

Programme Specification

Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme accredited by	The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)
4.	Final award	Postgraduate Award in professional Development : (Practice certificate in Independent Prescribing) 40 credits
5.	Programme title	Practice certificate in Independent Prescribing
6.	Pathways available	N/A
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Blended delivery of standard taught programme, block delivery of 12 taught days over 4- 6 months. Distance learning, on-line learning using Camtasia Studio and Adobe Captivate software and Work Based Learning (WBL)
8.	Mode of attendance	Mode of Delivery Part time delivery of twelve days over 4-6 months and 12 x 7.5hr days related clinical experience in practice A blended learning approach will be adopted to facilitate individual student learning styles and preferences. There will be set days that are self-directed learning through the e-learning activities available on the University Blackboard website.
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Subject-benchmark-statement---Pharmacy.pdf http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-degree-characteristics.pdf National Prescribing Centre (2012) A single competency framework for all prescribers http://www.npc.nhs.uk/improving_safety/improving_quality/resources/single_comp_framework.pdf http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist-independent-prescriber/entry-requirements
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	Course approved September 2014 August 2016 (Regulations amended - Section 20)

12. Educational aims of the programme

The course is for registered pharmacists with a least 2 years' experience in their area of clinical practice. This prescribing qualification will encourage pharmacists to strive for more clinically autonomous roles as prescribers. Early exposure to patients in practice placement fosters opportunities for the pharmacist to contextualise their theoretical knowledge of pharmacology and apply it to actual prescribing practice.

The aims and objectives of the course include the creation of clinical pharmacists who are trained to fulfil advanced roles in holistic patient care.

The University of Worcester course is unique and ground breaking as it offers pharmacists not only training to become expert prescribers but also an advanced level of competency in holistic health assessment and history taking. This will be integral to the programme. On completion of this course the pharmacists will therefore have a cutting-

edge qualification that equips them with skills in holistic health assessment and history taking, production of differential and working diagnosis, prescribing, and review of patient response and optimisation of therapy within their scope of practice.

The programme aims to achieve:

- a flexible, multidisciplinary, student centred route to postgraduate achievement as an autonomous practitioner in health assessment, diagnosis and independent prescribing.
- a stimulating environment based on the values of academic freedom, ethical awareness and critical appraisal.
- intellectual challenge through the promotion of critical analysis, evaluation and problem solving.
- Synthesis of existing pharmaceutical health care provision to develop new evidence based clinical pathways and treatments
 - an environment in which students gain the confidence to feel they can shape future pharmaceutical policy, provision and delivery by challenging and enhancing current practice and approaches.
- A module which develops critical reflection, originality, critique and synthesis to inform evidence based practice.
- the opportunity for the student to challenge their own values and attitudes and develop new ways of thinking in a supportive environment.
- a critical appreciation of how the pharmacist role sits in context with the varying perspectives and values of health and social care professionals, service users, carers and cultures.
- an opportunity for pharmacist prescribers to develop autonomy, self-management, leadership skills, decision making skills, collaboration skills, high level communication and dissemination skills and clinical competence in a supportive environment.
- increased opportunities for career advancement and the opportunity to capitalise on emerging new roles for pharmacists within a changing health care economy.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

On completion of this Award Independent Pharmacist Prescribers will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to become safe clinically competent and cost effective prescribers.

This level 7 Award sits within the Masters in Advanced Practice (MAP) and requires a higher level of critical analysis, synthesis and dissemination of practice.

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate comprehensive understanding of the responsibility that the role of independent prescriber entails and the framework for professional accountability,
2. Critically review and evaluate their personal scope of practice and demonstrate awareness of limits of professional competence i.e. knowing when and how to refer / consult / seek guidance from another member of the health care team.
3. Critically review and evaluate their ability to effectively communicate and develop a working relationship with patients/clients, parents and carers, other prescribers and members of the health care team.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the pathophysiology of the condition being treated, recognition of signs and symptoms of illness, and advanced knowledge of the pharmacology and mechanism of action of the medicines, interactions, side effects and potential adverse drug reactions
5. Demonstrate an ability to use common diagnostic aids, for example: stethoscope, sphygmomanometer and so on, relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe, including monitoring response to therapy.

