

The National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation

Interim Report
November 2013

Membership of the National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation

- Marian Shanley
- Anne-Marie Healy*
- Stephen Byrne*
- Paul Gallagher
- Noel Stenson*
- Mary Kerr
- William Reddy
- John Barry*
- Ann-Teresa Morgan*
- Evelyn Deasy*
- Veronica Treacy*
- Maura Kinahan*
- Pat McGovern
- Cliona McCormack
- Emer Browne*
- Prof Bob Sindelar
- Chairperson
- Head of school of pharmacy TCD
- Head of school of pharmacy UCC
- Head of school of pharmacy RCSI
- Vice –president of the PSI
- Deputy Sec Higher Education Authority
- Special Delivery Unit, Department of Health
- Community Pharmacist
- Community Pharmacist
- Hospital Pharmacist,
- Hospital Pharmacist
- Industry Pharmacist
- Formally IDA
- Patient representative (Irish Heart Foundation)
- Student representative
- International representative (University of British Columbia)

Membership of the National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation

- * Prof Anne-Marie Healy was appointed as acting head of school in Trinity College Dublin in July 2013 and she replaced Prof Marek Radomski who had been on the National Forum until that date.
- *Prof Stephen Byrne was appointed head of school in University College Cork in October 2013 and he replaced Prof Caitriona O'Driscoll who had been on the National Forum until that date.
- *Eoghan Hanly was elected as President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland and was replaced on the National Forum by Noel Stenson Vice-President, in August 2013.
- *Eilis Ryan Community Pharmacist, is an alternate on the National Forum.
- *Maureen Reidy Community Pharmacist, is an alternate on the National Forum.
- *Caitriona Gowing, hospital pharmacist, was an alternate on the National Forum until July 2013.
- *Veronica Treacy joined the National Forum in July 2013.
- *Rosemary Tully, industry pharmacist is an alternate on the National Forum.
- *Ciara O'Mahony is an alternate student representative on the National Forum.
- *Terence Smeaton and Niamh Lloyd were student representatives for 2012.

Origins of the National Forum

- The National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation (National Forum) was established by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) in order to facilitate the implementation of educational reforms recommended by the PEARs report. It held its first meeting in August 2011.
- The PEARs report was a root and branch analysis of pharmacy education in Ireland, commissioned by the PSI, which reported in June 2010.
- The PEARs report recommended that pharmacy education should move from a 4+1 model to a five year fully integrated programme leading to an MPharm degree.
- This recommendation of the PEARs report was adopted by Council of the PSI as policy in June 2010.
- The purpose of the National Forum, as set out in its terms of reference, is to advise and assist the Council of the PSI in its oversight of the development and on-going delivery of the new fully integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment.

Terms of Reference of the National Forum

Specifically the National Forum was charged with:

- Providing a mechanism for clear communication with the profession and wider stakeholders on the introduction of an integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment
- Driving progression towards the key implementation milestones...
 - The milestones referred to above include proposing a future funding model; establishing draft educational standards; developing a national system for practice-based learning; delivering a communication programme to the profession; establishing an interim education model; establishing draft accreditation standards.

Vision and Mission

- Educational reform is one pillar of a series of reforms that are being spearheaded by the PSI in order to bring about the vision of the Pharmacy Ireland 2020 initiative.
- Pharmacy Ireland 2020, looks to international best practice and to the realities of healthcare in Ireland and makes important recommendations on how pharmacy could move to an enhanced frontline healthcare role.
- The Department of Health strategic plan, *Future Health – a Strategic Framework for Reform of the Health Service 2012-2015* and the February 2013 report to the Minister for Health, *'The Establishment of Hospital Groups as a Transition to Independent Hospital Trusts'*, emphasise the importance of primary care in the delivery of effective medical services.
- Providing enhanced pharmacy services will make frontline healthcare more accessible, safer and more economical for the country and will bring drug and medicine usage into the forefront of patient care.
- In order to fully realise the potential of pharmacists to move into an enhanced healthcare function, pharmacy education must change to ensure that all pharmacy students are prepared for fuller patient facing roles and that they have a clear idea of the responsibility they have as part of a healthcare team.

What is Integrated Education?

- **Integrated education** means moving from a science based degree followed by a separate one year clinical placement to a five year degree in which clinical placements will be dispersed throughout the five years of formation while at the same time preserving the very high academic standards that are the hallmark of the pharmacy programmes in our three schools of pharmacy.
- **Integrated education** means contextualising the science and medicine that is integral to pharmacy education in to real life situations and practice settings. It will mean a change in the way the entire pharmacy degree is taught.
- **Integrated education** means learning to work as part of a healthcare team. It means clearly understanding the pharmacist's unique skill sets and expertise and ensuring that that expertise is unambiguously understood by all other healthcare providers.
- **Integrated education** will move pharmacy into the same educational model that is applied to all other healthcare professionals and will ensure that pharmacy is valued, respected and trusted by both the public and the healthcare community.

