
FACULTY OF
CANCER PHARMACY



Faculty Handbook A Guide to the FCP and How to Achieve Membership

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1. What is the Faculty of Cancer Pharmacy (FCP)?

The Faculty is a distinct semi-autonomous professional body within the College of Pharmacy Practice (the College). It provides professional support for pharmacists in the UK, from any professional background, who are interested and/or working in the specialist area of cancer pharmacy.

Launched in January 2008 as a joint venture between the College and The British Oncology Pharmacy Association, the Faculty works to the same main objectives of the College. It is run by a working Board consisting of six people elected from the membership, and works to a formal constitution.

2. What is the College of Pharmacy Practice?

Set up in 1980 as a Registered Charity, the College is an independent organisation with a membership of pharmacists from all branches of the profession. The College objectives are to:

Promote the highest professional standards to benefit patients and health care provision.

Promote post-registration training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The College mission statement is:

“To promote professional and personal development of all pharmacists and their staff to ensure a competent workforce which aspires to excellence in practice”.

The College has an established record for its innovative approaches to continuing professional development, assessment and accreditation.

Members of the College receive a variety of benefits: -

Recognition of a commitment to quality CPD;

The CPD Portfolio;

Progression to membership;

College and Faculty newsletters;

Involvement in a progressive College concerned with members' professional development and the future of the profession;

An opportunity to join one of the increasing range of Faculties relevant to particular specialist areas of pharmacy practice;

Peer recognition and support.

Recognising that the pharmacy profession is developing areas of specialisation, each with its own representative group(s), the College took the first step in creating a specialist faculty structure for pharmacy. Set up within the College, the faculty structure provides a coherent focus for the development of core and specialist competency frameworks, linked to a robust system of CPD, which also supports the RPSGB programme. The College provides the umbrella infrastructure, support and guidance to the Faculty of Cancer Pharmacy.

3. What are the benefits of joining the FCP?

A framework of practice standards (competencies) developed and agreed by the membership, to help you develop your role and ability in this specialist area.

Recognised accreditation as a specialist practitioner (i.e. Member status) in Cancer pharmacy when you demonstrate professional achievements of competence, expertise and excellence against Faculty practice standards.

Access to a tailored education and training programme, consisting of accredited conferences and workshops, designed specifically to support your CPD and progress towards specialist practitioner accreditation (i.e. Member status).

Support in your continuing professional and personal development e.g. through mentoring.

Regular communication with, and support through, a network of peers working and/or interested in this specialist area of practice.

Access to experts in this specialist area of practice.

Knowledge that events and education materials accredited by the Faculty are considered to be of high quality and relevant to Faculty competencies.

Opportunities to influence national strategy development through responses to consultations co-ordinated by the Faculty on behalf of its membership.

Support and promotion of targeted research and development in this area of practice.

A regular newsletter – Faculty Focus.

Access to an electronic discussion group.

4. Faculty Membership

4.1 Joining

The Faculty is a specialist group within the College. Therefore in order to join the Faculty you must already be an Associate Member or Member of the College.

Membership is on an annual basis, from 1 April each year.

You must be able to demonstrate an interest in cancer pharmacy by being a member of the British Oncology Pharmacy Association.

4.2 The different levels of membership

Associate membership

When you join the Faculty you do so as an **Associate Member** (hereafter referred to as Associate). If you also joined the College for the first time you are designated an Associate of the College too. You are entitled to use the letters ACPD after your name.

If, when you join the Faculty, you are an existing Associate or Member of the College you retain your existing membership status of the College and become an Associate of the Faculty.

Full Membership

Full **Member** status of the Faculty is conferred through a process of accreditation (see Section 7) when you successfully demonstrate that you practice to a sufficiently high standard, and that this practice is supported by appropriate skills, knowledge and experience. Most pharmacists joining the Faculty will strive towards Full Membership at some point in their career, as it formally recognises them as a specialist practitioner in the field of cancer pharmacy. Successful application for Membership of the Faculty automatically confers Membership of the College as well.

