Prescribing: maintaining competence and confidence

A CPPE guide for prescribers
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About this guide to prescribing

This guide has been developed to support pharmacist prescribers to identify their learning needs and signpost them to resources to help meet these needs. It is linked to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) publication *A competency framework for all prescribers* and can help to address most of the competency outcomes.

One outcome statement in particular requires that the prescriber “reflects on own and others prescribing practice and acts upon feedback and discussion [outcome statement 9.1]”. The combination of this guide and the prescribing competency framework provide the resources to do just that.

There are also outcome statements about knowing how to access relevant information:

- Refers to or seeks guidance from another member of the team, a specialist or a prescribing information source when necessary [outcome statement 1.8]
- Identifies, accesses, and uses reliable and validated sources of information and critically evaluates other information [outcome statement 2.7]
- Guides patients/carers on how to identify reliable sources of information about their medicines and treatments [outcome statement 5.3]

This guide offers a stepwise approach to identifying your learning and development needs, and then details a comprehensive range of resources that will help you to address those needs and gather evidence of your competence to prescribe. Once you have addressed a learning need and put that learning into practice you will start to gain confidence and then you may be ready to extend your practice.

The list of resources in this guide is by no means exhaustive, but it brings together a comprehensive range of resources that will form a starting point for your library. Remember that you’re also likely to find relevant local resources on your organisation, employer or commissioner’s website and/or intranet eg, prescribing or medicines policies.

If you’re new to prescribing, or returning to prescribing after a break, you might want to work through this guide from beginning to end. The same might be true for an experienced prescriber who’s planning to change sector or clinical discipline.

Pharmacists who practise prescribing as a regular part of their role may be considering applying for RPS Faculty membership. Prescribing fits within the expert professional practice cluster and this guide can help to identify evidence that will support your membership application.

If you are planning to extend your prescribing role or perhaps moving to a new organisation you might want to focus on particular competencies. You may be looking for a new resource to address a very specific learning need and Parts 2 and 3 of the guide might be what you need.

Although the guide has been developed with pharmacist prescribers in mind, other prescribers may find the resources equally helpful. It provides details of resources that relate to good prescribing practice, rather than necessarily being specific to pharmacy.

A note about web links

Where we think it will be helpful we have provided web links to take you directly to an article or specific part of a website. However, we are aware that web links can change. If you have difficulty accessing any web links we provide, please go to the organisation’s home page or your preferred internet search engine and use appropriate key words to search for the relevant item.

As this resource contains more web links than usual, the likelihood of a web link changing or being broken increases. If you are using the printed version of this resource, and the web link is not current, please visit www.cppe.ac.uk to access the latest interactive version for up-to-date links.
How to use this guide

The range of prescribers is probably as wide as the range of competencies required to be an effective prescriber, and different prescribers will use this guide in different ways. We’ve divided it into three distinct parts.

Part 1: using a competency framework

Here we explain how to use a competency framework as a learning needs assessment tool and how to create a learning plan. Working through Part 1 will help you to identify the resources from Parts 2 and 3 that will support your individual learning needs.

Part 2: resources

We have collated this comprehensive range of resources around the prescribing competencies to help you to navigate. We include details of how to access each resource, reasons to choose that resource rather than something else, and whether access to it is limited or involves a fee. This part could be used as a handy reference to dip into on occasion or as part of a more focused effort to address a set of learning needs.

Part 3: setting/clinical discipline-specific resources

These are resources that may be relevant to practitioners in more specialist roles where non-medical prescribing is common or there is a specific strategy for non-medical prescribing.

Terminology

The RPS publication *A competency framework for all prescribers* comprises ten competency dimensions grouped into two domains.

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<thead>
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<th>The consultation</th>
<th>Prescribing governance</th>
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<td>1. Assess the patient</td>
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Each competency dimension is underpinned by multiple outcome statements which explain what prescribers should be able to demonstrate.

An additional *Apply professionalism* domain is composed of outcome statements that are considered essential aspects of prescribing, but are not specific to prescribing. These are behaviours that prescribers would be expected to employ in all aspects of their clinical roles.

FIGURE 1: the RPS prescribing competency framework is divided into ten competency dimensions within two domains

[Figure 1 from page 9 of the RPS *A competency framework for all prescribers* has been reproduced with the permission of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society].
Assess the patient

This group contains resources around three main topics found within this competency: consultation skills, clinical examination skills and record keeping. The competency also has outcome statements relating to confirming the diagnosis, understanding conditions and assessing severity, and you will find resources in the Consider the options group that will help with these. We have listed the resources relevant to reviewing adherence within the Shared decision making group.

In this section you can find resources on the following topics:

- Consultation skills
- Clinical examination skills
- Patient records

Consultation skills

Taking appropriate medical and medication histories are the foundations on which the rest of the prescribing process is based. It’s when the purpose of the consultation is agreed with your patient, when you identify their ideas, concerns and expectations, and when you develop the rapport from which shared decision-making can happen.

CPPE Consultation skills for pharmacy practice

The Consultation Skills for Pharmacy Practice website explains why effective consultation skills are important and the standards of knowledge, skills and behaviours. It provides a guide to assessing your current practice using the Medication-related consultation framework (MRCF), advice about how to improve using a range of resources, and finally the opportunity to assess your performance using our online assessment.

1. Why are consultation skills important for all pharmacy professionals?

2. How do I know what standard is expected of me?

3. How do I know how effective my consultation skills are now?

4. How do I improve or maintain my performance?

5. How can I check my learning and development?

6. How do I continue to develop my skills and behaviours?

FIGURE 4: The Consultation skills for pharmacy practice pathway guides you through the six steps to effective consultation skills