

SOP

Prescription Writing

Department of Pharmacology

Faculty of Medicine

UWUSL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) ON PRESCRIPTION WRITING

Title

Prescription Writing for Undergraduate Pharmacology Teaching

Issued by

Department of Pharmacology
Faculty of Medicine, Uva Wellassa University

(1) PURPOSE

To establish a standardized procedure for accurate, safe, legal, and effective prescription writing for undergraduate pharmacology teaching and clinical practice.

(2) SCOPE

Applicable to:

- Lecturers
- Medical students
- Temporary demonstrators of Pharmacology
- Healthcare professionals involved in prescribing and dispensing medicines

(3) RESPONSIBILITIES

(3.1) Lecturer

- Teach principles of rational prescription writing
- Supervise prescription writing exercises
- Ensure adherence to prescribing guidelines and legal requirements

(3.2) Medical Students / Healthcare Personnel

- Write clear, accurate, and legible prescriptions
- Use generic names whenever possible
- Ensure patient safety during prescribing
- Monitor for drug interactions and adverse effects

(3.3) Prescriber

- Ensure prescriptions comply with national laws and Sri Lanka Medical Council regulations
- Verify patient identity and clinical details before prescribing
- Prescribe using generic names unless clinically justified otherwise
- Check for contraindications, allergies, and potential drug interactions
- Clearly state dose, route, frequency, and duration
- Avoid ambiguous abbreviations and ensure legibility
- Provide adequate patient education on drug use, side effects, and adherence
- Maintain confidentiality and proper documentation
- Take responsibility for monitoring treatment outcomes and adverse effects

(4) DEFINITIONS

- Prescription: A written set of instructions given to a pharmacist or healthcare personnel to dispense/administer medicines to a patient.
- Generic name: International Non-proprietary Name (INN) accepted worldwide for a drug.
- Brand name: Trade name given by the manufacturer for a drug product.
- Dose: The quantity of medicine prescribed at one time or over a specified period.
- Route of administration: The method by which a drug is administered (oral, intravenous, intramuscular, etc.).
- Frequency: How often a medicine should be administered.

(5) LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS OF PRESCRIPTION WRITING

- A prescription is a legal document
- Prescriptions should be precise, accurate, clear, and legible
- Generic prescribing is mandatory in Sri Lanka
- Only authorized professionals registered with the Sri Lanka Medical Council can prescribe medicines

Authorized prescribers include:

- Medical doctors
- Dental surgeons
- Veterinary surgeons
- Apothecaries
- Homeopathy and Ayurvedic physicians
- Optometrists (spectacles and contact lenses)

(6) COMPONENTS OF A PRESCRIPTION

(6.1) Date

- Indicates the date of issue
- Important for repeated prescriptions and medico-legal purposes

(6.2) Patient Information

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Address
- In ward settings: BHT number and ward number

(6.3) Prescription Symbol

- “Rx” originates from the Latin word “Recipe” meaning “Take”

(6.4) Drug Information

Name of the Drug

- Use generic names whenever possible
- Ensure correct spelling
- Selection should be based on efficacy, safety, quality, and cost

Dose

- Avoid unnecessary decimal points
- Use:
 - g for 1 gram or more
 - mg for less than 1 gram
 - microgram for less than 1 mg
 - Write 0.5 instead of .5

Route of Administration

Examples include:

- Oral
- Sublingual
- Intravenous (IV)
- Intramuscular (IM)
- Subcutaneous (SC)
- Intradermal (ID)
- Topical
- Suppository
- Enema
- Inhalational

Frequency

- Use accepted abbreviations when appropriate
- Prefer hourly intervals (e.g., 6 hourly, 12 hourly)
- Specify timing in relation to meals if necessary
- PRN/SOS medications should include:
 - Minimum dosing interval
 - Maximum daily dose

Duration / Quantity

- Specify duration of treatment
- Mention total quantity to be dispensed

(7) ADVANTAGES OF GENERIC PRESCRIBING

- More scientific
- Reduces confusion
- Easier identification of drug groups
- Helpful in identifying drug allergies
- Reduces treatment cost

(8) ACCEPTED ABBREVIATIONS

OD – Once daily
BD – Twice daily
TDS – Three times daily
QDS – Four times daily
Mane – Morning
Nocte – Night
Stat – Immediately
SOS / PRN – When necessary
IM – Intramuscular
IV – Intravenous
ID – Intradermal
SC – Subcutaneous

