



Summary Report of the On-Site Compliance Visit to
the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme
in Pharmacy provided by University College Cork (UCC)

Approved by PSI Council 22 June 2017

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Integrated Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by
University College Cork (UCC)

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]*

14 February 2017

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Glossary of Abbreviated Terms

▪ APPEL	:	Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning
▪ CCF	:	Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists
▪ CoMH	:	College of Medicine and Health
▪ DARE	:	Disability Access Route to Education
▪ ECTS	:	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
▪ EPA	:	Entrustable Professional Activities
▪ HEAR	:	Higher Education Access Route
▪ HEI	:	Higher Education Institute
▪ IPL	:	Interprofessional Learning
▪ IPPOSI	:	Irish Platform for Patient Organisations, Science & Industry
▪ KPI	:	Key Performance Indicators
▪ NFQ	:	National Framework of Qualifications
▪ NPIP	:	National Pharmacy Internship Programme
▪ NUI	:	National University of Ireland
▪ OSCE	:	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
▪ PE	:	Practice Educator
▪ PEARs	:	Pharmacy Education and Accreditation Reviews
▪ PRE	:	Professional Registration Examination
▪ PSI	:	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
▪ QQI	:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
▪ RCSI	:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
▪ TeL	:	Technology-enhanced Learning
▪ TCD	:	Trinity College Dublin
▪ UCC	:	University College Cork
▪ VLE	:	Virtual Learning Environment

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 concerns the accreditation of the five-year fully integrated Master of Pharmacy degree delivered by University College Cork (UCC) 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 recommendations of the accreditation team that the MPharm programme provided by UCC 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 subject to three specified conditions being met by 31 December 2015.

Subsequently, an on-site visit was undertaken in February 2016. At its 7 July 2016 meeting, the PSI Council approved the recommendations of the accreditation team that the MPharm programme provided by UCC be confirmed for an initial period of 2 years, with a further focused on-site visit during the second year of delivery.

This is the report of the on-site compliance visit to UCC on 14 February 2017.

iii. Documentation

The following documents were submitted by the provider in advance of the accreditation visit:

- 2016 Periodic Quality Review of the School of Pharmacy
- 2016/2017 – Year 2 Placement Learning Activities
- Standard 1 – KPIs
- Standard 7 – APPEL Policy relating to Year 2 Placement Student Attendance
- Standard 7 – APPEL Policy relating to Year 2 Placement Student Immunisation
- Standard 7 – APPEL Policy relating to Recording and Notification of Placement Issues
- UCC Updated Teaching and Learning, and Assessment Strategies, 2016-2017

iv. The Compliance Visit

The accreditation team held a preparatory meeting on 13 February 2017 in advance of the on-site visit.

The on-site compliance visit took place in UCC on 14 February 2017.

v. The Accreditation Team

The PSI accreditation team comprised:

Name	Designation at the time of visit
Prof Brenda Costall	Chair, Pharmacy academic with experience of developing and/or accrediting pharmacy degree programmes (international academic)
Dr Jason Last	Healthcare non-pharmacist
Dr Nicola Tyers	Quality assurance and regulatory expert
Mr Mark Brennan	Pharmacy academic with experience of developing and/or accrediting pharmacy degree programmes
Dr Éilís Ryan	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

University College Cork (UCC) has been delivering a four year BPharm programme since 2003 and this experience informs the delivery of the MPharm, which is the focus of the current review and accreditation undertaking. In the case of the five year integrated MPharm programme, students initially register for a BPharm degree. Upon successful completion, students then progress to the fifth and final MPharm year. It is the MPharm only that is the qualification appropriate for practice in Ireland and it is correctly positioned at Level 9 on the NFQ.

Within the framework of the MPharm, UCC School of Pharmacy aims to:

- deliver a student-centered, patient-focused education through both the integration of science and practice, and experiential practice training,
- create a supportive, motivating environment which fosters and inspires students to become reflective independent learners, and
- develop student skills through the design and application of evidence-based medicine to optimise patient care and public health.

During the on-site visit, the Head of School drew the accreditation team's attention to the integrated nature of the MPharm programme and underlined the centrality of conceptualisations of integration within the School. It was clear to the team that the School's planning, development and delivery of the MPharm programme are informed by an orientation towards integrated principles which over time has become increasingly embedded. Clearly articulated goals and objectives are driving progress towards a patient-centred programme. A highly motivated leadership is committed to producing high-calibre graduates through the successful implementation of a high quality, modern and forward-looking programme.

Following the outcome of the recently complete Periodic Quality Review, a School Advisory Board will be established to support the School in its teaching, research and outreach activities.

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

UCC has clearly defined management structures and the processes of the School of Pharmacy operate in a manner consistent with those of the CoMH and the wider university. Reporting and escalation mechanisms are transparent and clearly defined. The School staff is flexible with a forward-looking perspective and is able to adapt quickly to manage change.

The School has been proactively engaging with the broader university in value-add projects such as the promotion of mental health awareness and sexual health. Its staff members participate in the relevant University governance functions and Committees, thus ensuring a visibility of the School at all levels within UCC. A high level of support for the new programme amongst senior members of the University management team has been established and continues to be maintained as the programme develops.

UCC also demonstrates a clear and productive commitment to the support of the APPEL function as APPEL continues to progress with clearly defined lines of accountability that are maintained as separate from UCC.

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

UCC is a state-funded university and operates within closely monitored financial resources. The University is strongly committed to the development of Pharmacy and its new programme. The purpose-built Cavanagh Building, in which the School is accommodated, provides modern teaching and research facilities, including a model dispensary and aseptic suites.