Please note: If you have successfully applied for Membership of the College, this does not automatically confer Membership of the Faculty, as there is still a need to demonstrate the specific expertise, skills and knowledge required to work in the specialist area of cancer pharmacy.

Membership of the Faculty is available at three levels – General, Advanced and Fellowship and more information on which level you should consider applying for is given in section 7 of this booklet.

Pharmacists with special interests (PwSi)

At the time of printing of this handbook, the PwSI framework is under development and will be considered by the Faculty in due course.

5. Why seek full membership?

To become a member of the Faculty, you will need to demonstrate that you have acquired a range of competencies and skills and are working at a high level. The Faculty's accreditation process requires you to make an assessment of your own competency and evidence this with examples from your own practice. This is then validated through an interview process.

Competency assessment fits with accreditation, re-accreditation and validation of training of FCP members and their associated and subsequent development. It also helps in identifying any gaps in the skills of members and should be useful for employers to help confirm the suitability of an individual for a particular job or post, as the competency framework has been developed in line with the NHS Knowledge and Skills Frameworks (see separate booklets on these frameworks for further information).

In summary, people seek membership to become formally recognised as a specialist practitioner in the field of cancer pharmacy. It denotes that:

You have proven that you have high standards of practice .

Your skills, knowledge and expertise have been reviewed by a group of your peers working in the same specialist area of practice.

You are committed to continuing professional development.

6. When can I seek full membership?

This can be done at any time after joining the Faculty, but depends very much on your level of experience, and when you feel you are ready. However it is likely that most pharmacists will need to have been working, or have had an active interest, in the field of cancer pharmacy for at least three years before they have sufficient evidence of professional development and expertise to reach the standard required.

7. What are the different types of membership?

There are three different levels of membership of the Faculty.

(i) General level

Pharmacists at this level will have a basic level of understanding of the principles involved in diagnosing and treating the commoner forms of cancer. These pharmacists will usually be working under the guidance of a more experienced oncology pharmacist and may not necessarily wish to specialize further as oncology pharmacists themselves.

This level represents the minimum level of competence for any pharmacist having an oncology pharmacy input.

This is recognised by General Membership of the Faculty and College which is designed for pharmacists practicing in a generalist setting including:

Community pharmacists.

Hospital pharmacists not working solely in a single clinical speciality.

Pharmacists with less than three years experience in practice.

Pharmacists who may wish to apply for this level for membership will be delivering general services, although will be encouraged to move towards advanced membership if they take on specialist role.

(ii) Advanced Level

This is aimed at pharmacists who demonstrate a commitment to oncology practice. Any pharmacist called an oncology pharmacist or equivalent should be at or aiming for this level of practice. Pharmacists practicing at this level will have an in depth knowledge of the treatment and support of patients with a wider range of cancers

This is the minimum desirable level for a pharmacist practicing in oncology without the lead of a more experienced pharmacist

(iii) Fellowship level

Similar criteria apply to Fellowship as for Advanced Level, with potential candidates likely to have 5 years plus experience of working at a specialist level, and/or working at a regional or national level.

This describes the activity of a pharmacist acknowledged to be a specialist in oncology pharmacy practice. Pharmacists operating at this level will usually have a more strategic view of oncology pharmacy. They will have considerable in depth knowledge across a wide range of conditions.

The first stage in moving towards accreditation is to contact the College to discuss what the most appropriate level of membership is for you.

8. How do I seek full membership? – The competency based approach to membership

The competency frameworks adopted by the Faculty are recognised by the Department of Health as the basis for career development within the NHS. By using these frameworks, the Faculty can help its members to demonstrate the competencies required by employers both inside and outside of the managed sector.

In addition the Faculty recognizes the BOPA competency framework for specialist oncology pharmacists as supporting and providing evidence for the following competency clusters:

- GLF: Delivering Patient Care & Problem Solving Clusters
- ACLF: Expert Skills and Knowledge Cluster

Full details of the competency frameworks are given in the guidance documentation for membership at either advanced or general level, available from the College.

