What’s new in Pharmacy?

From 2013, it is proposed that NMMU will introduce two new full-time certificates for pharmacy support personnel, the **Pharmacy Technical Assistant** (year 1, Higher Certificate) and the **Pharmacy Technician** (year 2, Advanced Certificate). These two new courses will provide an **alternative career option** for learners who do not meet the minimum requirements for the BPharm degree, Pharmacy support personnel are mid-level workers who work with pharmacists in the various sectors of the pharmacy profession.

**WHAT DOES A PTA/PT DO?**

**Pharmacy Technical Assistant (PTA)**

The Pharmacy Technical Assistant would be able to **practice in any sector of pharmacy**, i.e. manufacturing, wholesale, community or institutional pharmacy. Their main functions relate to the logistics of **medicine supply management**, they assist with the selection and preparation of products for **dispensing** by the pharmacist, and assist in the **manufacturing** of non-sterile medicines and other general medicine-related administrative functions.

**Pharmacy Technician (PT)**

A Pharmacy Technician has a broader scope of practice than a PTA. A PT would work under supervision of a pharmacist who is physically present in a pharmacy or, under specified circumstances, under the supervision of a pharmacist who is physically not present in the dispensary of a Primary Health Care Clinic. Functions will include general medicine-related administrative functions, stock control, manufacturing and compounding of sterile and non-sterile medicines.

**DURATION OF STUDY**

Each programme extends over at least **one academic year of full-time study**. After obtaining the Higher Certificate and completing a **3 month period** of workplace-supervised practice the candidate may register with the **South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC)**, as a PTA. Alternatively, the candidate may continue their studies and complete the Advanced Certificate and a **3 month period** of workplace-supervised practice. This enables the candidate to register with the South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC), as a PT. However, if the candidate continued directly into the Advanced Certificate from the Higher Certificate without completing the 3 month period of workplace supervised practice, a six (6) month period of workplace supervised practice must be completed before the candidate may register with the South African Pharmacy Council.
Council (SAPC), as a Pharmacy Technician.

**ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**
The minimum requirements for a university-based certificate programme as specified in the Department of Education’s NSC must be met, as well as the following programme-specific requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pharmacy Technical Assistant (1 year)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APS (Admission Point Score)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH (home language / 1st additional)</td>
<td>3 (40 - 49%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATHEMATICS LITERACY or MATHEMATICS</td>
<td>4 (50 - 59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIFE SCIENCE</td>
<td>3 (40 - 49%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Admission to the Advanced Certificate (PT) is on successful completion of the Higher Certificate (PTA).

**WHAT SUBJECTS ARE STUDIED DURING THE PHARMACIST TECHNICAL ASSISTANT AND TECHNICIAN PROGRAMMES?**

**Pharmacy in Practice (PTA&PT)** - prepares students to practice in any sector of the pharmacy.

**Practical Pharmaceutics (PTA&PT)** - introduces students to pharmaceutical formulation

**Clinical Medicine Use (PTA&PT)** - introduces students to basic physiological and pathophysiological principles and the management of medical conditions.

**Pharmacy Business Environment (PTA)** - introduces students to basic entrepreneurial and business management concepts.

**Managing the Primary Health Care Clinic Dispensary (PT)** - prepares students to practice in a supervisory capacity in a Primary Health Care Dispensary under indirect supervision of a Pharmacist.

*Elective modules where one of the following topics must be selected:*

Health and Wellness Promotion; Information and Communication Technology in Pharmacy in the PTA programme and, Management of Chronic Disease; Complementary Medicine in the PT programme

The elective modules are intended to serve as a basic introduction to the research process.

**CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION**
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