

**Queen's University Belfast independent
prescribing course monitoring event report,
February 2021**



Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Event summary and conclusions | 1 |
| Introduction | 2 |
| Role of the GPhC..... | 2 |
| Purpose of this event..... | 2 |
| Background..... | 2 |
| Documentation..... | 3 |
| The event..... | 3 |
| Declarations of interest | 3 |
| Key findings | 4 |
| Part 1 - Learning outcomes | 4 |
| Domain - Person centred care (outcomes 1-6) | 4 |
| Domain - Professionalism (outcomes 7-15) | 4 |
| Domain - Professional knowledge and skills (outcomes 16-20) | 4 |
| Domain - Collaboration (outcomes 27-32) | 5 |
| Part 2 - Standards for pharmacist independent prescribing course providers | 5 |
| Standards 1 - Selection and entry requirements | 5 |
| Standard 2 - Equality, diversity and inclusion..... | 6 |
| Standard 3 - Management, resources and capacity | 6 |
| Standard 4 - Monitoring, review and evaluation | 7 |
| Standard 5 - Course design and delivery | 7 |
| Standard 6 - Learning in practice..... | 7 |
| Standard 7 - Assessment..... | 8 |
| Standard 8 - Support and the learning experience | 8 |
| Standard 9 - Designated prescribing practitioners..... | 8 |

Event summary and conclusions

| | |
|---|---|
| Provider | Queen's University Belfast |
| Course | Independent prescribing course |
| Event type | Monitoring |
| Event date | February 2021 |
| Reaccreditation period | August 2019 - August 2022 |
| 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 Queen's University Belfast should be fully accredited as a provider of a pharmacist independent prescribing course for the remainder of the accreditation period. |
| Conditions | There were no conditions. |
| Standing conditions | The standing conditions of accreditation can be found here . |
| Recommendations | No recommendations were made. |
| Minor amendments | None |
| Registrar decision | 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. |
| Maximum number of all students per cohort: | 30 |
| Number of pharmacist students per cohort: | 30 |
| Number of cohorts per academic year: | 1 |
| Approved to use non-medical DPPs: | No |
| Key contact (provider) | Dr Briegen Girvin, Lecturer in Education |

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Provider representatives | Dr Briegeen Girvin, Lecturer in Education |
| Accreditation team | Professor Angela Alexander (event Chair), Professor Emerita of Pharmacy Education, University of Reading Dr Ruth Edwards, Head of Professional Experience, School of Pharmacy, Aston University |
| GPhC representative | Chris McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC |
| Rapporteur | Chris 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 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>

Purpose of this event

The purpose of the monitoring event is to review the performance of the course against the education and training standards with the first cohort of pharmacists and to ensure that delivery is consistent with the GPhC accreditation criteria. The monitoring event utilises student feedback and evaluation together with a review of documentation and a meeting with course representatives. The accreditation period which was provisionally granted at the initial accreditation event is confirmed after a satisfactory monitoring event has taken place.

Background

Queen's University Belfast (QUB) approached the GPhC with an application for accreditation of a programme to train pharmacist independent prescribers. In line with the GPhC's standards for the education and training of pharmacist independent prescribers January 2019, an event was

scheduled for 14 June 2019 to review the programme's suitability for accreditation. In line with the GPhC's process for new providers of pharmacist independent prescribers, the event was held on site at QUB to allow for the GPhC's accreditation team to view the facilities available. There are two versions of the pharmacist independent prescribing programme at QUB. The first is for training pharmacist prescribers in Northern Ireland and is delivered by the Northern Ireland Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) which is hosted by QUB currently. The second version, the subject of this accreditation, is for delivery to pharmacists in Great Britain; it had a similar structure to the first version, but with minor modifications to the content to ensure applicability to the GB market, plus a 5-day clinical skills residential period at QUB. Following the implementation of the new GPhC Standards, the QUB School of Pharmacy and NICPLD opted to move away from a joint accreditation and to develop two separate courses to meet the needs of cohorts based in Great Britain and Northern Ireland respectively.

Subsequently, Queen's University Belfast was provisionally accredited by the GPhC in 2019 to provide a course to train pharmacist independent prescribers, for a period of 3 years. In line with the GPhC's process for accreditation of independent prescribing courses, an event was scheduled to review the course's suitability for full accreditation.