The School staff delivers the majority of the MPharm course content and correspondingly, has developed much of its content within clear and transparent processes for its approval and sign-off. Integrated approaches have become firmly embedded within School teaching and a network of stakeholders external to the School is drawn on to ensure that the provision maintains its modern, forward-looking aspect.

The accreditation team found the School staff highly committed to successfully delivering the MPharm. This motivation to succeed is also mirrored in the function of APPEL, within which UCC maintains two on-site, UCC-based PE roles to contribute to the development of the structure of experiential placements.

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 UCC programme has been designed to develop reflective practitioners who are committed to continuous development throughout their professional journey and who adopt, develop and exhibit reflective learning practices from an early stage in their professional training. The patient-centred curriculum is designed to achieve its outcomes through a learning experience that is increasingly integrated horizontally and vertically, but which supports learners appropriately as they progress through the programme.

Meeting the requirements of the CCF has been a focus for UCC as the programme has been realised. There is a clear link between the curriculum of the programme and a consistent focus on developing graduates who have the skills to engage in reflective professional practice.

An emphasis on reflective practice from Day 1 will bear fruits in the shape of graduates for whom self-reflection and continuous development is second-nature. This approach to instilling reflective practice in students from an early stage was noted by the accreditation team as a particular strength of the programme.

The CCF is a continual point of reference for the MPharm programme and has been integrated into the MPharm programme in such a manner as to provide students with as much exposure to it as is relevant and reasonable.

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

As outlined the School's newly redrafted documentation, UCC's strategy for teaching and learning facilitates the education and training of pharmacists with an in-depth knowledge of the science, and the skills and competencies that underpin the professional practice of pharmacy.

The curriculum has been designed with clear regard to the requirements of the CCF and a wide use of active learning methods supports and facilitates a student sense of ownership of their learning. A progressive structure of practice-based learning and experiential learning placements aims to support and instil in its graduates an innate orientation towards person-centred practice.

The development of the necessary knowledge and skills for appropriate, effective and safe pharmacy practice form core elements of the School's programme, which is delivered by School staff that maintains and fosters a culture of collegiality and professionalism.

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

UCC has developed and implemented an assessment regime that is consistent with the integrated principles of the curriculum and that shows a coherent link to the Teaching and Learning Strategy. Students are able to demonstrate they meet the intended learning outcomes through a range of assessment methods including formal written examinations, MCQ and short answer examinations, assessed laboratory assignments, group projects, presentations and OSCEs in addition to a portfolio of reflective learning activities that familiarise students with continued professional development techniques.

The School is currently exploring a suitable means of assessing student performance whilst on placement during Years 4 and 5. In conjunction with APPEL, the School is considering the applicability of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs).

Mechanisms by which assessments are collated and reviewed are clear and transparent. The School Appeals process is suitably robust and is in line with wider University governance protocols. In the event of students failing an assessment, they are afforded the opportunity of supplemental exams. Support is also provided prior to the supplemental exam by way of a review of the marks and discussion with a member of School staff.

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 quality assurance mechanisms in place within the School and university are sufficiently robust to ensure the development and implementation of the MPharm degree as a high quality programme.

In addition to School-specific mechanisms, support and assistance is provided by the Quality Promotion Unit and also APPEL, which maintains quality assurance accountability for the Year 2 placement as well as the statutory Years 4 and 5 placements.

The equity of the 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 to enable APPEL discharge its duties efficiently and effectively.

Professional development among staff is promoted by the School and all new teaching appointments are required to obtain a postgraduate qualification in Teaching and Learning. The School staff is highly motivated and have taken a shared ownership of working towards implementing and delivering a high quality programme.

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

Relevant policies and procedures are published on the UCC website and are therefore easily available to all.

The APPEL initiative continues to be committed to delivering a well-planned and executed process for ensuring students receive a high-quality and appropriate level of experiential training during the statutory placements in Years 4 and 5 placements.

UCC maintains high levels of student support, both formal and informal. A wide range of extracurricular activities, Pharmacy-related and not, provide a rich and varied learning and social environment which encourages high levels of academic achievement.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 8 is met.

vii. General Observations

The accreditation team noted several aspects of the UCC'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 that is clear throughout the School amongst the staff and students.
- The level of leadership and shared ownership for developing and implementing the integrated programme evident in the professionalism amongst staff and the breadth of engagement with developing the MPharm programme according to integrated principles.
- The continued progress being made towards embedding an integrated philosophy which reflects the positive and proactive approach of the Schools' staff.
- The approach taken to inculcating a keen sense of reflective practice amongst the students from an early stage in the programme, which will have a positive impact on their future professional development.
- The School's ongoing and continued support for, and engagement with, the APPEL project.

viii. Conclusions and Recommendations

The accreditation team agreed the following in relation to the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme provided by University College Cork (UCC);

- 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. UCC provides to the PSI a report by 28 February 2018 to include the following as they relate to APPEL:
 - an update in relation to the development and implementation of KPIs by which the performance of the APPEL function will be measured,
 - 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,
 - 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,
 - 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,
 - an update in relation to the procurement, implementation and further development of the IT platform,
 - an update in relation to the current and future plans for the APPEL administrative staffing,
 - 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. UCC provides to the PSI a report by 28 February 2018 to include the following as they relate to the School:
 - details of all changes made to the curriculum since 2015,
 - details of the plans and implementation process for multi-disciplinary teamworking,
 - details of the means by which students are assessed in interprofessional learning contexts,
 - information as it relates to the appointment and training of external examiners for the purposes of the co-delivered modules in Years 4 and 5,
 - details of the protocol developed for ensuring all required assessments are completed prior to students being eligible to undertake the Professional Registration Examination (PRE),
 - an update in relation to the continued input of external stakeholders, especially patients, into the development of the MPharm programme,
 - 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.