Organisational Plan

- The National Forum convened its first meeting in August 2011 and it has met on a monthly or six week basis since that date.
- At that first meeting, four sub-fora were established to ensure progress across all of the different activities that would lead ultimately to the roll-out of the five year fully integrated degree.
- These consisted of :
 - a Funding sub-forum,
 - a Curriculum Development and Assessment sub-forum,
 - a Development of Practice-based Learning sub-forum and,
 - an Interim Programme sub-forum.

Challenges Faced

- At the initial National Forum meetings it became clear that whilst the three schools of pharmacy were supportive of the PSI policy in principle, they were of the view that the introduction of a five year integrated degree was not feasible from a financial perspective. They cited current shortfalls in third level funding and the difficult economic circumstances as impediments to implementation within the timeframe suggested by the PSI. The schools were not in a position to indicate an alternative timeframe as they could see no foreseeable change in financial circumstances that would make the degree deliverable.
- A second concern expressed by the schools was the availability of practice placements across the five year programme particularly in hospitals.
- The National Forum, through its appropriate sub-fora continues to address these two principal concerns and other concerns of the schools.

Tutor Recognition and Support

- By emphasising the importance of clinical 'on-site' training, the five year fully integrated degree requires an increased input from the profession in mentoring the next generation.
- Whilst all professions have a responsibility to ensure that their skills and expertise are continued, this contribution should not go unacknowledged.
- The National Forum is exploring a range of incentives that will make tutoring a more rewarding and rewarded experience. This is an on-going discussion but at present suggestions include:
 - CPD recognition
 - Access to specialist programmes within the Irish Institute of Pharmacy
 - Special Interest Group status of the Irish Institute of Pharmacy
 - Access to libraries, data-bases and other on-line resources held by the academic institutions.
 - Career opportunities to move from practice to academia
 - Opportunities to develop 'Teaching Pharmacies' and 'Centres of Excellence' for pharmacy services.
 - Payment of an Honorarium. As this would ultimately be an additional cost to the student, any financial contribution to tutors would have to be very carefully considered particularly in the initial stages of the roll out of this programme.

