

# Scoping of Designated Prescribing Practitioner Requirements for Independent Prescribing courses



**Maria Staines:** [mariastaines@nhs.net](mailto:mariastaines@nhs.net)

**Jennifer Guffie:** [Jennifer.Guffie@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Guffie@hee.nhs.uk)

**Early Careers Training Programme Directors**

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## Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Purpose and background .....	3
Aim .....	3
Method/Process .....	3
Outcomes .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
1. Background .....	5
2. Purpose and outputs of the work .....	5
3. Method .....	5
4. Results .....	7
4.1 Requirements common to all HEI DPP applications: .....	7
4.2 Differences identified between HEI DPP requirements: .....	7
4.2.1 Mapping to the RPS DPP competency framework and provision of evidence to support application .....	7
4.2.2. Formal educational supervision training requirements .....	8
4.2.3. Additional requirements .....	9
5. Discussion .....	10
There were a number of factors identified as part of the DPP application process which could act as a barrier to becoming a DPP:.....	10
6. Recommendations .....	10
7. References .....	11
8. List of Tables .....	12
Appendix 1: HEE LaSE region HEIs requiring evidence of formal supervision training qualifications.....	13

## Executive Summary

### Purpose and background

In January 2021, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) published the revised Initial Education and Training standards for pharmacists (IETP) <sup>1</sup>. For the first time, one set of learning outcomes will span the first 5 years of a pharmacist training pathway, supporting the development of a continuum of education and training from undergraduate into post-registration, advanced and consultant practice. In addition, the incorporation of learning outcomes for prescribing will mean that from 2026 pharmacists will join the register as independent prescribers. A key enabler will be ensuring trainees have access to a prescribing placement and receive appropriate supervision.

To create a sustainable pipeline of Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs), the expectation is that once pharmacists qualify as an independent prescriber, they will go on to become a DPP, once they developed sufficient prescribing experience and meet the DPP supervisor criteria. However, the findings of a DPP workforce survey<sup>2</sup> in Health Education England London and South East region (HEE LaSE) showed only 8% of Independent Prescribers (IPs) went on to become DPPs to support workforce development. Key reasons cited for not becoming a DPP were confidence, absence within personal development plans, lack of awareness of the DPP role and IP qualifications not being utilised. In addition, variation in Schools of Pharmacy course DPP application requirements for IP training was reported by the HEE LaSE Early Careers Steering Group members as a further barrier to becoming a DPP<sup>3</sup>.

With the demand for upskilling of the current workforce and for the future need of Trainee Pharmacists (TPs), there is a need to rapidly increase the number of pharmacists undertaking the DPP role.

### Aim

The purpose of this review is to:

1. To identify commonality and differences in LaSE region Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) requirements to be a DPP for IP course during the applications process.
2. Identify DPP application requirements that may be a potential barrier to carrying out a DPP role.
3. Suggest recommendations and next steps to reduce potential barriers to pharmacists applying to take on the DPP role.

### Method/Process

- Nine commonly used IP course providers within HEE LaSE region were identified through discussion with stakeholders.
- Online searches and direct contact with IP course leads were conducted to obtain application forms and course handbooks.

## LaSE Scoping HEI DPP requirements, Oct 2022

- HEI DPP requirements were compared to identify similarities and differences between the HEIs. All available individual HEI DPP documents and independent prescribing application forms were reviewed as the DPP application requirements were not always clearly specified in one location as part of the application process: for some, details were spread across multiple forms, course handbooks and additional DPP information sources.

### Outcomes

- All HEIs required a minimum of three years prescribing experience for a practitioner to be a DPP as per the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) DPP competency framework<sup>4</sup>.
- Application forms required a self-declaration of compliance with the RPS DPP competency framework; however, the level of detail required varied significantly when collated against the framework competency themes.
- Differences were observed in the level of detail required from the prospective DPPs at application stage for the following aspects:
  - o Self-assessment of compliance against the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's (RPS) DPP competency framework themes<sup>4</sup>, the GPhC's guidance on tutoring and supervising<sup>5</sup> and the RPS competency framework for all prescribers<sup>6</sup>.
  - o Volume and type of evidence of formal assessment and supervision qualifications to be provided ranged from a brief statement on experience, to provision of certificates of specific mandated supervision training courses and qualifications.