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. [Edit as applicable]

The event

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and given that Queen's University Belfast had delivered IP programmes before with student successfully graduating, in conjunction with NICPLD, the event was conducted by desktop review.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest

Key findings

Part 1 - Learning outcomes

During the desktop review the team took assurance from the submission that the 32 learning outcomes relating to the independent prescribing course continued to be met.

Domain - Person centred care (outcomes 1-6)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Due to the Covid pandemic, the 'residential' in February 2021, for the 2020/21 cohort will be virtual. This means that the revision sessions, practice sessions for the outcomes stated below (assessed by OSCE) will be in a virtual environment on Microsoft Teams, rather than 'face to face'.

- Demonstrate appropriate history-taking techniques through effective consultation skills
- Support individuals to make informed choices that respect patients' preferences

Domain - Professionalism (outcomes 7-15)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Due to the Covid pandemic, the 'residential' in February 2021, for the 2020/21 cohort will be virtual. This means that the revision sessions and practice sessions for the outcomes stated below (assessed by OSCE) will be in a virtual environment on Microsoft Teams, rather than 'face to face'.

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of their own role and the role of others in multi-professional teams
- Recognise their own role as a responsible and accountable prescriber who understands legal and ethical implications

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

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Due to the Covid pandemic, the 'residential' in February 2021, for the 2020/21 cohort will be virtual. This means that the revision sessions and practice sessions for the outcomes stated below (assessed by OSCE) will be in a virtual environment on Microsoft Teams, rather than 'face to face'.

- Create and maintain appropriate records which ensure safe and effective care and align with relevant legislation
- Identify relevant investigations and interpret results and data in their prescribing practice
- Apply the principles of effective monitoring and management to improve patient outcomes

The following outcome will be taught and assessed in the usual way ('face to face') but later in the year (10th/11th June 2021) provided it is safe for students to fly to Belfast:

- Demonstrate clinical and diagnostic skills in clinical settings appropriate to their scope of practice

Domain - Collaboration (outcomes 27-32)

Learning outcomes met? Yes No

Due to the Covid pandemic, the 'residential' in February 2021, for the 2020/21 cohort will be virtual. This means that the revision sessions and practice sessions for the outcomes stated below (assessed by OSCE) will be in a virtual environment on Microsoft Teams, rather than 'face to face'.

- Work collaboratively with others to optimise individuals' care, understanding their roles in the prescribing process
- Recognise when and where to refer people appropriately
- Collaborate with people to encourage them to take responsibility for managing care
- Demonstrate appropriate consultation skills to get information from individuals who are either unaware of or guarded about their health needs, to inform safe prescribing
- Recognise when to seek guidance from another member of the healthcare team or an appropriate authority

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 continue to be met. (The criteria can be found [here](#))

Students can apply to undertake the pharmacist independent prescribing (PIP) programme either as a stand-alone certificate or as a potential year 2 option within the PG Diploma/MSc in Advanced Clinical Pharmacy Practice (ACPP).

There were 21 students in cohort 1 (2019/20), 6 on the PG Cert in Prescribing for Pharmacists and 15 Year 2 ACPP students. One applicant was rejected as they had previously failed a PIP programme at another university. The transcript showed the applicant had failed to pass an OSCE. The programme decided that the student needed to obtain some more clinical and therapeutic experience in practice before being accepted onto the course. The student was informed of this via telephone and was followed up by email.

The first cohort started October 2019 and was due to complete at the end of June 2020, but many students have delayed their final submissions due to the pressures of the Covid pandemic. Five students have completed. A further 4 students have recently made all of their final submissions and are awaiting their portfolios to be reviewed.

Standard 2 - Equality, diversity and inclusion

Standard met? Yes No

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

QUB is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and provides an environment that celebrates the diversity of its staff and students. QUB has a Postgraduate Admissions policy [Postgraduate Admissions Policy \(qub.ac.uk\)](https://www.qub.ac.uk/postgraduate-admissions-policy) which is followed for admission of students to the PIP programme.

During the first year of delivery of the new PIP course, the programme has made some further enhancements to the processes to promote inclusion. For example, the first webinar for IP cohort 2019-20 was an introduction to the IP course for both DPPs and students on Thursday 01 October 2019. Unfortunately, three DPPs got in touch with the programme lead to say they could not attend as it was a Jewish holiday. The IP programme lead now ensures that the dates of future webinars are calendar checked to ensure they do not coincide with any religious festivals.

