

UCL- Clinically Enhanced Pharmacist Independent Prescribing Course (CEPIP) Frequently Asked Questions

For pharmacists (and their training centres) studying the CEPIP as part of the UCL Postgraduate Diploma in General Pharmacy Practice (PG Dip GPP)

This document provides information about how the CEPIP course integrates with the PG Dip in General Practice in addition to general information about the CEPIP course.

Integration with the PG Dip GPP

Q – Can I study the CEPIP course as part of my PG Dip in General Pharmacy Practice?

The CEPIP course is a 60-credit module and can be studied as an optional module for Foundation Stage 2 (FS2). If you decide to complete the CEPIP course for FS2, this would be the only module that you study, and the CEPIP course would constitute the whole of your FS2.

If you intend to study the CEPIP course for FS2 please do not register for any other FS2 modules.

Q – I have already registered for an FS2 module. Can I still study the CEPIP course?

If you have already registered for your first FS2 module and then change your mind and decide to study the CEPIP course, you will need to withdraw from the FS2 module by notifying the Teaching and Learning Team. This must be done within the first two weeks of the module starting, or earlier. This means you will need to withdraw by 15th April, for modules starting in April, or 15th October for modules starting in October.

If you are more than two weeks into the module, you will not be able to withdraw and will not be able to complete the CEPIP course as part of the PG Diploma. Any withdrawals from a module after this point may still attract a fee.

Q – I have already completed a module towards FS2, can I still complete the CEPIP course?

If you have already completed an FS2 module you will not be able to complete the CEPIP course as part of your diploma. This is because the CEPIP course is a 60-credit module which constitutes the whole of FS2. If you already have credits from another FS2 module you will have more credits than you need for a Diploma. The Diploma funding will not cover additional credits.

The CEPIP course is also available as a stand-alone module which means it does not need to be studied as part of the Diploma. You are able to complete your Diploma and come back to UCL at a later date to study the CEPIP course. Please note, that this would require additional funding at the full CEPIP fee (see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing>).

Q – I have not been qualified for two years, can I still apply for the CEPIP course?

At the time of writing these FAQs, you must have been qualified for a minimum of two years when you start the CEPIP course. This is a GPhC requirement. You may apply for the course before you are two years qualified, as long as you will have been qualified for two years when you start the course.

The GPhC are currently consulting on removing this requirement, so watch this space.

Q – Does provisional registration count towards the requirement to have two years post qualification experience?

The GPhC have recently confirmed that relevant experience completed while provisionally registered can count towards the two year requirement (see <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist-independent-prescriber>).

Q – I have completed my FS1 but have only been qualified for 18 months. Can I start the CEPIP course?

You must have been qualified for a minimum of two years when you start the CEPIP course. This is a GPhC requirement. You will need to wait and apply for the next cohort that starts when you are two years qualified. There are two cohorts a year. This may mean that you need to take a break in between FS1 and starting the CEPIP module. Just tell us that this is what you are doing and that you intend to apply for a later CEPIP cohort. The University allows up to five years to complete a PG Diploma so you have time to do this. We recommend that you use the break to prepare for the CEPIP course. You could arrange to shadow your DPP so you become familiar with their area of practice, you could also ensure you are up to date with the prescribing guidelines and applied therapeutics in your chosen area of practice. You could also start some reading from the CEPIP reading list.

Q- When can I start the CEPIP course?

There are two intakes per year, one that starts in October and one that starts in April. Depending on when you finish your FS1, you may need to wait a few months before the CEPIP course starts/

Q – How do I apply for the CEPIP course?

The CEPIP course has entry requirements that are set by the GPhC. These are different to the entry requirements for the Diploma. Therefore you are required to apply for the CEPIP course using the application pack on the website (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional->

[development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing)). You MUST complete this application pack in full and submit it to sop.cepip@ucl.ac.uk in order to apply to the course. Being a student on the Diploma course does not guarantee entry to the CEPIP course. Please read the application guidance carefully and ensure that you complete all sections of the application pack as required.