6. Demonstrate comprehensive skills in holistic health assessment and prescribing within their scope of practice to:
 - a. Establish history of presenting complaint, past medical history including medication history, and other factors such as social and family history to inform the differential diagnosis
 - b. Explore differentials through further assessment and/or patient testing (if applicable) to establish a working diagnosis then formulate a treatment plan for the prescribing of one or more medicines, citing evidence base and rationale for choices, considering the option NOT to prescribe where appropriate.
 - c. Critically review and modify treatment, referring to other practitioners or seeking further advice if appropriate
 - d. Communicate rationale for prescribing to the patient and negotiate to achieve patient concordance through advanced consultation skills.
 - e. Monitor patient response, and make adjustments to therapy where necessary
 - f. Maintain accurate, effective and timely records and ensure that other prescribers and health care staff are appropriately informed.
2. Demonstrate a shared approach to decision making by assessing patients' needs for medicines, taking account of their wishes and values and those of their carers when making prescribing decisions.
3. Identify, critically review and synthesise information, advice and decision support systems and demonstrate how they will be used in patient care; taking into account evidence based practice and national/local guidelines where they exist.
4. Synthesise and disseminate knowledge on the influences that can affect prescribing practice at individual, local and national levels and evaluate how their own prescribing practice will be managed in an ethical way
5. Critically evaluate the importance of safe, clinically appropriate and cost effective prescribing practice.
6. Critically explore the roles and relationships of others involved in the supply and administration of medicines and prescribing, and demonstrate how you will contribute and lead in the context of a team approach
7. Critically evaluate the public health issues related to medicines use.
8. Critically evaluate the relevant legislation in relation to prescribing including ethical and professional frameworks for accountability and responsibility.
9. Evaluate and synthesise how they will maintain their and other practitioners' regular participation in personal and continuous professional development and audit of prescribing practice within clinical governance frameworks.

The programme is holistic in its conception. The assessments are designed to assess a breadth of knowledge, cognitive, practical and transferrable skills.

Teaching and Learning Methods

- The aim throughout the programme is to include a minimum of didactic teaching. Where this is used it is interspersed with discussion and analysis of cases, policies and examples from current pharmaceutical policy and practice. All lecturers are previously practitioners and have a wealth of experience to draw on.
- The Award emphasises self-directed autonomous learning with students applying learning outcomes and content to their own particular therapeutic speciality, discipline and, where relevant, practice, with subsequent discussion to compare and contrast experiences with other professionals and disciplines. For example there will be opportunities for multi-disciplinary shared problem Based Learning (PBL) sessions in conjunction with students from MSAP4021 and PDHS3020
- The programme includes a large degree of group discussion and debate as a key feature of the programme identified by students is networking and learning from other participants and health care disciplines. Therefore participation is encouraged and required throughout.
- Tutorials are a key aspect of the learning strategy with student being encouraged to share their assessment plans with tutors and peers. The seminar gives students an opportunity to critically analyse and disseminate specific aspects of their own clinical area of practice with their peers.

- The Award is linked to its own VLE on Blackboard.
- The Award is delivered by a blend of face to face and online sessions, some are wholly online. The Award uses Adobe Captivate and Camtasia Studio to deliver the online elements of the curriculum.

14. Assessment Strategy

The assessment is based on 4 key principles:

Adaptability: all the assessment items allow the student to match their interests, needs and discipline.

Utility: Students are encouraged to use topics which will enable them to explore issues and questions from their own speciality with a view to innovating and enhancing practise.

Learning: The assessments are seen as powerful opportunities for personal, focused learning and developing self-management and self-direction; they are a central aspect of the learning process. In completing their competency document in practice under the supervision of the Designated medical practitioner (DMP) the students have an opportunity to contextualise their theoretical pharmacology knowledge and apply it during prescribing practice through direct contact with patients.

Practice focused: All students are already in clinical practice. In MSAP4021P students are assessed in their practice by their DMP. They must critically reflect on cases from their practice. And record this in a portfolio of evidence. Students are able to utilise practice situations as a context or contribution for any of their assignments.

