

# Faculty of Health Sciences' Guidelines for physiotherapy students on the management of medicines

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## **Scope and Purpose**

This Guideline summarises the Faculty of Health Science's advice regarding medicines management at the time of writing (December 2014) and takes account of legal and professional guidance available at that time.

All student nurses, student midwives and Allied Healthcare Professionals (AHP) occupational therapy students, physiotherapy students and podiatry students must observe and/or participate in the administration of medicines during their programme of education.

The student and the mentor should discuss these guidelines and local medicine administration policies at the beginning of each practice placement experience.

Students' are accountable to society, their employer, the professional regulatory body and ultimately to individuals.

Professional Regulatory Body Standards must be adhered to at all times. Professional Standards ALWAYS takes precedence over these guidelines.

In practice placements the Employer is the organisation hosting the placement and with whom the Student has an honorary contract. The Student's roles and responsibilities are determined in Local Policy published by the Employer; local policies ALWAYS take precedence over these guidelines.

Local Policy should not contravene Professional Regulatory Standards and comply with legal frameworks such as the Medicines Act (1968) and Mental Capacity Act (2005).

## **Statement of Intent**

The Faculty of Health Sciences confirms its commitment to partnership working with placement providers. The aim of the Guideline is to ensure that Professional regulations are upheld and that adverse events are avoided during learning experiences; the guideline does not supersede or replace Local Trust Policies.

## **Stakeholder Involvement**

Practice Partners will be invited to contribute and comment on all versions of this Guidance. The Guidance has been developed by a multi-disciplinary group, which includes professionals involved in day-to-day delivery of health-care.

## **Guidance about supervision**

Students must never administer or supply medicinal products without direct supervision.

Direct supervision is defined as follows:

The student is in direct visual contact of their mentor, practice teacher or supervisor, who must be attentive and cognisant of the activities the student is undertaking and working close enough with them for these to be directly monitored (NMC 2010, NMC 2011a, NMC 2011b). This is in accordance with HPC, MHRA and Faculty standards about medicines management.

Students must NEVER administer or supply medicinal products without DIRECT supervision, although as they progress through their training, their supervision may become increasingly indirect to reflect their competence level (NMC 2010).

After administration or supply the mentor may then delegate the student to assist the patient in the ingestion or application of the medicinal product.

Registered practitioners and students must be aware that whenever a student is involved in medicines management, the registered practitioner maintains the responsibility and accountability for all related activity including: the ordering, receipt, storage, preparation, administration, monitoring and disposal of medicines and the maintenance of all associated documentation.

**Responsibility of the student:** Develop an increasing level of proficiency in all aspects of medicine administration.

Students will identify the limitations of their scope of practice and act in accordance with local policy of the Employer, Standards of the HPC and the MHRA, and legal frameworks.

The legislation currently permits Physiotherapists on the HCPC register to administer or supply medicines under a patient group or patient specific direction.

Under the direct supervision of a registered physiotherapist physiotherapy students should be involved in the administration of medicines under a patient group or patient specific direction.

NICE have recently published some new good practice guidance on patient group directions.

Under the direct supervision of the registered practitioner, the student will follow the 6 rights of administration (right person, right drug, right dose, right route, right time, and right documentation) and demonstrate this to mentors by:

1. Recognising limitations to their practice
2. Identifying the correct service user / patient group
3. Selecting the prescribed medicine
4. Calculating the required dosage
5. Identifying the correct timing of the prescribed medicine
6. Preparing and administering medicine
7. Recording the administration appropriately
8. Challenging incorrect/ambiguous documentation

The student will demonstrate medicines management competence in the development of the 5 rights of their own knowledge base (action, side effects, and contraindications, patient education and a person's right to refuse) and will demonstrate this to mentors by:

1. Identifying the reason for prescribing, supplying and administering the medicine
2. Understanding the action of the medicine
3. Having an awareness of possible adverse effects & contraindications & identifying those who should not be treated under a direction.
4. The ability to recognise adverse effects & contraindications
5. Discussing medication appropriately with patient and families
6. Identifying when to refer to another professional group

**Responsibility of the Mentor:** to assist a student in and assess the development of an increasing level of proficiency in all aspects of medicine administration

Medicines can be administered by a physiotherapist with the instructions of an independent prescriber or via local arrangements.

Instructions of an independent prescriber to a physiotherapist maybe in the form of a patient specific direction or a patient group direction (PGD) which is a written instruction for the supply or administration of medicines to certain groups of patients.

Physiotherapists should assess the student's proficiency in medicines management under patient group directions and (where possible) the administering of medicines. The student's level of proficiency must be recorded in their assessment document.

Medicines management is more than administration of medicines. Students should be assessed on their ability to assess the effect of medicines and their ability to discuss medication with those taking or administering it.

The student should increase their level of proficiency in all aspects of medicine administration, including the signing of the prescription sheets where applicable, but always under the direct supervision of the qualified practitioner. The registered practitioner must countersign the prescription sheet.

### **Guidelines for specific situations**

Post-registration programmes allow physiotherapy registrants to qualify as a supplementary or independent prescriber. Pre-registration student programmes do not include this and students must not participate in the practice of supplementary or independent prescribing except in the supply or administration of medicines under direct supervision and in accordance with a patient group or patient specific direction.

Oxygen: Oxygen must be prescribed and students may be involved in the administration of oxygen in accordance with local trust policy.

Keys: Under no circumstances are students permitted to be responsible for the practice placement's medicine keys.

Cytotoxic medicine administration: student physiotherapist should not administer oral chemotherapy medication.

### **Other policies to be read in conjunction with these guidelines**

- Medical devices (related to infusion devices)
- Vena-section
- Central venous line monitoring
- Blood transfusions
- Complementary medicines/therapies

### **References**

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