Wide variation in requirements between what the HEIs request in evidence and self-assessment at application stage and a lack of clarity in expectations presents potential barriers to pharmacists taking on the role of a DPP.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were agreed by the HEE LaSE EC Steering Group to support next actions from this scoping exercise. These recommendations are informing HEE national workstreams including the Pharmacy Integration Programme (PhIP), Initial Education and Training for Pharmacists reform (IETP), and Multi-professional supervision.

- To raise pharmacist awareness of RPS and GPhC frameworks for DPPs to facilitate evidence gathering for pharmacists planning for the role
- HEE to work collaboratively with HEIs to provide a clear pathway for supervision skills assurance.
- HEIs to consider implementing summative checklist of all requirements, which are clearly available so prospective DPPs can quickly ensure they meet requirements.
- Inclusion of streamlined DPP requirements as part of HEE commissioning of IP courses.

# 1. Background

In January 2021, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) published the revised Initial Education and Training standards for pharmacists (IETP)<sup>1</sup>. For the first time, one set of learning outcomes will span the first 5 years of a pharmacist training pathway, supporting the development of a continuum of education and training from undergraduate and foundation training into advanced and consultant practice. In addition, the incorporation of learning outcomes for prescribing will mean that from 2026 pharmacists will join the register as independent prescribers (IPs). A key enabler will be ensuring trainees have access to a prescribing placement and receive appropriate supervision. In addition, there will be a need to ensure the skillset of the existing workforce is commensurate with those completing the new standards in order to deliver new models of care consistently. The expectation is that once pharmacists qualify as an independent prescriber, they will go on to become a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP), once they meet the criteria, to create a sustainable pipeline of DPPs.

To understand the current DPP workforce and identify the gap, Health Education England London and South East (HEE LaSE) surveyed nearly 400 primary and secondary care pharmacists and found only 12 have been a DPP to date<sup>2</sup>. Supervision models are still being explored but based on 1 DPP for 4 trainee pharmacists, the deficit for London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex is 150 DPPs based on current trainee pharmacist numbers (around 650 TPs). The survey made a number of recommendations on ways to increase supervision capacity, broadly they fall into the following themes: increasing IP and DPP support mechanisms (such as mentoring and networks), training and opportunities for staff to develop and utilise supervision skills, reducing barriers and delays to pharmacists using IP and to acting as a DPP, improving access to workforce data.

In addition, it was highlighted by stakeholders in the HEE LaSE Early Careers Steering Group that the differing DPP requirements between the universities acts as a barrier to access to prescribing courses and to pharmacists becoming DPPs.

# 2. Purpose and outputs of the work

- Identify Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in HEE London and South East region (LaSE) independent prescribing course application requirements to undertake the role of a DPP.
- Identify commonality and differences in HEI DPP application requirements.
- Suggest recommendations to reduce variation in LaSE HEI DPP applications requirements which could act as barriers to pharmacists becoming a DPP.

# 3. Method

The following nine IP course providers were identified through discussion within the LaSE pharmacy team and with LaSE stakeholders:

## LaSE Scoping HEI DPP requirements, Oct 2022

- Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)
- Keele University (KU)
- Kings College London (KCL)
- London South Bank University (LSBU)
- Medway School of Pharmacy (MSOP)
- The Open University (OU)
- University College London (UCL)
- University of East Anglia (UEA)
- University of Reading (UR).

Online searches and direct contact with IP course leads was conducted to obtain application forms and DPP course handbooks. Criteria for HEI DPP application requirements were developed as part of the application review process (see results). In addition, HEI DPP requirements were compared against the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) DPP Competency Framework themes<sup>5</sup>. These were collated for comparison and commonality and differences between the HEI DPP requirements were identified and are discussed below.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Requirements common to all HEI DPP applications:

All HEIs require a minimum of three years prescribing experience for a practitioner to be a DPP, in line with the RPS DPP competency framework<sup>5</sup>.

