

University of Manchester independent prescribing course reaccreditation event report, December 2020



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Event summary and conclusions

Provider	University of Manchester
Course	Independent prescribing course
Event type	Reaccreditation
Event date	9 December 2020
Reaccreditation period	February 2021 - February 2024
Relevant standards	GPhC education and training standards for pharmacist independent prescribers, January 2019
Outcome	Approval The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that pharmacist independent prescribing course provided by the University of Manchester should be reaccredited for a further period of three years.
Conditions	There were no conditions.
Standing conditions	The standing conditions of accreditation can be found here .
Recommendations	No recommendations were made.
Minor amendments	There were no minor amendments.
Registrar decision	Following the event, the Registrar of the GPhC accepted the team's recommendation and approved the reaccreditation of the course for a further period of three years.
Maximum number of all students per cohort:	40
Number of pharmacist students per cohort:	40
Number of cohorts per academic year:	Two
Approved to use non-medical DPPs:	Yes

Key contact (provider)	Dianne Bell, Clinical Lecturer, Programme Director for Independent Prescribing
Provider representatives	Dianne Bell, Clinical Lecturer and Programme Director for Independent Prescribing Dr Laura Green, Lecturer and Deputy Programme Director for Independent Prescribing Professor Ellen Schafheutle, Director of Postgraduate Teaching and Learning for the Division of Pharmacy and Optometry Professor Jayne Lawrence, Head of Division of Pharmacy and Optometry Sally Hickson, Deputy Director of Student Operations
Accreditation team	Leonie Milliner (event Chair), Director of Education, General Optical Council Professor Angela Alexander, Professor Emerita of Pharmacy Education, University of Reading Professor Anne Watson, Postgraduate Pharmacy Dean, NHS Education for Scotland
GPhC representative	Chris McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC
Rapporteur	Dr Ian Marshall, Proprietor, Caldarvan Research (Educational and Writing Services); Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, University of Strathclyde
Observers	Rachael Mendel, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC Ben Pearson, Policy and Support Executive, General Optical Council

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 reaccreditation process is based on the GPhC's standards for the education and training of pharmacist independent prescribers January 2019.

The GPhC's right to check the standards of pharmacy qualifications leading to annotation as a pharmacist independent prescriber 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>

Background

The University of Manchester was first accredited in 2014. There were no outstanding conditions following initial accreditation of the programme in September 2014, the monitoring event in May 2015 or reaccreditation in July 2017. In line with the standards for the education and training of pharmacist independent prescribers January 2019, an event was scheduled on 9 December 2020 to review the course's suitability for reaccreditation. The programme is a 30-credit, FHEQ7 programme delivered over four months. Since the last accreditation there have been two cohorts per year for up to 40 students each cohort. The delivery of each cohort has consisted of eight face-to-face study days and 18 days of self-directed learning through the virtual learning environment. Of the 151 pharmacists whose results have been ratified since November 2014, 143 have passed and 8 failed (after the second attempt); two have withdrawn for personal reasons. This represents a 95% pass rate for pharmacists.

The Covid 19 pandemic has necessitated a change to asynchronous, online learning. The team was told that the Covid 19 pandemic had afforded an important opportunity for the programme team to review the programme and its mode of delivery. Rather than replacing study days with distance learning materials, the VLE has been updated to ensure currency, relevance, educational value and to enhance narrative links. The requirement for 90 hours of supervised practice of which at least half was with the named Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP) has been maintained. Students have been supported to understand what activities might be appropriate/effective, including remote approaches and the need for some face-to-face practice. The amended assessment strategy has been based on plans for rationalisation as part of the reaccreditation review. The cohort timeline has been extended from four to six months to allow re-development of teaching and assessment materials and students to complete supervised practice in the face of reduced opportunities. Academic/pastoral support has been increased through fortnightly tutorials. Webinars for all students have been scheduled later in the course to allow discussion of key topics.

Documentation

Prior to the event, the provider submitted documentation to the GPhC in line with the agreed timescales. The documentation was reviewed by the reaccreditation team and it was deemed to be satisfactory to provide a basis for discussion.

The event

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the GPhC modified the structure of the event so that it could be held remotely. The event was held via videoconference between the University of Manchester and the GPhC on 9 December 2020 and comprised of meetings between the GPhC reaccreditation team and representatives of the University prescribing course.

Students who were currently undertaking the course, or who had completed it in the last three years, contributed to the event by completing a qualitative survey, responses to which were reviewed by the GPhC accreditation team.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Schedule

The event

Meeting number	Meeting	Time
1.	Private meeting of accreditation team and GPhC representatives	09:30 – 10:30
2.	Meeting with course provider representatives	11:00 – 12:30
3.	Lunch	12:30 – 13:45
4.	Learning outcomes testing session	13:45 – 14:30
5.	Private meeting of the accreditation team and GPhC representatives	14:30 – 15:30
6.	Feedback to course provider representatives	15:30 – 15:45

Key findings

Part 1 - Learning outcomes

During the event the team reviewed all 32 learning outcomes relating to the independent prescribing course. To gain additional assurance the team also tested a sample of 6 learning outcomes during a separate meeting with the provider and was satisfied that **all 32 learning outcomes will be met** to a level as required by the GPhC standards.

