



Summary Report of the On-Site
Compliance Visit to
the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme
provided by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
(RCSI)

Approved by PSI Council 22 June 2017

Summary Report of the On-Site Compliance Visit to the Five-Year
Integrated Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by
the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

In accordance with Article 7(2) of the Pharmacy Act 2007

and

*Part 3, Rule 8(1) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Education and Training)
(Integrated Course) Rules 2014 [S.I. No. 377 of 2014]*

24 January 2017

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Glossary of Abbreviated Terms

▪ APPEL	:	Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning
▪ AQC	:	Awards and Qualifications Committee
▪ CCF	:	Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists
▪ CPD	:	Continuing Professional Development
▪ DARE	:	Disability Access Route to Education
▪ ECTS	:	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
▪ HEAR	:	Higher Education Access Route
▪ HEI	:	Higher Education Institute
▪ IPL	:	Interprofessional Learning
▪ KPI	:	Key Performance Indicator
▪ NFQ	:	National Framework of Qualifications
▪ NPIP	:	National Pharmacy Internship Programme
▪ NUI	:	National University of Ireland
▪ OSCE	:	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
▪ PAG	:	Programme Advisory Group
▪ PDP	:	Professional Development Planning
▪ PEARs	:	Pharmacy Education and Accreditation Reviews
▪ PE	:	Practice Educator
▪ PRE	:	Professional Registration Examination
▪ PSI	:	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
▪ QEO	:	Quality Enhancement Office
▪ QQI	:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
▪ RCSI	:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
▪ SARA	:	Student, Academic and Regulatory Affairs
▪ SMT	:	Senior Management Team
▪ TCAP	:	Traveller Community Access Programme
▪ TeL	:	Technology-enhanced Learning
▪ TCD	:	Trinity College Dublin
▪ VLE	:	Virtual Learning Environment
▪ UCC	:	University College Cork

i. Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the relevant PSI Accreditation Standards as published on the PSI website at www.psi.ie.

Stemming from the Pharmacy Act 2007 (as amended) and recognised in Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament of the Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI), the pharmacy regulator, has responsibility and powers for the approval of the programmes of education and training of pharmacists in Ireland.

The present accreditation exercise concerns the review of the five-year fully integrated Master of Pharmacy degree delivered by the School of Pharmacy at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) against the relevant PSI Accreditation Standards that were approved by the Council of the PSI on 2 October, 2014. Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of the MPharm degree and confirmation by the Higher Education Institute (HEI) that a graduate fully demonstrates the competencies necessary to apply to enter the register of pharmacists kept by the PSI.

ii. Process of Review

A first review of the programme against the PSI Standards was conducted in June 2015. On that basis, at its 17 September 2015 meeting, the PSI Council approved the recommendation of the accreditation team that the Five-Year Fully Integrated Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by the RCSI be recognised and approved for an initial period of two (2) years with a review on-site visit at or towards the end of the first year of delivery. There were no conditions.

Subsequently, and in accordance with the PSI Council approval of the programme in 2015, an onsite compliance visit to RCSI was undertaken in January 2016. Following this visit, at its 7 July 2016 meeting, the PSI Council approved the recommendation of the accreditation team that the recognition and approval of the Five-Year Fully Integrated Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by the RCSI be confirmed for an initial period of two (2) years with a further focused on-site visit during the second year of delivery.

This is the report of the focused on-site visit to RCSI in January 2017.

iii. Documentation

The following documents were available to the accreditation team by RCSI in advance of the on-site visit through its Moodle portal:

- RCSI Response to PSI Summary Report Sept 29th 2016
- RCSI School of Pharmacy Governance Structures
- Roles and Responsibilities within MPharm Updated
- Map of Roles within MPharm 2017
- Assessment Strategy
- Teaching and Learning Strategy
- MPharm Framework Curriculum
- MPharm Framework Experiential Learning

- MPharm Learning Outcomes And Assessments Map
- MPharm Marks and Standards 2016-17
- RCSI Pharmacy Professionalism Definition
- MPharm_Module Descriptors 2016.17
- School of Pharmacy MPharm QIP 2016-2017
- Student Feedback Year 1 Semester 1
- Student Feedback Year 1 Semester 2
- Longitudinal Placement Descriptor
- Longitudinal Community Pharmacy Placement (LCPP) RCSI Presentation Guidance
- LCPP RCSI Workbook
- LCPP RCSI Supervisor Briefing
- LCPP Supervisors Report
- Guidance for Students on Attendance Yr2 Placements
- Standard Operating Procedure Reporting of LCPPs Potential Code of Conduct Breaches
- Standard Operating Procedure LCPPs Reporting of Non-Attendance
- Supervisor Handbook
- 20161120 Student Handbook-Placement
- 20161114 APPEL Consortium Agreement (CA) Addendum Schedule
- 20160919 APPEL CA Addendum
- 20161205 APPEL Year 2 Placement Quality Framework

The following documents were provided by RCSI during the course of the on-site visit:

- Briefing on the status of the on-going implementation of the 5-year NUI/RCSI Master of Pharmacy Programme
- RCSI School of Pharmacy Leadership Team (2015–2018) – Mandate and Terms of Reference
- Confirmation from Regulations and Records Manager in relation to student transcript wording
- Implementation of the 5-Yr Master of Pharmacy Programme

iv. The Compliance Visit

The accreditation team held a preparatory meeting at PSI House on January 23, 2017 in advance of the on-site visit.

