

Information for doctors considering mentoring a pharmacist to become a pharmacist prescriber

Thank you for considering supporting a pharmacist to become a prescriber. We believe your support would be a major contribution to the development of safe and effective pharmacist prescribers, an exciting development in health care delivery in New Zealand.

Who are Pharmacist Prescribers?

The Pharmacy Council of New Zealand has developed a new *Pharmacist Prescriber* scope of practice. This new scope allows suitably trained and qualified clinical pharmacists working in a collaborative health team environment to prescribe medicines to patients under their care for the purpose of optimising medicines related health outcomes (NB the Pharmacist Prescriber will not be the primary diagnostician).

Following a period of extensive consultation and a pilot programme funded by Health Workforce New Zealand, the Medicines (Designated Pharmacist Prescriber) Regulations 2013 were introduced in July 2013.

For further information on pharmacist prescribing see:

[Pharmacy Council of New Zealand's website – Pharmacist prescribers](#)

[Health Workforce New Zealand – Pharmacist prescriber role](#)

[Health Workforce New Zealand – Pharmacist prescriber case studies](#)

Training requirements to become a Pharmacist Prescriber

The two Pharmacy Schools at the Universities of Auckland and Otago have developed a joint Postgraduate Certificate in Pharmacist Prescribing programme. The aim of this programme is to build on the clinical capabilities gained in the Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Pharmacy and equip pharmacists with core knowledge and skills to enable them to prescribe safely and effectively within the context of a collaborative health care environment.

The programme runs from late February to October and consists of two courses, each worth 30 points (300 hours).

- The first course 'Principles of Prescribing' runs in Semester 1 and consists of distance learning, audioconferences and face-to-face workshops. Topics include legal and ethical aspects of prescribing, consultation skills, patient assessment skills, patient monitoring, clinical decision making, record keeping, prescribing safely and effectively.
- The second course 'Prescribing Practicum' runs in Semester 2 and involves learning through experience in prescribing in the student's workplace, under the supervision of a Designated Medical Practitioner, with ongoing extensive support from the University.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Medical Practitioner

Pharmacists undertaking the prescribing course require a registered medical prescriber, known as a *Designated Medical Practitioner* (DMP) to provide supervision, support and advice during the Practicum component of the course. Pharmacists are required to undertake 150 hours of supervised practice during the programme. Pharmacists will begin their supervised hours from April however the majority of supervision will occur between July to October.

The DMP is required to provide supervision, support and assessment in the following ways:

- Help the student prepare a learning plan to achieve the learning outcomes and associated competencies;
- Provide training and support to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes and associated competencies. In particular for skills that are more appropriately learned in practice, including communication skills; clinical knowledge and skills necessary for the assessment, clinical decision making, treatment and monitoring of patients in the area of practice they intend to prescribe. NB for pharmacist prescribers clinical decision making is in the context of a confirmed diagnosis and a collaborative health team environment.
- Monitor the progress of the student and confirm the completion of the equivalent of 150 hours of supervised practice (minimum of three review meetings);
- Assess the achievement of the learning outcomes and associated competencies by the student, including confirmation of their ability to use common diagnostic aids for the physical examination of patients in the area of practice for which the pharmacist intends to prescribe;
- Complete a professional declaration that confirms that in your opinion the student has met the skills and competence requirements of the Practicum.

Examples of activities pharmacists may undertake during the Practicum include:

Observing clinics run by medical, nursing and allied health staff, observing ward rounds, practice prescribing under supervision, develop skills in physical assessment with appropriate members of the health care team and practice the skills in a clinical setting.

How much time will be involved for the DMP?

Training a pharmacist prescriber will certainly take up some time and this will vary depending on the training needs of individual pharmacists. Please note, the student is expected to take a proactive student-led approach to their learning. The DMP is **not** required to spend the entire period of supervised hours with the pharmacist. A range of other health professionals can be involved in the training depending on the pharmacist's setting and area of practice.

Support from the University for the DMP and pharmacist

The University will provide extensive support to the DMP and pharmacist during the programme including clear and practical guidance on helping the pharmacist successfully to complete the period of learning in practice. The Programme Coordinator will be available to provide ongoing support and to discuss any issues that arise.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions at this stage about the DMP role or the prescribing course please do not hesitate to contact Adele Print, Programme Coordinator, Professional Teaching Fellow, University of Auckland/Professional Practice Fellow, University of Otago adele.print@otago.ac.nz or phone 0211402927.