

Visitors' report – amended approval process for independent prescribing programmes

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Section one: Programme details

Name of education provider	St George's, University of London
Programme name	Prescribing: Independent and Supplementary
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant entitlement	Independent prescribing Supplementary prescribing
Name and role of HCPC visitors	Alaster Rutherford (Independent prescriber) Gemma Quinn (Independent prescriber)
HCPC executive	Mandy Hargood
Date of submission to the HCPC	12 January 2016

Section two: Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve education programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can be eligible to apply to be registered with us.

As well as approving educational programmes for individuals who want to join the Register, the HCPC approve programmes for those already on the Register.

Along with several other entitlements, we currently approve programmes to allow:

- chiropodists / podiatrists, radiographers and physiotherapists to have their registration record annotated with supplementary prescribing; and
- chiropodists / podiatrists and physiotherapists to have their registration record annotated with independent prescribing.

We have previously ensured that currently running supplementary prescribing programmes at this education provider met the standards of education and

training (SETs). As this new or amended programme is based on an existing HCPC approved supplementary prescribing programme, we can be satisfied that it meets some of the standards for prescribing, which are based on the SETs. However, we have identified some standards where we will need to make a judgement about how the introduction or modification of elements of the programme impact on the way it meets these standards.

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets the standards for education providers part of the standards for prescribing, and that those who complete the programme demonstrate an ability to meet the standards for all prescribers (along with the additional standards for independent prescribers where required).

Section three: Submission details

The following required documents were provided as part of the submission:

- Information for applicants (eg advertising materials, admissions / entry criteria)
- Programme specification
- Student handbook
- Information about programme and management team structure, including staff CVs
- Module descriptors
- Extracts from practice placement documents
- Extracts from assessment regulations relating to student progression and external examiners
- Standards for prescribing mapping document

Section four: Additional documentation

- The visitors agreed that no further documentation was required in order to make a recommendation.
- The visitors agreed that additional documentation was required in order to make a recommendation. The standards for which additional documentation is requested are listed below with reasons for the request.

A.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the student's module handbook where the academic entry criteria are stated. One entry criterion stated that an applicant must demonstrate an ability to calculate medication dosages accurately in order to apply to the programme. The visitors note that the document does not explain how this is will be tested or measured. The visitors note that without this information an applicant may not have the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme. Therefore the visitors require further evidence about

how an applicant's ability to calculate medication dosages is measured accurately in the admissions process.

Suggested documentation: Documentation that clearly outlines how the programme team will measure an applicant's ability to calculate medication dosages accurately

D.2 The length of time spent in practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Reason: for this standard the visitors noted discrepancies in the documentation about the required number of placement hours. The standards for prescribing mapping document states that 12 days (85 hours) of supervised learning is required, whereas the module descriptor states that 12 days (78 hours) of supervised learning and 85 hours of practice based activities is required for completion of the programme. The portfolio handbooks states that a minimum of 12 days (78 hours) of supervised learning with no mention of the 85 hours of practice based activities. The visitors noted that this discrepancy could potentially be misleading to students as the required number of supervised learning hours and practice based activities is not clear throughout the documentation. Therefore the visitors require further evidence which clarifies the correct number of supervised learning and practice based activities required in order to complete the programme.

Suggested documentation: Documentation that definitively clarifies the required number of supervised learning and practice based activities is required in order to complete the programme.

D.7 The designated medical practitioner must undertake appropriate training.

Reason: For this standard the visitors noted a variation of statements in the documentation about the required training for the designated medical practitioner (DMP). The student module handbook refers to the West Midlands GP trainer competencies as the expected level of training for a DMP on the programme. However the application form in the module descriptor states that the DMP must meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in Annexe 3 of NMC Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers. Because of this the visitors could not determine which training was required for someone to be a DMP on the programme, therefore the visitors require further evidence that clarifies the expected training required for a DMP on the programme.