Essentially, Associates applying for Membership must demonstrate they have the skills, expertise and knowledge as defined by the appropriate Faculty Competency Framework, and the College criteria (if not already a Full College Member) by:

Completing the appropriate Framework in a way that best matches your skills, experience, knowledge etc, as outlined in the membership guidance.

Submitting a portfolio that provides evidence of the information contained in the Framework.

Your completed framework and portfolio will be formally assessed by two of your peers from the Faculty. If accepted, an interview will be conducted by the same people. Successful application and interview confers Membership of the Faculty, and of the College (if you are not already a College Member).

9. What if I am already a Full or Advanced Member of the College?

There is still a need to demonstrate competency against the Faculty specialist standards of practice, which are not considered in applications for College Membership. Therefore the process outlined above and in the membership guidance documents still needs to be followed.

For those who are Members of the College by portfolio, the process of applying for Faculty Membership will be easier since they have already gone through the process of preparing and submitting a portfolio.

10. The accreditation process

The suggested timeline below lays out a chronological overview of the application process for accreditation. The subsequent sections then expand on each step in more detail.

Time from interview Countdown	Activity
- 6 months	Register intention to submit for membership
- 3 months	Send portfolio and two copies of your framework to the Faculty
	Framework and portfolio considered by two assessors*
- 6 to 8 weeks	Applicant informed of decision to interview
0	Interview with two assessors based on framework and portfolio
+1 week	Informed of outcome by Faculty
	*If the assessors consider that more evidence is required to demonstrate fulfilment of the membership criteria, it is referred back to the applicant.

11.1 Registering your intention to submit an application

This should ideally be done a minimum of six months in advance of potential interview dates (see section 10) using a standard form available from the College. You should send your form to the Chief Executive of the College. There is a registration fee of £100.00 payable. Payment can be made by cheque, credit card and/or in instalments by arrangement with the College. A statement of fees is available on the website www.collpharm.org.uk.

11.2 Submitting your application

No later than three months after you registered your intention to submit, you need to send the following to the College:

- Two copies of your completed framework.
- Your original portfolio.

- Submission fee of £100.00.

11.3 Assessment of portfolio and framework

Two assessors will be appointed to appraise your application for Membership. You will be informed of who they are. Assessors will normally be Full Members of the Faculty. The Assessors will have already been asked to declare any links/relationship with you. For example, they might be (or have been) your line manager or mentor. Assessors will be appointed in the light of this knowledge. The assessors will only discuss your submission with each other, and any relevant staff of the College. They will not seek the opinion of any mentor, nor seek clarification from them about the submission. The assessors will consider your submission to see whether it meets the Membership criteria.

Within four to six weeks following your submission, the assessors will either:
Invite you to interview **or**

Ask you to supply more evidence **or**

Ask you to resubmit - you will be told of the areas that need more attention and may resubmit at any time.

You will normally only be invited to interview if there is an expectation that you are suitable for Membership. However this does not mean that everyone will pass the interview. There may be some rare cases at interview where further confirmation is required about true experience and knowledge.

11.4 Preparing for the Interview

You can prepare for your interview by re-reading your framework and portfolio. Be aware of any new matters that have arisen since you wrote it.

11.5 The interview

Interviews will be held at regular intervals (usually Spring and Autumn). Interviews will normally be held in Coventry, but other suitable locations may be used depending on where applicants and assessors are based. Applicants bear their own travel costs to and from interview. The interview will last for about one hour. Its purpose is to verify your case for Membership, examine any possible weaknesses and evaluate knowledge, awareness, communication and competency.

Interview Structure:

You describe your career path, personal and professional development. For example, how you have got to where you are now, what you have learned and applied, and how it supports your application for membership.

(10 - 15 minutes)

Discussion on your completed framework and portfolio of evidence.

(Up to 20 minutes)

Assessors discuss any further points of clarification with you. This can also

cover general professional matters of interest arising from your submission and portfolio.