The on-site compliance visit took place in RCSI January 24, 2017.

v. The Accreditation Team

The PSI accreditation team comprised:

Name	Designation at the time of visit
Prof Brenda Costall	Chair, International Academic, Consultant in Pharmaceutical Education and Developments
Dr Aislinn Joy	Healthcare non-pharmacist
Leonie Clarke	Quality assurance and regulatory expert
Prof Jane Portlock	Pharmacy academic with experience of developing and/or accrediting pharmacy degree programmes
Niall O'Shea	Pharmacist practising in Ireland with experience as a tutor supporting experiential learning
along with	
Caroline Mellows	Education Manager, PSI
Siobhán H Fitzgerald	Education Standards Officer, PSI
Dr Matthew Maltby	Rapporteur

There were no declarations of interest.

vi. Meeting the Standards

Standard 1: The Professional Degree Programme Provider and Mission

The Professional Degree Programme Provider must engage in a systematic planning process and have a current strategic plan that facilitates achievement of the Professional Degree Programme Provider's mission, goals and objectives.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

As an institution, the RCSI, and accordingly the School of Pharmacy, places a considerable emphasis on excellence. Excellence lies at the heart of the School's educational strategy – the clearly articulated vision of the School is to purposefully and appropriately deploy best practice in teaching and assessment. This is supported by forward-looking technology to produce graduates who have the skills, attitudes and behaviours to meet the PSI Core Competency Framework and whose practice is patient-centred.

The clearly articulated missions, goals and objectives of the School reflect a strong commitment to delivering a progressive and modern degree programme which will instil its graduates with an innate sense of patient advocacy to promote public trust in the Pharmacy profession and enhance patient safety.

Implementation of the new degree programme has been carefully planned and documented, utilising a Change Laboratory approach. A rigorous process of curriculum development allows review, feedback, refinement and change, and quality improvement and enhancement to be integral aspects of the programme development. Resources and staffing levels are carefully monitored, with the process of review and feedback enabling these to be refined and enhanced as required. By adopting a systematic SOP-based approach to module and Year development, the paradigm remains consistent throughout, critically important when developing a programme that is horizontally and vertically integrated such as this.

'Growth through excellence' is the strategy which has so far underpinned and continues to inform the School's development and implementation of the new degree programme. The team is of the opinion that this is particularly evident; the manner in which the vision has been embraced and ownership taken to proactively develop and begin delivering a forward-looking degree is one of the strengths of the RCSI programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 1 is met.

Standard 2: Leadership, Organisation and Governance

There must be clear management structures for the Professional Degree Programme with a schedule of roles and responsibilities, and a defined structure and process to show lines of accountability and authority for all those involved in the delivery of the Professional Degree Programme.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The RCSI School of Pharmacy has developed a clear, transparent and robust structure to its management mechanisms. The Leadership Team, maintains clearly delineated roles and consists of:

- Head of School (Chair)
- Academic, Quality and Operations manager
- Lead in pharmacy research
- Lead in pharmacy education
- Laboratories & Technical Manager

Underneath this lie clearly mapped structures required for the development and delivery of each year of the new MPharm degree. Reporting to the Head of School, the team responsible for developing and delivering the MPharm teams consists of:

- The programme leader
- Year leaders (Years 1 – 5)
- Academic, quality and operations manager
- Senior operations coordinator
- Laboratories and Technical Manager

Not only are roles and responsibilities in relation to the MPharm delivery clearly mapped, so too are each role's activities and the relevant collaborators. This approach to defining and documenting roles, responsibilities and expectations of those roles allows the components of the new MPharm programme to be easily and efficiently martialled through the required stages of development, review, approval, delivery and improvement.

Established in 2015, the current management structures have adopted a cross-functional approach to the integrated MPharm which includes School staff in addition to academic colleagues from outside the School. An inclusive and integrated ethos has developed amongst RCSI members of staff associated with the delivery of the integrated programme, and this was clear to the members of the accreditation team throughout their visit. There is a tangible clarity of purpose, transparency in role and a shared vision within the School which has created a high level of collegiality and ownership, aspects which assist in supporting the realisation of the School's aspirations for the programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 2 is met.

