



Frequently Asked Questions

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Programme

1. What is the Post-Registration Foundation programme?

The NES Post-Registration Foundation Programme for Newly Qualified Pharmacists in Scotland has been developed in collaboration with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and a wide range of stakeholders from across the UK and different sectors, including NHS Education for Scotland (NES). The RPS curriculum sets out the overarching expected outcomes of training programmes across the UK for the early post-registration period and supports the development of more standardised and structured work-based training models for all post-registration pharmacists working in patient-focussed roles, regardless of their sector of practice.

The overarching RPS curriculum has been designed to develop pharmacist independent prescribers who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviours to deliver safe and effective holistic person-centred pharmaceutical care to an increasingly complex patient population and are able to contribute to improving how patient care and services are delivered. It supports pharmacists in the early stages of their career to increase their confidence and competence, develop a systematic approach to practice, and become valued members of integrated healthcare teams. It is based on practice-based learning and effective supervision to optimise learning through regular feedback, reflection, and achievement of identified learning needs.

The NES Post-Registration Foundation programme has been designed to support completion of the RPS curriculum and includes some additional specific learning content to reflect the needs of the patients, workforce, and service delivery in NHS Scotland. Completing the NES Post-Registration Foundation programme allows pharmacists to achieve a UK-wide recognised professional credential whilst completing a training programme which reflects pharmacy practice in Scotland.

2. What are the benefits of the programme?

The programme aims to develop pharmacists to become proficient, confident, person-centred, safe, resilient and resourceful practitioners. By completing the training programme, learners will develop knowledge and skills which will allow them to develop their professional practice as a pharmacist in areas including the following:

- delivery of holistic person-centred pharmaceutical care
- management of increasingly complex people with multi-morbidities
- providing more enhanced clinical services
- prescribing within agreed scope of practice
- working in integrated multidisciplinary teams
- undertaking quality improvement projects to positively impact on patient care and service delivery
- developing and delivering education and training for the pharmacy and multidisciplinary teams
- participating in research activities





3. How long will it take to complete the programme?

It is anticipated that it will take approximately two to three years to complete the programme and be ready to submit for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society assessment to receive the credential. If a learner needs longer, this will be discussed at a monthly meeting or a 4 monthly Intermediate Progress Review with their Educational Supervisor and communicated to NES Pharmacy. Breaks in training due to unforeseen circumstances, for example ill health or maternity leave, will be accommodated. However, should a break of > 6 months be requested then this would be dealt with on a 1:1 basis.

4. Who is the programme for?

The programme is for newly qualified pharmacists who have just completed their Foundation Training Year (FTY) and are employed in a post working in community, hospital, or primary care sectors of practice. Unfortunately, staff who are not employed by a contractor are not currently eligible.

5. Do I need to be a Royal Pharmaceutical Society member to undertake the training?

No, learners do not need to be a member of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) to undertake the training. If they are a member of the RPS they will have access to additional UK resources. However, NES Pharmacy will provide specific resources for all learners registered to undertake their training in Scotland, on TURAS Learn.

6. How and when can I register for the programme?

Formal registration opens on 1st of August via the [NES Pharmacy website](#). Potential learners can register on this date so long as they are; on the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) register as a registered pharmacist, employed by an organisation, and have permission/ support from their line manager. Registration will close on the 31st of August to allow processing of registrations and to enable for a training start date of 1st of October. The next training start date will be 1st February for which there will be a separate registration period from the 1st of December to the 12th of January at 12 noon for newly qualified pharmacists who are unable to commence the programme in October. This second intake will commence the programme on the 1st of February.

7. What will the programme involve?

The programme will involve completing an evidence framework developed by NES and stakeholders from throughout Scotland, which has been aligned to the overarching Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) curriculum. Within the evidence framework there are five Domains;

- 1) Patient-Centred Care and Collaboration,
- 2) Professional Practice,
- 3) Leadership and Management,
- 4) Education and
- 5) Research

For each Domain, there is a specified set of capabilities and learning outcomes which are used to plan, conduct, and evaluate the learner's performance. Training is supported by resources to help development of underpinning knowledge to support the completion of the learning outcomes. These resources are in a variety of learning formats such as online courses, e-Learning modules and webinars.





8. What is the difference between Educational Supervisors and Practice Supervisors?

Educational Supervisors (ES) are experienced pharmacists who facilitate the learner's training and assess their development overall, throughout the duration of the training programme. The learner should meet with their ES monthly and record the meetings within their portfolio.

