

**Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists  
For students entering Part 1 in 2011/2**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Life Sciences Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	23/Aug/2011
Programme Director:	
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate
Education and Training (CIPPET)	
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

To enable pharmacists to practise and develop as prescribers and to meet the standards set by the General Pharmaceutical Council which will enable them to apply for registration to practise as independent prescribers.

The learning outcomes for independent prescribers set by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) are that following qualification, Pharmacist Independent Prescribers will be able to:

- Understand the responsibility that the role of independent prescriber entails, be aware of their own limitations and work within the limits of their professional competence - knowing when and how to refer / consult / seek guidance from another member of the health care team
- Develop an effective relationship and communication with patients, carers, other prescribers and members of the health care team
- Describe the pathophysiology of the condition being treated and recognise the signs and symptoms of illness, take an accurate history and carry out a relevant clinical assessment where necessary
- Use common diagnostic aids e.g. stethoscope, sphygmomanometer
- Able to use diagnostic aids relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe, including monitoring response to therapy

Apply clinical assessment skills to:

- inform a working diagnosis
- formulate a treatment plan
- the prescribing of one or more medicines if appropriate
- carry out a checking process to ensure patient safety.
- monitor response to therapy, review the working/differential diagnosis and modify treatment or refer / consult / seek guidance as appropriate
- Demonstrate a shared approach to decision making by assessing patients' needs for medicines, taking account of their wishes and values and those of their carers when making prescribing decisions
- Identify and assess sources of information, advice and decision support and demonstrate how they will use them in patient care taking into account evidence based practice and national/local guidelines where they exist
- Recognise, evaluate and respond to influences on prescribing practice at individual, local and national levels
- Prescribe, safely, appropriately and cost effectively
- Work within a prescribing partnership
- Maintain accurate, effective and timely records and ensure that other prescribers and health care staff are appropriately informed
- Demonstrate an understanding of the public health issues related to medicines use
- Demonstrate an understanding of the legal, ethical and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to prescribing
- Work within clinical governance frameworks that include audit of prescribing practice and personal development
- Participate regularly in CPD and maintain a record of their CPD activity

**Transferable skills**

The programme will develop the following range of transferable skills related to prescribing:

- Applying up-to-date clinical and pharmaceutical knowledge
- Generating treatment options for the patient
- Establishing a relationship with patients
- Prescribing safely and according to legal, professional and organisational standards
- Improving prescribing practice by active review and development
- Accessing, critically appraising and applying relevant information
- Working within local and national policies, services and frameworks
- Working positively and supportively with colleagues

## Programme content

Mod code	Module Title	Credits	Level
PMMIP1	Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing	45	7

The programme will cover the following aspects:

### Consultation, Decision-Making, Assessment and Review

- Autonomous working and decision making within professional competence
- Understanding own limitations
- Accurate assessment, history taking, and effective communication and consultation with patients and their parents/carers
- Patient compliance and shared decision making
- Building and maintaining an effective relationship with patients, parents and carers taking into account their values and beliefs
- Effective communication and team working with other prescribers and members of the health care team
- A knowledge of the range of models of consultation and appropriate selection for the patient
- Formulating a working diagnosis
- Development of a treatment plan or clinical management plan, including lifestyle and public health advice
- Confirmation of diagnosis/differential diagnosis - further examination, investigation, referral for diagnosis
- Principles and methods of patient monitoring
- Chemical and biochemical methods for monitoring the treatment of the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe on qualification and responses to results
- Clinical examination skills relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe
- Recognition and responding to common signs and symptoms that are indicative of clinical problems. Use of common diagnostic aids for assessment of the patient's general health status; e.g. stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, tendon hammer, examination of the cranial nerves
- Assessing responses to treatment against the objectives of the treatment plan/clinical management plan
- Working knowledge of any monitoring equipment used within the context of the treatment/clinical management plan
- Identifying and reporting adverse drug reactions
- Management options including non-drug treatment and referral

### Influences on and Psychology of Prescribing

- Patient demand versus patient need including partnership in medicine taking, awareness of cultural and ethnic needs
- External influences, at individual, local and national levels
- Awareness of own personal attitude and its influence on prescribing practice

### Prescribing in a Team Context

- The role and functions of other team members
- Communicating prescribing decisions to other members of the team.
- The responsibility of a supplementary prescriber in developing and delivering a clinical management plan
- The professional relationship between pharmacist prescribers and those responsible for dispensing
- Interface between medical and non-medical prescribers and the management of potential conflict
- Documentation, and the purpose of records
- Structure, content and interpretation of health care records/clinical notes including electronic health records
- The framework for prescribing budgets and cost effective prescribing

