



Independent  
prescribing  
programme

Liverpool John Moores University  
Report of a monitoring event  
June 2018

## Event summary and conclusions

<b>Provider</b>	Liverpool John Moores University
<b>Course</b>	Independent prescribing programme
<b>Event type</b>	Monitoring event
<b>Event date</b>	25 June 2018
<b>Accreditation period</b>	March 2017 – March 2020
<b>Outcome</b>	Full accreditation confirmed. The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that Liverpool John Moores University should be fully accredited as a provider of a pharmacist independent prescribing programme for the remainder of the accreditation period.
<b>Conditions</b>	There were no conditions.
<b>Standing conditions</b>	Please refer to Appendix 1
<b>Recommendations</b>	No recommendations were made.
<b>Registrar decision</b>	Following the event, the Registrar of the GPhC accepted the accreditation team's recommendation and approved full accreditation of the programme for the remainder of the accreditation period.
<b>Key contact (provider)</b>	Charles Morecroft, Professor of Pharmacy Education and Professional Practice, Lead Pharmacist, Subject leader Pharmacy and Programme lead for Postgraduate pharmacy programmes.
<b>Accreditation team</b>	Mr Mike Pettit, (event Chair), Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, University of Sussex Professor Anne Watson, Postgraduate Pharmacy Dean, NHS Education for Scotland
<b>GPhC representative</b>	Mr Christopher McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Mr Christopher McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC

## Introduction

### Role of the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and is the accrediting body for pharmacy education in Great Britain. The accreditation process is based on the GPhC's 2010 accreditation criteria for Independent Prescribing.

The GPhC's right to check the standards of pharmacy qualifications leading to annotation and registration as a pharmacist is the Pharmacy Order 2010. It requires the GPhC to 'approve' courses by appointing 'visitors' (accreditors) to report to the GPhC's Council on the 'nature, content and quality' of education as well as 'any other matters' the Council may require.

The powers and obligations of the GPhC in relation to the accreditation of pharmacy education are legislated in the Pharmacy Order 2010. For more information, visit:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/231/contents/made>

## Key findings

### Section 1: The programme provider

**The team was satisfied that all four of the four criteria relating to the programme provider continue to be met. (See Appendix 2 for criteria)**

The team was informed that since the initial independent prescribing accreditation event in December 2016, the first pharmacy independent prescribing cohort had finished. The first cohort consisted of nineteen pharmacists, of which at the time of this event, fourteen completed. Four students intermitted for a variety of reasons, two students related to sickness or job changes of the DMP, and two due to student-related personal reasons. However, the team was informed that one student is due to complete in August 2018.

Based on the feedback from students and stakeholders, the programme representatives proposed the following changes to the programme to be approved at this event:

1. To merge the three existing modules into one 40 credit module. This change was **agreed** by the team subject to the University providing evidence to the GPhC that this has been approved (validated) by the university before students are taught in this way.
2. To separate the Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP) declaration from the portfolio to encourage earlier submission that the ninety hours has been completed. This change was **agreed** by the team.
3. To increase the maximum size of each cohort from twenty to forty for each Spring and Autumn cohort. This change was **agreed** by the team subject to clinical skills teaching not exceeding 18:1 SSR.

From the Spring 2018 cohort the portfolio will utilise a bespoke Microsoft OneNote class notebook online available on Canvas.

It was noted from the documentation that the start dates of the programme have been amended to March and September to ensure teaching begins before the undergraduate programmes, and to give additional flexibility for timetabling and submission deadlines.

Programme feedback was successfully obtained from eight students. The team noted that this was a relatively low response rate, and further, that the responses appeared to highlight some dissatisfaction with the programme. The provider has implemented changes that it hopes will increase the programmes satisfaction rate and assured the team that feedback will be obtained from students earlier in the programme.

### Section 2: Pre-requisites for entry

**The team was satisfied that all six of the six criteria relating to the pre-requisites for entry continue to be met.**

The team noted that there had been no changes to the admission requirements since the initial accreditation event in 2016. Admission to the programme is via an online application and follows the process outlined in the Programme Specification, which is available to students via the University's website.

It was noted from the documentation that some applicants had been challenged in being able to determine their area of practice, particularly when they specified a broad area, for example mental health, or minor ailments. After discussion with the programme team, and prior to an offer to register, applicants were guided to choose a more appropriate and specific area, for example bipolar or dermatology. Additional information has now been provided to future cohorts via the application web pages and at the introduction study day, in order to assist with this.

### Section 3: The programme

**The team was satisfied that all eight of the eight criteria relating to the programme continue to be met.**

The team was satisfied that the programme's clinical skills teaching and learning content was sufficient.

