

Outline curriculum for a training programme to prepare optometrists with the Additional Supply or Supplementary Prescribing Speciality to become Independent Prescribers.

1. Aim

To prepare optometrists already practising as additional supply optometrists or supplementary prescribers to meet the standards set by the General Optical Council for entry on to the appropriate specialist therapeutic prescribing register for independent prescribers.

The learning outcomes in bold are additional to those that have already been demonstrated by additional supply optometrists/ supplementary prescribers. These should form the basis of an appropriate conversion course.

2. Learning outcomes

Following the completion of a programme of study, optometrist independent prescribers should be able to demonstrate:

- [a] an understanding of his or her role as an independent prescriber, an awareness of the limitations of his or her clinical experience and an ability to work within the limits of his or her professional competence
- [b] an ability to take a comprehensive medical history and examine the eye and adnexa using appropriate instrumentation and clinical techniques
- [c] knowledge of the pathophysiology, clinical features and natural course of the conditions being treated
- [d] an ability to identify the nature and severity of the presenting condition and to generate an appropriate patient-specific clinical management plan
- [e] an ability to monitor the response to treatment, to review both the working and the differential diagnosis, and to modify treatment or refer / consult / seek guidance as appropriate
- [f] an ability to prescribe, safely, appropriately and cost effectively
- [g] an ability to take a shared approach to decision making by assessing patients' needs for medicines, taking account of their preferences and values and those of their carers when making prescribing decisions
- [h] an ability to critically evaluate sources of information, advice and decision support in prescribing practice, taking into account current evidence based practice
- [i] an understanding of the public health issues related to medicines use
- [j] an understanding of the legal, ethical and professional framework for accountability and responsibility in relation to prescribing
- [k] an ability to work within clinical governance frameworks that include audit of prescribing practice and personal development

3. Indicative Content

It is recognised that some of the following indicative content may have been covered in the additional supply/supplementary prescribing curriculum, however given that there are no legal restrictions on the ocular conditions managed, or the pharmaceutical agents prescribed by optometrist independent prescribers, this material needs to be revisited. In particular, differential diagnosis and review. Moreover, the increased professional autonomy and responsibility of the

independent prescriber forms the basis of the additional legal and ethical components of the curriculum.

[a] Clinical and pharmaceutical knowledge

- o Principles of pharmacology
 - Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of systemically administered medicines
 - Systemic drug design, formulation and delivery
 - Physiological/pathological alterations in drug response e.g. age, ethnicity, pregnant or breastfeeding women, co-morbidity
 - Potential for unwanted effects e.g. allergy, adverse drug reactions, interactions
- o Pathogenesis, clinical features natural history and management of the conditions for which the independent prescribing optometrist intends to prescribe

[b] History taking, examination techniques, decision making and review

- o Concept of a working diagnosis
- o Development of a treatment plan including selection and optimisation of a drug regimen
- o Patient-specific clinical management plans in the context of a supplementary prescribing partnership
- o Principles of concordance
- o Assessment of responses to treatment against the objectives of the treatment plan/clinical management plan

[c] Prescribing in an individual and team context

- o Autonomous working and clinical decision making within professional expertise and competence – knowing when and how to refer / consult / seek guidance from another member of the healthcare team
- o Effective communication and team working with other professionals
- o The responsibility of an independent prescriber in the development, delivery and review of a patient-specific clinical management plan
- o The responsibility of a supplementary prescriber in collaborating with an independent prescriber in the the delivery and review of a patient-specific clinical management plan
- o Negotiating support/training for prescribing role
- o Development and maintenance of professional knowledge and competence in relation to the condition(s) which the optometrist intends to manage (with or without the prescription of drugs)

[d] Evidence based practice and clinical governance in relation to prescribing

- o Information systems / decision making support tools
- o Local and professional clinical governance policies and procedures
- o Risk assessment and risk management
- o Reflective practice, continuing professional development and support networks

[e] Legal basis of prescribing

- o Legal basis of independent prescribing

[f] Prescribing safely and professionally

- o Local and national policies impacting on prescribing practice
- o Local and national frameworks for medicines use
- o Antimicrobial use and resistance
- o Budgetary constraints at local and national level

4. Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategies

The conversion programme should be taught to at least first degree level (HE3/ M level). Programme delivery may be achieved through a variety of strategies e.g. face to face instruction, distance learning or directed private study. Learning strategies and assessment methods must be appropriate for the material being taught and the learning outcome that is being tested. The programme should be of sufficient length to achieve the learning outcomes and should include at least two days of face to face learning activities.

5. Learning in practice

The purpose of the learning in practice component of the conversion programme is to transfer learning from the taught component of the programme into practice and to acquire skills that are more appropriately learned in practice. Training should be obtained in an appropriate ophthalmic care setting in the UK under the supervision of a designated ophthalmologist.

The duration of the additional learning in practice is as follows:

- Supplementary prescribers: a minimum of 6 sessions of not less than 3 hours
- Additional supply optometrists: a minimum of 14 sessions of not less than 3 hours

Each trainee will be required to maintain a Portfolio of Practice Evidence to ensure that learning outcomes have been achieved. The College of Optometrists will provide details of the format of the portfolio and the nature of the Common Final Assessment for the conversion programme.