AFRICA · SOUTH AFRICA · FOREIGN-QUALIFIED PHARMACIST ROUTE

ZA Pharmacist registration in South Africa

To practise as a pharmacist in South Africa you must be registered with the South African Pharmacy Council under the Pharmacy Act 53 of 1974. Foreign-qualified pharmacists have their degree evaluated, pass a professional exam and then complete practical training or community service. Facts checked against official sources on **20 November 2026**.

WORK RIGHTS COME FIRST SAPC states that foreign-qualified applicants must be permanent residents or have permission to work in South Africa. Non-South Africans also need a Department of Health (FWMP) letter of support to book the exams, and a Home Affairs work permit before community service. Plan immigration and registration together.

1	2	3	4	5	6
SAQA qualification check	FWMP letter Department of Health	Apply to SAPC credential evaluation	Professional exam 3 online papers	Internship / CSP Council decides	Registration pharmacist
3–6 months (est.)	1–3 months (est.)	3–6 months (est.)	twice a year	12 months +	after completion

The route, step by step

1. **Have your degree evaluated by SAQA**
   All foreign qualifications must first be evaluated by the South African Qualifications Authority. SAPC needs the original SAQA certificate and a SAQA consent form.
   Time: 3–6 months (est.) · Cost: set by SAQA
2. **Get a Department of Health letter**
   Non-South Africans who need a work permit need a letter of support from the National Department of Health Foreign Workforce Management Programme. It is also needed to book the exams.
   Time: 1–3 months (est.)
3. **Apply to SAPC for evaluation**
   Submit the full application and fee. The Pre-registration Committee meets in March, June, August and November. Missing documents after 6 months void the application.
   Time: 3–6 months (est.) · Cost: R21,964
4. **Pass the Professional Examination**
   Three open-book multiple-choice papers on the SAPC online platform, held in May and September or October. You need at least 50% in each paper.
   Time: twice a year · Cost: R4,677 per paper
5. **Internship or community service**
   Council may register you as a pharmacist intern for practical training, or as a pharmacist to perform community service at a public health facility.
   Time: 12 months + · Cost: R737 a year (intern)
6. **Register as a pharmacist**
   Once all requirements are met you are registered as a pharmacist. An annual fee is due each year by 1 February.
   Time: after completion · Cost: R2,687 a year

Official fees	Amount
Evaluation of foreign qualification Non-South African citizen, VAT incl. (South African citizen: R11,171)	**R21,964**
Professional exam, per paper Three papers in total. The 2026 brochure shows R4,514; the fee notice and exam form show R4,677	**R4,677**
Review of exam results, per paper Optional, if you want a paper re-checked	**R1,215**
Pre-registration exam, 3rd+ attempt Interns, from the third attempt. Late booking fee R1,383	**R2,800**
Annual fee, pharmacist intern Payable each year while registered as an intern	**R737**

Exam pattern: online or onsite?

SAPC Professional Examination ONLINE
3 open-book papers, at least 50% in each · Pharmacy practice and law: 120 MCQs, 4 hours · Pharmaceutics and chemistry: 90 MCQs, 3 hours · Pharmacology and toxicology: 90 MCQs, 3 hours

Pre-registration examination ONLINE
Required during the internship · Calculations section: 2 hours · General section: 2.5 hours · Held in March, August and October

Timelines

- The Pre-registration Committee meets in March, June, August and November. Complete applications are due by 31 January, 30 April, 30 June and 30 September.
- Professional exams run in May and September or October. Book at least one month ahead. SAPC aims to release results within 2 months.
- Non-South Africans have 4 attempts per paper within 4 years of approval. Outstanding documents must arrive within 6 months of applying.

Typical total: About 2–4 years (est.)

Keep these separate

- Registration ≠ visa ≠ job. SAPC registration gives no right to enter or stay. Home Affairs decides visas, and employers decide hiring.
- SAPC itself asks for proof of permission to reside and work, and a Home Affairs work permit before community service, so plan the immigration route alongside.
- Practising pharmacy without SAPC registration is unlawful in South Africa. 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): SAPC (sapc.za.org, pharmcouncil.co.za): foreign-qualified overview, process, forms and exam pages; 2026 Foreign Graduate Registration Guidelines brochure; 2026 Professional Examination study guide and application form; 2026 pre-registration exam notice · Board Notice 860 of 2025 (GG 53799) and Board Notice 943 of 2026 (GG 54876), gov.za · SAQA (saqa.org.za) · National Department of Health FWMP · South African visa application centre for Pakistan (vfsglobal.com/one-pager/southafrica/pakistan). **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.