

Independent prescribing application guidance

There are two aspects to the application process for Independent Prescribing (IP) at The University of Manchester (UoM):

- the online application form provides your details to the university to allow communication with you and to process your application
- the IP application form provides the information we require to verify that you are eligible to undertake the course, which is mainly based on regulatory standards.

You must complete the online application to signal your wish to be considered for the course, and the IP application form to confirm that you meet the regulatory eligibility criteria. Failure to do so will result in your application being rejected.

We have offered guidance on the application process in general and each section of the application form. We have also provided information about the role of designated prescribing practitioners (DPPs) and answers to FAQs at the end of this document. The information within this document is intended to address the issues that often lead to us rejecting applications, so please take time now to reduce delays later.

Preparation

Check your professional eligibility to apply to undertake a prescribing course:

General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) - www.pharmacyregulation.org/students-and-trainees/pharmacist-education-and-training/independent-prescriber-education-and-training

Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) - www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-post-registration/standards-for-prescribers

The University of Manchester course is accredited only by the GPhC and NMC, so we are unable to accept applications from other healthcare professionals. However, your regulator will have details of approved providers on their website:

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) - www.hcpc-uk.org/education/approved-programmes

General Optical Council (GOC) - <https://optical.org/education/for-prospective-students/post-registration-qualifications.html>.

If you are employed within the NHS, check with your Non-Medical Prescribing (NMP) Lead for guidance on organisational processes and funding BEFORE you embark on application to avoid delays later in the process.

You should also check the criteria for designated prescribing practitioners, which you can find in the regulatory standards signposted above.

Download the current version of the Independent Prescribing application form from the course webpage, where you will also find current information about the programme, including study and assessment dates and course fees:

www.manchester.ac.uk/study/masters/courses/list/09815/independent-prescribing-short-course/all-content/#course-profile

Check that you have an enhanced DBS disclosure issued within three years of the start date of the course, or subscription to the update service. If you work in Scotland or Northern Ireland, the relevant checking service will be a suitable alternative. We cannot consider your application unless you have an enhanced DBS disclosure in place; a commitment to apply or application in process are not sufficient.

Completing the application form

We have only asked for information that is necessary and is often driven by the regulators. You can see our Privacy Notice on the university website: www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/privacy-information/data-protection/privacy-notices

You must enter your name at the top of each page of the application form so that we can confirm the information relates to you.

Although not all sections need be completed by all applicants (because some information is profession specific), you must follow the directions on the application form carefully and complete all sections that apply to you. If any section that is required is not completed, your application will be rejected.

All signatures must be handwritten (wet) onto the form; we cannot accept typed names or images inserted. Once the form is completed in full, you should scan the document and upload it with your online application. The signatures are kept on file and used for verification of assessment submissions during the programme. If you don't have access to a scanner, you might find the free Adobe Scan app helpful, because it will allow you to scan all pages into one document: www.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/mobile/scanner-app.html.

Section 1

Although the same application form template is used by all Universities in the North West, you should indicate only one to ensure that your NMP/governance lead agrees with that application. This is especially important when you consider that some courses require additional support in terms of accelerated hours and fees.

If you are not employed by one organisation, you should either provide the details of your agency or the business through which you complete your tax return if self-employed.

You must upload your transcript for all qualifications leading to professional registration and all postgraduate qualifications awarded by a university.

You must complete this section with your details, and you must sign in the places indicated.

The prescribing course at UoM is only offered at level 7 (master's level), which means that you must have an undergraduate degree to be eligible to study with us. The course is also accelerated so there is no breathing space to develop the requisite academic skills that would come from previous degree-level study.

The personal statement is how we assess whether you have the experience in your clinical area, knowledge, skill and understanding to become a prescriber. Please address the following points to demonstrate that you:

- are working clinically in a patient-facing role
- undertake medication reviews
- consider the needs of service users
- consult with service users
- have an area of intended prescribing practice
- have clinical experience in that area of intended prescribing practice
- have engaged in continuing professional development within the last 12 months
- reflect on your practice as a means of learning
- have an awareness of your own limitations and professional codes of conduct
- communicate with a wide range of healthcare professionals.

Section 2

This section is completed by your line manager if you are employed.

If you are self-funding and completing your learning within your employing organisation, your line manager should complete this.

