from registration.
Employer	Decides hiring, including intern training posts. A licence is not a job offer.

Who can apply

- A pharmacy degree such as BPharm, MPharm or PharmD.
- Current registration as a pharmacist in the country where you earned the degree.
- Relevant clinical pharmacy work experience after registration. Experience during study counts only if highly relevant and extensive.
- A pass in a Council-approved English test (IELTS or OET) before the preliminary review.
- Fitness for registration: health, conduct and competence. Updated good standing and police records are checked at intern registration.
- Registered in Australia, Canada, Ireland, the UK or the USA? You use a different route (REQR or TTMR), not this one.

The steps, with approximate time and cost

1 Pass a Council-approved English test
IELTS Academic 7.0 in every band, or OET grade A or B in every sub-test, within 2 years of applying. It is needed before the preliminary review.
Time: 2–6 months (est.) · Cost: set by test provider

2 Apply for the preliminary review
Online application with degree, registration, work history and self-assessment. Transcripts must arrive from the issuer within 90 working days. No other step starts until you are approved.
Time: about 8 weeks · Cost: NZ$950

3 Pass the OPRA exam
Overseas Pharmacist Readiness Assessment, run by the Australian Pharmacy Council at test centres, including in Pakistan. Two attempts. Pass OPRA and NZPL within 2 years of approval.
Time: within 2 years · Cost: A$2,245 per attempt

4 Pass the NZ Pharmacy Legislation course
A 12-week online course on New Zealand law, ethics and professional duties, with a final assessment in week 12. You need Council approval before enrolling.
Time: 12 weeks · Cost: fee to be confirmed

5 Register as an intern and train
Needs a paid job at an approved pharmacy with a preceptor. Complete the PSNZ Intern Training Programme (at least 1,450 hours) and pass the Assessment Centre OSCE within 2 years.
Time: about 1 year (est.) · Cost: NZ$909

6 Register as a pharmacist
Apply to change scope from Intern to Pharmacist once training and the Assessment Centre are done and no practice concerns are raised.
Time: after passing · Cost: NZ$371.30–1,055

Typical total: About 2.5–4 years (est.)

Language requirements

- IELTS Academic: at least 7.0 in each of the four bands, within 2 years of applying. One IELTS One Skill Retake within 60 days is accepted.
- OET: grade A or B in each of the four sub-tests, within 2 years. Results from more than one sitting in that period can be combined.
- No other English tests are listed by the Council.

Read this before you plan

- Licence ≠ visa ≠ job. Council approval or registration gives no right to enter, stay or work. Visas are decided by Immigration New Zealand.
- The intern year needs a paid job at an approved pharmacy with a preceptor. Finding that job is your task, and nothing in this process is guaranteed.
- Before intern registration, approved applicants already in New Zealand may work only as a supervised Pharmacy Graduate, and only with a valid visa.

Exams, costs and documents

Checked 20 November 2026

Exam pattern and mode: online, test centre or onsite

OPRA (Overseas Pharmacist Readiness)

TEST CENTRE

- 120 questions, 2.5 hours
- Biomedical, pharmaceutical and clinical sciences
- Result is pass or unsuccessful, no score
- 2 attempts; more only at Council discretion
- Results valid 2 years for the Council

In person at test centres. APC lists centres in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi, plus Auckland and Wellington. No online option is listed.

NZ Pharmacy Legislation course (NZPL)

ONLINE

- 12 weeks, 10 online modules
- Compulsory weekly Zoom class
- Final assessment in week 12, 100%
- All module activities must be completed
- Council approval needed to enrol

Taught online by the University of Auckland: 10 modules and a weekly Zoom class. The provider does not state where the final assessment is sat.

Assessment Centre (OSCE)

ONSITE

- Objective structured clinical exam
- 10 stations testing clinical skills
- Usually held in May and November
- Only after completing intern training
- Attempts limited to sittings while an intern

In person in New Zealand at the end of the intern year. Council policy names Auckland and Wellington. Not offered online or abroad.

Official fees	Amount
Preliminary review (non-comparable) Initial consideration of registration, non-refundable	**NZ$950**
OPRA, per attempt Paid to the Australian Pharmacy Council at registration	**A$2,245**
Intern registration and APC Initial registration and annual practising certificate, intern scope	**NZ$909**
Intern APC renewal, second year Only if you need a second intern year	**NZ$669**
Change of scope, Intern to Pharmacist NZ$1,055 after the May Assessment Centre; NZ$371.30 after the November one	**NZ$371.30–1,055**
NZPL course and Intern Training Set by the University of Auckland and PSNZ. NZPL fee listed as to be confirmed	**see provider**

Council fees from the Pharmacy Council (Fees) Notice 2025, GST inclusive. English tests, travel and living costs are extra.