The application deadlines are as follows:

- For October intake applications open in June and end mid July
- For April intake applications open in December and close mid January

For the exact dates please see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing>

Q – Who decides whether I can apply for the CEPIP course in FS2?

Your Educational Programme Director and your employer will make the decision about whether to support you to apply for the CEPIP course as part of your diploma or not. This will usually be based on whether the Trust need you to prescribe as part of your role, and whether they can support your prescribing training, including a DPP (Designated Prescribing Practitioner) to support you, but will also depend on whether you meet the entry criteria (see above) and have progressed well in your diploma studies so far. If you want to apply for CEPIP in FS2 it would be a good idea to discuss it with your Educational Supervisor initially, and then with your Educational Programme Director to find out whether they would be willing to support your application. Some Trusts may only support practitioners to complete an independent prescribing course after they have completed their diploma and Foundation Training, because they value FS2 training highly and/or feel that you would be better equipped to complete the training when you have more experience.

Q – I don't think I am ready yet to undertake a prescribing course. What are my options?

The CEPIP course is only one option for FS2, and is intended for those who are in roles that require them to prescribe. You do not have to take this option. You may select from the other available modules to complete FS2.

The CEPIP course is also available as a stand-alone module which means it does not need to be studied as part of the Diploma. You are able to complete your Diploma and come back to UCL at a later date to study the CEPIP course. Please note, that this would require additional funding at the full CEPIP fee (see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing>).

Q – How is the CEPIP course funded?

If you are studying the CEPIP course as part of your PG Diploma in General Pharmacy Practice with UCL, the course fees for the CEPIP course will be covered as part of your Diploma fees, and will be the same as the other FS2 route.

If you wish to study the CEPIP course as a stand-alone course (i.e. not as part of the Diploma) the full CEPIP fee will be applied (see <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing>).

Q – Are the learning outcomes for the CEPIP module equivalent to the non-prescribing FS2 route?

The learning outcomes for the CEPIP course have been mapped to the FS2 route. The majority of the learning outcomes are covered, with the exception of some of the professional skills since students will be required to focus on their prescribing skills.

The learning outcomes for the CEPIP course are dictated by the GPhC. Information about the GPhC IP learning outcomes can be found here:

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist-independent-prescriber>

Q – Will I be missing out on completing my Foundation Training if I complete the CEPIP course?

We have worked hard to ensure that practitioners who complete the CEPIP module as their FS2 will complete their Foundation Training as well as their diploma. We have taken into consideration the overlap between the Foundation Practitioner Framework and the Competency Framework for Prescribers, based on careful mapping of both frameworks. Nevertheless, we do recognise that the practitioners on the two routes will necessarily complete their Foundation Training and diplomas with slightly different skill sets. The most obvious difference will be that those on the IP route will not have completed a QI project, but some of FS2 professional learning outcomes will not overtly be covered either, as you will need to dedicate your studies to developing your prescribing skills.

In making the decision about whether it is the right time for you to complete the IP course, it may be helpful to know that the IP course is available as a stand-alone course and so can also be accessed post-diploma. We are also hoping to develop some of our other modules such as QI, and the MScAPP modules (for example, Research, and Education & Training) as stand-alone CPD modules that people can access whenever they need them. Please note that there will be a fee associated with these stand-alone modules.

Q – I have nearly completed my Diploma. Can I still study the CEPIP course?

UCL regulations do not allow students to be registered on two programmes at once. A student remains registered on a programme until all their assessments have been through an exam board and the academic award has been issued. This means that FS2 pharmacists must have been awarded the Diploma before they can apply to study the CEPIP course as a stand-alone course.

Pharmacists who submit their FS2 assessments in March will go through the Exam Board in April and be awarded the Diploma after that. This means that they cannot start the CEPIP course in April. They will need to apply for the October intake of the CEPIP course.

Pharmacists who submit their FS2 assessments in September will go through the Exam Board in October and be awarded the Diploma after that. This means that they cannot start the CEPIP course in October. They will need to apply for the following April intake of the CEPIP course.