If you are self-employed, this part is a self-declaration, and you must complete and sign it, but this will mean that two references are required (see below)

Section 3

Your designated prescribing practitioner (DPP, which we use as an umbrella term for Practice Assessor, Practice Supervisor, and Designated Prescribing Practitioner), is the health care professional identified on your application form. The signature of the DPP must match the documents undertaken throughout the programme.

Ninety (90) hours is the minimum amount to be spent in supervised clinical practice, although we recommend that this is not spent with one person. There are many ways to undertake supervised practice, and you will find some guidance in the section below about the role of the DPP.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your proposed DPP understands the role they are committing to and you cannot expect them to know what the role involves if you don't. While they may have experience of being a DPP for another prescribing student, all university's expectations vary, so be sure you know what UoM expects.

Please follow the directions on the application form to determine which parts of section 3 relate to you, which comes down to your profession (rather than the DPP's).

While the NMC standards indicate that the Practice Assessor and Supervisor could be the same person, this is to allow for exceptional circumstances and is not acceptable at the point of application to UoM.

CQC registration (or GPhC registration for community pharmacies) is not required, but since that would address many of the governance considerations of a learning environment, a separate audit must be completed if the learning environment is not covered by CQC/GPhC registration. Please enquire by emailing the Admissions Team: pgtaught.pharmacy@manchester.ac.uk

Section 4

This section is not optional, but not all parts are required for all applicants, so please consider this guidance carefully.

4a must be completed for all applications. It should be completed by the person responsible for NMP or prescribing governance within the organisation **where the applicant is currently employed**.

4b need only be completed if the applicant is planning to undertake supervised practice in an organisation in which they are not employed. This part should be completed by the person responsible for NMP or prescribing governance in the organisation **where the applicant plans to undertake supervised practice**.

4c need only be completed by applicants from NHS organisations within the North West of England. This includes primary care organisations and community pharmacies, who should contact their ICB for guidance.

The numeracy assessment is not a university requirement, but an aspect of the NHS selection process so you should take advice from your NMP/governance lead about whether they require you to complete it and to gain access to it if they do.

Required experience

We are keen to ensure that you have an appropriate amount and range of experience as a practitioner so that you bring plenty of transferable skills to the course. That means that you must have experience in undertaking consultations with patients, a sound understanding of the condition/s within your planned scope of practice, familiarity with the medicines and non-pharmacological management options and some experience in recommending changes to medicines for clinical reasons.

You should also have a good working relationship with your DPP or PA/PS. Knowing the practice setting and staff will mean you have good support to help develop your new skills.

Self-employed/self-funding applicants

Please pay particular attention to the following points if you are self-employed or self-funded:

- You must upload a copy of your enhanced DBS disclosure with your online application (as well as the details you provide on the application form). We cannot facilitate the DBS application for you but you may find the information on the UK Government website: www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-checking-service-guidance--2
- If you do not have a line manager, you must complete section 2 yourself or ask your DPP/PA to complete it. However, please be aware that the same person cannot sign sections 2, 3 and 4; you must have at least two people involved in your application. If you self-declare section 2, you must be open and honest about each criterion.
- You must provide details of two referees:
 - One must be from a prescriber who can confirm the section 2 criteria (other than direct employment/prescribing budget information) and they must provide registration details.
 - The other reference should be from a former line manager or academic tutor (within the last five years) or someone you work with professionally and who can confirm that you are of good health and character.

NB family members, friends, people with whom you have a limited professional relationship or with who you have not worked in your professional role are not appropriate referees.

- Section 4 must be completed. If the organisation in which you are planning to undertake supervised practice does not have a Non-Medical Prescribing Lead, you must ask the person responsible for prescribing governance to complete it. If your DPP/PA/PS holds that role, another senior person should complete section 4. You cannot self-declare section 4.
- The numeracy assessment is not required.

Guidance for pharmacists on choosing a Designated Prescribing Practitioner

A Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP) is an experienced independent prescriber who supports and supervises a trainee pharmacist prescriber's period of learning in practice. They are also responsible for assessing whether the learning outcomes have been met and whether the trainee has acquired the prescribing competencies.