The students who spoke with the team via telephone reported that, overall, they felt supported on the programme. The students believed that all aspects of the programme are mapped to the 16 GPhC learning outcomes. It was noted by the students that the lessons they attended could all be related to specific learning outcomes. However, some students did comment that the programme has a low number of contact hours in comparison to others that they are aware of.

Overall, the students spoken to were complementary regarding the resources of the programme and were impressed with the access to specialist practitioners. Students complemented the availability and access to electronic resources and commented that it was quite easy to navigate the portfolio system, however they highlighted some concerns around the guidance to upload the correct documents to the site.

Students were asked about their interaction with staff and tutors. Overall, the students felt that the contact with staff and tutors was appropriate. It was noted that if staff or tutors didn't know the answer to an enquiry, they would find out the information and come back to the student, or signpost to other services as required.

Students felt that there was no specific direction provided by the University, based on areas they likely to prescribe in during their study, but acknowledged that their specialist skills were developed in conjunction with their DMP. The students were aware that their full attendance was necessary and that their attendance was monitored by an electronic recording system. Overall, the students felt the programme was good and would recommend it to others.

### Section 4: Learning in Practice

**The team was satisfied that all five of the five criteria relating to learning in practice continue to be met.**

Induction sessions for DMPs are held in the University, although if they cannot attend, the student's named University tutor will visit the DMP to undertake the induction. At application, DMPs are required to make a declaration that they have read the DMP guide which includes the GPhC's 16 learning outcomes. It was noted that DMPs signing off on the competence of their students did this using Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) Prescribers competency framework.

Students are required to complete all of their supervised practice sessions and they will not be signed off by their DMP until they have accrued at least 90 hours of supervised practice.

The students spoken to by the team confirmed that, to their knowledge, their DMPs were invited to attend induction days at the university and believed that the programme was explained to the DMPs in detail. The students felt that the DMPs were aware of what was expected of them as prescribing pharmacist and felt that the online resources provided by the University equipped them with theoretical knowledge to undertake effective consultations.

## Section 5: Assessment

**The team was satisfied that all four of the four criteria relating to assessment continue to be met.**

Of the nineteen students registered on the programme in October 2017, twelve were successful at the Board of Examiners held in April 2018 with a further two passing at the Board of Examiners held in June 2018, totalling fourteen.

Students undertook a total of five assessments across the programme, including written and oral assessments, workplace-based assessments of practice, reflective reports on their own progress, OSCEs, and completion of a professional practice portfolio. In addition to the main assessment processes, students maintained a portfolio of professional development, to demonstrate the application of their learning through real life workplace-based assessment of their practice.

It was noted that formative feedback is provided to enhance and enable learning and ongoing development and includes reflection with their University personal tutor, facilitated peer group discussion, critical reflection on the final study day and use of summative OSCEs.

The team noted that the external examiner's report after the April 2018 Board of Examiners, indicates that the programme is comparable to other IP programmes, that student attainment is at a satisfactory level and assessments achieved an appropriate range of marks.

## Section 6: Details of Award

**The team was satisfied that both criteria relating to details of the award continue to be.**

The team was satisfied that the correct award is issued to pharmacists and that the provider has a set process in place for the ratification of marks and issuing of these to the GPhC.

## Appendix 1 - Standing conditions

The following are standing conditions of accreditation and apply to all providers:

1. The record and report include other comments from the team, and providers are required to take all comments into account as part of the accreditation process. The provider must confirm to the GPhC that required amendments have been made.
2. The provider must respond to the definitive version of the record and report within three months of receipt. The summary report, along with the provider's response, will be published on the GPhC's website for the duration of the accreditation period.
3. The provider must seek approval from the GPhC for any substantial change (or proposed change) which is, or has the potential to be, material to the delivery of an accredited course. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. the content, structure or delivery of the accredited programme;
  - b. ownership or management structure of the institution;
  - c. resources and/or funding;
  - d. student numbers and/or admissions policy;
  - e. any existing partnership, licensing or franchise agreement;
  - f. staff associated with the programme.
4. The provider must make students and potential students aware that successful completion of an accredited course is not a guarantee of annotation or of future employment as a pharmacist independent prescriber.
5. The provider must make students and potential students aware of the existence and website address where they can view the GPhC's accreditation reports and the timescales for future accreditations.
6. Whenever required to do so by the GPhC, providers must give such information and assistance as the GPhC may reasonably require in connection with the exercise of its functions. Any information in relation to fulfilment of these standing conditions must be provided in a proactive and timely manner.

## Appendix 2 – Accreditation criteria, learning outcomes and indicative content

GPhC accreditation criteria, learning outcomes and indicative content for pharmacist independent prescribing programmes

The accreditation criteria, learning outcomes and indicative content for pharmacist independent prescribing programmes can be downloaded from the GPhC website at:

<http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/approval-courses/accreditation-guidance>