### 4.2 Differences identified between HEI DPP requirements:

#### 4.2.1 Mapping to the RPS DPP competency framework and provision of evidence to support application

All HEI application forms required completion of a DPP self-declaration form. However, the level of detail asked varied significantly, including variance in the requirements to self-declare competency against the RPS DPP competency framework, see Table 1 below, and in the requirement to provide evidence of competency, see Appendix 1:

Table 1 RPS competency framework themes – HEIs requiring self-declaration and or evidence

RPS DPP Competency Framework Theme*	Self-declaration required	Evidence requested
Personal Characteristics	UCL	
Professional Skills and Knowledge	UCL, UR, OU	
Teaching and Training Skills		UCL, UR, UEA, OU (MSOP, LSBU & KU – briefly describe)
Working in Partnership	UCL, UR	
Prioritising patient care	UCL	
Developing in the role		
Learning Environment	UCL	
Governance	UCL, UR	
RPS DPP framework read and individual matches requirements	MSOP, OU	

## LaSE Scoping HEI DPP requirements, Oct 2022

RPS DPP Competency Framework Theme*	Self-declaration required	Evidence requested
Meet the GPhC requirements for undertaking the role of DPP <sup>6</sup>	KCL	

Key: Keele University (KU); Kings College London (KCL); London South Bank University (LSBU); Medway School of Pharmacy (MSOP); The Open University (OU); University College London (UCL); University of East Anglia (UEA); University of Reading (UR).

\*Note: Anglia Ruskin University application did not contain a checklist asking prospective DPPs to declare compliance with the RPS framework themes so was not included in Table 1.

### 4.2.2. Formal educational supervision training requirements

The majority of HEIs (7/9) required some description of how applicants demonstrate they have the teaching, training, and assessment skills to support a trainee as a DPP. However, there was significant variation in the level and extent of the evidence to be submitted between the HEIs, see Table 2, below.

Table 2 Formal educational supervision training requirements

HEI	Individual HEI Evidence requirements to demonstrate formal educational supervision training and experience
ARU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not asked to submit evidence</li> </ul>
KCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not asked to submit evidence</li> </ul>
MSOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit brief description of experience</li> </ul>
KU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline experience of teaching, supervision, and assessment of healthcare professionals, including details of any formal qualifications.</li> </ul>
LSBU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline experience of teaching, supervision, and assessment of students</li> </ul>
UEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must have accessed the training for DPPs on UEA Practice Educator website</li> <li>Prospective DPPs who are a non-medical prescriber also required to complete the regulatory body training (unspecified).</li> </ul>
OU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of training experience with course lead post application</li> <li>Must have completed OU practice assessor/supervisor training (or comparable training jointly agreed by the Open University NMP Lead and supporting organisation).</li> </ul>
UCL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit evidence to demonstrate formal training in teaching and supervision</li> <li>Submit a training plan</li> </ul>



## LaSE Scoping HEI DPP requirements, Oct 2022

HEI	Individual HEI Evidence requirements to demonstrate formal educational supervision training and experience
UR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit evidence to demonstrate formal training in teaching and supervision.</li> </ul>

Two of the HEIs DPP application processes additionally required evidence of specific formal teaching qualifications (UR and UCL). These are summarised in flow charts provided to applicants (see Appendix 1) <sup>7,8</sup>.

In addition, there are differences in the supervision training courses they recognise as part of the application. University of East Anglia (UEA)<sup>9</sup> requires any prospective DPP without prior DPP experience or experience of supervising students to complete an Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) training package. Open University (OU) requires completion of an OU practice assessor/supervisor training or comparable course.

### 4.2.3. Additional requirements

The requirements identified in Table 3 relate to additional HEI specifications to be met by prospective DPPs and demonstrates differences between HEIs DPP requirements that may affect the decision to be a DPP.

