NHSE & PhSC proposed list of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)

Background

In January 2021, the GPhC published the revised Standards for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists.

To support the development of a continuum of education between the MPharm and the foundation training year, NHSE have been working with the Pharmacy Schools Council to explore how training activities can be developed in clinical placements during the MPharm.

This follows the announcement that pharmacy students would be eligible for the DHSC clinical tariff from 2022/23 onwards.

A stakeholder group was convened to look at how undergraduate pharmacy students can move from observing tasks, to being entrusted to carry them out with the appropriate level of supervision. This will support students to gain practice-based skills effectively during the MPharm, preparing them for their training year.

In support of this group's work, the University of Bath were commissioned, following a competitive process, to develop a list of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for pharmacy undergraduate students. They were also asked to conduct additional research to identify barriers and enablers to the implementation of the EPAs in practice and undertake some pilot testing.

What are EPAs?

EPAs are units of clearly defined professional activity which a learner is entrusted to complete in practice with the appropriate amount of supervision once adequate competencies are demonstrated.

EPAs should be observable, measurable, executed within a designated time frame and suitable for entrustment decisions by qualified personnel.

The developed list of EPAs is presented below with some initial FAQs. Further implementation guidance will be published later in 2023 and the FAQs will be updated.

List of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs)

Title of EPA	
Communication skills	
1	Use appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication skills to gather relevant information from healthcare professionals
2	Use appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication skills to gather relevant information from patients/carers
3	Use appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication skills to give relevant information to healthcare professionals
4	Use appropriate non-verbal and verbal communication skills to give relevant information to patients /carers

Analyse information to determine the effects of medication therapy, identify medication-related issues and prioritise health-related needs	
5	Construct an accurate, comprehensive medication history using a range of appropriate sources of information
6	Construct an accurate, comprehensive medical history using a range of appropriate sources of information
7	Construct an accurate, comprehensive social history using a range of appropriate sources of information
8	Discuss with patient and/or carer ideas, concerns and expectations about the management of their condition
9	Undertake a clinical assessment
10	Interpret findings from a clinical assessment and communicate these to the patient
11	Review relevant patient diagnostic tests, results and information to demonstrate the ability to review the appropriateness of medications
12	Use histories, discussion and test results (as appropriate) to identify, list and prioritise medication-related problems and health-related needs in partnership with patient/carer
13	Agree and document actions and interventions required to meet a prioritised need
14	Perform a comprehensive and accurate medicines reconciliation using a range of appropriate sources of information
15	Advise a patient on an issue associated with the use of a medicine
16	Take and resolve a medication related query using appropriate resources
17	Perform a screening assessment to identify patients at risk of prevalent diseases in a population
18	Assess likelihood that a reported sign or symptom is an adverse drug reaction and take the appropriate action
19	Investigate the root cause of a medication error and suggest appropriate action
20	Follow a structured process to supply a medicine without a prescription

Care Planning	
21	Make use of care planning to implement an existing care plan
22	Make use of care planning to establish patient-centred goals and create a care plan for a patient, which is evidence-based and cost-effective
23	Make use of care planning to follow-up and monitor a care plan, in collaboration with the patient, caregivers and other health professionals

Supply and Administration of medicines	
24	Receive a prescription form for dispensing from an electronic system and/or directly from a patient / carer
25	Legally check a prescription form (containing one or more items)
26	Clinically check a prescription form (containing one or more items)
27	Dispense a prescription item
28	Accuracy check prescription items that have been dispensed by a member of staff in the pharmacy
29	Make legal and appropriate records following the supply of medicines and devices to patients/carers and/or other healthcare professionals
30	Give out dispensed medicines to a patient or carer with appropriate checks and advice
31	Determine whether a patient is eligible for and has received appropriate immunisations
32	Safely administer immunisations to a patient and make accurate records
33	Follow a process for ordering, storage, disposal, resupply of medicines and / or devices
34	Assess suitability of patients own medicines for use upon transfer of care

Optimising use of medication	
35	Educate patients and /or professional colleagues regarding the appropriate use of medications
36	Lead a discussion using a current clinical guideline and/or research publication, which includes application to patient care
37	Participate in a public health campaign to promote awareness of an important health issue
38	Evaluate the clinical and cost effectiveness of medications
39	Choose an appropriate evidence source and use this to review a patient's management and resolve any problems.
40	Undertake an audit, report the findings and make recommendations.

Working as a team	
41	Collaborate as a member of a multi-professional team
42	Collaborate as a member of a pharmacy team
43	Take appropriate action to keep yourself and others safe at work
44	Give feedback to a team member to develop others and improve patient care

Personal Development	
45	Create a learning action plan and/or CPD record
46	Reflect on experience to identify areas for further development and collect evidence on your performance to show the development of professional attributes
47	Discuss practice with a peer to identify areas for improvement

Note: When completing these EPAs students should follow any local protocols, guidance or standard operating procedures that may be in place.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will all Schools of Pharmacy be adopting the EPAs?

The proposed list of EPAs provides a helpful framework around which placement activities can be structured. There is no requirement for all schools of pharmacy to adopt or utilise EPAs within their placement provision. Schools of pharmacy will be working closely with their placement providers to develop placement models that work for them.

How were the list of EPAs developed?

The list was initially developed and refined based on the available literature in both the UK and internationally. A Delphi study was carried out to achieve consensus on a list of activities that could be carried out by pharmacy students on placements.

Are students expected to carry out all of the EPAs on the list?

No. The list of EPAs presented, represents activities that pharmacy students may be able to undertake on placement. Which EPAs are implemented as part of placement provision will be determined by individual Schools of Pharmacy in liaison with their placement providers.

Is additional guidance available in relation to how to implement the EPAs?

Further guidance in the form of a toolkit will be published later in the summer of 2023. Schools of Pharmacy and placements providers are strongly encouraged to continue to work collaboratively on the development and implementation of their placement plans.