The following learning outcomes were tested at the event: **7,15,19,21,23 and 30**.

Domain - Person centred care (outcomes 1-6)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Domain - Professionalism (outcomes 7-15)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Domain - Professional knowledge and skills (outcomes 16-20)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Domain - Collaboration (outcomes 27-32)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Part 2 - Standards for pharmacist independent prescribing course providers

Standards 1 - Selection and entry requirements

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all six criteria relating to the selection and entry requirements will be met (The criteria can be found [here](#))

Pharmacist applicants must have at least 2 years' patient-orientated experience in a UK practice setting relevant to their intended scope of prescribing practice, be in good standing with the GPhC/PSNI, have relevant clinical or therapeutic experience in their area of intended prescribing, which is suitable to act as the foundation of their prescribing practice while training, and have an agreement with an experienced independent prescriber to act as their Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP). All applicants, including independent applicants, undergo the same application and interview process, irrespective of employment status and funding stream, and places are offered on the basis that they meet all eligibility criteria and are able to demonstrate adequate support to complete the course.

Standard 2 - Equality, diversity and inclusion

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to the equality, diversity and inclusion will be met.

The programme team observes the University Policy on Inclusive Teaching and Learning Materials and completes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training. The team also ensures that it has suitable arrangements in place for individual students with specific needs. Study days and assessments are planned with consideration of religious observances and accessibility. Applicants are not excluded on the grounds of any protected characteristic where they can demonstrate an ability to meet the eligibility and study requirements of the course, with adjustments where appropriate. Examples in learning materials reflect the diversity of the service user populations. DPPs are involved in making reasonable adjustments where necessary. Equality and Diversity is one of the subsections of the Law and Ethics topic where the principles of equality, diversity and human rights, relevant legislation and appropriate actions are considered.

Standard 3 - Management, resources and capacity

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all six criteria relating to the management, resources and capacity will be met.

Students are allocated an Academic Assessor at the start of the course. The learning contract that students develop at the beginning of the course is agreed with the DPP and Academic Assessor and monitored through DPP meetings and tutorials. Concerns are addressed or escalated to the Programme Director as necessary and to Faculty processes if required. The Programme Director and Lead for Pharmacist Prescribing is a pharmacist independent prescriber with experience in primary and secondary care. The Deputy Director and Lead for Nurse Prescribing is an experienced nurse independent prescriber. The three core Academic Assessors are independent prescribers from a range of clinical backgrounds, including community pharmacy, mental health and paediatrics. The WTE devoted to the programme was estimated to be 1.5 but the team was told that should demand for the programme increase, the Division would release resources to fund additional staff. All members of the programme team participate in the biannual University peer review process. There is a purpose-built Flexible Skills Suite which can act as a lecture hall, for group work or as a simulated ward, and students have access to appropriate equipment, computer clusters and library resources. DPPs receive general training from a DPP preparation e-learning programme and a local induction by webinar/screencast and Course Handbook. Academic Assessors make contact with DPPs at the start of the course and then at monthly intervals throughout to confirm progress and address any issues. The team was told that as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, the programme had been lengthened from four to six months for the March 2020 cohort to permit redevelopment of learning materials and appropriate supervised practice opportunities. The October 2020 and subsequent cohorts resumed the four month programme duration.

Standard 4 - Monitoring, review and evaluation

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all six criteria relating to the monitoring, review and evaluation will be met.

Learning materials are reviewed in advance of each cohort, taking into account student feedback, emerging changes to evidence/practice and currency of resources. In the light of the Covid 19 pandemic and input from NHS organisations, the number of face-to-face teaching days has been reduced from eight to six. Evaluation forms are used for each study block with feedback being addressed at the programme board meeting in advance of the following cohort. Student feedback seen by the team was all positive. Programme Board meetings include members of academic, programme management and admissions staff, student and service user representatives, and the external examiner. Staff members have an annual performance and development review and the biannual peer review of their teaching. A unit review is undertaken ahead of the Programme Board, and a full review of formative and summative assessments in advance of Programme Board and Exam Board. The teaching team remains up to date in respect of NHS and profession-specific strategy, having access to the North West NMP Leads' network, which provides intelligence about the needs of the vast majority of the students on the programme. As a result of the original programme approval the course remains validated by the University and complies with continuous monitoring and quality assurance processes. The team was told that currently all learning in practice is supervised by Designated Medical Practitioners (DMPs) who are experienced trainers but that as non-medical DPPs become involved, a more formal quality assurance of learning in practice and its assessment will be developed.