Documents usually required

- Proof of identity
- Pharmacy degree and transcript, sent directly by the issuer
- Registration certificate, sent directly by the registering authority
- Employment history
- Self-assessment of knowledge, experience and skills
- English test results
- Certificate of good standing (renewed if over 6 months old)
- Police records from each country you have lived in
- OPRA and NZPL results for intern registration

Expected time

- Preliminary review usually takes about 8 weeks after all documents arrive; the Council says high volumes can make it longer. Documents must arrive within 90 working days.
- OPRA and NZPL must both be passed within 2 years of approval. OPRA sittings are listed for March, July and November 2027.
- The intern programme runs from 10 January to 7 November each year. Training and the Assessment Centre must be finished within 2 years of intern registration.

Typical total: About 2.5–4 years (est.)

The intern year in New Zealand

- You need a paid job at an approved community or hospital pharmacy, supervised by an approved preceptor. Volunteer work does not count.
- Intern Training Programme by PSNZ: at least 1,450 supervised hours between 10 January and 7 November, up to 84 hours a fortnight.
- Applications to the programme open in mid-November and close in late January.
- You finish with the Council's Assessment Centre OSCE. Both must be done within 2 years of intern registration.

Visas, pay and next steps

Checked 20 November 2026

Immigration route (separate from registration)	What official sources say	Status
Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV)	Needs a full-time job offer of 30+ hours from an accredited employer with an approved job check. For jobs that need registration, you show NZ registration or confirmation that you are eligible. From NZ$1,540; 80% decided within 5 weeks.	Open
Green List Straight to Residence	Hospital, industrial and retail pharmacist are Tier 1, needing Pharmacy Council registration and a pharmacy degree, plus an accredited employer job and the set pay. The March 2026 list page shows as archived, so check the live list. From NZ$6,450.	Confirm
Skilled Migrant Category	Points-based residence: 6 points from qualification, NZ occupational registration or income, plus up to 3 for NZ skilled work. Needs an accredited employer job. Changes took effect on 24 August 2026. From NZ$6,450.	Open

If you are applying from Pakistan

- The Australian Pharmacy Council lists OPRA test centres in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. Seats vary and venues may change at short notice.
- OPRA fees are paid by Visa or Mastercard issued by a bank in your country of residence, or by Google Pay or Apple Pay.
- Transcripts and registration certificates must reach the Council directly from your university and registering authority.
- Most NZ visas are applied for online. Medicals must use an INZ panel physician where your country has one; confirm the current list for Pakistan.
- Police certificates are needed from countries of citizenship and where you spent 12+ months in the last 10 years, under 6 months old.

Pay and funding

- No official or collective-agreement pharmacist pay figure was verified for this guide.
- For the Green List and AEWV, Immigration New Zealand sets minimum pay rules; check the current rate for your job before you accept an offer.

Avoid these common mistakes

- Booking OPRA or NZPL before the Council's preliminary review approval. Neither can be taken without it.
- Missing the 90 working day window for documents sent directly by your university and registering authority.
- Using both OPRA attempts without preparation. Further attempts are only at the Council's discretion.
- Passing the exams without a plan for a paid intern post in New Zealand. Intern registration needs one.
- Assuming Council approval or intern registration gives a visa, residence or a job.

How ASGHCA supports you

- OPRA exam preparation course
- 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

ASGHCA offers education and guidance. Regulated immigration advice is referred to authorised professionals.

Official sources, all checked 20 November 2026: pharmacycouncil.org.nz: Pharmacists qualified in other countries, English language requirements, Fees (Fees Notice 2025), Intern pharmacists, Intern Policy · pharmacycouncil.org.au: New Zealand OPRA exam · publicprogrammes.ac.nz: NZ Pharmacy Legislation · psnz.org.nz: ITP information for overseas pharmacists · immigration.govt.nz: Appendix 13 Green List (09/03/2026), Straight to Residence, AEWV, Skilled Migrant Category, health and police requirements.

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Dr. Afifa Saghir (RPh), Founder & CEO · Registered Pharmacist in Pakistan and Australia

inquiry@asghca.com
WhatsApp +92 335 0051800 · +61 491 787 335 · UK +44 7587 013834
Instagram & TikTok @asghcaofficial · facebook.com/asghca

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