Support is given to help the student to apply the module learning outcomes to their assignment through written guidance in the module guide and in tutorials.

Assessments are innovative and varied, for instance, including Objective Structured Competency Examinations (OSCEs) which are practical examinations based on cases and using actors role playing patients.

Some of the assessments include formative activities which helps students prepare for their final summative assessment, presented in the module guide. This enables the module leaders to identify at an early stage any issues with students' academic development and also enables students to self-assess and ensure they are preparing appropriately for the assignment. Feedback is directly linked to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

The programme uses Masters level descriptors for assessment of assignments which are aligned to the University's [Masters Level Assessment Criteria](#).

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award map

Course Title: Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing			
Module Code	Module Title	Credits	Status (Mandatory (M) or Optional(O))
MSAP4021P	Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing	40	M

Statement of requirements

In order to undertake this Award students must meet the following requirements as set out by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)

<http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist-independent-prescriber/entry-requirements>

1. Be a registered Pharmacist whose name is held on the General Pharmaceutical Council Register.
2. Have at least 2 years post registration experience and be deemed competent by their employer to undertake the programme. The year immediately preceding the application should be in the field in which there is intention to practice.
3. Part time workers must have practiced for a sufficient length of time to be deemed competent by their employer.
4. Support from employing organisation to attend the course, gain access to a prescribing budget, undertake continued supervised practice and associated professional development activity.
5. Have a Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP) who is willing to provide the student with supervision, support and the opportunity to develop competence in prescribing practice during the 12 x 7.5 hr days practice component of the course. DMPs are required to sign the confederation form to record their agreement to undertake this commitment to the student.

This will be a Medical Practitioner who works alongside the student within their working environment.

Be able to evidence a current Disclosure Barring Statement

Have completed the West Midland Confederation application form alongside the University of Worcester application form and met the eligibility criteria for this with completed signatures from the Trust Lead, Manager and Designated medical practitioner.

License as a Prescriber:

Pharmacists may only prescribe once they have successfully completed this GPhC approved programme. On successful completion, the University will write to the GPhC and ask for this qualification to be annotated. Entry on the pharmaceutical register will be annotated to denote that the student is a prescriber.

Once the qualification has been annotated onto the GPhC register, the pharmacist may need to undertake further preparatory measures prior to prescribing. This may include ensuring entry onto a local "prescriber's database", ensuring that they have access to an NHS prescribing budget, ordering of prescription pads and so on. These local requirements will differ according to employer and the clinical setting. It is therefore the responsibility of the individual prescriber to find out what these arrangements are, and ensure that they obtain the necessary authorisations from their employer.

Please Note: The GPhC reserve the right to assess each individual applicant and make a decision about whether they can have the annotation on the GPhC register in individual circumstances. It cannot be guaranteed that future applications for annotation on the register as a prescriber would or would not be successful.

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

This award is located at level 7 of the FHEQ. The following sources have been used throughout the programme:

- [QAA \(2010\) Masters Degree Characteristics](#) (Whole programme)
- [QAA \(2008\)The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, Masters level](#) (Whole course)
- For information about the BSc (Hons) Health Sciences (top-up) please follow this link - <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/health-sciences-bsc-hons-top-up.html>
- If you would like to know more about the MSc Advancing Practice <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/advancing-practice-msc.html>
- Please follow this link to obtain more information about the diverse range of modules and awards available on the new Professional Development for Health Sciences programme <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/cpd-framework.html>
- Information about up-coming conferences and workshops can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/professional-development-workshops.html>
- [QAA Code of Practice on Workbased and Placement Learning \(2007\)](#).
- E learning elements have been guided by the [QAA Code of Practice on Collaborative Provision and Flexible and Distributed Learning \(including e-learning\) \(2010\)](#)
- DH (2005) Supplementary Prescribing by Nurses, Pharmacists Chiropodists/Podiatrists, Physiotherapists and Radiographers within the NHS in England
- <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/>
- <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Subject-benchmark-statement---Pharmacy.pdf>

<http://www.rpharms.com/developing-your-practice/pharmacist-prescribers.asp>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-nurse-and-pharmacist-independent-prescribing-in-england-key-findings-and-executive-summary>

National Prescribing Centre (2012) A single competency framework for all prescribers http://www.npc.nhs.uk/improving_safety/improving_quality/resources/single_comp_framework.pdf

17. Support for students

A full range of pastoral and academic support services are available for students which can be accessed via the [Student Homepage](#).

