

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

This document contains the questions most frequently asked about this programme. Click on the name of each section below to jump to questions under that topic:

- [Background](#)
- [Enrolment](#)
- [e-course](#)
- [Self-assessment framework](#)
- [Workshops](#)

Background

What is the Preparing to train as an independent prescriber programme?

This is a fully funded programme that helps pharmacists develop the skills and confidence needed to best prepare for independent prescriber training. The programme is made up of four main components:

- a self-directed e-course and self-assessment framework
- a mandatory online workshop to support your self-assessment of competencies and develop a personal development plan.
- an optional online workshop to support your readiness for academic writing and reflective practice.
- optional peer support sessions, providing an opportunity for you to develop your professional network and establish communities of practice.

Why has the Preparing to train as an independent prescriber programme been developed?

From 2026, pharmacists will be annotated as prescribers at the point of registration, and being a prescriber is rapidly becoming essential in all clinical settings. So, pharmacists who registered before 2026 and want to become a prescriber in practice now need to complete the independent prescribing qualification.

Pharmacists have been prescribing since 2003. In September 2022, almost 12,000 pharmacists in England were reported as being annotated independent prescribers on the GPhC register.¹ As of January 2023 there were just under 53,000 registered pharmacists² in England. So, given the gap between those two figures, we can anticipate a high demand for completing the independent prescribing qualification. Some pharmacists face challenges when applying and studying for the qualification, and so this programme is intended to support pharmacists in being ready for these challenges.

Enrolment

Who is eligible to join the *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* programme?

This programme is available to all pharmacists from all sectors of practice who are planning to apply for and commence independent prescriber training with a Higher Education Institute (HEI).

I'm a learner on the Primary Care Education Pathway (PCPEP), do I need to complete the *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* programme?

No. Taking part in the PCPEP prepares pharmacists to train as an IP. This training provides a solid foundation of clinical knowledge and familiarity with their working environment, which helps its learners to become prepared for the challenges of the IP course. It is expected that IP training will happen **after completion** of the PCPEP, unless the pharmacist is already an IP when they start the PCPEP or already has some prior clinical knowledge and experience in the primary care environment – in which case they can apply to do IP early with a break in the PCPEP.

I'm a newly qualified pharmacist, can I train as an independent prescriber straight away?

There is no longer a requirement to be registered as a pharmacist for 2 years before enrolling on an independent prescribing (IP) training course. However, we do not recommend that pharmacists enrol on an IP course as soon as they are registered.

The [GPhC entry requirements for a pharmacist IP course](#) state that applicants must have relevant experience in a UK pharmacy setting. We believe that newly qualified pharmacists need some time to adapt to a new phase in their career and experience the responsibilities of professional judgment and accountability before they can get the most from their training as an independent prescriber.

Newly qualified pharmacists have described 'lack of confidence', 'decision making', 'managing professional relationships', 'being in charge', and 'adapting to the workplace' as the greatest challenges they face in their work.³ Therefore, if you meet the [eligibility criteria](#), we recommend that you enrol on the [CPPE Newly qualified pharmacist programme](#) as the first step in your post-registration professional development journey. You would then complete our [Preparing to train as an independent prescriber programme](#) as one of the modules of our *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme.

Newly qualified pharmacists working for Boots or in hospital pharmacy have alternatives to access instead of the CPPE *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme. Boots pharmacists should complete the [Boots Newly Qualified Pharmacist programme](#) and those working in hospitals can access the [NHS England Newly Qualified Pharmacist pathway](#) (NQPh pathway). These pharmacists can complete CPPE's *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* programme alongside the NQPh.

How would I study the *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme and the *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* programme at the same time?

We recommend that you complete the first two modules of the *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme first. Module 1 focuses on person-centred care, consultation skills and collaboration with the multi-professional team. Module 2 focuses on application of clinical knowledge, reasoning and judgment skills and clinical decision making. Completing these modules will help you to recognise, understand and articulate the skills and attributes required to be a prescriber, and this knowledge should serve as the foundation of your prescribing practice whilst preparing to train as an IP.

After completing modules 1 and 2 of the *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme you can complete the *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* e-course and workshops as your next module. You will complete a self-assessment which is based on the *Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) competency framework for all prescribers* to help you to reflect on your knowledge and skills, and prioritise the areas in which you need to develop, so that you can feel confident as you apply and prepare to start an IP course.

