

Guidance for Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs) involved in GPhC monitoring or accreditation events

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Introduction

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the independent regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy premises in Great Britain. It is our job to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of members of the public by upholding standards and public trust in pharmacy.

Our principal functions include:

- approving qualifications for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and accrediting education and training providers;
- maintaining a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy premises;
- setting standards for conduct, ethics, proficiency, education and training, and continuing professional development (CPD);
- establishing and promoting standards for the safe and effective practice of pharmacy at registered pharmacies;
- establishing fitness to practise requirements, monitoring pharmacy professionals' fitness to practise and dealing fairly and proportionately with complaints and concerns.

Education and training

The GPhC sets standards, including learning outcomes, for the initial education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, as well as education and training standards for pharmacist independent prescribers and pharmacy support staff.

The GPhC approves courses against these standards through its accreditation processes to allow people to demonstrate that they have met the course requirement to apply for registration or annotation. The full list of courses that the GPhC approves is below:

- 4-year MPharm degree
- 4-year MPharm degree taught in-part overseas (2+2)
- 5-year MPharm degree with preparatory year
- 5-year MPharm degree (MPharm year 1 taught over 2 years)
- 5-year MPharm degree with integrated foundation training
- 5-year MPharm degree with sandwich foundation training
- 5-year MPharm degree taught in-part overseas with integrated foundation training (2+3)
- Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programmes (OSPAPs)
- Pharmacist independent prescribing programmes
- Pharmacy technician qualifications/courses

The GPhC also accredits courses for pharmacy support staff, such as dispensing, and medicines counter assistant courses, that permit those working in pharmacies to undertake a range of activities for the safe supply of medicines to patients and the public under the supervision of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician.

Pharmacists as independent prescribers

Regulations to allow pharmacists to prescribe independently came into effect in 2006. A pharmacist independent prescriber may prescribe autonomously for any condition within their clinical competence. This currently excludes three controlled drugs for the treatment of addiction. We set standards for courses leading to annotation as a pharmacist independent prescriber. In order to be annotated as a prescriber a pharmacist must take and pass an education and training course accredited by us.

Role of the Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP)

A DPP is a workplace-based supervisor who supports the pharmacist in their Learning in Practice environment. This role was previously only allowable for designated medical practitioners (DMPs) but regulatory changes in 2019 enabled other suitably qualified and experienced registered healthcare professional with prescribing rights to undertake the role. The term DPP encompasses this range of healthcare professionals, including medical practitioners.

Courses must include a period of learning in practice of at least 90 hours under the supervision of a DPP. The responsibilities of supervision include signing-off a pharmacist independent prescriber in training as a competent prescriber.

Questions and answers about the survey

What is asked in the survey and how long will it take to complete?

The survey explores your role as a DPP by utilising rating scales and free text comments for the following areas:

- training
- support
- guidance
- assessment
- feedback, and
- concerns processes

The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

What do I need to consider when completing the survey?

Feedback should only be given in your capacity as DPP in relation to the education provider that sent you the survey to complete, and for the pharmacist independent prescriber(s) you have directly supervised as part of your supervision responsibilities with that specific education provider.

What is monitoring or accreditation?

Monitoring is a quality assurance process whereby the GPhC seeks to gain assurance that the course offered by a provider meets the GPhC education and training standards after the first cohort of pharmacist independent prescribers have completed the course. Reaccreditation is a quality assurance process whereby the GPhC seeks to gain assurance that the course a provider offers continues to be fit for purpose and meet the GPhC education and training standards.

Who is part of the accreditation team for monitoring and accreditation event?

The team is made up of a number of members of the GPhC's accreditation and recognition panel. Each accreditation team will include pharmacists and lay members, and depending on the course being accredited, may additionally include pharmacy academics, pharmacy technicians, and newly qualified pharmacists.

What is a monitoring or accreditation event?

It is a series of meetings between a GPhC accreditation team (accompanied by a GPhC staff member) and the course provider. It takes place over one day, and involves a review of all aspects of course management and course provision to ensure it meets the GPhC education and training standards.

Before the event, the course provider will have submitted documentation to the GPhC to show how their course provision meets the standards. This will be reviewed by the accreditation team and discussed further during the event. The accreditation team will consider all they have seen and heard to help them to make an informed view on the course provision.

Why have I been asked to take part?

As part of the overall quality assurance processes for monitoring/accrediting a pharmacist independent prescribing course, we seek views of current/recent DPPs to help inform the processes and allow the accreditation team to gain an overall view on the course provision. Course providers will seek volunteers from DPPs who are currently, or were previously, a DPP for pharmacist independent prescribers on the course to complete a short survey.

Will course staff be told about my views?

After reviewing feedback from DPP surveys, the accreditation team may feedback the main points to staff in summary format, such as 'the DPPs have highlighted xxx, what is your view?'. However, survey feedback is not linked to individual DPPs in any way.

How will my feedback be used?

The collated views of all DPPs who respond to the survey will be referred to in the monitoring or reaccreditation report. The report will simply state that the accreditation team collected feedback from X number of DPPs via an online survey sent prior to the event. The report will provide a summary of your views and those of your fellow DPPs, for example: 'the majority of DPPs who responded to the survey reported that they had good access to training materials offered by the provider'. It is important to remember that what is said in the survey is confidential and that the GPhC does not ask for personal or identifiable information about the DPP completing the survey.

Serious concerns

If you have any serious concerns regarding the programme, these should be raised separately. Information about how to submit a concern can be found on our dedicated webpage [here](#).

Frequently asked questions

Can I find out the outcome of the monitoring or accreditation event?

Yes. Once the accreditation process is complete, the report of the event will be available to view on our website at: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/approved-providers-education-and-training>

Where can I find our more information about the GPhC's accreditation processes?

You will find more information at <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/approval-courses>

Where can I view the GPhC's education and training standards?

You will find these at: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/education-standards>