The role of the ES is to:

- meet with the learner monthly,
- help the learner to identify their development needs and create learning objectives as required,
- ensure that the learner receives structured training,
- ensure that the evidence developed against curriculum outcomes meets, in the ES's view, the appropriate standard,
- provide written feedback for evidence,
- assist the learner to organise specific learning opportunities to achieve identified learning needs,
- undertake formal review of the learner's progress every four months of the training programme,
- identify and support learners who require additional support.

Educational Supervisors are required to register with NES as part of the training programme. They are also required to be qualified for a minimum of two years and will be expected to have undertaken training relating to the programme and supervised learning events.

Practice Supervisors (PS) are experienced pharmacists or pharmacy technicians or any other member of the health care team, for example, doctor, GP or advanced nurse practitioner. They work closely with learners and may observe practice on a more regular basis than the Educational Supervisor. They will undertake supervised learning events (SLEs) as part of the ongoing assessment of learners' training.

They may work within a specific area of practice and are therefore responsible for the training of the learners when they are within this area. For example, this can be a specialist aseptic, clinical or Medicines Information pharmacist. A learner may have several Practice Supervisors throughout their training, but this will very much depend on where they work.

Alternatively, they may be an experienced pharmacist who works with the learner on an occasional basis due to workplace demands. For example, within a Community Pharmacy which the learner occasionally provides additional pharmacist cover or within a busy hospital ward during periods of high workload.

The PS will help identify the learner's further development needs by undertaking SLEs. PSs are not currently registered with NES and are not required to attend compulsory training sessions.





9. How to enlist the help of an Educational Supervisor?

If a pharmacist is interested in undertaking this programme, we require them to discuss with their line manager or employer in the first instance. A potential learner should have an identified Educational Supervisor before registering for the programme. Learners will also need a Designated Prescribing Practitioner within ~ 12 months of starting training, to enable them to be eligible for an Independent Prescribing course. An Educational Supervisor and Designated Prescribing Practitioner can be the same individual.

10. What support is available as part of the programme?

- Apart from the Educational Supervisor, there will be Practice Supervisors who will work alongside the learners. They may change depending on the stage of training or they may remain the same throughout. Their role is to support learners each day in practice.
- When undertaking the Independent Prescribing (IP) course, learners will be supervised by a Designated Prescribing Practitioner who will ensure the learning outcomes relating to the IP course are ready for submission for assessment by the university.
- Senior Educators from NES Pharmacy are responsible for groups of learners and will provide regular online sessions to help them locally.
- There may be an Educational Lead within the organisation who will also support learners.
- People, known as collaborators, will undertake supervised learning events (SLEs) as a form of regular assessment during training. For further information on SLEs see the section later in this document.

11. What evidence can learners, who have completed the Foundation Training Year, transfer to the programme?

Evidence for this programme is at a more advanced level than the Foundation Training Year (FTY) and therefore new evidence should be developed to meet the requirements of the curriculum.

12. Is there a timetable of what needs to be covered and when?

A programme of learning will be available to learners, once registered for the programme, on TURAS Learn.

13. What happens if the Educational Supervisor or sector of practice changes during training?

The Post-Registration Foundation programme is designed to be flexible across all sectors of pharmacy practice. If the learner changes role, requires a change in Educational Supervisor or changes their sector of practice, then training to that point can be transferred. The learner should contact their NES Senior Educator to discuss any changes in employment and training. **The learner must inform NES, as soon as possible**, of any changes and complete a “change in training details” form, which is available on TURAS Learn.





Independent Prescribing

1. What does it mean that the programme now includes Independent Prescribing as a qualification?

After 12 months of training (so in Year 2), if learners have completed the Preparing to Prescribe outcomes, have completed a 12-month Intermediate Progress Review and are signed off as ready to start an Independent Prescribing (IP) course, plus have submitted the IP declaration form to NES, will be allocated to attend an IP course. The course will be undertaken at either Robert Gordon University or The University of Strathclyde. Due to the funding model, whilst we do try and accommodate requests from employers for a specific university, we need learners to apply for the university as allocated. Both Universities have been commissioned to deliver the IP course and full use of the places commissioned needs to be made. On receipt of the Practice Certificate for Independent Prescribing and when the learner has completed the non-independent prescribing outcomes of the programme (Domains 3, 4 and 5), learners need to inform NES of their intention to submit for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) assessment and consideration of awarding of the credential. NES pays the assessment fee and we need to ensure that learners are supported to submit for assessment.

If successful, the learner will be awarded the RPS Post-Registration Foundation Pharmacist credential which is recognised across the UK. Completion of the NES Evidence Framework and the IP course are both required to be eligible to receive the credential.

2. I do not wish to undertake Independent Prescribing course as part of the Post-Registration Foundation programme, is this possible?