(Up to 10 minutes)

You describe the direction you hope to take in the future, identify any further development needs and how you plan to meet these. Assessors will positively contribute to this where they have identified anything from your submission or portfolio that may help.

(5 minutes)

11.6 Your membership

After your interview, the assessors will discuss your application and make their decision regarding Membership. They will then advise the Chair of the College Practice Committee and the Chair of the Faculty whether or not you have met the Membership criteria. Membership is conferred on Associates by the Committee, which considers the assessors' recommendations and makes a decision. You will be advised of this in writing within one week of the interview date.

Details of those achieving Membership will be noted in Faculty Focus and other College publications and a Press Release will be provided to the Pharmaceutical Journal after each interview date. If successful you will also be invited to attend a Faculty conference for the presentation of your Membership Certificate.

In the event that your application is not judged satisfactory following the interview, you may apply for another interview at any time. Full feedback will always be given.

11.7 How is the accreditation process is quality assured?

The College Practice Committee will appoint a Chief Assessor, who will use a variety of mechanisms to ensure that the assessment process remains robust, consistent and fair. These may include:

Participation in some assessments and interviews, but they will play no role in the interview or its outcome.

Retrospective review of portfolios, submissions and interview notes.

Being available to provide advice to assessors in situations where they wish to seek a third point of view.

The process aims to assure the quality of the assessment, not act as a retrospective check on whether Membership should have been granted. It will help determine future assessor training needs.

12. What support is available?

12.1 Mentorship

Many Faculty Associates who have successfully gained full Membership are happy to provide support and advice to those Associates preparing to make a submission for Membership. A list is provided on the Faculty website. It is up to

you whether you wish to approach someone for help. When selecting an individual to approach regarding mentorship you should bear in mind a number of factors.

Firstly, the person you approach should not generally be someone with whom you have a line management or tutorial relationship. Good mentoring requires a degree of frankness about your deficiencies, which does not sit well with the responsibilities of a manager or a tutor.

Secondly, from time to time individuals approached may already be supporting as many applicants as they feel they are able. Faculty mentors voluntarily give their time to support applicants and if your request is declined this is not a reflection on yourself - just a practical workload consideration.

A mentor can be described as a personal facilitator who listens, encourages, challenges and questions in such a way that are empowered to achieve a certain goal. The mentor's behaviour leads to an insight into your development. A mentor does not have responsibility for the outcome: this rests with you.

A mentor should be treated as a trusted and valued friend. The specific support provided by your mentor will depend on your needs, but it is crucial to remember that mentors are not tutors, supervisors, teachers or managers. They do not have authority over you and equally do not have responsibility for completing your portfolio or submission for you. They are not involved in the evaluation of your application and therefore should not be regarded as informal examiners or persons of influence in the evaluation for Membership.

Do take your mentor into your confidence (which will be strictly respected). You should also remember that mentors are voluntarily giving their time to help Associates. You, and they, are busy people; so make your meetings and conversations as meaningful as possible. Give some thought in advance to your ideas and concerns and use them as an informal agenda. Examples of assistance could include:

How to structure the portfolio.

The scope of the portfolio.

Feedback on pieces of evidence.

Feedback on the framework.

Advice regarding the most appropriate level of membership to apply for.

Assessors will not contact your mentor. Your mentor will help you to understand the criteria and to identify events, etc, which relate to the criteria. You may be helped in the preparation of your submission but remember that you are responsible for the whole process.

12.2 Other forms of support

The Faculty will not formally set up local support groups, as this would be impossible to co-ordinate and manage. However you are strongly encouraged to contact other applicants in your area who are also going through the process, to provide mutual support. The Faculty will post a list of applicants on the website to facilitate those links. Alternatively you may wish to use Smartgroups to identify who else local to you is going through the process who you can meet up with, or someone you can buddy up with using e-mail.

There may already be a group or network running in your area; where this is known the Faculty will provide contact details.

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