### Applied Therapeutics

- Pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics
- Changes in physiology and drug response, for example the elderly, young, pregnant or breast feeding women and ethnicity

- Adverse drug reactions and interactions, to include common causes of drug-related morbidity
- Pathophysiology of defined condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe
- Selection and optimisation of a drug regimen for the patient's condition
- Natural history and progression of condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe.
- Impact of co-morbidities on prescribing and patient management

#### **Evidence-based Practice and Clinical Governance**

- Local and professional clinical governance policies and procedures
- Development and maintenance of professional knowledge and competence in relation to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe
- The rationale for national and local guidelines, protocols, policies, decision support systems and formularies - understanding the implications of adherence to and deviation from such guidance
- Prescribing in the context of the local health economy
- Principles of evidence-based practice and critical appraisal skills
- Reflective practice and continuing professional development, support networks, role of self, other prescribers and organisation
- Auditing, monitoring and evaluating prescribing practice
- Risk assessment and risk management
- Audit and systems monitoring
- Analysis, reporting and learning from adverse events and near misses

#### **Legal, Policy, Professional and Ethical Aspects**

- Policy context for prescribing
- Professional competence, autonomy and accountability of independent and supplementary prescribing practice
- GPhC Code of Ethics and Practice Guidance
- Legal frameworks for prescribing, supply and administration of medicines e.g. patient group directions, supply in hospitals
- Medicines regulatory framework including Marketing Authorisation, the use of medicines outside their product licence
- The law applied to the prescribing, dispensing and administration of controlled drugs and appropriate counselling of patients
- Compliance with guidance arising from the Shipman enquiry
- Ethical considerations of the supply and administration of medicines
- Application of the law in practice, professional judgment, liability and indemnity
- Accountability and responsibility to the employer or commissioning organisation, awareness of local complaints procedures
- Consent
- Prescription pad administration, procedures when pads are lost or stolen
- Writing prescriptions
- Record keeping, documentation and professional responsibility
- Confidentiality, Caldicott and Data Protection, Freedom of Information
- Suspicion, awareness and reporting of fraud or criminal behaviour, knowledge of reporting and 'whistle blowing' procedures

#### **Prescribing in the Public Health Context**

- Patient access to health care and medicines
- Duty to patients and society
- Use of medicines in populations and in the context of health priorities
- Public health policies, for example the use of antibiotics, antivirals and vaccines
- Inappropriate use of medicines including misuse, under and over-use
- Inappropriate prescribing, over and under-prescribing

#### **Part-time or modular arrangements**

The programme is part time and consists of 26 days, of which some days are taught face-to-face and others are directed study. Students undertaking the programme will also spend 12 days learning in practice, under the supervision of a designated medical practitioner (DMP). There are two formats of the programme:

Programme A - A multi-disciplinary programme comprising study days of one day per week over a 6 month period; with up to 2 cohorts per year

Programme B - A uni-disciplinary programme with residential study days of 5 x 2 days over a 6 month period; with up to 3 cohorts per year

#### **Progression requirements**

## **Assessment and classification**

### **Teaching and learning strategies recognise:**

- The background knowledge and experience of pharmacists in all aspects of medicines, working with patients and the law relating to pharmacy and that this will vary between individuals;
- That pharmacists are familiar with basic pharmacology and the treatment of minor ailments. Programme content on applied therapeutics should focus on evidence-based selection and use of medicines and optimisation of treatment in individual patients;
- That formal confirmation of clinical competence in the specified condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe is an essential part of the programme;
- That pharmacists may not learn clinical examination skills in their basic training and that arrangements must be made for them to learn basic skills for the clinical (risk) assessment of patients during the prescribing programme;
- That pharmacists must learn the skills required for assessment of patients with the condition(s) for which they will prescribe;
- The value of case studies and significant event analysis in the learning process;
- The need to encourage development of critical thinking skills and reflective practice and the maintenance of CPD records.
- Students who pass the programme will be awarded the 'Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing', as required by the GPhC. To obtain the Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing, students will be required to gain a pass level in each element. There is no compensation between elements. Students will be required to obtain a threshold competence in the skills and knowledge being assessed. The criteria for pass/fail for all assessments will be set to ensure that the student is a safe practitioner in the area of independent prescribing. Critical failure in the assessment, such as causing, or failing to identify, serious harm to a patient will automatically be considered a fail.