The new programme supports the Chief Pharmaceutical Officers (UK) vision for all patient focussed pharmacists to be independent prescribers and deliver enhanced patient care. Completing an Independent Prescribing (IP) course is therefore included as a core part of the programme. If a learner has concerns these should be raised with their employer and NES, but this will ultimately lead to the learner leaving the programme as NES are unable to award an outcome and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society can only award the credential if all Domains are completed. To complete Domains 1 and 2 you need to have completed an IP course.

3. Where can I get more information on the Independent Prescribing courses which is part of the programme?

Information related to the Independent Prescribing (IP) course, which will be delivered after registration and approximately twelve months of training, is available on [TURAS Learn](#). For an estimated timeline learners can access individual university websites. For specific questions about an individual IP course please contact the university. For this programme, as detailed above, learners need to be eligible and have completed specific parts of the programme prior to being allocated to an IP course. The application process opens for each university once the learner names have been allocated. The university then contacts the learners and invites them to apply. We have specific guidance for to help learners complete the application form as effectively as possible. The info is on the programme [TURAS Learn](#) pages.





Information on independent prescribing course



Further information relating to registration and delivery of independent prescribing courses for Foundation pharmacists will be added to this section as and when it becomes available.

September 2021 and February 2022 cohorts

Information about course dates and applications for courses in 2023 can be found [in this section](#).

Guidance on how to apply to an independent prescribing course

Once you have received confirmation of funding and allocation to a specific course, the assigned university will contact you to apply via their application process. To support you with the application we have produced guidance documents for both Scottish universities.

- [Post-Registration Foundation Programme for Newly Qualified Pharmacists in Scotland: guidance for applying to Robert Gordon University for an independent prescribing course](#) ( Download, 176 KB)
- [Post-Registration Foundation Programme for Newly Qualified Pharmacists in Scotland: guidance for applying to the University of Strathclyde for an independent prescribing course](#) ( Download, 165 KB)

Further information on Independent Prescribing courses available via NES can be found [here](#).





Supervised Learning Events

1. What is a supervised learning event?

A supervised learning event is an interaction between a learner and a supervisor or collaborator which leads to immediate feedback and reflective learning. They are designed to help learners develop and improve their clinical and professional practice and to identify areas for further learning and development.

2. What is the purpose of a supervised learning event?

Supervised learning events aim to:

- drive learning to develop capabilities which supports safe and effective patient care
- look at the learner's performance in their day-to-day practise and through the provision of immediate feedback, enable them to understand their own performance and reflect on areas for further development
- highlight the learner's strengths, achievements, and good practice
- demonstrate engagement of learners in the educational process
- identify learners who may need additional support.

Participation in this learning process, along with reflecting on the feedback received, is an important way for learners to evaluate how they are progressing towards the outcomes in the NES programme.

3. Is a supervised learning event an assessment?

No, supervised learning events (SLEs) are not assessments, they are learning events designed to support development through the provision of feedback. However, the Educational Supervisor will draw on the feedback gathered from SLEs during the monthly review meetings and the Intermediate Progress Reviews to check the learner is making satisfactory progress. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society Post-Registration Foundation Competency Committee will also review the information in SLEs as part of the final summative assessment.

4. Can a supervised learning event be failed?

Individual supervised learning events are not pass/fail assessments, they are used collectively to inform the final summative assessment by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Post-Registration Foundation Competency Committee.





5. What supervised learning events are included in the programme?

The following supervised learning event tools are recommended in the Evidence Framework for the training programme:

SLE tool	Description
Acute Care Assessment Tool (ACAT)	Evaluates the individual's clinical assessment and management, decision making, team working, time management, record keeping, prioritisation and handover over a continuous period across multiple patients . Can be used in all sectors.
Case based Discussion (CbD)	Retrospectively evaluates the individual's input into patient care. A structured discussion is undertaken remotely from the patient and is used to explore clinical reasoning, decision making and application of clinical knowledge in practice.
Case Presentation (CP)	Evaluates the individual's ability to orally present a case to colleagues.
Direct Observation of Non-Clinical Skills (DONCS)	Evaluates the individual's non-clinical skills.
Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS)	Evaluates the individual's ability to undertake a practical procedure.
Journal Club Presentation (JCP)	Evaluates the individual's ability to present at a Journal Club.
Leadership assessment skills (LEADER)	Evaluates the individual's leadership and teamworking capabilities.
mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercise (mini-CEX)	Evaluates a global clinical encounter with a patient and assesses the synthesis of essential for clinical care such as history taking, communication, examination and clinical reasoning.
Multi-source Feedback (MSF)	Evaluates the individual's performance using feedback from colleagues.
Patient Survey (PS)	Evaluates the individual's communication and consultation skills from the patient's perspective.
Patient Survey Reflection (PSR)	Allows the individual to reflect on the feedback from patient(s).
Quality Improvement Project Assessment Tool (QIPAT)	Evaluates the individual's ability to undertake a quality improvement project.
Reflective Account (RA)	Flexible tool for individuals to document reflection and learning from a wide range of settings.
Teaching Observation (TO)	Evaluates the individual's ability to deliver an effective learning experience to others.





