Returning to prescribing

What is return to prescribing?
There are many reasons why pharmacist prescribers have been unable to prescribe for a period of time. For example, you may have been on a non-clinical secondment, working in another profession, or you may have taken time off to bring up a family, care for a relative, recover from a period of illness or go travelling. If this applies to you and you are considering a return to a prescribing role, you need to make sure that you can practise safely and competently.

Who can support my return to prescribing?
You could attend our Return to prescribing course or use the CPPE Prescribing: maintaining competence and confidence guide. You may be able to get support from your colleagues, and working with other prescribers (medics and non-medics from different professions) can provide valuable perspectives. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) provides a number of opportunities for networking with other pharmacists. For example, there is an online discussion group for pharmacist prescribers where you can contact prescribers who are working in a similar area and find out what specific competencies are required.
How do I return to prescribing if I’m not registered as a pharmacist prescriber?
If you are not currently registered as a pharmacist prescriber with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), you will need to apply for the appropriate annotation. You do this by completing the relevant paperwork and paying the appropriate fee. If it has been more than six months since you gained your award, the GPhC requires that along with your application, you submit a letter demonstrating you have a relationship with another prescribing pharmacist, to whom you could refer in cases of doubt or for professional reassurance. For further information and to register, visit the GPhC website.

What knowledge and skills do I need before I return to prescribing?
You have a professional obligation to be competent to practise in your chosen area. You will need to identify the skills and knowledge you already have, what gaps there are in your knowledge and experience, and how you plan to fill these gaps. A competency framework for all prescribers outlines the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for effective prescribing. Using this framework can help you identify any gaps in your knowledge or skills.

Continuing professional development

What courses are available if I want to return to prescribing?
We run a three-day course (two consecutive days followed by a third day around three months later) aimed at pharmacist prescribers who have been out of prescribing practice for more than a year. The range of topics is intended to address competence and confidence, identify the barriers that stopped delegates prescribing in the first place and ways to overcome their barriers. Extensive opportunities to discuss ideas with like-minded people and form networks for ongoing support are key benefits of this course.

For those who prefer to study alone, the CPPE Prescribing: maintaining competence and confidence guide offers a tour through using the prescribing competency framework as a learning needs assessment tool, and signposts to a comprehensive set of resources that address most learning needs.

I’m a supplementary prescriber. Can I attend the Return to prescribing course?
The course is designed for both supplementary and independent prescribers. You may find that, once you’ve returned to supplementary prescribing, you want to make the transition to independent prescribing. Networking with other prescribers will help you to identify the pros and cons of converting to independent prescribing and compare the two alternatives for making the transition.

Do I need to pay for the Return to prescribing course?
There is no charge to attend the course, but you must agree to the cancellation policy. We provide all workshop materials, and lunch and refreshments on all three days. Accommodation is not provided.

You can find details of our cancellation policy on the CPPE website.

If you are a GPhC-registered pharmacist prescriber, but do not live in England, or if you are a prescriber from another profession, please contact Dianne@cppe.ac.uk for details of fees payable.
What if I need to cancel my place on the course?
Please see the booking details and cancellation policy pages for information on how to cancel your booking and charges that may apply.

When will the course start and finish?
Courses are scheduled to run from 9:30am until 4:30pm on all three days. Refreshments are served on arrival from 9:00am.

Can I stay overnight?
Accommodation is not provided. You may choose to book accommodation, but this will be at your own expense.

Could I just attend one day?
Applicants must attend all three days. Failure to attend any of the three days would invoke the cancellation policy.

Is there a lot of work to do before or after the course?
There is pre-work and this is made available to all delegates when we confirm the booking. For this course, we ask that delegates complete the MBTI® online questionnaire, complete a consultation skills pre-workbook, and familiarise themselves with A competency framework for all prescribers. These set the scene for the event, and provide knowledge on which the course builds. We expect that this will take around three hours, but it may be more or less according to your previous experience.

During the course we support you to develop a personalised action plan that you will undertake between the second and third day, and after the course is complete. Time taken to complete this will depend on your identified learning needs, commitment to service development, and the opportunities you’re able to create.

Do I need to start/complete the CPPE Consultation skills for pharmacy practice programme?
Excellent consultation skills are essential to effective prescribing and, although we don’t currently require you to pass the e-assessment to be eligible to attend, we strongly recommend completing the programme as part of your return to prescribing.

Is there an assessment? Will we get any sort of certification?
There isn’t a formal assessment, but the course supports self-assessment of competence and may help you to complete any organisational assessments of competence that your employer requires.

Attendance on the course is recorded on your CPPE profile and certificates of attendance can be downloaded after the course. However, reflection on learning and consideration of its relevance to your practice are the keys to professional development.
Other considerations

**Do I need professional indemnity insurance?**
The GPhC standards require registrants to ensure that all their work, or work for which they are responsible, is covered by appropriate professional indemnity cover. Your employer may provide indemnity cover for your prescribing role and you should check your organisational policies for details. If you already have a professional indemnity insurance policy, you should check whether this covers your prescribing role. Providers of indemnity insurance include the Pharmacists’ Defence Association and the National Pharmacy Association.

**I have not worked as a prescriber for a while and am anxious about returning to practice. Is there someone I could talk to?**
If you are a registered pharmacist, you might find it useful to contact Listening Friends. This is a free and confidential telephone service provided by Pharmacist Support and staffed by volunteer pharmacists. All the volunteers are trained in listening skills and dealing with people under stress. The fact that they are all pharmacists also means they understand the particular pressures of the pharmacy profession. You can contact Listening Friends by phoning 0808 168 5133.

At CPPE we have a coaching service for our customers. If you have a specific work-related goal you would like to achieve within a supportive framework and a set timescale then our coaching service is for you. We have a dedicated team of trained coaches who can work with you to find the right path and achieve your goals. You can find out more and apply for the coaching service on our website.

**I am an experienced pharmacist prescriber, but I’m planning to change sector. What should I do?**
A good starting point for changing your sector of practice would be to find out more about prescribing in your new sector by having a chat with a prescriber who already works in that sector. They may also be able to assist you in identifying local opportunities for gaining experience, such as work shadowing. The steps described in the CPPE *Prescribing: maintaining competence and confidence* guide will help you to identify learning needs created by the change of context and ways to address them.

**I’m registered with GPhC as a supplementary prescriber. What do I need to do to become an independent prescriber?**
There are two options to train to be an independent prescriber. The full programme involves 26 days’ teaching/learning activity and 12 days’ supervised practice. A shorter conversion programme consists of at least two days’ teaching and learning activity and two days’ supervised practice.

Supplementary prescribers who wish to undertake the conversion programme must be registered as such with GPhC, be able to provide evidence of prescribing practice that is no more than two years old, and provide a statement of support from a medical practitioner confirming their competence as a supplementary prescriber. The full independent prescribing programme is open to all pharmacists registered with the GPhC who have at least two years’ appropriate patient-orientated experience in a UK hospital, community or primary care setting following their pre-registration year. Some universities have additional requirements. Contacts for all GPhC-accredited prescribing programmes can be found on the GPhC website.