Suggested documentation: Documentation that clarifies the training required for the designated medical practitioner.

D.10 Students and designated medical practitioners must be fully prepared for the practice placement environment, which will include being given information about:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- the timings and the duration of the experience and associated records to be maintained;

- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the professional standards which students must meet;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the portfolio handbook where the visitors noted there was information missing which could potentially leave students and designated medical practitioners (DMPs) unprepared for placement. The visitors noted that the required number of hours of supervised hours was not consistent across the documentation available. The module descriptor states that 12 days (78 hours) of supervised learning and 85 hours of practice based activities is required for completion of the programme. The portfolio handbooks states that a minimum of 12 days (78 hours) of supervised learning with no mention of the 85 hours of practice based activities. The visitors note that this lack of clarity could potentially leave students and DMPs unprepared for placement. Therefore the visitors request further evidence to demonstrate how students and DMPs are prepared for the practice placement environment.

Suggested documentation: Documentation that demonstrates how students and designated medical practitioners are fully prepared for the practice placement environment.

D.10 Students and designated medical practitioners must be fully prepared for the practice placement environment, which will include being given information about:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of the experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the professional standards which students must meet;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the portfolio handbook where the visitors noted there was information missing which could potentially leave students and designated medical practitioners (DMPs) unprepared for placement. The visitors were unable to identify the relevant information about the summative assessments, specifically the permitted number of attempts, consequences of failing or the pass mark. The portfolio handbook includes three assessment forms for core competencies, the handbook further states that three assessments must be carried out, also included was information about the pass mark. To support this information the visitors could not find any additional guidance about the assessments, including information about the number of attempts a student can have at these assessments, and at what point of the programme they are to be completed. The visitors note that without this information there is potential for a student or the DMP to be unprepared for the summative assessments as part of the placement. Therefore the visitors request further evidence to demonstrate how students and DMPs are prepared for the practice placement environment.

Suggested documentation: Documentation that demonstrates how students and designated medical practitioners are fully prepared for the practice placement environment.

D.10 Students and designated medical practitioners must be fully prepared for the practice placement environment, which will include being given information about:

- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
- the timings and the duration of the experience and associated records to be maintained;
- expectations of professional conduct;
- the professional standards which students must meet;
- the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
- communication and lines of responsibility.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the portfolio handbook where the visitors noted there was information missing which could potentially leave students and designated medical practitioners (DMPs) unprepared for placement. The visitors were unable to identify the relevant lines of responsibility in the placement environment. The visitors note that without this information there is potential for a student or the DMP to misunderstand the appropriate communication and lines of responsibility when on placement. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how students and DMPs are fully prepared for the practice placement environment, including placement hours, information about summative assessments and communication and lines of responsibility.

Suggested documentation: Documentation that demonstrates how students and designated medical practitioners are fully prepared for the practice placement environment.

E.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from a relevant part of the HCPC Register.

Reason: For this standard the standards for prescribing mapping document directed the visitors to the PG Cert, PG Dip, and MSc Healthcare Practice course document. The visitors were unable to locate this document as part of the submission. Therefore the visitors could not ascertain the requirements for the external examiner for the programme, including relevant experience and qualifications. Therefore the visitors require further documentation which specifies the requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from a relevant part of the HCPC Register.

Suggested documentation: Documentation which specifies the requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from a relevant part of the HCPC Register.

Section five: Recommendation of the visitors

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

- There is sufficient evidence to show the programme meets the standards for education providers part of the standards for prescribing, and therefore that the programme be approved
- There is insufficient evidence to determine if or how the programme meets the standards for education providers part of the standards for prescribing. Therefore, a visit is recommended to gather more evidence, and if required place conditions on approval of the programme

Section six: Visitors' comments

The visitors noted that there were references to the HCPC's former name, the Health Professions Council (HPC) in the documentation. The visitors suggest that the programme team update their documentation to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.