Eligibility criteria: DPP

The DPP must be a registered independent prescriber who has at least three years of recent prescribing experience within the field that the pharmacist is intending to prescribe. This means that, rather than having to be a doctor, the DPP could be a pharmacist, nurse or any other independent prescriber with at least three years of active prescribing experience.

There are a number of other requirements as well, including that they must be familiar with and able to demonstrate all of the competencies in [A competency framework for all prescribers](#), which is the syllabus for your training, and [A competency framework for designated prescribing practitioners](#).

You can find the detailed eligibility criteria in section 3a of the application form (which you can download from the [course webpage](#)), which should be self-explanatory. The important thing to remember is that the university doesn't have a lot of discretion because these eligibility criteria are set by the regulators.

The role of the DPP

One of the criteria in section 3a is:

“Agrees to retain the primary responsibility for the overall supervision and assessment of the applicant as a prescriber in training while working in collaboration with academic and workplace partners during the applicant's period of learning in practice.”

The DPP doesn't provide all 90 hours of supervised practice. At Manchester, we *require* that the named DPP supervises at least 30 hours. You should spend the rest of the time with a range of prescribers, ideally from different professions, so you see different approaches to similar tasks.

The DPP has a crucial role in supporting trainee pharmacist prescribers, which involves:

- agreeing on a learning contract with the trainee prescriber
- planning a programme of learning in practice that will provide the opportunity for the trainee prescriber to meet their development needs and gain competency in prescribing
- facilitating learning by encouraging critical thinking and reflection
- providing dedicated time and opportunities for the trainee prescriber to observe how they conduct consultations with patients/carers, and the development of management plans
- allowing the trainee prescriber to carry out consultations, suggest management and prescribing options and plan follow-up
- helping the trainee prescriber to integrate theory with practice
- encouraging in-depth analysis of diagnostic and management approaches through case-based discussion
- providing timely feedback on highlights in performance and areas for improvement
- assessing progress and verifying that, by the end of the course, the trainee prescriber is competent to assume the prescribing role
- taking responsibility for signing off competencies
- collaborating with peers and the Academic Supervisor to support the trainee prescriber.

During the application process, the DPP must also complete and sign section 3b of the application form to confirm that the practice learning environments are suitable.

What counts as supervised practice?

It's a dynamic process that generally follows a series of stages:

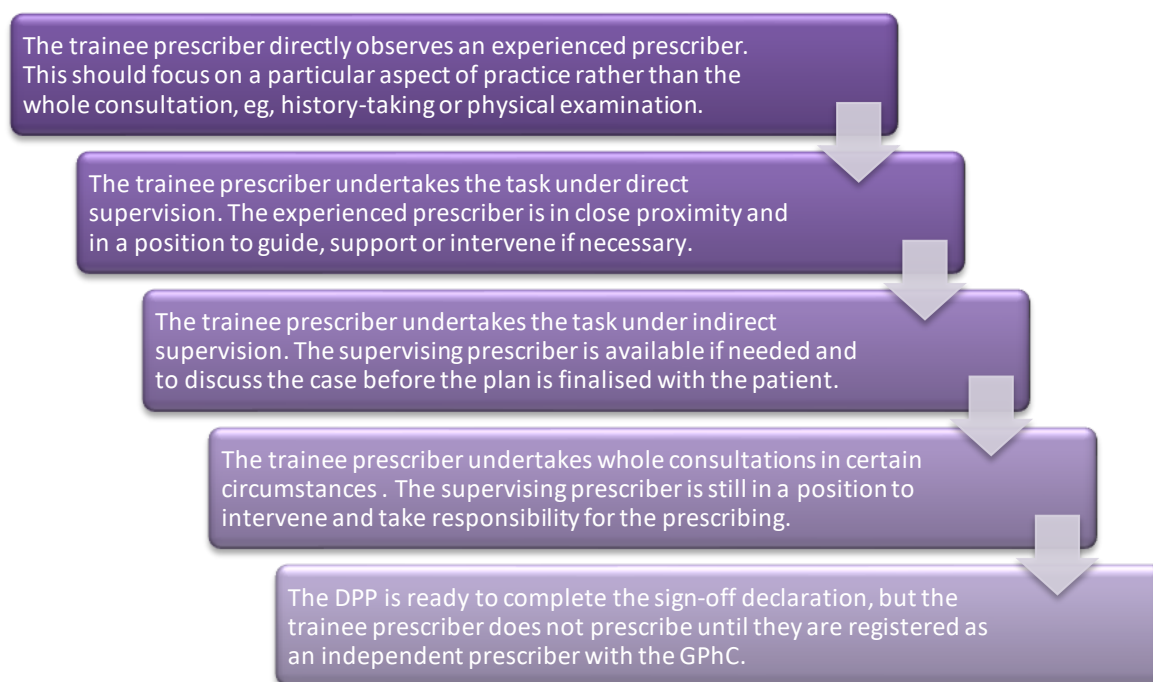


Figure 1: based on the five levels of supervision for entrustable professional activities (Ole ten Cate, 2013)

Case-based discussion and multi-disciplinary team meetings can count towards the period of learning in practice as long as they contribute to addressing a development need identified in the learning contract or demonstrating a prescribing competency. However, neither should constitute a large proportion of the total supervised practice.

The DPP will also contribute to two supervision meetings with the student and their Academic Supervisor; one at the start of the course and the second around two-thirds of the way through. These are online meetings of around 20 minutes and offer an opportunity for the DPP to confirm their understanding of their role in supervision and assessment, and to verify the trainee prescriber's progress towards their development goals. Meetings are scheduled at a mutually convenient time once the pharmacist has registered for the course.

What's in it for the DPP?

You can see that there is quite a lot of time and responsibility in being a DPP and it's essential that a potential DPP understands what's required before they agree. There's also a great deal to be gained from being a DPP because it helps you to validate and develop your own practice when you're supporting someone else's development. And the DPP would usually benefit from you being a prescriber in the end so it's time invested.

What do you need?

Your DPP should be someone you can work with, someone you trust to encourage and challenge you, and someone who will make time for you. There is an eligibility criterion about usually working with the applicant and that's because you need to know that you can work with them. This is one of the few courses where you are dependent on someone else putting effort in for your development.

You're asking someone to do a whole lot of work for no immediate gain. Make sure there's a clear return for their investment and that you're honest about what you expect. Try to be flexible and make the most of every opportunity and, if you can present them with a fully formed plan, it's much more likely to work than simply saying, "Will you be my DPP?"

Further guidance

The University cannot provide a DPP and does not keep a register of people who may be prepared to act in that role. However, the [Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education](#) (CPPE) and the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society](#) offer guidance on approaches to securing this essential support.

Guidance for NMC registrants on choosing a Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor

The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) takes a different approach to supervision of the period of learning in practice in that there are two named people involved.

The Practice Assessor (PA) is an experienced independent prescriber who undertakes the assessment aspect of the period of learning in practice. That's the initial assessment of development needs, the final sign-off of competence and at least one other progress review part-way through the course. The Practice Assessor must spend about one-third of the period of learning in practice supporting the trainee prescriber's development.

The Practice Supervisor (PS) is an experienced nurse independent prescriber who is responsible for supporting the development of prescribing competencies through practice-based learning activities.

These two practitioners must work together with the Academic Supervisor to ensure that the trainee prescriber is supported to develop and meet the prescribing competencies.

Eligibility criteria: Practice Assessor

The PA must be a registered independent prescriber who has at least three years' recent prescribing experience within the field that the NMC registrant is intending to prescribe. This means that, rather than having to be a doctor, the PA could be a nurse, midwife, pharmacist or any other independent prescriber with at least three years' active prescribing experience.

There are a number of other requirements as well, including that they must be familiar with and able to demonstrate all of the competencies in [A competency framework for all prescribers](#), which is the syllabus for your training, and [A competency framework for designated prescribing practitioners](#).

You can find the detailed eligibility criteria in section 3a of the application form (which you can download from the [course webpage](#)), which should be self-explanatory. The important thing to remember is that the university doesn't have a lot of discretion because these eligibility criteria are set by the regulators.

The role of the Practice Assessor

Two of the criteria in section 3a are:

“Agrees to retain the primary responsibility for the overall supervision and assessment of the applicant as a prescriber in training while working in collaboration with academic and workplace partners during the applicant's period of learning in practice.”

“Agrees to work in partnership with the nominated Academic Assessor to evaluate and recommend the student for progression in line with programme standards.”