The *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme will have provided you with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to support your practice as a prescriber in competencies described in the *RPS competency framework for all prescribers*. For example, you might assess yourself as competent for *Competency 1: Assess the patient* and *Competency 3: Present options and reach a shared decision* because of the learning you have completed in Module 1 of the *Newly qualified pharmacist* programme. If you assess yourself as competent, it means that you don't have learning needs prior to starting an IP course, and need only plan to demonstrate competency during your IP course.

How do I secure a place on the *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* programme?

You need to book a place on one of the mandatory [Preparing to train as an independent prescriber workshops](#) to guarantee your place and gain access to the e-course and self-assessment framework. Once you make your workshop booking, you will receive notification that you have been granted access to the e-course, which is hosted on the Canvas platform.

Note: the programme release on 12 September 2023 is the pilot cohort and will be limited to 120 places. More places will be released in late 2023.

e-course

How can I access the e-course?

You need to book a place on one of the mandatory [Preparing to train as an independent prescriber workshops](#) to guarantee your place and gain access to the e-course and self-assessment framework. Once you make your workshop booking, you will receive notification that you have been granted access to the e-course, which is hosted on the [Canvas platform](#). You will then sign into the Canvas platform, and the *Preparing to train as an independent prescriber* e-course will appear on your dashboard. If you experience any difficulties with accessing Canvas, please contact our customer services team using the Live chat facility at www.cppe.ac.uk or email info@cppe.ac.uk.

How long will it take me to complete the e-course?

The e-course is designed to be used flexibly and you can study as much or as little as you need, using your completed self-assessment framework to help signpost you to the sections where you have the greatest learning needs. There are no enforced deadlines for completion, and you can revisit the e-course at any time. The only requirement is that you complete your self-assessment in advance of attending the mandatory [Preparing to train as an independent prescriber](#) workshop.

In what order should I study the e-course?

The e-course is designed to help you 'pick and choose' the topics that are most beneficial to you and the learning needs you identify in your self-assessment. There is no set order or rigid format that you need to follow.

We encourage you to take time to read the introduction to the e-course before you download and start to complete your self-assessment framework. We also would highlight the video wall content in the *Preparing*

to study for your independent prescribing course topic, so that you can see and hear from people who have either completed their IP training or deliver the IP courses and act as designated prescribing practitioners.

Self-assessment framework

Why do I have to complete a self-assessment framework?

The self-assessment framework supports you in reflecting on your knowledge and skills, based mainly on the [RPS prescribing competency framework](#) because all independent prescribing course providers use the RPS framework to support their delivery. This helps you to become more familiar with the competencies that you will need to demonstrate to qualify and practice as an independent prescriber.

The e-course is also based on this framework, so rating yourself against the competencies will help you to track your progress and identify your personal learning needs. Revisiting the self-assessment framework once you have completed the e-course and associated activities will also help you create an action plan to continue your development as you commence your prescriber training.

Workshops

Which workshops do I have to attend as part of this programme?

The only workshop that is mandatory is the [Preparing to train as an independent prescriber](#) workshop that you booked a place on to access the programme. This online workshop is 2 hours long and is designed to help you review your self-assessment of competencies and identify actions to support your development. You will work together with other pharmacists, giving and receiving feedback from others who are getting ready to apply or undertake an independent prescribing course. This workshop will help you confidently identify your existing transferable skills as well as recognise those that you may need to prioritise for your development. The workshop also provides the opportunity to network and gain ongoing support from your peers.

The *Academic writing and reflective practice* workshop is optional and is designed to raise your confidence in being ready to demonstrate study skills at the required level 7 (equivalent to a Master's degree) associated with the independent prescribing courses. It is a 2-hour online workshop.

The *Peer support sessions* are also optional, providing the opportunity for you to share experiences, concerns and progress with other pharmacists on the programme. You can attend as many or as few of these as you feel you need. These sessions will be hosted online.

References

1. C Burns. *Independent prescribing pharmacist numbers total 15,000, increasing by two-thirds in two years*. The Pharmaceutical Journal. 2022. Available from: <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/independent-prescribing-pharmacist-numbers-total-15000-increasing-by-two-thirds-in-two-years>
2. General Pharmaceutical Council. *The GPhC register as of 31 January 2023 - Trend data*. 2023. Available from: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/gphc-register-trend-data-january-2023.docx>
3. E Magola, S Willis, E Schafheutle. Community pharmacists at transition to independent practice: Isolated, unsupported, and stressed. *Health and Social Care in the Community*. 2018. 26(6): 849-859. DOI: [10.1111/hsc.12596](https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12596)

[Return to contents](#)

Last review: August 2023

Next review due: August 2024