Specific to the programme:

- Some students may be invited to interview depending on their application information. During the application process all students are advised that they are welcome to visit the programme leader to discuss the course.
- There is extensive programme information on Blackboard VLE, in module flyers, in the Masters in Advancing Practice (MAP) booklet and in the programme handbook.
- The course team provide an exceptional level of individual academic support and encouragement to students. The team are always aware of the competing pressures on students and the difficulties of returning to study alongside a busy job and family. Academic support is personal and flexible and proactive; it is tailored to the particular needs of students who are known to the team over a long period of time.
- The first of the 10 taught days is an induction day. This is designed to familiarise students with: the University, the Institute of Health and Society (IHS) and the course. They can meet representatives from Student Services, Registry and Information and Learning Services (ILS) including a visit from the ILS link librarian on the first day.
- All students are allocated a Personal Academic Tutor for the duration of the course.
- This Award has a dedicated VLE where students can access all course materials

Personal Academic Tutors

Students will be assigned a Personal Academic Tutor for this module. Students can access their Tutor for tutorials and advice by email or an appointment system. Any notices or changes to the module or information related to this will be posted on the 'Blackboard'.

The focus of the Personal Academic Tutor is to encourage your personal development planning so that you receive structured support to develop:

- Awareness of your own strengths and weaknesses.
- A clear vision of what you want to achieve through PG study.
- Greater understanding of how study in your discipline area at the University can help you towards your goals.
- The best choice of modules for you to reach your goals.
- A plan for your dissertation so that you choose the right module, the best type of study for your question and you apply for your ethical approval well in advance.
- A reflective approach to all the feedback you receive on your work.
- A sense and a record of progression and achievement in your development of subject and generic skills and attributes (qualities).
- An ability to use this greater awareness to articulate the benefits of your PG experience to others including employers.

The Personal Academic Tutor will also respond to requests for support and help with problems which affect academic work either at subject level or by referral to other University facilities. The Personal Academic Tutor is the student's regular point of contact within the University and they will normally remain with the student throughout their time at the University.

Students should talk to their Personal Academic Tutor at least once each semester to discuss feedback, module choice and dissertation plans as a minimum using face to face contact, email, phone and Skype to keep in touch.

Clinical Placements

Pharmacists identify their own Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP) and arrange with their module leaders to meet with the designated medical practitioner during the programme to monitor progress, identify areas of competency and discuss suitable OSCE and seminar assessment. There is the "Guidance for Designated Medical Practitioners Handbook" which is sent to the DMP prior to the course commencing. It contains detailed information about their role and responsibilities and includes the contact details for the course leader. Any queries by the DMP will be addressed on a one to one basis by a member of the course team.

The DMP is ultimately responsible for signing and agreeing the clinical competency document within the scope of practice identified.

Support for students is also available at the following links.

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/index.htm>

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/student-services/disability-and-dyslexia.htm>

18. Admissions

Entry requirements

- Students must be a registered pharmacist with the GPhC
- Must have at least two years appropriate patient-orientated experience in a UK hospital, community or primary care setting following their pre-registration year.

- Must have identified an area of clinical practice in which to develop their prescribing skills and have up-to-date clinical, pharmacological and pharmaceutical knowledge relevant to their intended area of prescribing practice
- Must be able to demonstrate how they reflect on their own performance and take responsibility for their own CPD.
- Must have identified a suitable (DMP) who has the qualifications, 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 and learning outcomes for the programme.

In addition Health Education West Midlands (HEWM) require that the pharmacist must:

- Be able to evidence a current DBS Check.
- Have completed the West Midland Confederation application form alongside the University of Worcester application form and met the eligibility criteria for this with completed signatures from the Trust Lead, Manager and Designated medical practitioner.