The PA doesn't provide all 90 hours of supervised practice. At Manchester, we require that the PA supervises 15-30 hours, and the Practice Supervisor supervises at least 30 hours. You should spend the rest of the time with a range of prescribers, ideally from different professions, so that you see different approaches to similar tasks.

The PA has a crucial role in the assessment of trainee prescribers, which involves:

- agreeing a learning contract with the trainee prescriber and Practice Supervisor

- planning a programme of learning in practice that will provide the opportunity for the trainee prescriber to meet their development needs and gain competency in prescribing
- facilitating learning by encouraging critical thinking and reflection
- providing dedicated time to observe and provide feedback to the trainee prescriber on highlights in performance and areas for improvement
- encouraging in-depth analysis of diagnostic and management approaches through case-based discussion
- assessing progress and verifying that, by the end of the course, the trainee prescriber is competent to assume the prescribing role
- taking responsibility for signing off competencies
- collaborating with the Practice and Academic Supervisors to support the trainee prescriber.

During the application process, the PA must also complete and sign section 3b of the application form to confirm that the practice learning environments are suitable.

Eligibility criteria: Practice Supervisor

The PS must be a registered independent prescriber who is an active prescriber with current clinical and prescribing experience in the area in that the trainee prescriber requires support, supervision and feedback. This means that the PS could be a nurse, midwife, pharmacist or any other independent prescriber working in the same field of practice.

There are a number of other requirements as well, including that they must be familiar with and able to demonstrate all of the competencies in [A competency framework for all prescribers](#), which is the syllabus for your training, and that they must be familiar with and working towards achieving competencies in [A competency framework for designated prescribing practitioners](#).

You can find the detailed eligibility criteria in section 3c of the application form.

The role of the Practice Supervisor

The PS has a crucial role in supporting and supervising trainee prescribers that includes:

- agreeing a learning contract with the trainee prescriber and Practice Assessor
- planning a programme of learning in practice that will provide the opportunity for the trainee prescriber to meet their development needs and gain competency in prescribing
- facilitating learning by encouraging critical thinking and reflection
- providing dedicated time and opportunities for the trainee prescriber to observe how they conduct consultations patients and their carers and the development of management plans
- allowing the trainee prescriber to carry out consultations, suggest management and prescribing options and plan follow-up
- helping the trainee prescriber to integrate theory with practice
- encouraging in-depth analysis of diagnostic and management approaches through case-based discussion
- providing timely feedback on highlights in performance and areas for improvement
- collaborating with peers and the Practice and Academic Supervisors to support the trainee prescriber.

What counts as supervised practice?

It's a dynamic process that generally follows a series of stages (see below). The Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor must work together with the trainee prescriber to agree on development goals on which the PS and student will concentrate in advance of formative and summative assessment by the Practice Assessor.

