REQUIREMENTS FOR PRESCRIBING PROGRAMMES FOR REGISTERED NURSES AND MIDWIVES
The role of the Nursing and Midwifery Council

What we do

We regulate nurses and midwives in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We exist to protect the public. We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives can deliver high quality healthcare throughout their careers.

We make sure that nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold our professional standards. We have clear and transparent processes to investigate nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards. We maintain a register of nurses and midwives allowed to practise in the UK.
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Prescribing programme requirements

These programme requirements for prescribing education and training replace our previous education and training standards stated in the 2006 Standards of proficiency for nurse and midwife prescribers.

The education framework and programme requirements state the education and training standards that graduate entry prescriber programmes must have. These are the programmes that trainee prescribers in the UK must undertake in order to acquire the standards of proficiency necessary for annotation to the register as a nurse or midwife prescriber with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

As part of our commitment to interprofessional learning and in recognition of a multiprofessional approach to prescribing proficiency, we have decided that in future all NMC approved prescribing programmes must deliver outcomes which meet the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's (RPS) Competency Framework for All Prescribers.¹

For all categories of prescriber, the RPS Competency Framework applies in full and demonstration of all those competencies contained within it must be achieved in order to be awarded prescriber status and thereafter maintained throughout subsequent prescribing practice. The category of award determines the formulary a qualified prescriber may prescribe from.
The Nursing and Midwifery Order [Article 19(6)] states that our Council has the authority to establish the standards of education and training that approved education institutions (AEI) must meet in respect of additional qualifications which may be recorded on the register.

Approved education institutions (AEI), their work placed learning partners and employers all have ownership and accountability for the development, delivery and management of nurse and midwife prescriber programme curricula.

**Titles, qualifications and formularies**

The following three titles continue to apply as before to those nurses, midwives and Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) who are able to prescribe.

1. **Community practitioner nurse (or midwife) prescriber** – This refers to a registered nurse (level 1), midwife or SCPHN who has an annotation next to their name on our register confirming that they are qualified to prescribe drugs, medicines and appliances from the Nurse Prescribers’ Formulary for Community Practitioners in the current edition of the British National Formulary.

In order to obtain community practitioner nurse (or midwife) prescriber status, a nurse, midwife or SCPHN must successfully complete either:

- a community practitioner nurse (V100) prescribing course as part of an existing approved SCPHN or district nursing specialist practitioner qualification education programme, or
- a V150 prescribing course for nurse or midwives who have not undertaken the community practitioner nurse (V100) qualification as part of an integrated programme of education, for example as part of a specialist practice qualification in district nursing or a SCPHN health visiting programme but who wish to be able to prescribe from Nurse Prescribers’ Formulary for Community Practitioners in the current edition of the British National Formulary.
2. **Nurse (or midwife) independent prescriber** – This refers to a registered nurse (level 1), midwife or SCPHN who has an annotation next to their name on our register confirming that they may prescribe any medicine for any medical condition within their competence (with the exception of certain controlled drugs).

3. **Supplementary prescriber** – This refers to a registered nurse (level 1), midwife or SCPHN who has an annotation next to their name on our register confirming that they are able to work in partnership with an independent prescriber (such as a doctor or dentist) to implement an agreed patient/client-specific clinical management plan with the patient/client's agreement.

In order to obtain independent/supplementary prescriber status, a nurse, midwife or SCPHN must successfully complete a independent/supplementary prescriber (V300) preparation programme.

Stand-alone extended formulary prescriber status was previously available by way of successfully completing the V200 prescribing programme before supplementary prescribing was introduced in 2003.⁴

These titles are set out both in law⁵ and in our own internal legislation.⁶
Programme requirements

1  Selection, admission and progression

AEIs and work placed partners must:

1.1. ensure that an applicant is a level 1 nurse or midwife before being eligible to study an NMC approved post-registration prescribing programme

1.2. ensure that applicants for a V300 prescribing programme have completed at least one year’s post-registration practice

1.3. consider recognition of prior learning that is capable of being mapped to the RPS competency framework

1.4. confirm that the applicant has appropriate support in place on entry and throughout the programme, in relation to work placed learning, and

1.5. ensure that the minimum award for their prescribing programmes is at bachelor’s degree level.

2  Curriculum

AEIs and work placed partners must:

2.1 ensure that the prescribing programme outcomes are designed to deliver the competencies set out in the RPS competency framework

2.2 state the learning and teaching strategies that will be used to support achievement of the RPS competency framework
2.3 develop programme outcomes that inform student learning in relation to the formulary the individual prescribing student needs to know

2.3.1 stating the general and professional content necessary to meet the programme outcomes

2.3.2 stating the prescribing specific content necessary to meet the programme outcomes

2.3.3 confirming that the programme outcomes can be applied to all four fields of nursing practice (adult, mental health, learning disabilities and children's nursing) and midwifery, and

2.4 ensure that the curriculum provides a balance of theory, simulation and practice learning, using a range of learning and teaching strategies.