The UCL CEPIP Course

Q – Why should I choose the UCL CEPIP Course?

A – The UCL CEPIP course has been developed from the outset as an integrated clinically enhanced pharmacist independent prescribing course. It has been developed by pharmacists for pharmacists. The course development team includes pharmacists who are using their prescribing skills in extended/advanced practitioner roles such as urgent care settings, home care services, mental health services and GP practices. The team also includes academic pharmacists with extensive experience in the design, development and delivery of pharmacist independent prescribing courses. The course is specifically designed to meet the needs of pharmacist prescribers working in medicines optimisation, GP practice, Urgent and Emergency Care and provision of NHS 111 services and care homes. Community pharmacists will be able to use the prescribing and physical examination skills to collaborate with their local GP practices and extend their services.

‘Clinically enhanced’ refers to the additional skills that you will acquire around history taking and physical examination as part of the UCL independent prescribing course. Developing these new skills throughout the course will take you on a journey to a much broader appreciation of what holistic care looks and feels like, and in turn you will develop as a more rounded healthcare professional. These skills are essential in order to initiate prescribing. During the CEPIP course you will develop the skills to make an informed decision in each instance of prescribing. You will be able to apply these skills to make an informed judgement in each prescribing instance as to whether you are competent to prescribe drug X for patient Y at time Z.

The course incorporates five full days of physical examination skills teaching. This teaching will be led by medics and supported by pharmacists who use physical examination skills in their daily practice so that you can learn from their experience of extending their pharmacy role. We will be using the Clinical Skills Suite and equipment to ensure you gain hands-on experience of diagnostic skills needed for diagnosis which you can develop further with your DMP during your supervised time in practice

We will continue to support you after you have qualified as a prescriber through the use of social media networks and events.

Q - What is the difference between this clinically enhanced course and a standard independent prescribing course?

A - This means that the physical examination skills included in the course go beyond those required by the GPhC for pharmacist independent prescribing programmes. In relation to physical examination skills, the GPhC indicative content includes:

- Clinical examination skills relevant to the condition(s) for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe
- Recognition and responding to common signs and symptoms that are indicative of clinical problems. Use of common diagnostic aids for assessment of the patient’s general health status; e.g. stethoscope, sphygmomanometer, tendon hammer, examination of the cranial nerves.
- Working knowledge of any monitoring equipment used within the context of the treatment/clinical management plan

The aim of the physical examination skills teaching in the UCL CEPIP course is to enable the trainee independent prescriber (TIP) to clinically assess patients using focused medical history taking and physical examination skills whilst having an awareness of additional tests and referral pathways to aid in diagnosis. The course will also enable the TIP to safety net patients and manage risk. The course will cover the major body systems described below. In addition TIPs will need to develop competence in any particular physical examination skills required for their scope of practice that they will have identified with their DMP.

The following body systems will be taught on the course:

1. Cardiovascular
2. Respiratory
3. Abdomen
4. Ear, nose and throat
5. Musculoskeletal
6. Neurological assessment
7. Peripheral vascular and lymphatic system
8. Visual acuity and ophthalmoscopy
9. Mental health

Q – How much time will I need to spend studying?

A - There are a number of elements of the course. These are detailed below:

1) Face to face study days at UCL. You are required to attend NINE full study days at UCL. This includes one day for OSCE assessments. The dates for the study days for your cohort are shown on the website. You must attend all nine study days in order to pass the course. We ask you to confirm in the application pack that you are able to attend the nine study days for your cohort. If you are unable to attend a study day you will be required to attend with the next cohort and this will delay your completion of the course.

2) Learning in practice time. It is a GPhC requirement that TIPs spend a minimum of 90 hours of supervised practice over the duration of the course. The 90 hours is a minimum requirement. You may decide, with your DMP that you require longer in practice in order to develop the competencies required to become a prescriber. At the end of the 90 hours your DMP must sign you off as having achieved all of the [Royal Pharmaceutical Society's \(RPS\) Competencies for All Prescribers](#).