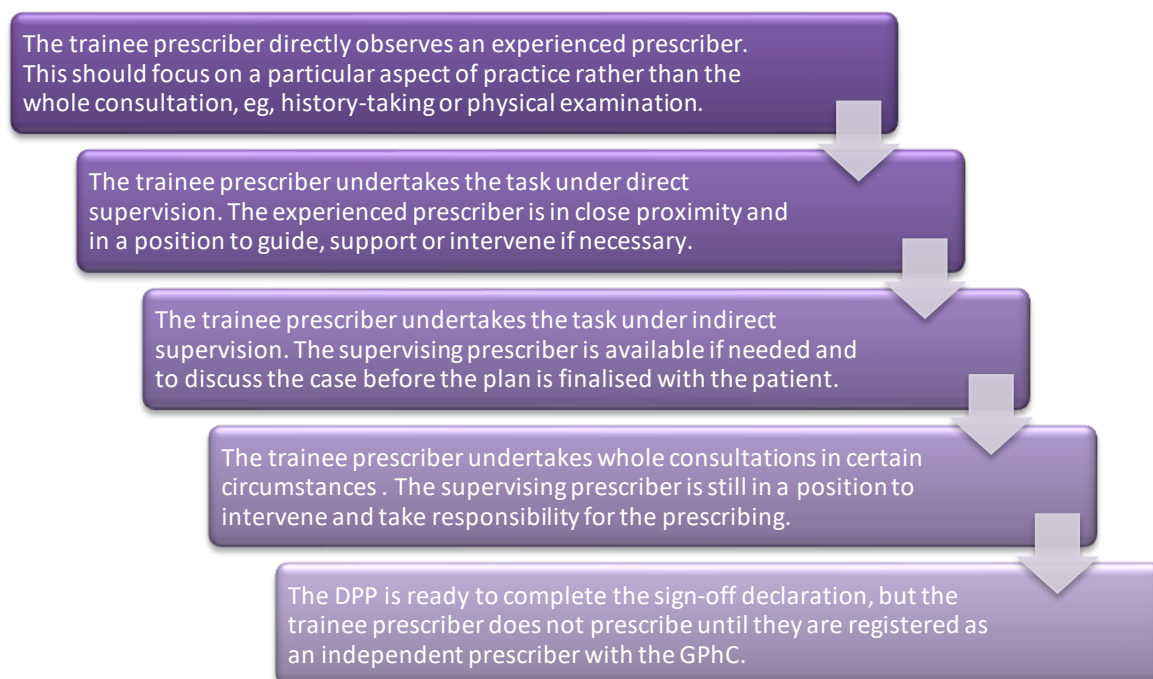


Figure 1: based on the five levels of supervision for entrustable professional activities (Ole ten Cate, 2013)

Case-based discussion and multi-disciplinary team meetings can count towards the period of learning in practice as long as they contribute to addressing a development need identified in the learning contract or demonstrating a prescribing competency. However, neither should constitute a large proportion of the total supervised practice.

The Practice Assessor and Practice Supervisor will also contribute to two supervision meetings with the student and their Academic Supervisor; one at the start of the course and the second around two-thirds of the way through. These are online meetings of around 20 minutes and offer an opportunity for the PA and PS to confirm their understanding of their role in supervision and assessment (respectively), and to verify the trainee prescriber's progress towards their development goals. Meetings are scheduled at a mutually convenient time once the pharmacist has registered for the course.

What's in it for the PA/PS?

You can see that there is quite a lot of time and responsibility in being a PA/PS and it's essential that they understand what's required before they agree. There's also a great deal to be gained from being a PA/PS because it helps you to validate and develop your own practice when you're supporting someone else's development. And the PA/PS would usually benefit from you being a prescriber in the end so it is time invested. Being a PS might also be a steppingstone to be a PA, allowing some experience and learning from PA as well as making use of prescribing skills and experience.

What do you need?

Your PA and PS should be people that you can work with, that you trust to be encouraging and to challenge you, and who will make time for you. There are eligibility criteria about usually working with the applicant and that's because you need to know that you can work with them. This is one of the few courses where you are dependent on someone else putting effort in for your development.

You're asking someone to do a whole lot of work for no immediate gain. Make sure there's a clear return for their investment and that you're honest about what you expect. Try to be flexible and make the most of every opportunity and, if you can present them with a fully formed plan, it's much more likely to work than simply saying, "Will you be my PA/PS?"

Further guidance

The University cannot provide a Practice Assessor/Supervisor and does not keep a register of people who may be prepared to act in that role. However, the [Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education](#) (CPPE) offers guidance on approaches to securing this essential support that is relevant to applicants from all professions.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What is the content of the Independent Prescribing course?

The course content covers the [General Pharmaceutical Council](#) (GPhC) and the [Nursing & Midwifery Council](#) (NMC) standards for accredited prescribing courses. The content is mapped to [A competency framework for all prescribers](#), which will provide a guide to the topics we include.

Prescribing courses teach the prescribing process and do not usually teach the clinical aspects of prescribing in any one condition. We expect that you will bring a good amount of experience and transferable skills from your existing role as a healthcare professional, combine that with teaching and self-directed learning and work with your DPP or PA/PS to apply the knowledge and skills in your area of practice.

We adopt a blended approach with six face-to-face study days and 150 hours of self-directed learning from online resources. The study days include history taking, consultation skills and physical examination as well as a range of opportunities to discuss law, ethics and governance topics.

Can I apply for the Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing if I have not previously completed a Postgraduate Diploma/MSc?

You must have a strong clinical background and be able to evidence this through your application and interview. A postgraduate diploma/MSc in a relevant subject is very helpful in this respect but it is not a requirement.

How long does it take to qualify?