Standard 5 - Course design and delivery

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all ten criteria relating to the course design and delivery will be met.

Three registered pharmacists were involved in the initial development of the programme, a 30-credit, FHEQ7 programme delivered normally over four months, but due to Covid-19 the programme was delivered over six months for the March 2020 cohort. All online learning has been re-built in response to the new regulatory standards, and the need for fully online teaching during the pandemic. Study days are interactive and consist normally of practical workshops, small group work and whole group discussions. A learning contract determined at the start of the course identifies transferable skills and development needs for the students' practice and against the assessment strategy. The programme benefits from shared intelligence from a range of programmes and liaison with the North West NMP Leads' network and input from the North West Non-Medical Prescribing Education Group. The programme board has patient and public involvement (PPI) representation, with service users involved in the development of the Interview questions for applicants. It is made clear to both students and DPPs that students must not prescribe in practice until they are annotated as a prescriber by their regulator. The

programme regulations permit a resit for all assessments, except where the reason for referral is a patient safety concern. If concern is raised about a trainee prescriber, their Academic Assessor would initially address the concern directly and notify the Programme Director of concerns, discussions and action plans.

Standard 6 - Learning in practice

Standard met? Yes No

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

The 90 hours of supervised practice should be predominantly with patients in a clinical setting; this is explored during the interview. Students are only offered a place if they have a plan that involves time consulting with patients within their scope of practice under the supervision of their DPP. The student must be supervised at all times when undertaking aspects of the prescribing process that are new to them, with the DPP being responsible for overseeing the whole period of supervised practice and agreeing the range of other suitable prescribers that may be involved. The DPP must themselves supervise at least half of the required hours. The DPP's professional registration and prescribing annotation are verified at the point of shortlisting (see Standard 9 for additional commentary on DPPs' experience). As part of the final assessment, the DPP signs a declaration which is verified against programme records for each student.

Standard 7 - Assessment

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all eleven criteria relating to the assessment will be met.

Assessment is by a multiple-choice and short answer question exam, a reflective practice portfolio, a case presentation, and an OSCE; the OSCE stations have been reduced from six to two during the pandemic with all learning outcomes being covered. There is a patient safety criterion in each of the assessments, and this is reflected in formative feedback as well as summative assessments. Patient safety forms an important element of the OSCE stations, case presentation and reflective practice portfolio assessment. Any concerns expressed by examiners are discussed at the Programme Exam Board with the possibility of exclusion where patient safety is considered to have been compromised. Formative assessments support the development of safe practice with a series of three meetings with the DPP to review progress. Additionally, four tutorials with the Academic Assessor allow monitoring of progress towards the learning outcomes and assure the quality of supervised practice learning opportunities. Academic staff members are involved in the exam, OSCE and reflective practice portfolio assessments. Practice-based assessments are all undertaken by the DPP, who has the necessary competencies in practice and for the support of training. DPPs are encouraged to provide prompt and constructive feedback to trainee prescribers and this is reviewed during tutorials and as part of the supervised practice evaluation. Standardised assessments on campus are subject to University regulations, policies and procedures, and serve to confirm the practice-based assessment. All assessments are reviewed and considered in detail with the external examiner in advance of the Exam Board. Students must pass all assessments independently of

each other to complete the course; there is no compensation between assessments. Where students are not successful in all assessments at the first attempt, they are usually permitted one further attempt at any/all assessments, except in the event of a patient safety concern.

Standard 8 - Support and the learning experience

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all four criteria relating to the support and the learning experience will be met.

An induction webinar in advance of the course provides an opportunity to meet staff and peers, and an orientation session on the first study day focuses on facilities and addressing concerns. Academic Assessors provide pastoral and academic support for their tutees; the programme team is aware of the potential conflict in this arrangement but assured the team that the role is mainly supportive and constructive. Learning contracts provide a blueprint for development needs during supervised practice. Trainee prescribers are required to document formal DPP meetings at the start, end and midpoint of the course. Anonymised feedback is sought at intervals through the course. In advance of the programme induction, DPPs are required to complete the DPP preparation e-learning programme and assessment.

Standard 9 - Designated prescribing practitioners

Standard met? Yes No

The team was satisfied that all five criteria relating to the designated prescribing practitioners will be met.

DPPs must be able to demonstrate all competencies in *A competency framework for designated prescribing practitioners*. It is confirmed that the applicant and DPP have an established working relationship and applicants who have never met their DPP or who are paying for their services are not accepted. DPPs are invited to contact the programme team if they are concerned about their understanding of their role or require additional training; they are directed to contact the student's Academic Assessor as their first point of contact. There is a supervised practice evaluation as part of the routine feedback process. The team noted that the North West Non-Medical Prescribing Education Group application form for DPPs does not include experience of assessment of students or trainees; it was agreed that this issue which relates to several providers in the region will be explored outside the accreditation process.