3 Work placed learning

AEIs and work placed partners must:

3.1 ensure that work placed learning provided through simulation does not exceed the proportion of hours spent in workplace settings

3.2 ensure that work placed learning is overseen and assessed by a ‘practice assessor’. This person will perform the same role and will need the same qualifications as the practice assessor for any other NMC approved pre or post-registration education programme, with the exception that the practice assessor for prescribing can be any registered healthcare professional with suitable qualifications and who is an experienced prescriber – they need not be a nurse or midwife or a medical practitioner

3.3 ensure that students work in partnership with the education provider and their work placed partners to arrange their practice assessor, and

3.4 AEIs are responsible for ensuring the arrangements and governance for work placed learning are in place for those applicants who are self-employed.

4 Learning and assessment

AEIs and work placed partners must:

4.1 ensure the programme leader is a registered nurse and/or midwife and/or healthcare professional with appropriate professional, prescribing and teaching qualifications and experience

4.2 ensure the programme leader works in conjunction with the Lead Midwife for Education (LME) and the practice assessor to ensure adequate support for any midwives undertaking prescribing programmes

4.3 ensure that student learning, support, supervision and assessment is in line with NMC requirements? and that the practice assessor is a prescriber
4.4 provide feedback throughout the programme to support student development necessary for meeting the RPS competency standards

4.5 assess the student’s suitability for award based on the successful completion of a period of work placed learning relevant to their field of prescribing practice, and

4.6 ensure that all programme learning outcomes are met, addressing all areas necessary to meet the RPS competency framework. This includes all students:

4.6.1 successfully passing a pharmacology exam (the pharmacology exam must be passed with a score of a minimum of 80%), and

4.6.2 successfully passing a numeracy assessment related to prescribing and calculation of medicines (the numeracy assessment must be passed with a score of 100%).

5 Eligibility to apply to the register

AEIs and work placed partners must:

5.1 following successful completion of a NMC approved programme of preparation, confirm that the nurse, midwife or SCPHN is eligible to be recorded as a prescriber, in either or both categories of

5.1.1 a community practitioner nurse (or midwife) prescriber (V100/V150), or

5.1.2 a nurse or midwife independent/supplementary prescriber (V300)

5.2 inform the prescriber student that the award must be registered with us within one year of successfully completing the programme. Failure to register the award within one year will render the qualification invalid and the individual concerned will have to retake and successfully complete the programme in order to qualify and register their award as a prescriber, and

5.3 inform the prescriber student that they may prescribe only after the qualification is recorded with us.
1. **Approved education institutions (AEIs):** the status awarded to an institution (or part of an institution, or combination of institutions) that works in partnership with practice placement and work based learning providers to deliver NMC approved education programmes. AEIs will have provided us with assurance that they are accountable and capable of delivering NMC approved education programmes.

2. **Formulary:** an official list giving details of prescribable medicines. The main function of a nursing and midwifery prescription formulary is to specify those particular medications that are approved to be prescribed by nurses and midwives, depending on the level of qualification they have obtained.

3. **Nurse and midwife prescribers:** the collective title for those nurses and midwives who have successfully completed an NMC approved prescribing programme and had that qualification added as an annotation to their entry on the NMC register.

4. **Pharmacology:** the study of medicinal drugs and their effect on the body.

5. **Practice assessor:** assess and confirm student achievement of learning outcomes and NMC proficiencies in work placed learning environments.

6. **Programme leader:** the appointed individual at an AEI with ultimate responsibility for the safe and effective delivery of prescribing programmes.

7. **Recognition of prior learning (RPL):** a process that enables previous certificated or experiential learning to be recognised and accepted as meeting some programme outcomes and requirements. It includes both theory and practice achievement.

8. **Student:** any individual enrolled onto an NMC-approved programme at pre-registration or post-registration level, whether full time or less than full time.
9. **V100**: the annotation to the NMC register which indicates that a registrant has successfully completed a prescribing course as part of a SCPHN or district nursing specialist practitioner qualification (SPQ) and can therefore prescribe from the limited community formulary.

10. **V150**: the annotation to the NMC register which indicates that a nurse or midwife (who is not a SCPHN or a district nurse) has completed an approved NMC prescribing programme that entitles them to prescribe from the limited community formulary.

11. **V300**: the annotation to the NMC register which indicates that the nurse or midwife has successfully completed an NMC approved prescribing programme that gives them full independent/supplementary prescriber status, allowing them to prescribe any drugs (except certain controlled drugs) appropriate to their scope of practice.

12. **Work placed partners**: organisations who provide the work placed learning and support necessary for meeting the RPS competencies in prescribing, thereby meeting the NMC standards of proficiency.
End notes

4. This course is no longer available but there will still be some active nurses and midwives on the register who will have this as a valid annotation to their entry on the register.
7. Requirements for learning and assessment for all nursing and midwifery programmes (Annexe to Education framework)