The course is four months from the first taught day until the last submission. There is a period of about eight weeks after your final submission until the Exam Board ratifies results, which means that students who are successful in the first attempt at all of the assessments may be able to register with their regulator around six months after starting the course.

Anyone who isn't successful in the first attempt of any of the assessments will join the next cohort for their second attempt.

In extenuating circumstances, extensions and interruptions may be required. However, students must complete the course within two years of their registration date.

Do I need to attend all the taught sessions and assessments?

Yes. All workshops are mandatory, and you will not be permitted to attempt any assessments until you have achieved full attendance. Each assessment must be passed independently of the others, and you must complete all learning and assessments within two years of starting the course.

How do I decide on a scope of practice?	Your scope of practice during the course should be a clinical area where you have extensive clinical experience and the opportunity to start prescribing on completion of the course. It should be narrow enough to make the workload manageable and that you have ready access to patients at a time that your DPP or PA/PS can provide supervision.
Will the course teach me clinical knowledge within my scope of practice?	No. Prescribing courses accommodate students from a wide range of backgrounds, so we teach the prescribing process in generic terms and then support you to contextualise the learning within your scope of practice during the supervised practice element of the course. You must bring a good level of clinical experience within your scope of practice.
What if I do not have a scope of practice?	It is essential that you define your scope of practice before applying for the course because we assess your clinical experience in that scope during the application and selection process. You may find it helpful to discuss your plans with your line manager, service lead, DPP or PA/PS to ensure that you have a plan in mind and that you can demonstrate your experience in that area.
After gaining my independent prescriber qualification, can I choose to prescribe outside of my scope of practice?	Prescribing permissions are linked to a self-assessment of competence in managing the conditions for which you plan to prescribe. As part of the course, we teach you how to undertake this self-assessment and create a development plan. You can then use these skills to develop your competence after you have qualified and expand your scope of practice.
Is this course the same as a V300?	Yes. V300 is the NMC code for this course.
Is an accelerated programme right for me?	This accelerated course covers a large amount of learning in a very short space of time. You must engage fully with the programme and be prepared to commit to an average of 15 hours of study and 7.5 hours of supervised practice per week for the duration of the course. Only you can decide whether this approach works for you.
Is a blended learning programme right for me?	A blended learning approach offers a high degree of flexibility with a minimum number of contact days. It also means that you need to be self-motivated to learn in your own time. You must have a good level of IT skills because self-directed learning requires you to navigate the central learning environment (Canvas) and an electronic portfolio (PebblePad). The skills required to navigate the application process are a good example of the skills required to study the course so that might give you a sense of whether this is the right course for you.
Do I need an NMP lead signature on my application form?	Yes. All applicants must have section 4 completed by either the NMP Lead or an equivalent person with a lead role in prescribing governance within the organisation in which they plan to prescribe.

If I am self-funding ...	Please see the guidance above for details of extra requirements for self-funding applicants, which should cover most FAQs.
What am I eligible to do after completing the course?	You are eligible to request annotation as an Independent Prescriber with your regulator. They will undertake a series of checks so completing the course is not a guarantee of registration, but it is a pre-requisite.
How do I find a DPP?	Consider how you plan to work as a prescriber, including how you will access a prescribing budget and manage the separation of prescribing and dispensing/administration. If you plan to support a surgery by running clinics for them, one of the GPs with whom you have an existing professional relationship, may best see the benefits of investing in your development.
What does a level 7 course mean and are the credits transferable?	<p>Level 7 study is master's level, which means that you must have an undergraduate degree to undertake this programme. Assessment at level 7 requires a deeper level of criticality and synthesis in the reflection than degree level. The University of Manchester Independent Prescribing course is only assessed at level 7.</p> <p>The course offers 30 level 7 credits, which may be transferable to other programmes. You should check with the team that runs the programme for which you want to use the credits in the first instance.</p>
Do DPPs or PA/PSs get paid?	No. There is no payment for overseeing the period of learning in practice. It is expected that the DPP or PA/PS will benefit from you being a prescriber, so they are investing time in your development.
What is required of my DPP or PA/PS?	See the guidance above.
Can I pay the course fees in instalments?	No. University regulations require that the course fees are paid in full prior to commencing the course.

If you have any questions that are not answered by the information on the course webpage or this document, please email the Admissions Team pgtaught.pharmacy@manchester.ac.uk