Funding the Five Year Programme

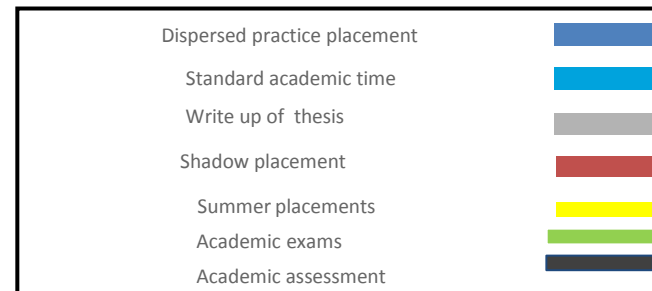
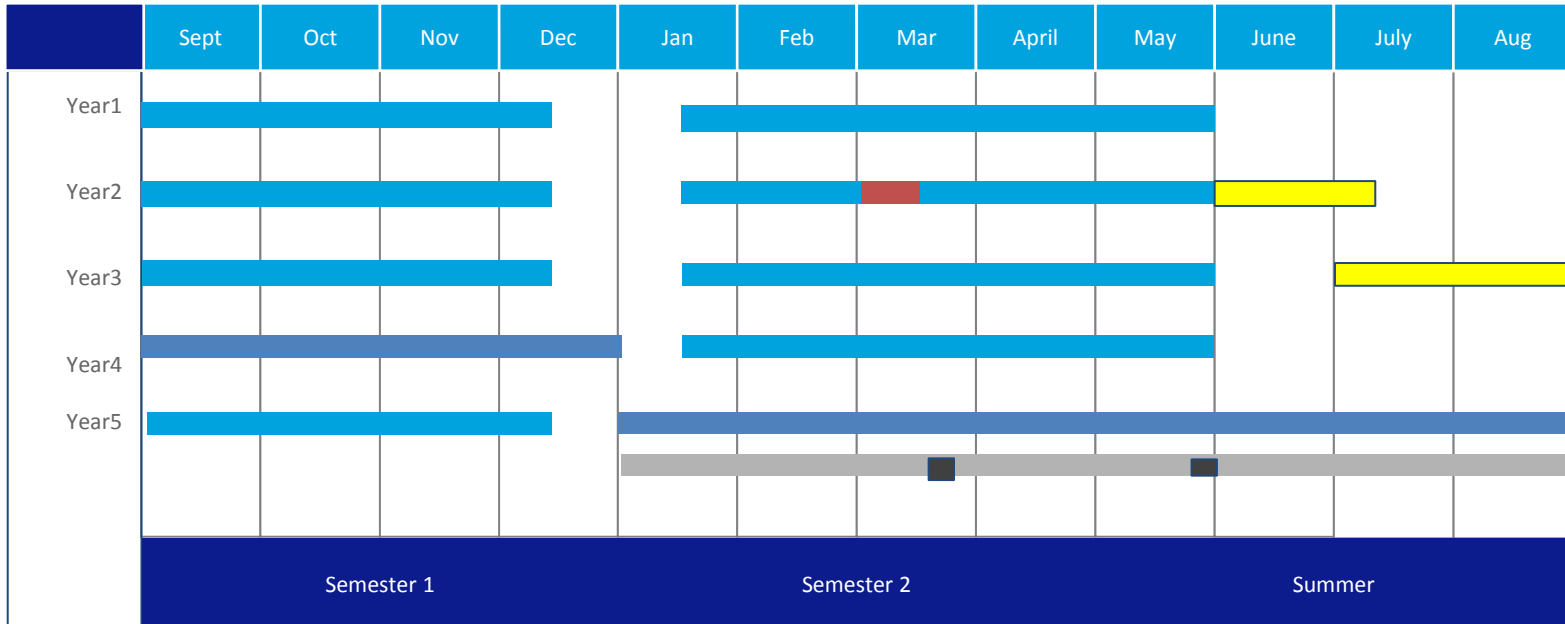
- The five year degree would move the entire pharmacy programme into the three schools of pharmacy. Currently, the +1 year is delivered on behalf of the PSI by RCSI. This would impose a financial cost on the schools.
- The schools had identified funding as the single biggest impediment to the implementation of the five year programme. The sub-forum acknowledged that any funding model put in place had to be sustainable and reliable. External funding that could be withdrawn at any time could not be the basis of proceeding with the new programme. The only sustainable model going forward was to levy a student fee for the fifth year of the MPharm programme. This fee would cover the establishment and running costs of the new degree. Council of the PSI accepted this recommendation from the National Forum and authorised a Cost Analysis by PA Consulting to establish that the cost of introducing a fifth year was not so high that students would be asked to pay an excessive fee to cover it.
- PA Consulting applied a number of assumptions to their calculations and estimated that the five year programme could be delivered for between €7539 and €11476 per student per year depending on the model used. This analysis was unanimously adopted by Council in June 2012 subject to a stress testing of the figures. This was completed by May 2013.
- The HEA have confirmed that a post-graduate grant which is currently to the value of €4000 would be payable in respect of each student attending UCC and TCD. This grant is not payable to the RCSI which is a private third level institution.
- PA Consulting did not look to any rationalisations or savings that could be made by the three schools working collaboratively to develop this programme.
- The National Forum can not suggest what fee any academic institution should charge but it would emphasise the importance of putting in place as many supports and facilities as possible to help students in financial difficulties.
- The three schools of pharmacy do not accept the final figures proposed by PA Consulting. Each academic institution is preparing its own financial model which will give an outline of establishment and delivery costs and these will be discussed when they become available.

What would the Five Year Programme Look Like?








- The Curriculum Development sub-forum has developed a Framework for the five year programme after consultation with the profession, the schools and international experts.
- This represents the minimum integration that is envisaged across the five years and the expectation is that as the degree becomes embedded, increased placement opportunities will be accessed.
- Integration is more than just dispersed placements. Schools of pharmacy will seek to integrate students with other health care disciplines to ensure that pharmacy practice is included in all patient care strategies.
- A dedicated office, the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL), will support placements in the three schools.

4. Practice placement integration: The proposed curriculum framework

- The overall feedback from the universities and workshops identified a 4/8 month block placement over 4th and 5th year as the preferred option. This is outlined as part of the overall curriculum below.



4. Practice placement integration: The proposed curriculum framework *contd.*

Dispersed practice placement	
Standard academic time	
Write up of thesis	
Shadow placement	
Summer placements	
Academic exams	
Academic assessment	

OEL: Once the OEL is set up there could be some flexibility in the development and implementation of this framework.

Shadow placements: These may be carried out at any stage in year 2, under the guidance of the University.

