



Independent
prescribing
conversion
programme

University of Reading

Report of a reaccreditation event

February 2017

Event summary and conclusions

Provider	University of Reading
Course	Independent prescribing conversion programme
Event type	Reaccreditation
Event date	14 February 2017
Accreditation period	April 2017 - April 2020
Outcome	Approval The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the University of Reading should be reaccredited as a provider of a pharmacist independent prescribing conversion programme for a further period of three years.
Conditions	There were no conditions.
Standing conditions	Please refer to Appendix 1
Recommendations	No recommendations were made.
Registrar decision	Following the event, the Registrar of the GPhC accepted the accreditation team's recommendation and approved the reaccreditation of the programme for a further period of three years.
Key contact (provider)	Kat Hall, Programme Director
Accreditation team	Mr Mike Pettit (event chair), Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice, University of Sussex Professor Helen Howe, Retired hospital Chief Pharmacist
GPhC representative	Miss Jenny Clapham, Quality Assurance Officer, General Pharmaceutical Council
Rapporteur	Professor Brian Furman, Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, University of Strathclyde

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 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>

Background

The University of Reading was first accredited by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) in 2008 to provide a conversion programme to train pharmacist supplementary prescribers as independent prescribers. The course was reaccredited by the GPhC in January 2011, and then again in January 2014, on each occasion for a period of three years; in 2014, there had been no conditions or recommendations. In line with the GPhC's process for reaccreditation of independent prescribing programmes, an event was scheduled on 14 February 2017 to review the programme's suitability for reaccreditation. The accreditation process was based on the GPhC's 2010 accreditation criteria for Independent Prescribing.

Documentation

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

The event

The event was held on 14 February 2017 at the GPhC headquarters, London, and comprised a number of meetings between the GPhC accreditation team and representatives of the University of Reading prescribing programme.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Key findings

Section 1: The programme provider

All five criteria relating to the programme provider are met.

The programme is provided by the Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET), which is part of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Reading; CIPPET has provided prescribing programmes for pharmacists since 2005 and has experience in providing non-medical prescribing programmes for nurses. Although the independent prescribing conversion programme does not carry any credits and is thus outside some University quality assurance procedures, because the programme is provided in parallel with the accredited independent prescribing programme, the same quality processes apply to the conversion programme; these include the six yearly periodic review process, the next of which is due in 2018, when the GPhC should be informed of the outcome. Since 2015, the programme has been delivered in the new clinical skills suite which is designed to support group work and clinical skills teaching, and is equipped with computer facilities, consultation rooms with video-recording equipment, as well as all of the necessary equipment for clinical skills teaching. There are currently five members of staff (1.2FTE) associated with the programme, which is additionally supported by visiting lecturers who provide specialist teaching for legal and clinical aspects. The programme director is a registered pharmacist and like the other staff team members, is a qualified independent prescriber.

Section 2: Pre-requisites for entry

All five criteria relating to the pre-requisites for entry are met.

During the application process the applicant is required to upload conversion-specific documentation to enable confirmation that they meet the GPhC independent prescribing conversion programme entry requirements. In addition to the University standard online application process, applicants are provided with online guidance outlining the requirements for admission and how the evidence can be provided. Submitted applications are reviewed to confirm current registration with the GPhC register; it will also be made clear in future documentation that applicants registered with the PSNI are eligible to join the programme. The admissions process includes the programme director confirming that the applicant is annotated as a supplementary prescriber on the GPhC register. Applicants must provide a statement of support from a medical practitioner confirming their competence as a supplementary prescriber and their suitability to convert to become an independent prescriber. The applicants' designated medical practitioners (DMPs) must complete an independent prescribing conversion programme-specific declaration and are provided with an independent prescribing conversion programme handbook; the requirement for evidence of competence will in future be incorporated into the DMP flyer to ensure that a statement is included confirming an applicant's competence as a supplementary prescriber. Applicants may submit GPhC CPD records in support of their application along with their personal statement; CPD records are reviewed by the staff, with applicants being required to demonstrate how they reflect on their performance.

Section 3: The programme

All seven criteria relating to the programme are met.

