

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
Postgraduate Certificate in Non-Medical Prescribing	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	MC7NMP3 (30 weeks) MC7NMP2 (15 weeks)
UCAS Code:	
Name of Final Award:	Postgraduate Certificate, PGCert
Level of Qualification:	Level 7
Regime of Delivery:	Hybrid Learning
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Part Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	15/30 Weeks
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Health Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Brief Description of the Programme

The Post Graduate Certificate in Non-Medical Prescribing (Independent and Supplementary) involves nurses, midwives, pharmacists, and suitably qualified allied health professionals working autonomously to make decisions regarding holistic assessment of individual patients within their care. It aims to afford a greater awareness of personal limitations and scope of professional competence in relation to making autonomous prescribing decisions based on clinical assessment of patients, leading to appropriate treatment options or referral to another healthcare professional. The programme embraces 'A Competency Framework for all Prescribers' (Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) 2016) which consolidates the existing profession specific prescribing frameworks and updates the competencies in order to provide a single common framework for any prescriber regardless of professional background. The Post Graduate Certificate in Non-Medical Prescribing enables nurses from the four fields of nursing practice (adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nurses) midwives and specialist community public health nurses, pharmacists, podiatrists/chiropractors, physiotherapists, therapeutic radiographers and paramedics to practice and develop as Independent and Supplementary prescribers and to meet the standards set by the HCPC (2019), NMC (2018) and the GPhC (2019). The programme can be studied as a short course, over 15 weeks, or a longer programme, over 30 weeks. On successful completion of the Post Certificate in Non-Medical Prescribing the health care practitioner will be able to practice and further develop as an independent and supplementary prescriber; demonstrating ability to meet the standards set by their professional bodies. The programme is co-taught with the level 6 Graduate Certificate Non-Medical Prescribing.

Programme Aims

1	Develop the knowledge and skills required to deliver cost-effective, evidence-based practice in the role of the Non-Medical Prescriber whilst also understanding the diverse nature of service users
2	Provide an interprofessional platform for shared learning relevant to prescribing practice
3	Analyse and evaluate contextual and contemporary issues of practice which may impact on the students' transition to a non-medical prescriber
4	Develop an understanding of governance issues and the ethics and accountability related to non-medical prescribing
5	Develop the knowledge and skills relevant to continual professional development

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Demonstrate mastery in undertaking a comprehensive patient assessment, displaying a detailed knowledge of the investigations and physical examination required whilst acknowledging any underlying condition to inform a diagnosis and treatment plan.
K2	Demonstrate reflection, integrity, personal responsibility, accountability, and a shared approach for prescribing considering the legal and ethical implications, multi-professional team working and the wishes, values, diversity and ethnicity of patients and their carers.
K3	Demonstrate in depth knowledge of the principles of pharmacology and how these inform prescribing decisions considering how alterations in physiology and pathophysiology may affect the actions of medicines.
K4	Demonstrate the ability to accurately calculate drug dosages to ensure safe prescribing practice.
K5	Distinguish between independent & supplementary prescribing considering current research and formulating an independent perspective. Document an accurate legible clinical management plan that reflects the principles of supplementary prescribing.
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	
C1	N/A
Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Prescribe safely appropriately and cost-effectively considering local and national frameworks to support evidence-based prescribing taking into account relevant research materials.
S2	Demonstrate mastery in both pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches to modifying disease and promoting health, optimising doses as well as stopping treatment in addition to considerations of polypharmacy.
S3	Evidence advanced scholarship of the public health issues related to medicines use.

Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)

L1	Write legible, unambiguous and complete prescriptions and written records that meet legal requirements ensuring that other healthcare professionals and prescribing partners are appropriately informed.
L2	Demonstrate mastery of working within governance frameworks that include audit of prescribing practice, reflecting on one's own prescribing practice and that of others and demonstrating an independent perspective within this in relation to continual professional development.

Programme Structure

The programme consists of one 60 credit module studied over one or two semesters. There are no optional modules.

Level Seven

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
NP704 or	Non-Medical Prescribing NMC and HCPC registrant	60	Core	No
NP705	Non-Medical Prescribing for Pharmacists (Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing)	60	Core	No

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

The programme of study will consist of a hybrid learning approach. This will include face-to-face study, online teaching, directed study, self-directed study and distance learning activities. Attendance at university will be for 11 taught days plus assessment over three days. The remaining days will be protected learning time and consist of self-directed and directed study. Students undertaking the programme are required to complete 26 days of structured learning activities.