6. How to access the supervised learning event forms?

The forms can either be accessed directly from the e-Portfolio and sent electronically to the supervisor or collaborator, or a Word version can be downloaded from [TURAS Learn](#).

7. Do you need to plan supervised learning events?

Supervised learning events (SLEs) can be planned or spontaneous, depending on the situation and availability of a collaborator. Learners are expected to demonstrate improvement and progression during each training period, and this will be helped by undertaking frequent SLEs. Therefore, learners should ensure that SLEs are evenly spread throughout their training.

8. What topics should a supervised learning event cover?

As the aim of supervised learning events (SLEs) is for the learner to learn and develop, ideal topics should be those which the pharmacist finds challenging, or they wish to improve upon. The SLEs will also need to cover the Domains and outcomes in the Evidence Framework; please see information within TURAS Learn for some suggested examples.

9. Who organises the supervised learning event?

It is the learner's responsibility to approach their supervisors/collaborators to arrange the frequency, an appropriate range of supervised learning events (SLEs) and to ensure that completed SLEs are recorded within the e-Portfolio.

10. Who should contribute to the supervised learning events?

Learners should undertake supervised learning events with a variety of collaborators. For example, their Educational Supervisor, other pharmacists (who are more experienced than the learner), medical staff, experienced nurses, or allied health professionals. This allows an accurate and robust picture of practice to be formed around performance. Collaborators should not be a peer, or anyone at the same or lower level of training.

11. What sort of feedback should be expected?

Feedback should be recorded immediately and include comments on the learner's strengths and areas for development. There should also be specific actions for the learner to undertake to address the identified learning needs.

Remember that all pharmacists have scope for development and are expected to actively engage in life-long learning and refine their skills throughout their careers. It is important that learners understand they can improve their performance.

12. Can supervised learning events be undertaken remotely?

Yes, supervised learning events (SLEs) do not necessarily need to take place in person and may be undertaken remotely using the telephone and digital technologies. Please refer to and follow your local information governance procedures. Good practice guidance for undertaking remote SLEs is available on [TURAS Learn](#).





13. How can pharmacists, supervisors and collaborators learn to use the supervised learning event tools?

Learners and Educational Supervisors can learn more about using the supervised learning events tools by visiting [TURAS Learn](#). Information will be included as part of the induction training and there are additional workshops available on supervised learning events for all NES training programmes.

14. Can you use simulated patients to complete some Direct Observation of Practical Skills?

Yes, you can perform some Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS), but not all, on colleagues.

15. Do I need to complete Direct Observation of Practical Skills before I start an Independent Prescribing course?

In 2022 it was decided that learners should practice Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS) to gain confidence but they do not need to complete 3 x DOPs before they join an independent prescribing course. We would encourage learners to practice clinical skills and collect DOPs in the first 12 months of training.

16. Can the Direct Observation of Practical Skills tool used during the Independent Prescribing course be used as part of my portfolio?

Yes, you can use the Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS) tool from the university but please ask your NES Senior Educator for guidance. Learners may need to follow a slightly different process to ensure they can be viewed by assessors, and therefore able to be included as part of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society assessment.





Portfolio and evidence

1. What types of evidence will I need to collect and where is it stored?

Learners are expected to collect evidence throughout their training. This will be mainly in the form of supervised learning events (SLEs) which have been undertaken with a supervisor or collaborator. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) e-Portfolio includes the various SLE forms which may be used to provide evidence for the outcomes. These can be sent electronically to your supervisor / collaborator or downloaded as a Word version.

Other types of evidence may also be collected for specific outcomes, and these are detailed in the NES Evidence Framework for the training programme. Templates to use for non-SLE pieces of evidence are available on [TURAS Learn](#).

Learners can also include other types of evidence to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes such as a conference poster, anonymised feedback from patients and anonymised documents evidencing active involvement in tasks. It is the learner's responsibility to make sure there is no patient identifiable information in their portfolio. For Audit and Significant Event Analysis (SEA) we recommend developing a Reflective Account for upload as this will minimise the risk of any patient identifiable information being in the learner's RPS e-Portfolio. Should a learner decide to upload their Audit or SEA with the original feedback from their reviewer, then NES will assume no responsibility should there be patient identifiable information in the learner's RPS e-Portfolio.