The independent prescribing conversion programme is a non-credit bearing programme, but is taught and assessed at level 7 using the learning outcomes specified by the GPhC; these learning outcomes are mapped to the assessment methods and students are guided as to how to evidence in their portfolios the attainment of the learning outcomes. Students must attend the University for a study day focussing on physical assessment skills and how to meet the programme learning outcomes to become an independent prescriber; the second half of the day is devoted to discussing the differences between supplementary and independent prescribing. This includes sharing and reflecting on their experiences and how they feel about returning to prescribing. Pharmacists attending the programme demonstrate through their portfolios that they have built on their background knowledge and experience, as well as acquiring competence in prescribing.

Section 4: Learning in Practice

All five criteria relating to learning in practice are met.

DMPs are provided with the same support as those supervising students on the independent prescribing programme and are provided with a specific handbook to support their role; this details the roles of the DMP and the programme team in teaching clinical assessment skills. DMPs are also sent an induction presentation which includes an outline of the course. If needed, the DMP can have a discussion with a member of the programme team, either by telephone or through a site visit. Students experiencing difficulties usually self-present; staff members discuss the issues with the student, with the rest of the staff team being drawn in to provide support if there are major issues. While the DMPs are expected to provide formative feedback to their students, they are not involved in summative assessments, other than the final DMP declaration of competence. Evidence is provided via the learning in practice log maintained as part of the student's portfolio. The DMPs must confirm that the student has completed at least two x 7.5 hour days of learning in practice and that in the DMP's opinion the skills demonstrated in practice confirm the pharmacist as being suitable for annotation as an Independent Prescriber. Failure in

the period of learning in practice cannot be compensated by performance in other elements.

Section 5: Assessment

All four criteria relating to assessment are met.

Students are assessed through their portfolios and through the period of learning in practice with their DMPs. Students are made aware of the assessment methods in the programme handbook. Portfolio entries, which are marked against specified criteria, must include evidence demonstrating that students have met the learning outcomes. The portfolios undergo second marking for moderation, with the second marker being a member of staff who teaches on the full IP course to provide quality assurance. Members of the programme team who work in clinical practice provide confirmation of safe and effective practice. In any assessment, a failure to identify a serious problem or an answer which would cause the patient harm will result in overall failure of the programme.

Section 6: Details of Award

Both criteria relating to details of the award are met.

Successful students are awarded a 'Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing' which includes their name, GPhC number and date of the University level ratification. University level ratification occurs after a member of the University Senate approves the outcome of the external examination board. The pass list, as approved via University level ratification, is sent to the GPhC by the programme administration team upon approval of the programme director.

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

GPhC accreditation criteria for pharmacist independent prescribing conversion programmes

Section 1: The programme provider

- 1.1** Must be recognised by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) or the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) as a provider of an accredited independent prescribing programme or as a previous provider of an accredited supplementary prescribing programme.
- 1.2** Must be part of, or be closely associated with, a higher education institution which implements effective quality assurance and quality management and enhancement systems and demonstrates their application to prescribing programmes. The programme must be validated by its higher education institution.
- 1.3** Must have adequate physical, staff (academic and administrative) and financial resources to deliver the programme including facilities to teach clinical examination skills.
- 1.4** Must have identified staff with appropriate background and experience to teach the programme, ideally including practising pharmacists with teaching experience and staff with clinical and diagnostic skills.
- 1.5** Must have an identified practising pharmacist with appropriate background and expertise who will contribute to the design and delivery of the programme. The identified pharmacist must be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), and where possible should be a pharmacist independent prescriber.

Section 2: Pre-requisites for entry

- 2.1** Entrants must be a registered pharmacist with the GPhC or the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
- 2.2** Entrants must currently be annotated as a supplementary prescriber and able to provide evidence of prescribing experience within the UK that is no longer than 2 years' old.
- 2.3** Entrants must provide a statement of support from a medical practitioner that confirms their competence as a supplementary prescriber.
- 2.4** The provider must ensure that the DMP, identified by the pharmacist, has training and experience appropriate to their role. This may be demonstrated by adherence to the Department of Health Guidance (2001). The DMP must have agreed to provide supervision, support and shadowing opportunities for the student, and be familiar with the GPhC's requirements of the programme and the need to achieve the learning outcomes.
- 2.5** Entrants should demonstrate how they reflect on their own performance and take responsibility for their own CPD.

