



Information Booklet

Call for Expressions of Interest from registered medical practitioners in being appointed as Medical Assessor to the Health Committee

December 2024

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A. Introduction - About PSI, the Pharmacy Regulator

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) is a public body established in law to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public by regulating pharmacists and pharmacies.

As the pharmacy regulator we set the standard for pharmacists' education and training in Ireland and create the standards and supports to promote good professional practice in pharmacy. We register pharmacists, pharmaceutical assistants and pharmacies, carry out inspections of pharmacies and take action when we receive a complaint about a pharmacist or pharmacy. Our functions are set out in the Pharmacy Act 2007 ("the Act").

In Ireland, it is estimated that two million visits are made to pharmacies each month. Most people have high levels of trust and confidence in their pharmacist and pharmacy, but errors do happen. Medicines are complex, and complaints can arise about the care or treatment that is received from a pharmacist or pharmacy. When this happens, the PSI is responsible for receiving and handling "fitness to practise" complaints and managing those complaints pursuant to the statutory process as set out in Part 6 of the Act. Complaints are heard before statutory Disciplinary Committees.

More information regarding the Disciplinary Committees including their functions is set out at Appendix 2.

B. Expression of Interest & Eligibility

We are now inviting registered medical practitioners to express their interest in being appointed as Medical Assessors to our Health Committees.

Successful applicants will be appointed to a Panel of Medical Assessors and will be assigned to Health Committee Inquiries to provide independent advice on medical evidence to the Committee.

The registered medical practitioner must be present at the meetings of that committee but may not vote. The registered medical practitioner has the same protections as a judge of the High Court.¹

Successful applicants may also be required to attend callovers of the Committee. Callovers are case management hearings which are scheduled 4 times a year for each Committee of Inquiry, at which all cases more than 1 year old are mentioned and updates provided to the Committee.

To be eligible for appointment as a Medical Assessor to the Health Committee applicants must, by date of application:

¹ The Pharmacy Act s34 (9 to 11)

- i. Be a registered medical practitioner² with the Irish Medical Council, preferably practicing in General Practice, as a qualified consultant psychiatrist, or a medical practitioner with a special interest and training in the area of substance use disorders and mental health.
- ii. Must not have any conditions attached to their registration with the Medical Council.
- iii. Be compliant with Medical Council Professional Competence requirements.

Further information is provided in this booklet. If you are interested in applying for this role, please complete the Application Form attached to apply.

The PSI is committed to diversity and inclusion in our appointments.

C. Term of Appointment to the Panel

Successful applicants shall be appointed for an initial period of four years, with the option to be re-appointed for a further two years. At the end of the initial four year appointment, renewal of appointment for a further period of two years is subject to:

- i. the individual's agreement;
- ii. the individual continuing to satisfy the conditions or qualifications for appointment which shall be completed through a new declaration and;
- iii. there being no grounds for non-renewal.

Grounds for non-renewal include but are not limited to:

- i. misbehaviour, which can include but is not limited to fraud, dishonesty, discriminatory behaviour and misconduct,
- ii. incapacity or impairment,
- iii. criminal convictions including for minor offences,
- iv. being the subject of findings or sanctions in relation to any complaint made against them under the Medical Practitioners Act 2007,
- v. failing to comply with Medical Council Professional Competence requirements,
- vi. persistent failure to comply with sitting requirements (without good reason),
- vii. operational requirements and/or structural changes to facilitate the effective discharge of the Committee's duties.

² Applicants must provide their registration number and the date of admission to the register of the Medical Council.

D. Time Commitment

Fitness to practise hearings are normally held at the offices of the PSI on Fenian Street, Dublin 2.

The frequency of meetings is set out below.

- The Health Committee of Inquiry meet, as required, when a matter is ready for hearing. The committee consists of a lay majority, and normally three committee members sit on each committee to hear complaints referred to them. The committee has the benefit of an independent legal assessor who may advise the committee on certain matters arising as part of the hearing, and as required. Many inquiries last for one or two days, however, some inquiries can run for more than two days.
- Outside of Inquiry dates, the Chair of the Committee may convene additional meeting dates for the Committee to meet privately in order to deliberate. The Medical Assessor will be expected to attend those meetings also.
- By applying for this position, it is assumed that the applicant can meet the time commitment required.