Summer placements : There are three opportunities for summer placements. The first is in the summer of 2nd year ,the second is the summer of 3rd year and the third in the summer of 4th year. Universities will have to decide whether these are elective or mandatory. It is difficult to see how three meaningful placements can occur in the three principle practice settings without at least one summer placement.

Block placements: In the 4/8 month model the first placement is carried out in semester one in 4th year. This is then followed by a block in semester two in 5th year. The block in fifth year has to be patient facing (i.e. in the hospital or community pharmacy setting)

Blocks back in university: There was feedback from the schools and workshops that a ‘block’ back in the universities during the 4month/8month placements and at the end would be beneficial. This will support reflective practice and consolidation of learning.

Exams: There will be a formal examination including OSCEs at the end of the fifth year.

The Office of Experiential Learning

- The National Forum recognises that asking schools to source, evaluate and assess practice placements for students across five years of the programme is a considerable burden.
- The National Forum has suggested that this function should be a shared service between the three schools with a centralised data base and administration.
- This shared service is called the Office for Experiential Learning (OEL) and, through a national co-ordinator and three practice educators, it will be an administrative support to students, tutors and schools in ensuring that the practice placements run smoothly.
- In early 2013, the schools of pharmacy were provided with a number of documents that were intended to form the basis for developing this office and these are being actively considered by the schools.

Practice Placements

- The essence of the five year integrated degree is that students will get exposure to the three main practice areas: community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy and industry. This will allow students make informed career choices but it will also encourage the development of rounded professionals who will have a clear knowledge of the full range and influence of their profession.
- It is an essential component of the integrated degree that the student remain a student for the full five years of study. Under the current system, students become employees during their final year. Whilst removing employee status will have short term financial consequences for students, the opportunity presented by the new programme for careful teaching and professional mentoring will be an invaluable asset to the young pharmacist and to the profession as a whole.
- It is a matter of understandable concern to the schools of pharmacy that the profession should be in a position to offer the required quantity and quality of placements once the five year programme is introduced.
- This was the principle challenge that the National Forum sought to address in 2013.
- The National Forum cannot source actual placements, that is for the academic institutions, however, a programme of engagement with the three strands of the profession has been commenced by the Forum to ensure that there is a full understanding within the profession of what the proposed reforms are and what they are expected to deliver.

Stakeholder Engagement

- In January 2013 the PSI notified all registered pharmacists that a series of information evenings would take place all over the country to discuss the new Institute of Pharmacy, the Core Competency Framework, CPD and Educational Reforms.
- Eight such information evenings took place in February and March 2013: in Dublin South, Dublin North, Sligo, Galway, Athlone, Waterford, Cork and Limerick.
- A total of 480 pharmacists attended the meetings.
- The Chairperson of the National Forum outlined the proposed educational reforms and asked for comment, criticism and suggestions on how these could be implemented.

Feedback from the Information Evenings

- PA Consulting have analysed the 325 feedback forms that were submitted by those attending the information evenings and the response has been unequivocal:
 - 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the importance of the implementation of an integrated degree for the profession.
 - 85% agreed that the change to the integrated degree had to be made for the profession going forward.
- On the question of becoming a tutor under the new programme, 53% either agreed or strongly agreed that they would be interested. An additional 25% were neutral, 9% did not respond and 13% did not agree with acting as a tutor. This ties in with the lack of clarity around how the programme would be implemented – only 50% were clear on how it would be implemented over the next five years.
- PA Consulting have applied a statistical analysis to these figures to identify their accuracy and reliability as a barometer for the entire profession and they concluded that from a statistical perspective the survey could be seen as representative of the full register allowing for a margin of error of less than 5%.

Outcome from Information Evenings

- The National Forum is encouraged with the response from the profession to the educational reforms being proposed but is mindful that to translate this support into practice placements will require further engagement with the profession.
- This engagement will have to involve the schools of pharmacy who will be responsible for placements in the integrated degree.

Community Pharmacists

- In January and February 2013, the Chairperson of the National Forum had a series of one-to-one meetings with superintendent pharmacists to explain the educational reforms being proposed and to identify whether there were any difficulties for the profession that would need to be addressed.
- Initially she met with the superintendents in the five major chains who between them represent about 200 pharmacies. These superintendents were very interested in the proposed five year degree and all expressed an interest in taking students across the various placement periods.
- The Chairperson also met with individual pharmacy owners. Whilst some have expressed concern at the proposed changes (particularly the implications of the change in student status from employee to unpaid internee), all have recognised that the present system needs to be updated.
- When looked at in the round these independent pharmacists came to the view that the compromises that will be required to make the new programme work, will be worth it for the gains it will produce.
- At the conclusion of this engagement process, the comments and observations of the superintendent pharmacists were analysed and the overwhelming response was one of support for the proposed reforms.
- It is worth noting that all pharmacists who did not take a student under the current system cited financial constraints as the reason. They regretted the loss to their practices of a student which they recognised as a stimulating and energising presence.