The inclusion of academic writing skills is a feature of many modules and use of the Learning Development Unit is actively promoted. At the start of the programme students have an introduction to the Learning Resource Centre and information technology. The induction includes academic writing support available in the virtual learning environment, database searching, e-submission, and information on plagiarism and academic misconduct. Following enrolment, students are assisted in logging into their university e-mail accounts and the university virtual learning environment.

Lectures: keynote lectures are employed to launch fundamental theoretical aspects of the programme and will be led by the lecturers and/or external speakers. The lectures will provide the foundation for student-led work within seminar and/or workshops.

Seminars: seminars will offer a forum by which students can explore key areas and will combine the presentation of information and ideas, exploration of relevant issues, and the

application of theoretical principles. There will be opportunities for students to discuss the application of these in their field of practice.

Workshops: workshops will be used to enable students to work through examples and to consider the application of theory to practice. These sessions will be facilitated by lecturers and/or outside speakers.

Simulation: the high-fidelity state of the art simulation suite at Bucks New University is used to simulate practice scenarios and to facilitate physical assessment skills. Students can learn in a more realistic, but non-threatening environment. The potential exists to employ the Simulation suites and Scotia Medical Observation and Training System (SMOTS) cameras for practical skills assessment.

Directed reading: throughout the programme the students will be required to engage in critical discussion, which will require them to undertake directed reading outside of the formal teaching session. Students will be provided with relevant reading lists by the lecturers and will be encouraged to undertake independent reading to ensure they engage with a breadth of literature and evidence, so they are cognisant with contemporary debates within their field. In keeping with the Virtual Learning Policy, all documents and supporting information will be made available to students electronically and will be utilised to enable student discussion and peer support.

Case studies: during face-to-face sessions, an array of real case studies from all disciplines will be used as a vehicle for enquiry-based learning. Students will explore and critically discuss the components of those cases, to learn from successful and unsuccessful interventions as well as to be able to iterate the nature of good and bad experiences. The case studies will enable the students to illuminate the nature of work and the demands inherent within the practice arena to enable the development of critical knowledge and problem-solving skills.

Group work: group work is a key teaching and learning modality. It enables students to engage in participatory learning and encourages a team working approach to problem-solving. The programme includes an element of enquiry-based learning where students work in small groups to discuss work-related scenarios and coordinate presentations to a professional standard. This is an opportunity for the students to benefit from constructive feedback from their peers. Group work will be employed as a teaching and learning tool for student preparation for the practical skills assessment.

Learning Contracts: learning contracts allow students to negotiate an area of study personal to them and help them to focus on their learning and development needs. The learning contract will contribute to the development of the practice portfolio.

Competency Based Learning: Clinical competencies are core to the learning and assessment criteria of this programme and students are not admitted to the programme unless they have access to appropriate clinical experience for the duration of the module.

Reflection: reflection in and on practice is central to the student developing emotional intelligence around their skills development that will enable their continued professional development. Reflecting on their past experience and the experiences of others is a key component of the programme and will contribute to the portfolio. Reflection encourages the students to explore the application of new knowledge to a given situation and the development of problem-solving skills, both of which are characteristic of being a responsive practitioner.

Virtual Learning Environment: the virtual learning environment will allow students to access all materials such as lecture notes and interactive activities and where appropriate participate in discussion boards. It is a resource through which students may be contacted and which also enables them to access a range of facilities to support their studies including the library, academic writing support and plagiarism software.