The learner's evidence will be stored in the RPS e-Portfolio. This online portfolio will be assessed by the RPS when the learner submits for assessment.

2. What makes good quality evidence?

There are 3 key things that make good quality evidence. Quality content, a range of collaborators and a range of supervised learning event (SLE) tools used. Good quality evidence is not simply the amount of evidence but the content within the evidence. Low stakes outcomes need less evidence compared to higher stakes outcomes. Evidence does not need to meet all the descriptors for an outcome but should cover all parts of the outcome statement. There needs to be a range of evidence. For example, use a variety of SLE tools as opposed to a single SLE tool.

There needs to be a range of collaborators for the SLEs, so use different people, such as nurses, GPs and pharmacy technicians. Ensure there is reflection using a Reflective Account highlighting any development required within some of the pieces of evidence for each outcome.





Monitoring of progress

1. How often should a review of progress be completed?

- Learners should meet monthly with their Educational Supervisor for an informal meeting.
- Every 4 months there should be a more formal review of progress, an Intermediate Progress Review (IPR). The learner and their Educational Supervisor, review the learner's performance, progress, and eligibility to continue with the programme is agreed. After twelve months in training, the 12-month IPR informs the decision to commence formal independent prescribing training.

2. How should learners prepare for an Intermediate Progress Review?

In preparation for the Intermediate Progress Reviews (IPR) the learner should arrange a suitable time for the meeting in advance of the specified deadlines. We suggest a date early in the window, as quite often the review needs to be re-arranged due to work commitments or leave.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has produced a [flow diagram](#) of the IPR process within the RPS e-Portfolio.

The learner should complete the relevant sections of the Intermediate Progress Review form before the meeting. The learner must complete the Preparing to Prescribe outcomes, have a successful IPR and support from their Educational Supervisor and NES, before you can apply for the Independent Prescribing course.





Assessment

1. What types of assessment are there and when do they happen? Is there a fee?

There are many small points throughout the programme where progress is measured. Initially supervised learning events (SLEs) are a form of assessment by collaborators, there are monthly meetings with Educational Supervisors and more formal Intermediate Progress Reviews every 4 months. Learners will be expected to schedule and complete all of these regularly throughout their training.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) assess Domains 3, 4 and 5 plus the Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS) associated with the 18 clinical skills that you need to complete. The DOPS need to be at the Expected Level.

The Independent Prescribing (IP) course will be assessed by the university and covers Domains 1 and 2. The university outcome needs ratified by the university and this may take a few weeks.

On receipt of the IP certificate and once learners have completed Domains 3, 4 and 5, they will indicate to NES they intend to submit their portfolio for assessment to receive the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) credential. NES will pay the fee and may inform RPS of the names submitting for the credential.

It is anticipated that there will be set windows for the RPS assessment process. Learners will be informed of the exact process nearer the time.

Learner's e-Portfolios will be assessed by a Post-Registration Foundation Competency Committee which comprises of several practitioners, from the different countries (England, Scotland, and Wales) who have been trained and calibrated to assess portfolios. There is no need for learners to attend this assessment. The outcome should be known a few weeks after the Committee have met.

If successful, learners will receive the RPS credential. If they are unsuccessful, they will be invited to resubmit later. There is a fee to submit to RPS, but this will be paid for as part of the agreement with NES Pharmacy and the RPS at the next diet of assessments.

There will be appeals process in case learners feel the process hasn't been followed. Learners are unable to appeal if they are just unhappy with the outcome, there needs to have been something happen as part of the assessment process. Should a further fee be required, if unsuccessful, this may need to be paid by your Health Board.

2. Where can learners and Educational Supervisors get more information about the assessment process?

Further information on the assessment process will become available from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) website and will also be available from your NES Senior Educator. Additional information will be published on TURAS Learn as and when this becomes available prior to the first assessments in 2024.





3. What will this new assessment strategy mean for assessors/NES/learners who are on the Pre-September 2021 programme?

The change in assessment strategy for the Post-September 2021, programme will not affect those in the Pre-September 2021 programme. The NES assessments supporting the Pre-September 2021 programme will continue to be delivered until at least Summer 2024. With this, current assessors and NES staff will still be required to fulfil their current roles to support the learners to complete training.

If you have any questions that are not covered within this document, please contact the Post-Registration Foundation programme team via the email address nes.pharmacistfp@nhs.scot