There will be four elements to the assessment

#### **Criteria of success**

1. Portfolio assessment, to include Therapeutic Profile(s), Reflective reports, and Clinical Management Plan(s): Evidence of achievement of all learning outcomes at a Level 7 pass
2. Exam, comprising short and long answers and multiple choice questions (MCQs): 50% for long answers and 80% or more for short answers and MCQs.
3. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE): Evidence of achievement of all essential outcomes and 50% or more for other assessed outcomes
4. Statement of competence and completion of period of learning in practice by the Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP): Pass/Fail

**Work will be assessed on a University wide scale, as follows:-**

#### **Passing categories:**

70% Work of distinction standard

60-69% Work of merit standard

50-59% Pass/work of good standard

For all assessed elements, original work will be expected in the sense that the synthesis of the material will have to be original to the student.

#### **Failing categories:**

40-49% Work below threshold standard (BTS)

Unsatisfactory Work

University regulations for re-sitting assessments and re-submissions will be followed.

## **Admission requirements**

All entrants to the conversion programme must meet the following requirements (as required by GPhC):

- Current registration with GPhC and/or PSNI as a practising pharmacist
- Have at least two years appropriate patient orientated experience practising in a hospital, community or primary care setting following their pre-registration year
- Identify an area of clinical practice and need in which to develop their prescribing skills
- Have up-to-date clinical, pharmacological and pharmaceutical knowledge relevant to their intended area of prescribing practice
- Demonstrate how they reflect on their own performance and take responsibility for their own CPD
- Demonstrate how they will develop their own networks for support, reflection and learning, including prescribers from other professions

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Angela Alexander. The programme secretary, Marina Sims, will provide the first point of contact for the programme.

### **Support for students and their learning**

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see [www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)

Students on the programme will be provided with personal and educational support by a tutor.

Peer support amongst students will be encouraged.

This is also extended to encompass past students who have become Pharmacist Independent Prescribers.

### **Career prospects**

Pharmacists who undertake this programme will have applied or been selected by their employers on the basis that there is a role for them as an independent prescriber in their current posts e.g. to enhance their effectiveness when running clinics for specific conditions, by enabling them to prescribe without reference to a clinician on every occasion. Pharmacists with this qualification may apply Registered Prescriber status, designated by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, and be eligible to apply for new posts which require the prescribing qualification.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

The pathophysiology of the condition being treated  
Formulating a working diagnosis  
Confirmation of diagnosis/differential diagnosis - further examination, investigation, referral for diagnosis  
Recognition and responding to common signs and symptoms that are indicative of clinical problems.  
The legal, ethical and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to independent prescribing  
The responsibility that the role of independent prescriber entails, being aware of their own limitations and working within the limits of their professional competence  
The sources of information, advice and decision support and how they will use them in patient care taking into account evidence based practice and national/local guidelines where they exist.  
The public health issues related to medicines use  
Teaching/learning methods and strategies  
All the knowledge and understanding components

##### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

###### *Assessment*

All the knowledge and understanding components will be taught using a mixture of face-to-face teaching and directed study.

Assessment will be via:

- the examination
- the OSCE
- the DMP's assessment of the student's period of learning in practice
- the student's portfolio

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### Skills and other attributes

#### B. Intellectual skills - *able to*:

Work autonomously and make decisions within professional competence  
 Take a shared approach to decision making by assessing patients' needs for medicines, taking account of their wishes and values and those of their carers when making prescribing decisions  
 Work within clinical governance frameworks that include audit of prescribing practice and personal development  
 Teaching/learning methods and strategies

#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

##### *Assessment*

These skills will be developed by students in their periods of learning in practice and in face-to-face teaching sessions

Assessment will be via:

- the examination
- the OSCE
- the DMP's assessment of the student's period of learning in practice
- the student's portfolio

#### C. Practical skills - *able to*:

Clinical examination skills relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe  
 Use of common diagnostic aids for assessment of the patient's general health status; e.g. stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, tendon hammer, examination of the cranial nerves  
 Developing an effective relationship and communication with patients, carers, other prescribers and members of the health care team  
 Maintain accurate, effective and timely records and ensure that other prescribers and health care staff are appropriately informed  
 Participate regularly in CPD and maintain a record of their CPD activity  
 Teaching/learning methods and strategies

#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

##### *Assessment*

These skills will be developed by students in their periods of learning in practice and in face-to-face teaching sessions.

Assessment will be via:

- The OSCE
- the DMP's assessment of the student's period of learning in practice
- the student's portfolio

#### D. Transferable skills - *able to*:

#### Teaching/learning methods and strategies

##### *Assessment*

**Please note - This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.**