(9) GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- Ensure correct patient identification
- Write clearly and legibly
- Avoid ambiguous abbreviations
- Avoid prescribing errors
- Check for allergies and contraindications
- Ensure appropriate dose, route, and duration
- Monitor for drug interactions and adverse effects

(10) Pharmacoeconomic and Patient-Centered Considerations

- Assess the patient's socioeconomic background and ability to afford prescribed medicines
- Prefer cost-effective options such as generics and biosimilars where clinically appropriate
- Balance efficacy, safety, and affordability when selecting drugs
- Discuss alternative therapies or formulations if cost is a barrier
- Promote rational use of medicines to reduce unnecessary financial burden on patients and the healthcare system

(11) Prescriber Safety and Professional Indemnity

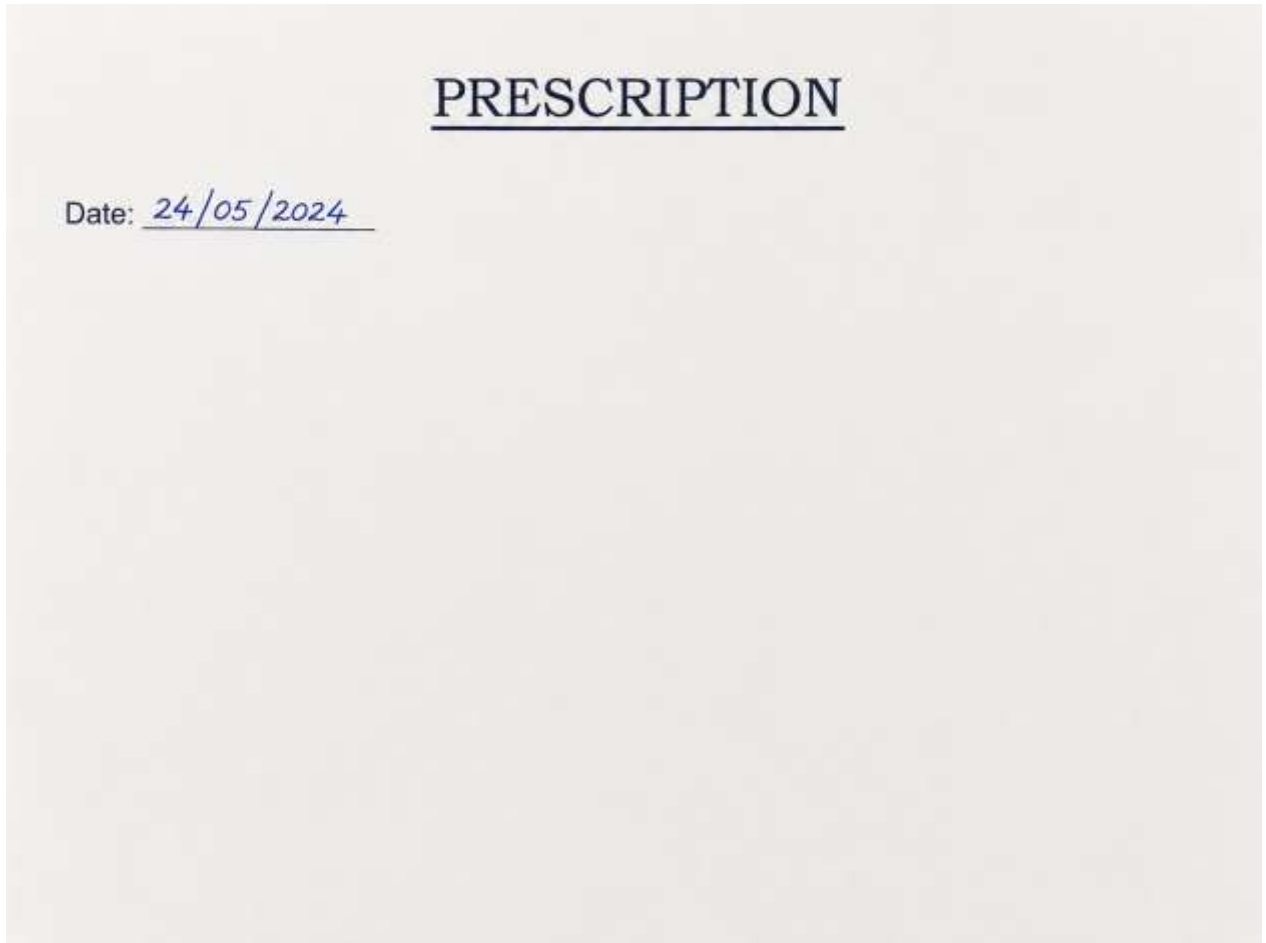
- Prescribers should be aware that prescription writing is a legal and professional responsibility.
- To safeguard against medico-legal risks, prescribers are encouraged to obtain Professional Indemnity Insurance or membership in a recognized medical defense association.
- Such coverage provides protection in cases of alleged negligence, prescription errors, or adverse drug reactions.
- Institutions may provide group coverage, but prescribers should verify whether this adequately protects them individually.
- Maintaining clear, accurate, and compliant documentation is essential, as it serves as the first line of defense in any legal inquiry.