E. Fees and Expenses

See Appendix 4 for rates. These are fixed rates, and can only be deviated from in exceptional circumstances, such as for example, a particularly complex complaint involving multiple Notices of Inquiry, and multiple respondents.

F. Assessment Process

All applications will be reviewed by an Assessment Panel consisting of three members, one of whom will be a non-PSI staff member such as a public servant. The Assessment Panel will:

- Assess all candidate applications against the eligibility criteria and competencies outlined in this document,
- Consider whether a brief meeting or telephone call is required to clarify any information or to help make a final decision in relation to that assessment,
- Consider whether any verification method is required over and above that set out in the Application Form (this may include the PSI requiring further information or statutory declarations from shortlisted applicants about their experience or qualifications gained outside Ireland);
- After the conclusion of the assessment process, make a recommendation to the Council of the PSI in relation to the appointment(s).

- The Assessment Panel may decide to make appointments based on order of merit or may decide to deem all eligible applicants suitable for appointment.

Applicants will be contacted and notified, regardless of whether their application is successful or not.

G. Submitting your Interest

If you are interested in applying, please complete the Expression of Interest Application Form. Only applications made using this form will be accepted and CVs submitted separately will not be considered. Please return this form to the PSI no later than 5pm on **31st January 2025** to eoimedicalassessor@psi.ie

The PSI will endeavour to convene the Assessment Panel to review applications in February 2025 with a view to advising applicants of the outcome before the end of February 2025. Appointments shall take effect from Monday, 10th March 2025.

H. Confidentiality

The PSI takes its data protection obligations very seriously. The PSI will process any personal data in relation to your application in accordance with the Data Protection legislation. The data will be kept for no longer than is necessary for its purpose, and it shall be kept in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the data, including preventing against the unauthorised or unlawful processing of data. More information is available in our [Data Protection Statement](#).

Useful Links

- [Pharmacy Act 2007](#)
- [Guide for Complainants](#)
- [Guide for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Owners on the Inquiry Process](#)

Appendix 1

Main Duties and Responsibilities of Medical Assessor

The Health Committee hears complaints where a registered pharmacist's fitness to practise may be impaired. The Medical Assessor's role is to advise the Committee on the medical evidence. Each case is assessed on its own facts and the Medical Assessor must draw upon their professional experience and knowledge to help the Committee understand the medical/psychiatric issues involved in the cases. This is a challenging and demanding role and applicants must be able to demonstrate, the competencies set out in Appendix 3.

Appendix 2

Information regarding the PSI Statutory Disciplinary Committees

There are three committees involved at different stages in the complaints process under Part 6 of the Act:

1. Preliminary Proceedings Committee

This committee reviews complaints at a “screening stage”. It advises the Council of the PSI on whether:

- the complaint should be referred to hearing before a Committee of Inquiry, or
- the complaint should be referred to mediation, or
- no further action should be taken in relation to the complaint.

Meetings of the Preliminary Proceedings Committee are held in private.

2. Committees of Inquiry

There are two Committees of Inquiry which can hear a complaint.

(a) Professional Conduct Committee: This committee hears complaints which have been referred to it primarily on grounds of professional misconduct and poor professional performance. A selection of committee members (normally three) sits when an inquiry is due to be heard. The hearings normally take place in public.

(b) Health Committee: This committee hears complaints which have been referred to it, usually on the grounds of the inability of a pharmacist to practise due to health impairment. A selection of committee members (normally three) sits when an inquiry is due to be heard. Inquiries conducted by the Health Committee are normally held in private.³

Hearings before both the Professional Conduct Committee or the Health Committee are similar to hearings before a court or tribunal. The committee hears evidence from the parties to a complaint. When the committee has considered the evidence, it decides whether there are findings to be made against the pharmacist or pharmacy. Where the committee makes findings against a pharmacist or pharmacy, it recommends to the PSI Council the sanction which it thinks should be applied to the pharmacist or pharmacy.