Clinical Practice

All students are required to complete a successful period of practice under the supervision of an experienced prescriber. For nurses and midwives (NMC registrants) there will be a Practice Assessor (PA) and a Practice Supervisor (PS). These roles are undertaken by two different individuals. In exceptional circumstances only both roles may be undertaken by one individual however the course team must approve this and additional support and monitoring would be put in place, as described in the course handbook. For HCPC registrants (physiotherapist, chiropodist/podiatrist, therapeutic radiographer and paramedics) there will be a Practice Educator (PE) and for Pharmacists (GPhC registrants) a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP). The supervised practice will be in the student's clinical practice setting or in the setting where the experienced prescriber is working. There is a requirement for a minimum of 90 hours. The PA/PS/PE/DPP must meet the criteria for undertaking the role (NMC 2018, GPhC 2019, HCPC 2019). The student will be responsible for identifying suitably experienced prescribers in conjunction with their manager (if appropriate) prior to commencing the non-medical prescribing programme. The PA/PS/PE/DPP will be required to contribute to the application form detailing their qualifications, experience, and learning opportunities available in the clinical area. Students will also be required to complete the application form confirming their suitability to undertake the programme and the commitment of the employer (if applicable) and the availability of PA/PS/PE/DPP to support the student during the programme of study. This provides a live database of those supporting students in practice and the clinical environment hosting the student. The PA/PS/PE/DPP is invited to attend an introductory session via an online platform. This session outlines the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the university, student and the PA/PS/PE/DPP. The virtual learning environment (VLE) will also host an area providing access to essential information for the PA/PS/PE/DPP. This includes a video recording of their roles and responsibilities. The university provides the PA/PS/PE/DPP with a handbook that outlines the roles and responsibilities for the period of clinical supervision. The contact details for members of the teaching team are included. Each student will be allocated a member of the university teaching team to act as an academic assessor and link tutor. The link tutor/academic assessor is the nominated person from the AEI for an individual student in the practice setting. This nominated person is the first point of call for any issues around student support or issues of concern. A link visit may be arranged by the academic team if appropriate to support both the PA/PS/PE/DPP and the student in the clinical setting. The academic assessor will liaise with the student and the PA/PS/PE/DPP, providing clear lines of communication to ensure application of theory to practice, to facilitate successful completion of the practice competencies and learning outcomes.

The student should gain a breadth and depth of experience during the 90 supervised hours. As part of the portfolio, a learning contract is developed to identify the individual learning needs of each student. An action plan is developed setting out the goals and objectives for the practice learning. Progress is reviewed at 30 hours and 60 hours with a formal review undertaken by the academic assessor at 60 hours providing feedback to the student and PA/PS/PE/DPP. The log of hours will detail the time spent with the PS/PA/PE/DPP for all students.

NMC Only: The learning contract may be developed with the PS or the PA, the review at 30 hours will be with the PS, the review at 60 hours will be with the PS and PA and should be submitted to the academic assessor for review. The final sign off must be by the PA. **For Specialist community public health nurses (SCPHN):** SCPHN are assigned to practice and academic assessors who are registered SCPHNs with appropriate equivalent experience for the student's field of practice.

For midwifery students only: Midwifery students will be assigned to practice and academic assessors who are registered midwives. The PA and PS are expected to work in collaboration with the Lead Midwife for Education and the student's personal academic tutor for supporting students from the midwifery profession only. Further information is in the programme handbook.

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

Books and other Texts

All core texts will be in the library for students to borrow for free or read online. Students may be required to purchase texts and journals to support their study programme.

Computers

Students will need to have a PC and sufficient storage for course documents and elements of the portfolio as they are developed. The computer should have appropriate audio-visual hardware for online learning and discussions.

Good Wi-Fi connection is imperative and Google Chrome is the preferred internet browser for accessing the VLE.

DBS

Students are expected to have an enhanced DBS check in order to undertake the course.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students' study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students' study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad / Work Based Learning (Hours)
Full programme	156	354	90 hours

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our

commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The assessment for the programme is designed to meet the requirements of the NMC (2018) the HCPC (2019) and the GPhC (2019). The NMC and HCPC have adopted 'A competence framework for all prescribers' (RPS 2016) within their prescribing standards. The GPhC have their own learning outcomes.

All the assessments will be appropriate, achievable and vocationally focused and will form a constructive part of the learning process. The portfolio assessment affords the opportunity to capture 90 hours supervised clinical practice allowing reflection on and in practice and application of theory to practice through critical analysis of the prescribing competencies. It contains supervisor and assessor feedback along with service user comment to contribute to the development of a holistic approach to prescribing. Shared learning will take the form of a formative peer-assessed task considering two drugs of choice from the student's clinical area (NMC HCPC). This formative presentation will allow sharing of knowledge of drugs used within each student's clinical area creating a constructive and innovative addition to the learning experience. Pharmacist students will undertake a peer assessment of physical examination skills creating a benchmark for developing knowledge and skill. The summative numeracy and pharmacology exams test knowledge and skill and application of theory to practice.

The following assessment activities are used for this programme:

Numeracy Examination Pass mark 100%

Pharmacology Examination (Nurses, Midwives and Allied Health Professionals only) Pass Mark 80%

Assessment of Physical examination skills (Pharmacists only) Pass Mark 70%

Portfolio including 3 x pass/fail elements

Practical skills assessment Pass Mark 70%

Additional Assessment Regulations

Students are offered two attempts at each assessment. Students may be offered an exceptional third attempt at the numeracy assessment at the discretion of the assessment board. The pass mark for this assessment is 100% and is a pass/fail element.