- Prescribers should also stay updated on Sri Lanka Medical Council regulations and institutional policies regarding liability and insurance.

(12) PROCEDURE FOR WRITING A PRESCRIPTION

Step 1 – Write the Date

- Mention the current date clearly



Step 2 – Enter Patient Information

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Address

PRESCRIPTION

Date: 24/05/2024

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Address: _____

Step 3 – Write the Prescription Symbol

- Use “Rx”

PRESCRIPTION

Date: 24/05/2024

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Address: _____

Rx

Step 4 – Prescribe Medicines

Include:

- Generic name
- Dose
- Route
- Frequency
- Duration
- Quantity

Step 5 – Add Prescriber Information

- Name
- SLMC registration number
- Address
- Telephone number
- Signature and official stamp

(13) SAMPLE PRESCRIPTION

Date: 22/09/2010

Name: Kanthi Perera

Age: 19 years

Gender: Female

Address: No. 50, Saman Mawatha, Rathmalana

Rx

- Phenoxyethyl penicillin 500 mg 6 hourly × 5 days (40 tablets)
- Paracetamol 1 g 6 hourly × 3 days (24 tablets)

Prescriber:

Dr. Shane Bandaranayake

SLMC Registration No: 45084

Address: No. 71, Cross Lane, Negombo

Signature: _____

- **Date-** 22/9/10
- **Name:-** Kanthi Perera **Age:-** 19 yrs
- **Gender :** F
- **Address:** N0 50, Saman Mawatha, Rathmalana

Rx

Phenoxyethyl penicillin 500mg 6hrly × 5days
(40 tabs)

Paracetamol 2 tabs 6hrly ×3days (24tabs)

Name: Dr. Shane Bandaranayake

SLMC Reg No: 45084

Address: No. 71, Cross Lane, Negombo.

T phone no

.....
Signature of Prescriber

(14) COMMON ERRORS IN PRESCRIPTION WRITING

- Illegible handwriting
- Incorrect drug spelling
- Missing dose or duration
- Incorrect abbreviations
- Omission of patient details
- Brand prescribing instead of generic prescribing
- Incomplete prescriber details

(15) PATIENT EDUCATION

- Explain drug dosage and timing clearly
- Emphasize adherence to treatment
- Inform regarding adverse effects
- Educate regarding storage of medicines
- Advise when to seek medical attention

(16) DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD KEEPING

- Maintain copies when required
- Ensure confidentiality of patient information
- Follow institutional and legal documentation standards

(17) REFERENCES

- British National Formulary (BNF)
- WHO Guide to Good Prescribing
- Guidelines on Ethical Conduct for Medical & Dental Practitioners Registered with the Sri Lanka Medical Council.
- Standard Pharmacology Textbooks

Prepared by:

Dr. Kumara Kaluarachchi
Head of the Department of Pharmacology
Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Gayathri Rathnayake
Head of the Department (Acting)
Department of Pharmacology
Faculty of Medicine
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka.

Snr. Prof. Muditha Vidanapathirana
Dean
Faculty of Medicine
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Shane Bandaranayake
Lecturer (Probationary)
Department of Pharmacology
Faculty of Medicine
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Minoli Edirisinghe
Temporary Demonstrator
Department of Pharmacology
Faculty of Medicine
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka

Submitted by:

Dr. Minoli Edirisinghe
Temporary Demonstrator
Department of Pharmacology
Faculty of Medicine
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka

Date of Implementation: 10/06/2026