Table 3 Additional requirements outlined by some HEIs

Requirement	No of HEIs (8 total)	HEIs
DPP must work in the same organisation as trainee	1	UR
DPP should be working in the same clinical specialism as trainee	3	UR, UEA and KU
DPP is in good standing with their regulatory body	3	UCL, KCL and UEA
Disclosure if under investigation by regulatory body or referred to a fitness to practice panel hearing	1	MSOP
DPPs able to demonstrate they meet competencies with the RPS competency framework for all prescribers <sup>10</sup> .	3	UR, UEA, UCL and OU
Additional: Evidence of this needs to be provided	1	UCL
DPPs to adhere to or familiarise themselves with GPhC's standards for Guidance on Tutoring and Supervising Pharmacy Professionals in Training <sup>11</sup>	1 – adhere	KCL
	1 – be familiar	UCL

## 5. Discussion

**There were a number of factors identified as part of the DPP application process which could act as a barrier to becoming a DPP:**

- Differences in the level of formal training in educational supervision required.
- Differences in the volume of evidence to be provided.
- Differences in the types of evidence to be provided.
- DPP must work in the same organisation as the IP trainee.
- DPP must work in the same clinical specialism as the IP trainee.
- Not all DPP requirements are available publicly or easily accessible on course website pages.
- Individual DPP requirements are covered across multiple documents and not collated on one single document or check list. For example, some requirements are in DPP handbook, some in IP course application form, some in separate DPP declaration and some in DPP requirements flow chart. This makes it challenging to ensure requirements are understood and met as a whole.

It is important to highlight that some of the HEI requirements (Table 2) do not support potential multiprofessional or system models of supervision. For example, a requirement to work in the same organisation may pose a barrier for pharmacists working in community pharmacy or organisations with small teams who may have few or no DPPs available.

## 6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were agreed by the HEE LaSE EC Steering Group to inform HEE national workstreams including the Pharmacy Integration Programme (PhIP), Initial Education Training and Reform (IETP), and Multi-professional supervision.

- To raise pharmacist awareness of RPS and GPhC frameworks for DPPs to facilitate prospective evidence gathering for pharmacists planning for the role.
- HEE to work collaboratively with HEIs to provide a clear pathway for supervision skills assurance.
- HEIs to consider implementing a summative checklist of all requirements in a single location, which are easily available so prospective DPPs can quickly ensure they meet requirements.
- Inclusion of streamlined and standardised DPP requirements as part of HEE commissioning of IP courses.

## 7. References

1. General Pharmaceutical Council, 2021. Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/standards-for-the-initial-education-and-training-of-pharmacists-january-2021.pdf> (Accessed 09/10/2022).
2. Zena Uppal, Health Education England London and South East Pharmacy. Barriers to Pharmacists pursuing the Designated Prescribing Practitioner Role. <https://ukclinicalpharmacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/UKCPA-Virtual-Conference-2022-Abstract-Handbook-.pdf> (Accessed 09/10/2022)
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6. General Pharmaceutical Council, 2019. Education and training of pharmacist independent prescribers: evidence framework. <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/education-and-training-of-pharmacist-independent-prescribers-evidence-framework-may-2019.pdf>. (Accessed 09/10/2022)
7. University of Reading DPP flow chart <https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/study/subject-area/pharmacy-pg/-/media/9ed9495b2dde4a028efe6de91e5ffeba.ashx> (Accessed 09/10/2022).
8. University College London DPP flow chart [https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/sites/pharmacy/files/dpp\\_guidance\\_2021-22.pdf](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/sites/pharmacy/files/dpp_guidance_2021-22.pdf) (Accessed 09/10/2022).
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10. Royal Pharmaceutical Society 2021. A competency framework for all prescribers <https://www.rpharms.com/portals/0/rps%20document%20library/open%20access/professional%20standards/prescribing%20competency%20framework/prescribing-competency-framework.pdf> (Accessed 09/010/2022).
11. General Pharmaceutical Council, 2018. Guidance on tutoring and supervising pharmacy professionals in training. [https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/guidance\\_on\\_supervising\\_pharmacy\\_professionals\\_in\\_training\\_august\\_2018.pdf](https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/guidance_on_supervising_pharmacy_professionals_in_training_august_2018.pdf) (Accessed 09/10/2022).