3) On-line learning. A large part of the learning material for the course is delivered on-line via UCL's virtual learning environment. The learning material will support and supplement the learning from the face to face study days and the learning in practice time.

4) Self-directed study. The content of the face-to-face study days and the on-line learning will be directed by UCL and informed by the GPhC requirements for the course. By the end of the course you will be required to demonstrate your achievement of the learning outcomes for the course and the RPS prescribing competencies. How much additional study you will need to undertake to achieve the learning outcomes and competencies will depend on your prior knowledge and experience, and how long you take to assimilate the knowledge and develop the skills and competencies. Everyone is different. For example, if you have not studied applied therapeutics for a while, you may need to spend more time on this subject than someone who has recently completed a PG Diploma. You may

need to read beyond the learning material presented in the on-line learning. The amount of self-directed learning that you need to undertake will depend on you.

5) Completion of the course assessments. The amount of time required to complete the course assessments will depend on you. There are a number of different elements of the assessment including completion of a prescribing portfolio. This will be your record of your learning in practice time, and will be completed as you progress through the course.

As a very rough guide, Universities nominally associate 10 hours of studying for every one credit of a course. Since this is a 60 credit course, the total amount of study time required would be around 600 hours.

Q – What are the course assessments?

A - The purpose of assessment is to confirm that the student has achieved the learning outcomes for Independent Prescribing and can demonstrate the competencies within the RPS Competency Framework for all Prescribers. Assessment must provide confirmation of the pharmacist's clinical competence in the area(s) for which they intend to prescribe; including the clinical assessment of patients and the ability to use basic diagnostic aids and make an assessment of the patient's general health. A range of assessment methods are used on this course to test achievement of the course learning outcomes and the prescribing competencies, and to ensure that the full breadth and depth of student's knowledge and skills are assessed. These include a written coursework, written examination, reflective activities, workplace based assessments, and OSCEs. The purpose of the OSCE is to assess the students' competence in a controlled environment. All assessments are grounded in the student's practice to ensure relevance to the workplace.

Q – How long is the course?

A – This is a part-time course, that can be completed in 6,9 or 12 months. The University base elements of the course take place over six months, but the supervised learning in practice can be studied up to 12 months, depending on the pharmacists individual learning needs in the workplace.

Q – How will UCL support me when I am studying the course?

You will be supported on the course by experienced academic and administrative teams. You will meet the Course Team at every study day. They are available in between study days via e-mail, telephone and face to face if you need. You will assigned a tutor from the Course Team to support you on the course. Your tutor will meet with you and your DPP on three occasions during the course, and will provide you with feedback on your formative assessments.

Q – How soon after completing the course can I apply to the GPhC for annotation of my name against the register as an Independent Prescriber?

A - Once you have undertaken all the assessments, your results will need to be considered by the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiner meets four times a year. We would, therefore, anticipate that we would be able to inform you of the outcome of the course within three months of completion of the course assessments.

Pharmacists who successfully complete the course will be awarded a certificate of completion, the *Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing*. This provides evidence that you have successfully

completed the programme and the period of learning in practice. You are required to submit this Certificate to the GPhC when you apply for annotation of the register as an Independent Prescriber.

Q – What do I need to consider before I apply to study for the UCL CEPIP course?

A - We recommend that you identify a service need for you to train as an Independent Prescriber before you apply for the course. This will mean that you can focus on the scope of practice required for the service during the course. It also means that you will be able to use your new skills and build your expertise in prescribing, as soon as you qualify. The longer you leave it to use your prescribing skills once you are qualified, the harder it will be. Many people who do not use their prescribing skills straight away find that they need to complete a 'return to prescribing practice' course prior to being able to prescribe within a service.

We advise that you discuss the service need with your employer or supporting organisation. By supporting organisation we mean the organisation who are supporting you to undertake the course and for whom you are likely to be using your prescribing skills. Your employer or supporting organisation are required to complete a statement within the application pack confirming support of your application.

You will also need to have identified a medical practitioner to support you during the course. Please see the section on Designated Prescribing Practitioners (DPPs) below for more information about this role.