19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

- Students evaluate modules at the midpoint and end of each module. Collated evaluations are placed online with the module leaders' response and action plan and uploaded onto Blackboard. Evaluations are reviewed by the programme leader and in programme management committees by the whole team. The collated student evaluations are made available to the education leads at the local NHS Trusts in respect of sponsored students.
- Annual Evaluation Reports
- External Examiner Reports
- Peer learning through observation.
- Programme Management Committee
- Post exam board moderation
- The staff appraisals of members of the programme team inform scholarly activities such as research, publication and conference presentations.
- Overall programme evaluation takes place via classroom evaluations

20. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specification.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- The minimum pass mark is 80% for the Pharmacology Exam.
- Seminars, Portfolios, and Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) are Pass or Fail awards.
- There is no compensation between assessment items.
- The Award normally has a 100% attendance requirement.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade, unless the failure was due to non-attendance.
- Reassessment items that are passed are graded at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.

Requirements for Awards

Award	Requirement
Postgraduate Award in Professional Development : (Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing)	Passed 40 credits at level 7 (MSAP4021P)

The award is unclassified.

21. Indicators of quality and standards

The University underwent a QAA Institutional Audit in March 2011. The audit confirmed that confidence can be placed in the soundness of the institution's current and likely future management of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. The audit team highlighted several aspects of good practice, including the student academic representative (StARs) initiative, the proactive approach which supports the student experience for disabled students, the comprehensiveness of the student online environment (SOLE), the wide range of opportunities afforded to students to enhance their employability, the institution's commitment to enhancement, and the inclusive approach to working with its collaborative partners.

22. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Career Opportunities & Links with Employers

The ability to see a patient through assessment, diagnosis and then prescribing will mean that the pharmacists become uniquely autonomous in their clinical practice.

The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust in 2010 found that newly qualified pharmacists, under the current system, struggled to apply their knowledge of medicines, and science to solving clinical problems and communicating with patients. Employers reported that graduates were not always confident in making clinical judgements.

Furthermore, it was stated, the modern NHS requires pharmacists with more than just the M.Pharm- patients and other practitioners need pharmacists who are better equipped to be able to contextualise their capability in theoretical pharmacology to apply it to actual clinical practice.

This prescribing course encourages pharmacists to build on their existing expertise and knowledge to acquire competence as a prescriber. The pharmacists who complete this course find that their employability is significantly enhanced.

Moreover, the University has aspired to provide a course that equips its students with much more than just the basic level of competence and knowledge required to achieve a prescribing qualification. The pharmacists produced by the teaching and learning strategies we have devised will be qualified pharmacist prescribers with an additional level of health of assessment expertise, diagnosis skills and proficiency in prescribing and patient consultation within their scope of practice.

- The Programme Leader and Programme Team work closely with commissioners and other stakeholders within the local NHS economy to ensure the programme is current and has been designed to meet national and local policy drivers.
- The programme ensures pharmacist Independent prescribers are well equipped to undertake the challenges of improving and managing quality in the modern health service.
- The course is a “Stand Alone” programme on Independent and Pharmacist Prescribing that is worth 40 Level 7 CATS points. On successful completion students will qualify for a Practice Certificate in Pharmacist Independent Prescribing and their entry on the GPhC register will be annotated to denote that they are a prescriber.

Opportunities for Further Study: Students may use the 40 level 7 credits towards the Masters in Advanced Practice (MAP) award, an MSc in advanced practice. This is outlined in more detail in the course handbook.

Graduate destinations

Pharmacists may only prescribe once they have successfully completed this GPhC approved programme. On successful completion, the University will write to the General Pharmaceutical Council and ask for this qualification to be recorded. The pharmacist's entry on the pharmaceutical register will be annotated to denote that they are a prescriber.

Pharmacists who undertake this programme will have applied or been selected by their employers on the basis that there is a role for them as an independent prescriber in their current posts e.g. to enhance their effectiveness when running clinics for specific conditions, by enabling them to prescribe without reference to a clinician on every occasion.

Links with employers

The Award has been developed in partnership with the GPhC and with HEWM. Placements will be provided by the local NHS Trusts in the West Midlands and with local independent pharmacy contractors.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module outlines and the course handbook provided to all students at the start of the course.