**Becoming an Independent Prescriber (IP) as a Community Pharmacist?.......**

The ability to independently prescribe is crucial for pharmacists delivering care across the NHS and will form the cornerstone of future practice as we develop care pathways with our patients, communities and in support of the new [NHS 10 year plan.](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-to-recovery-the-governments-2025-mandate-to-nhs-england/road-to-recovery-the-governments-2025-mandate-to-nhs-england) Community Pharmacy and Community Pharmacists are increasingly being embedded as partners across Primary Care as seen in the [Delivery Plan for recovering access to primary care](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PRN00283-delivery-plan-for-recovering-access-to-primary-care-may-2023.pdf) which refers to many new initiatives.

NHS England Workforce, Training and Education (NHSE W,T&E) previously known as Health Education England (HEE)

[Independent Prescribing](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/pharmacy/independent-prescribing) link describes support for 3 key groups to access 3,000 IP training places before end March 2026 – Group 1 includes Community Pharmacist and locums. Pharmacy Integration Programme (PhIP) – see [list of approved and funded universities](https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/pharmacy/independent-prescribing/approved-suppliers-list-national-provision) for the IP course.

General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)

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 (although this currently excludes three controlled drugs for the treatment of addiction).

To register as an independent prescriber, you must complete an accredited course and on completion you will receive a practice certificate in independent prescribing, making you eligible to apply for an annotation to the GPhC register.

IP courses are typically run over a period of 6 months. The course is part-time and often delivered through a combination of face-to-face or online teaching sessions (often one day per week) and self-directed study.

Some universities offer a course with a greater distance learning option, however, all courses involve a minimum of 26 days of teaching and learning activity as specified by GPhC.

In addition to this, each pharmacist must successfully complete at least 12 days (90 hours) of **learning in a practice** environment whilst being supervised by a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP). For the purposes of developing their independent prescribing practice, applicants must identify an area of clinical or therapeutic practice on which to base their learning e.g. Hypertension, Respiratory or Minor Illness – ear, nose and throat etc.

GPhC also require that applicants must have relevant experience in a UK pharmacy setting and be able to recognise, understand and articulate the skills and attributes required by a prescriber. This experience and awareness will act as the basis of their prescribing practice whilst training.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)

Maintains and publishes the ‘[Competency Framework for all Prescribers’](https://www.rpharms.com/resources/frameworks/prescribing-competency-framework/competency-framework) for all regulators, professional bodies, education providers, prescribing professions and patients and carers to use. Additionally see ‘Competency Framework for [‘Designated Prescribing Practitioners’](https://www.rpharms.com/Portals/0/RPS%20document%20library/Open%20access/Professional%20standards/DPP%20Framework/DPP%20competency%20framework%20Dec%202019.pdf?ver=2019-12-18-150746-160) (DPP) who are responsible for trainee IP ‘period of **learning in practice**’. DPP’s must be registered, IP annotated and actively prescribing with the ability to support the trainee IP in the agreed area of clinical/therapeutic practice.

The aim of the DPP role is to - oversee, support and assess the competence of non-medical prescribing trainees, in collaboration with academic and workplace partners, during the period of **learning in practice.**

After completion of course and annotation then [RPS Professional Guidance: Expanding Prescribing Scope of Practice](https://www.rpharms.com/Portals/0/RPS%20document%20library/Open%20access/Prescribing%20Competency%20Framework/RPS%20-%20Scope%20of%20Practice-English-220601.pdf?ver=fNYC4O_ThDfE3AsC01HvFw%3d%3d) supports prescribing in further clinical areas where competent.

**So in summary**

**… it is ~ 6-month part-time study course, available through HEE funded courses at a number of universities**

**… some universities offer distance learning options and some require face to face study days**

**… all universities have a minimum of 26 days of teaching and learning (~ 1 day a week)**

**… in order to apply you need a named DPP to support the 90 hours of learning in practice (~ 0.5 days a week)**

**… identify an area of clinical / therapeutic practice**

**… need to agree a timetable of learning release if employed**

**… need to agree a timetable for the 90 hours of learning in practice with DPP**

**… DPP accessibility has traditionally been difficult for Community Pharmacists. Local ICS pilot programme provides TEACH and TREAT slow clinics supporting trainee IP’s from Community Pharmacy access learning in practice and a DPP**

**… Independent Prescribing is important now and into the future especially as in 2026 all new pharmacists joining the register will be IP on day 1. For further information** [**sian.williams20@nhs.net**](mailto:sian.williams20@nhs.net) **Community Pharmacy Integration - Clinical Lead.**

**FOR INFORMATION -**

**Application suitability assessment by HEI from GPhC website -** [Guidance to support the implementation of the standards for the education and training of pharmacist independent prescribers (pharmacyregulation.org)](https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/guidance-to-support-the-implementation-of-the_standards-for-the-education-and-training-of-pharmacist-independent-prescribers-october-2022.pdf)

*Any process to assess an applicant’s suitability must be consistent, not disadvantage any individual or sector, and should include acquiring an understanding of their:*

*• work experience (including pre-registration/foundation training)*

*• clinical or therapeutic experience*

*• patient-based experience*

*• evidence of CPD*

*This information could also provide evidence that they are able to recognise, understand and articulate the skills and attributes required by a prescriber, however, would need to be confirmed by the course provider. It is worth noting that applicants do not need to demonstrate evidence of having the skills and attributes, only that they are be able to recognise, understand and articulate them.*

*Course providers can ascertain this information in any way they choose, however, they must be satisfied that the applicant is suitable to commence training. For example, they may wish to:*

*• review and assess the submission of a supporting statement from the applicant*

*• review the applicant’s CV*

*• review a template listing the skills and attributes of a prescriber to which the applicant has provided evidence of their understanding*

*• carry out an interview*

*• consider a letter of recommendation/supporting statement*

*It is also the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that they consider any key documents, possibly provided by the course provider or proactively by themselves, that they provide evidence and give thought to their area of clinical or therapeutic practice on which they intend to base their learning.*

*Course providers should be satisfied that an applicant’s individual experience and supporting evidence of their relevant experience in a UK pharmacy setting, alongside their ability to recognise, understand and articulate the skills of a prescriber, are credible and meaningful in their totality. These should provide assurance that they are suitable candidates for commencing an independent prescribing course.*

In the absence of NHSE W,T&E confirmation of course funding I can only suggest you look at local universities previously commissioned to provide funded placements and get all documentation ready to apply once we have a £ announcement.

[**Bath Pharmacist Independent Prescribing unit**](https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/pharmacist-independent-prescribing/) **– see link for update re Oct 2024 applications course cost £2,385**

[**University of West England (UWE) Independent Prescribing –**](https://courses.uwe.ac.uk/Z51000077/independent-andor-supplementary-prescribing) **and I have confirmation from course lead at UWE that same as Bath in order to ensure equity of course access that no pharmacy students will be progressed unless funding is in place and trainees will not be able to switch between funding streams once agreed – cost £2,200** NB ALL forms must be with UWE 6 weeks before course starts.