³ Inquiries conducted by the Health Committee are normally held in private however, a complainant or respondent pharmacy or pharmacist may ask for an Inquiry to be held in public and the council may agree to this.

Who sits on the Health Committees?

The PSI's Health Committees must include:

- Lay members (non-pharmacists);
- Registered pharmacists; and
- Registered pharmacists who are pharmacy owners (either a sole trader or a director of, or a shareholder in a corporate body which carries on a retail pharmacy business)
- A Medical Assessor is not part of the Committee and may not vote. Their role is to provide independent advice on medical evidence.

Appendix 3

Competencies required (skill, knowledge & abilities)

You do not need to have advised committees or public bodies previously. However, Medical Assessors must bring appropriate experience, knowledge, and abilities to the role. Consider how you meet the competencies set out below.

No.	Core Competencies	Examples
1.	A clear understanding of and commitment to public protection	You will have an appreciation of, and commitment to protecting, promoting and maintaining the health, safety and well-being of patients and the public.
2.	A proven ability to work collaboratively and constructively with others	Accepting challenge from others whilst remaining focused on the task.
		Seeing beyond your own personal experience or specialism and considering other information and perspectives.
		Showing respect for committee members and all participants in the disciplinary process.
		Giving and receiving constructive feedback.
3.	Understanding of or interest in regulatory/legislative environments or frameworks	Working within a framework of legislation, rules, guidance and standards and understanding legal and procedural issues to achieve consistent determinations.
		Appreciating the PSI's obligation to protect the public and maintain public confidence in the profession and in the system of regulation.
		Respecting respondents' rights to an objective hearing and fair procedures.
		Ability to learn and develop professionally and maintain up to date knowledge of issues relevant to the role.
		Ability to act independently and in good faith and to behave in a fair, balanced and non-discriminatory fashion.
4.	Ability to analyse information and use effective judgement to provide fair and reasoned medical advices	Ability to demonstrate objective, proportionate and reasoned decision-making in relation to medical conditions.
		Identifying the relevant implications from what is being discussed and assessing the impact of advices on all parties involved.

No.	Core Competencies	Examples
		<p>Clearly explain how conclusions have been reached.</p> <p>Recognising when information is limited and where more information might be needed.</p> <p>Bringing independent and objective scrutiny.</p> <p>Ability to balance the need for proper and objective consideration of issues with the obligation to deal with matters in a prompt manner.</p>
5.	Ability to communicate effectively with good interpersonal skills	<p>Ability to communicate clearly and concisely – spoken and in writing, and in particular an ability to express and succinctly explain technical medical issues to assist the Committee.</p> <p>Being focused and succinct in your communication with good/active listening skills.</p> <p>Confident in expressing views and opinions in a group setting.</p> <p>Ability to communicate courteously with all participants in the disciplinary process.</p> <p>Ability to adapt your style appropriately for different situations.</p> <p>Satisfactory IT skills, able to access and communicate through email and use file sharing software e.g. iPads or other similar devices.</p>
6.	Understands and values diversity and fair treatment	<p>Shows awareness of the diversity of the communities which pharmacy professionals serve and an understanding of different needs.</p> <p>Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion; impartiality and fair treatment.</p> <p>Aware of own biases and manages these appropriately.</p> <p>Listens with patience and courtesy.</p>

Appendix 4

Fees applicable

Medical Assessors are remunerated for their work at a rate of €1,200 (ex VAT) for a full day attendance and €600 (ex VAT) for a half-day attendance. They will also be required to attend training days which are remunerated at a rate of €600 per day, and €300 per half day. All reasonable vouched expenses are discharged in line with the PSI's travel and subsistence policy. Please note, as a public service body the PSI must give due consideration to the requirements of the One Person One Salary Directive, where applicable.