Regardless of interruptions to their studies whilst undertaking the short version of the programme then they must complete the programme in no more than two years from the identified start of the programme.

Regardless of interruptions to their studies whilst undertaking the longer version of the programme they must complete the programme in no more than three years from the identified start of the programme.

The course team will interview the registrant to ensure that their acquired skills and knowledge remain valid prior to the resumption of studies.

If a registrant has not completed all assessments within the allocated time, they would need to reapply and must undertake the whole programme again, including all assessments, to ensure that competence has been maintained.

All assessments must be passed. Any student who demonstrates unsafe practice will fail the

element in question even if the pass mark is otherwise achieved.

Classification

Calculation of final award:

Students must pass all elements of the programme in order to be awarded 60 academic credits and be awarded the Postgraduate certificate in Non-medical Prescribing

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

Nurses and Midwives

The applicant must be a registered nurse (level 1), a registered midwife or a specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) and may be employed by the NHS, self-employed or non-NHS employed.

Have confirmation of clinical support, access to protected learning time, and employer support where appropriate. Applicants from the area of aesthetic medicines must also meet specific criteria detailed in the Framework for Aesthetic Practitioners.

Usually be able to provide evidence of 60 level 6 academic credits or provide evidence via the Buckinghamshire New University Accreditation of Prior Learning and Experiential Learning (APEL) process of their ability to study at Master's level 7.

Applicants must confirm that they are capable of safe and effective practice at a level of proficiency appropriate to the V300 programme and their intended area of prescribing practice related to clinical /health assessment, diagnostic care and management, planning and evaluation of care.

Applicants must have been registered with the NMC for a minimum of one year prior to application for entry to the programme.

Applicants must have a practice assessor and practice supervisor to meet the standards of the NMC (Standards for student supervision and assessment NMC 2018).

Pharmacists

The applicant must be registered as a pharmacist with the GPhC or with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and be in good standing with the healthcare regulator.

Applicants must have at least two years' appropriate patient-orientated experience post-registration, in a relevant UK practice setting.

Applicants must have an identified area of clinical or therapeutic practice in which to develop independent prescribing practice. They must also have relevant clinical or therapeutic experience in that area, which is suitable to act as the foundation of their prescribing practice while training.

The applicant must have a designated prescribing practitioner who has agreed to supervise their learning in practice, and who meets the standards set by the GPhC (Standards for the education and training of pharmacist independent prescribing, 2019).

HCPC (Podiatrists/Chiropodists, Physiotherapists, Therapeutic Radiographers and Paramedics)

Be registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) in one of the relevant allied health professions.

Be professionally practising in an environment where there is an identified need for the individual to regularly use independent/supplementary prescribing.

Be able to demonstrate support from their employer/sponsor including confirmation that the entrant will have appropriate supervised practice in the clinical area in which they are expected to prescribe.

Usually be able to provide evidence of 60 level 6 academic credits or provide evidence via the Buckinghamshire New University Accreditation of Prior Learning and Experiential Learning (APEL) process of their ability to study at Master's level 7.

Usually have at least 3 years relevant post-qualifying experience in the clinical area in which they will be prescribing.

Have identified a Practice Educator who must be a qualified prescriber, on the register of their statutory regulator with annotation(s) for prescribing where applicable and with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to support safe and effective learning.

Do applicants require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?	Yes
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Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

Applicants are already qualified health care professionals in their own field. Qualifying as a non-medical prescriber will increase the potential for more autonomous working and contribute to holistic patient care within the individual student's scope of practice.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Prior learning is recognised but students must still undertake all assessments. Students must discuss their prior learning with their academic tutor and identify their individual learning needs through the learning contract. This enables their learning to be tailored through the hybrid approach.

Pharmacists must attend all the clinical skills teaching sessions, regardless of prior learning. Students must meet all the learning outcomes by the end of the programme.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies, all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include an introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Their personal Tutor also acts as an **Academic Assessor**, who will work in partnership with their practice assessor to ensure successful progression within the programme
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services.

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	Buckinghamshire New University
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies descriptor for higher education qualifications at Level 7 NMC Standards for prescribing programmes 2018 NMC Standards for student supervision and assessment 2018 HCPC Standards for prescribing 2019 GPhC Standards for the education and training of pharmacist independent prescribers 2019
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice) Specific programme regulations noted on page 7 of this document
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	Yes
Ethics Sub-committee	N/A
Date Published / Updated:	September 2021

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

There are no exit qualifications available on this programme.