Standard 3: Resources

The School must have sufficient allocated resources, financial, physical and staff, and have developed and documented contingency plans to cover any deficiencies that may arise in order to ensure the effective delivery of a Professional Degree Programme that continues to meet the 'Accreditation Standards of the five-year fully integrated Master's degree programmes in pharmacy' as approved by the PSI Council from time to time.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

RCSI is a privately-run college and therefore receives only limited State funding. It must generate sufficient resources to continue ongoing operations and cover capital expenditure. Based on the financial information provided prior to the onsite visit in January 2016, the RCSI appears to be financially sound. It is currently completing a major addition to its teaching facilities in the form of a new Academic and Education Building which will provide the School of Pharmacy with access to a state of the art clinical skills simulation suite, a library and a range of tutorial rooms in addition to extensive sports facilities..

Supporting the School of Pharmacy in its endeavours to deliver a world class Pharmacy programme is a cohort of highly motivated, enthusiastic faculty members whose expertise spans Pharmacy practice and the cognate disciplines. In keeping with the integrated approach adopted for the MPharm programme, faculty members from the Schools of Nursing & Midwifery, Medicine and Physiotherapy also collaborate to develop and delivery course content.

The School is also supported by the APPEL function, itself accommodated within RCSI office space.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 3 is met.

Standard 4: Curriculum

The curriculum must be planned to deliver an integrated learning experience that combines and co-ordinates all components in a logical and cohesive manner with clearly articulated linkages between and across units within years and between years. The Professional Degree Programme must be planned as a whole to deliver graduates who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to meet the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists necessary for entry to the profession of pharmacy and to assure the accountability of the profession to society.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The programme aims to develop reflective practitioners who are committed to continuous development throughout their professional journey. The curriculum is ambitious in its scope and adopts a progressive and forward-looking approach to its highly integrated nature. The programme content is delivered by means of a ‘*themes and organ-systems*’ approach and throughout its duration, students are exposed to the full range of pharmacy practice settings through visits, site-tours and experiential placements.

The process for planning and developing course content is interdisciplinary but there remains a cohesive focus on training patient-centred practitioners who, by the time they graduate from RCSI, will have developed the skills to engage in reflective practice and for whom CPD within their professional practice is a given.

The accreditation team noted that a particular strength of the programme is the enthusiasm, drive and expertise with which the faculty members have engaged with the programme’s development and delivery in order to establish a programme which is forward-looking and able to adapt to developments within the role of the professional.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 4 is met.

Standard 5: Teaching and Learning Strategy

The Teaching and Learning Strategy must be designed to deliver a curriculum that produces graduates that meet the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists as established by the PSI Council from time to time.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The approach to teaching and learning adopted by the School and highlighted in its Teaching and Learning strategy supports the delivery of a curriculum that aims to facilitate the development of graduates with the required scientific and clinical knowledge, professional competence, commitment to continuing professional development, and who are prepared and able to engage with the challenges associated with their future roles in practice. Learning outcomes of the curriculum are easily aligned and mapped to the attributes of the six domains on the PSI CCF, and the use of active learning methods ensures students own their own learning.

Professionalism and the development of the necessary skills for appropriate, effective and safe pharmacy practice form core elements of the School's programme. Policies and procedures already in place require registration with the relevant and appropriate professional regulatory body according to the role held. A culture of professionalism is clearly evident within the School, and this is reflected not only in the strength of commitment to excellence amongst the staff, but also in the enthusiasm shown by the students for their learning environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 5 is met.

Standard 6: Assessment Strategy

The Assessment Strategy must ensure that all graduates demonstrate the competencies set out in the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists as established by the PSI Council from time to time. The strategy must align with the teaching and learning strategy (see Standard 5) and use effective and validated diagnostic, formative and summative assessment methods that are reviewed at frequent intervals and take account of developments in pharmacy practice within all components of the Professional Degree Programme.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The approach outlined in the assessment strategy document provided by the School contains a range of methods suitable for each level of study of increasing complexity and diversity. These methods allow students to demonstrate the progressive attainment of all learning outcomes and ensure assessment of their attainment is robust and appropriate.

Assessments take place throughout all semesters of the programme with high-stakes summative assessments taking place at the end of semesters. The type and balance of assessment varies with the module but each assessment is specifically designed to ensure a consistent challenge to the student.

Overall, a wide variety of assessment modalities are used ranging from MCQ, written questions (short-notes, essays), laboratory practical examinations, projects, presentations, portfolios and OSCEs. Facilities are made available to students for the electronic submission of projects and portfolio entries on-line.

In line with college requirements, a clear and transparent appeals mechanism is maintained by the Student Academic and Regulatory Affairs department and it is overseen by the relevant College Board.