## 8. List of Tables

Table 1 RPS competency framework themes – HEIs requiring self-declaration and or evidence

Table 2 Formal educational supervision training requirements

Table 3 Additional requirements outlined by some HEIs

## Appendix 1: HEE LaSE region HEIs requiring evidence of formal supervision training qualifications

Summary of scoped HEIs level of supervision experience evidence required. 9 HEIs in total, see also Table 1:

- 3/9 asked for completion of a self-declaration form plus a brief description of teaching, training, and assessment skills to demonstrate competency against this theme.
- 4/9 asked for completion of a self-declaration form plus evidence to demonstrate competency. Evidence could include a job description, a CV, a list of current duties, CPD records, certificates from appropriate courses.
- 1/9 asked prospective DPPs whether they meet GPhC requirements<sup>6</sup> for undertaking the role of DPP.
- Anglia Ruskin University application did not contain a checklist asking prospective DPPs to declare compliance with the RPS framework themes so does not feature in Table 1.

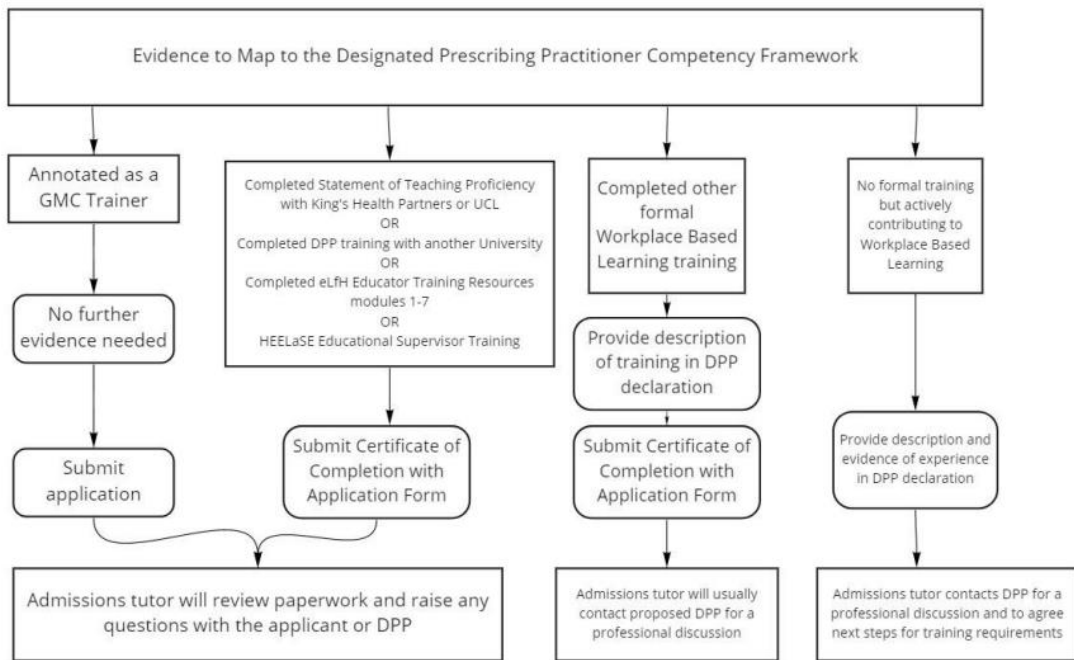
Two HEIs, University of Reading and University College London, were identified as requiring evidence of specific formal teaching and supervision qualifications as part of their DPP application processes. This includes specific named supervision training courses. These are summarised in flow charts below, included in their DPP guidance.

The core criteria are summarised here:

- If the named teaching and supervision formal training courses have been undertaken, then evidence of those can be provided.
- If other formal courses have been completed, then certificates must be provided and a professional discussion between the HEI and prospective DPP will take place
- If no formal courses have been completed, then evidence of workplace activities can be submitted and a professional discussion with the admissions tutor will be needed to confirm suitability for the role.



**Figure 1** Evidence that the DPP can demonstrate they meet all the competencies within The Competency Framework for Designated Prescribing Practitioners



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# LaSE Scoping HEI DPP requirements, Oct 2022

Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET)  
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