Section 3: The programme

- 3.1** Must be taught at least at bachelor's degree level (FHEQ (2008), level 6) and reflect the fact that since June 2002, pharmacists have graduated and practise at master's degree level (FHEQ (2008), level 7).
- 3.2** Must achieve the learning outcomes identified in the curriculum for an independent prescribing conversion programme.
- 3.3** Must include teaching learning and support strategies which allow pharmacists to build on their background knowledge and experience as and acquire competence in prescribing.
- 3.4** Must provide opportunities for pharmacists to demonstrate how they will apply their learning to the conditions for which they will be prescribing.
- 3.5** Must contain learning activities equivalent to 2 days including a minimum of one day of face to face learning activities. The programme will be expected to contain a range of appropriate delivery methods
- 3.6** Must have a clear policy on attendance and participation and the obligations of pharmacists who miss part of the programme. Pharmacists must attend all scheduled teaching and learning sessions that provide instruction on clinical examination and diagnosis.
- 3.7** Candidates will be subject to the full assessment process for the conversion programme.

Section 4: Learning in Practice

- 4.1** The provider must support the DMP with clear and practical guidance on helping the pharmacist successfully to complete the period of learning in practice including the arrangements for the quality assurance of summative assessments. The roles of the programme provider and the DMP for teaching the skills for clinical assessment of patients must be clearly set out.
- 4.2** The provider must support the DMP with clear and practical guidance on their role in the assessment of the student.
- 4.3** The provider must obtain formal evidence and confirmation from the DMP using the specified wording; "the pharmacist has satisfactorily completed at least 2 x 7.5 hour-days supervised practice".
- 4.4** The provider must obtain a professional declaration from the DMP using the specified wording; "In my opinion as the DMP, the skills demonstrated in practice confirm the pharmacist as being suitable for annotation as an Independent Prescriber".
- 4.5** Failure in the period of learning in practice cannot be compensated by performance in other assessments.

Section 5: Assessment

The programme provider should ensure that assessment strategies meet the requirements of the curriculum particularly:

- 5.1 Evidence from a range of assessments that the student has achieved the intended learning outcomes for the conversion programme.
- 5.2 The programme is freestanding and will be assessed separately from any other programmes and programme.
- 5.3 The assessment scheme should demonstrate that the criteria for pass/fail and any arrangements for compensation between elements of assessment, together with the regulations for resit assessments and submissions, are consistent with safe and effective prescribing and the achievement of all learning outcomes.
- 5.4 In any assessment, a failure to identify a serious problem or an answer which would cause the patient harm should result in overall failure of the programme.

Section 6: Details of Award

- 6.1 The provider should award successful candidates a *'Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing'* confirming that the candidate has successfully completed the programme and the period of learning in practice.
- 6.2 The provider should send a certified copy of the pass list to the Registrar of the GPhC, via the Applications Team, containing the names and registration numbers of the pharmacists who have successfully completed the programme and confirming that they are eligible for annotation on the GPhC Register as independent prescribers.

Appendix 3 – Learning outcomes

Independent prescribing conversion programme learning outcomes

All GPhC accredited independent prescribing conversion courses need to ensure that following qualification pharmacist independent prescribers are able to:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Use common diagnostic aids e.g. stethoscope, sphygmomanometer
4. Able to use diagnostic aids relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe, including monitoring response to therapy.
5. Apply clinical assessment skills to:
 - inform a working diagnosis
 - formulate a treatment plan for 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
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal, ethical and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to prescribing.

Appendix 4 – Indicative content

It is expected that education providers will use the indicative content to develop a detailed programme of study which will enable pharmacists to meet the learning outcomes.

The following should form the basis of the conversion course:

Consultation, decision-making, assessment and review

- Clinical examination skills relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe.

Legal, policy, professional and ethical aspects

- Professional competence, autonomy and accountability of independent and supplementary prescribing practice

Note: The standards of proficiency for supplementary prescribers are included in the standards for independent prescribers.