Independent Prescribing in General

Q - What is the aim of pharmacists independent prescribing?

A - To provide patients with quicker and more efficient access to medicines through making the best use of the skills of trained pharmacist prescribers allowing medical prescribers to focus patients with more complicated conditions and complex treatments

Q - What are the roles and responsibilities of the pharmacist independent prescriber?

A - To be the pharmacist prescriber responsible for the patient's care including diagnosis and assessment. In addition, to prescribe within the limits determined by their own clinical competence and professional code of conduct while accepting professional accountability and clinical responsibility for their prescribing practice within a clinical governance framework. They will refer patients when the patient's condition or treatment no longer falls within their competence.

Q - What conditions can pharmacist independent prescribers prescribe for?

A - There are no legal restrictions on the clinical conditions that may be dealt with by pharmacist independent prescribers. Pharmacists are generally required to choose a scope of practice in which to train as an independent prescriber.

Q – Do I need indemnity insurance to train as an Independent Prescriber?

A - Pharmacists are advised to check with their employer and/or their personal insurer before they begin that they are fully covered in their role as a trainee independent prescriber (TIP) and a future role as a qualified independent and supplementary prescriber.

Scope of Practice

Q – Why do I need to define a scope of practice in which to develop my competence as a prescriber?

A - The GPhC stipulates that pharmacists must choose a defined scope of practice in which to develop their skills and competence as a prescriber. Clearly this could be interpreted in a number of ways. For example one student might stipulate essential hypertension (narrow scope), whilst another might stipulate acute medicine which is a much broader term and possibly more subjective, but equally valid. In our application pack we have included a learning needs analysis which asks for a breakdown of the group of patients, disease state(s), work place setting and details of the multidisciplinary team within which the IP will work. This is to guide you to begin thinking about the scope and infrastructure in place to support your prescribing practice. It is not designed to restrict your prescribing practice once you have qualified.

In order to develop your competence as a prescriber within the timeframe of the course, we advise that you choose an area of practice that you feel comfortable with and that is appropriate for your role, for the purposes of the course. This means you can focus your 90 hours in practice on developing the competencies required to be a prescriber within an area that you are familiar with. You will then be able to apply the competencies you have learnt to extend your scope of practice, or to take a more generalist approach, once you are qualified.

Q- Can my scope of practice be a generalist scope?

A - In prescribing practice, the 'scope' is not only drug/disease specific in practice, but also patient and time specific. In other words, do I as a prescriber feel competent to prescribe drug X, for patient Y at time Z, and most importantly can I justify my actions. In terms of 'generalist scope of practice' we have spent some considerable time thinking about this. Our stance is that the onus is on the prescriber to apply the skills that they have learned and developed, to make an informed judgement in each prescribing instance as to whether they are competent to prescribe drug X for patient Y at time Z – moving away from arbitrary lists of medicines or disease states. The key to using a generalist scope is that the prescriber is equipped with the skills to be able to assess their own competence and justify their actions. Here at UCL we will be putting an emphasis on this during the course and delivering teaching during the study days around this very aspect.

For the purpose of the course, we suggest that you define an area of practice that you feel comfortable with and that is appropriate for your role.

Q – Can I prescribe outside of my scope of practice once I have qualified as a prescriber?

A – There are no legal restrictions on the clinical conditions for which pharmacists can prescribe but you have a professional responsibility to be competent to prescribe whatever you are writing on the prescription. The focus on a particular area of practice for the CEPIP course is not designed to restrict you to a particular scope of practice once qualified. During the CEPIP course you will develop the skills to make an informed decision in each instance of prescribing. The onus is on you, as the prescriber, to apply the skills you have learned and developed, to make an informed judgement in each prescribing instance as to whether you are competent to prescribe drug X for patient Y at time Z – moving away from arbitrary lists of medicines or disease states.

The Designated Prescribing Practitioner

For information about the role of the DPP, please see the DPP guidance on our website

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing>

Application Process

Please see the website for information about how to apply:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy/study/professional-development/clinically-enhanced-pharmacist-independent-prescribing>