The programme collected equality and diversity data for cohort 2020-21 of the PIP programme. This data shows that there is a larger proportion of females in the cohort compared to males (68.2% female), similar to proportions in the profession as a whole. The majority of the cohort (63.6%) are aged between 27 and 31 years of age. In addition, IP students come from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds. The programme has had no requests for reasonable adjustments for cohorts 2019-20 or 2020-21 academic years.

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 continue to be met.

There have been no changes to staff, teaching locations and/or resources. The course structure changed after the first year in that modules 5 and 6 were swapped. Other minor changes required because of the Covid pandemic have been approved by the GPhC.

Programme staff have kept in contact with students throughout the course. Five webinars are organised throughout the year and attendance rates have been high. Webinars are also recorded so that students can re-watch them at a later date. Webinars have covered the course overview, in-practice training and other more detailed topics such as how to get the best from the in-practice training and how to submit good evidence for the e-portfolio.

Students also have webinars on how to prepare for the residential week and general webinars on 'next steps' within the course. The webinars have been very interactive and have provided an opportunity for students to ask questions and network with each other. In particular during the Covid pandemic, the programme keeps in touch regularly with students on their progress and answer any queries they may have. Extensions were granted initially to the end of June

2020, then end of September, end of December and now the end of March 2021.

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 continue to be met.

The programme has gathered detailed student feedback in an electronic questionnaire, sent to the 2019-20 cohort (response rate 12 out of 21 students). Ninety two percent of students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement *'The format of the learning within the IP course [i.e. e-learning, recorded webinars and face to face residential week] were appropriate and suited my learning needs'*. Ninety two percent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement *'The IP programme content and assessments have prepared me to undertake the IP role'*. Students were asked if they would recommend the PIP programme at QUB to friends or colleagues and 100% of students who answered this question said 'yes'. Students provided positive comments on each module as shown on pages 5 to 6 of the questionnaire.

All PIP modules are reviewed annually by the programme lead and members of the PIP programme delivery team horizon scan for updates to practice. Any minor changes to the course content due to changes in practice or changes to websites/resources are made on an annual basis by the programme lead. The course continues to follow normal university quality assurance procedures and no issues or concerns regarding the PIP programme have been identified.

From the evidence in the submission, the external examiner was satisfied with all of the subject standards and programme quality measures and made no recommendations.

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 continue to be met.

Upon review, the programme decided in October 2020 to change the order of the modules so that Professionalism now comes before Influences on and the Psychology of Prescribing and Patient-centred Care i.e. the 5th and 6th modules have been swapped over.

Standard 6 - Learning in practice

Standard met? Yes No

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

The programme continues to use medical doctors as DPPs. All DPPs have all been either consultants working in hospital or general practitioners in primary care. As part of the approval process, the programme checks the GMC register to ensure that the DPP is registered and has no restrictions to their practice.

Standard 7 - Assessment

Standard met? Yes No

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

5 out of 21 students from cohort 2019-20 have completed the course and another 4 students are close to completion, having recently submitted their eportfolios for marking. The low rate of completion is due to the pressures of the Covid pandemic.

All assessment processes detailed within the original IP accreditation submission have been followed. These include the quality assurance measures of double marking of all fails and of 10% of assignments submitted.

Standard 8 - Support and the learning experience

Standard met? Yes No

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

Before the course commences, all students and DPPs sign up to formally meeting with each other at four time points throughout the in-practice training to reflect on learning needs and plan activities.

Fifty eight percent of students confirmed in the questionnaire, that they have met with their DPP at least four times throughout the in-practice training and 92% of students confirmed that during these meetings they discussed strategies and identified mechanisms for achieving the required learning outcomes.

Standard 9 - Designated prescribing practitioners

Standard met? Yes No

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

As detailed under Standard 6, the programme still requires that DPPs should be medical doctors. DPPs are required to declare that they have the relevant skills and experience, such as having supported and supervised other healthcare professionals before the student is accepted onto the course.

Should the programme move to accepting non-medical practitioners as DPPs, the programme will follow the guidance provided within the RPS Competency Framework for DPPs, in order to ensure they have the required competencies and are eligible to undertake the role of DPP.

The programme provides collective feedback to DPPs.