Supported by the Quality Enhancement Office, the School reviews its assessment and student performance regularly. This allows the assessment results to contribute to and inform quality improvement initiatives and mechanisms.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 6 is met.

Standard 7: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

All processes and activities related to the Professional Degree Programme must be clearly defined, documented, executed and controlled in accordance with a system of Quality Management which assures and demonstrates consistency, reproducibility and transparency of operations. There must be evidence that this process is being used to enhance the quality of the provision.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The School has developed a clear, transparent and robust structure to its management and governance mechanisms. The governance structures appear to be particularly strong and the entire programme is appropriately underpinned by these. The team agreed that the clarity and precise nature of the governance mechanisms, the clear and accessible documentation of them, and the transparency of reporting lines are a particular strength of the MPharm programme.

The equity of APPEL engagement with the three consortium parties is of paramount importance; the continued development of clear lines of communication with the three Schools and the continuation of the collegial, proactive relationships between APPEL and the Schools will ensure APPEL functions equally successfully in the interests of all three Schools.

APPEL continues to make significant progress towards developing KPIs, quality assurance and enhancement processes, and leveraging suitable IT capabilities which will enable APPEL to discharge its duties efficiently and effectively.

Professional development among staff is promoted and fostered by the School.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 7 is met.

Standard 8: Students

There must be processes at HEI and School level to assist prospective students in their application to the Professional Degree Programme., in securing and maintaining placements for the practice-placement elements of the Professional Degree Programme, and to support students' development as learners and as future practising professionals.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The School continues to maintain high levels of student support and provides an environment in which student feedback is sought as part of the process of quality enhancement. Feedback is proactively sought, considered and then acted on accordingly, appropriate to maintain a balanced environment in which high academic achievement is actively supported. This occurs alongside a range of extracurricular activities for students in formal and informal settings.

The accreditation team noted the high level of support and concern afforded by the School in ensuring that students' needs are being met academically and outside the classroom.

College policies and procedures are published online and are easily accessible.

The accreditation team noted the high levels of satisfaction and enthusiasm amongst the students for their chosen course, and is of the opinion that the commitment to excellence exhibited by the School staff is one of the strengths of the programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 8 is met.

vii. General Observations

The accreditation team noted several aspects of the RCSI's integrated programme they particularly wish to draw attention to as being specific strengths. In the interests of supporting the School maintain the high level of commitment to delivering this innovative and forward-looking programme, the team highlighted the following:

- The high level of commitment, drive and enthusiasm for success, which is clear throughout the School amongst the staff and students.
- The level of concern and support evident amongst the staff for students on the programme to ensure their needs are catered for and that any issues can be addressed quickly, appropriately and effectively.
- The forward-thinking approach that ensures planning for the future is an integral element to the development of the programme.
- The integrated nature of the programme's delivery and assessment that provides strong foundations on which to build over the coming years, along with an approach to interdisciplinary learning and thinking which is clearly and firmly embedded.
- The strong governance structures and mechanisms underpinning the programme provide assurances of high quality in teaching and assessment and ongoing efforts to continually enhance that quality of the programme.

viii. Conclusions and Recommendations

The accreditation team agreed the following in relation to the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme provided by Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI);

- Standard 1 is met
- Standard 2 is met
- Standard 3 is met
- Standard 4 is met
- Standard 5 is met
- Standard 6 is met
- Standard 7 is met
- Standard 8 is met

On that basis, the accreditation team makes the following recommendations to the Council of the PSI;

1. The programme be approved and recognised for a period of three (3) years, June 22, 2017 and expiring June 22, 2020.

2. The RCSI provides to the PSI a report by February 2018 to include the following as they relate to APPEL;
 - a. an update in relation to the development and implementation of KPIs by which the performance of the APPEL function will be measured,
 - b. details of the operational plans for the recruitment of the statutory experiential learning placements to be undertaken by students in Years 4 and 5 of the programme,
 - c. details of the planned quality assurance mechanisms for the statutory experiential learning placements to be undertaken by students in Years 4 and 5 of the programme,
 - d. details of the training to be undertaken by the tutor-pharmacists recruited to supervise the statutory experiential learning placements to be undertaken by students in Years 4 and 5 of the programme,
 - e. an update in relation to the procurement, implementation and further development of the IT platform,
 - f. an update in relation to the current and future plans for the administrative staffing,
 - g. an update in relation to the continued input of relevant stakeholders (including staff, students, tutors, supervisors and service users) into the evaluation and further development of the APPEL functions.
3. The RCSI provides to the PSI a report by February 2018 which includes an update in relation to any substantive changes to the programme, or developments of significance.
4. The PSI undertakes a focused on-site visit during the first quarter of 2019 following the completion of the 4-month statutory placement and in advance of the 8 month statutory placement.