

Recommended Core Modules for Qualified Nurses

Background

Nursing SCRIPT is an eLearning programme that supports the safer management of medicines.

The regulations governing the prescribing, administration and supply of medicines are subject to regular review. Clinical practice is continually changing due to the emergence of new evidence, advances in therapeutic complexity and increased governance. It is important that practitioners involved in medicines administration are confident and competent within their specialism. The West Midlands Academic Health Science Network (WM-AHSN) commissioned Nursing SCRIPT in order to maintain and develop medicine-related professional knowledge and competence of nurses. Developed in close collaboration with Health Education England, and based on the established SCRIPT programme for junior doctors, Nursing SCRIPT is available to qualified nurses in the West Midlands.

This document provides guidance on recommended 'core modules' to support practitioners in keeping up-to-date with changes in practice. These modules will also be relevant to those changing their scope of practice, or those undertaking remediation after a career break.

The Programme

The eLearning programme comprises 18 modules across three categories:

Principles of Medicines Management	Managing the Risks	Therapeutic Groups
Dose Calculations*	Adverse Drug Reactions*	Advanced Pain Management
Evidence-Based Practice*	Drug Interactions*	Anticoagulation (1)
Formulation and Administration*	Medication Errors*	Anticoagulation (2)
Medicines Management in Care Homes	Sepsis	Introduction to Pain Management
UK Medicines Policy*	Special Patient Groups*	Pharmacological Pain Management
Utilising the BNF(C)*		Respiratory
		Treatment of Infection*

Table 1: Modules available in the Nursing SCRIPT programme

The module titles and content for Nursing SCRIPT were determined following a scoping exercise. Modules have been designed to cover the basic principles of medicines management (e.g. Formulation and Administration, UK Medicines Policy) and important therapeutic areas (e.g. Anticoagulation, Treatment of Infection).

The module content supports the World Health Organization's recent Global Patient Safety Challenge 'Medication Without Harm', which aims to reduce severe avoidable medication-related harm by 50% globally in the next five years. All modules have been authored by specialist healthcare professionals and have been externally peer-reviewed to ensure accuracy and relevance to practice.

Core Modules

Core modules (highlighted with an * in Table 1) cover principles applicable to any sector of nursing practice. The rationale for these modules being identified as core is detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

Module Title	Rationale
Dose Calculations	All healthcare professionals that prescribe, dispense, supply or administer medicines will need to perform calculations. Nurses are frequently required to perform calculations in their day-to-day practice, particularly when administering medicines.
Evidence-Based Practice	Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) allows healthcare professionals to use current best evidence to improve care processes and patient safety. The principles of EBP help healthcare professionals keep up-to-date with current evidence and practice guidelines to meet Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements.
Formulation and Administration	Over 50% of medication-related patient safety incidents reported to the National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS) between 2005 and 2010 were the result of an administration error.
UK Medicines Policy	In 2013, the NHS in England spent in excess of £15 billion on medicines. UK policies and procedures relating to the management of medicines are fundamental to patient safety.
Utilising the BNF(C)	The British National Formulary (BNF) and BNF for children (BNF(C)) are the primary resource on the use of medicines in the UK. It is essential that nurses know how to utilise this resource accurately and effectively.
Adverse Drug Reactions	Adverse Drug Reactions (ADR) cost the NHS an estimated £600 million every year. It is estimated that 3.6 % of hospital admissions are as a result of an ADR. It is essential that nurses are aware of the risks associated with medicines and how to optimise treatment for patient benefit.
Drug Interactions	Approximately 36% of patients over the age of 75 take four or more medicines. Patients on multiple medicines have an increased risk of a drug interaction occurring. It is important that nurses can recognise potential drug-drug and drug-food interactions, and which patient groups may be more at risk of these interactions (e.g. young children, older adults).
Medication Errors	Medication errors account for 10%–20% of all adverse events in the NHS. Whilst the majority of medicines are prescribed and administered appropriately, safely and effectively, when errors do occur, they can cause substantial harm to the patient.
Special Patient Groups	At least one of the special patient groups (e.g. kidney and liver dysfunction, older adults, and pregnancy and breastfeeding) will be encountered regardless of a nurses sector of practice. Nurses require knowledge to appreciate how medicine regimens are adapted for these groups.
Treatment of Infection	Education around appropriate prescribing and administration of antibiotics is a crucial part of antimicrobial stewardship (AMS).

Table 2: Core Modules in Nursing SCRIPT programme

A broad understanding of practice in the different sectors of healthcare can increase knowledge and contribute to improving the safe and seamless transition of care. All modules contain activities and case vignettes, which have been designed to cover clinical practice in a range of nursing specialities. While these activities cannot address every sector of practice, a wide range of therapeutics and general principles are discussed which can be applied to a broad range of nursing fields.