Community Pharmacy Representatives

- The Chairperson met with the President and the Director of Pharmacy Services of the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU). Engagement with this representative body will be on-going as the programme of educational reform develops.
- Community pharmacy is and will remain the principle career path for pharmacy graduates and carefully structured placements in this practice setting will be crucial to the successful roll out of the five year degree.

Placements in Community Pharmacies

- The engagement process that took place in February and March of 2013 offers a considerable degree of optimism that the community pharmacy sector will be willing to work with the schools of pharmacy to provide quality placements when the time arises, provided the appropriate supports are put in place.

Placements in Industry

- The involvement of pharmacists in the pharmaceutical industry is at a relatively low level at present.
- Industry offers rewarding and stimulating career opportunities and by exposing all students to industry, the five year integrated degree will open up these possibilities to graduates.
- The impact that pharmacists can have on the pharmaceutical industry is considerable given their scientific, medical and clinical training in particular in the areas of patient safety, medicine reconciliation and pharmacology.
- The two industry representatives on the National Forum have been involved in the formation of PIER, an organisation of pharmacists who are engaged in industry, education and regulation.
- This body will assist the schools of pharmacy to secure meaningful placements for students in the industry sector.

Engagement with Representative Bodies

- The National Forum has commenced an engagement exercise with Pharmachemical Ireland, the Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association (IPHA) and the Pharmaceutical Managers' Institute of Ireland (PMI) to discuss industry placements and to identify what needs to be put in place to make pharmacy students useful and relevant to industry.

Placements in Hospitals

- Under the current programme, only a limited number of students have the opportunity to experience practice in a hospital setting.
- 16 placements for pharmacy students are available in our hospitals in 2013 and whilst these placements are designed to prepare students for entry on to the register as practicing pharmacists, they are in practice aimed at preparing students for a career in hospital pharmacy.
- The new degree seeks to train pharmacists with hospital experience, not hospital pharmacists: this is an important distinction. It will expose the pharmacy student to the rigorous patient-safety emphasis of a hospital setting as well as to the importance of working as part of a healthcare team.
- Studies have identified the transition from community to hospital and the transition from hospital to community as presenting a high risk to patients in terms of medication errors. The pharmacist is the key professional in this area and by integrating the pharmacist into the care management team and with the right systems in place, these transitions can be made safely and seamlessly.
- Finding quality hospital placements is seen by the schools of pharmacy as one of the biggest challenges to the successful roll out of the five year degree.

Pharmacy Liaison Workshops

- In June 2013, in response to a need identified by the NF, the PSI and the NF commenced a series of workshops with HSE Pharmacy Liaisons. Pharmacy liaisons are practising pharmacists whose role is to develop ways in which pharmacists can work as part of healthcare teams both in the community and in hospitals in the context of the HSE clinical care programmes. Their perspective on the educational initiatives being promoted is very important.
- There have been five pharmacy liaison workshops – July 4th, August 20th and September 19th October 16th and November 6th all facilitated by Pierre-Henri Baviera of PA Consulting. This has proved to be a very constructive group and it has looked at how the system within hospitals needs to change in order to fully admit pharmacy students as part of the healthcare training teams that operate there.
- The workshop identified the six hospital groups as a starting point for consideration of what could be done and arising out of this consultative process and from National Forum discussions a number of initiatives have commenced.

Initiatives for Securing Hospital Placements

- The PSI and PA Consulting have developed an overview of the quantity of practice placements that will be required to support the five year integrated degree in the three principal practice settings.
- Paul Gallagher (RCSI) is working with the PSI to identify the potential of the entire hospital sector in Ireland to provide placement opportunities for pharmacy students.
- A business case is in the process of being prepared for submission to the Department of Health outlining what needs to be put in place for the successful roll-out of pharmacy placements in hospitals. This will involve consultation with the HPAI and Chief Pharmacists in hospitals as well as the liaison pharmacists and the hospital representatives on the National Forum.
- UCC is taking the lead in developing learning outcomes pertaining to the placement components of the curricula and this will look at the learning outcomes and curriculum structure necessary to support practice placements which will include hospital placements.

Conclusion

- The National Forum has been aware from the beginning that the schools of pharmacy were being asked to make significant changes in the way pharmacy was taught. The schools will need to be supported and assisted in making these changes which are necessary to enable pharmacy progress as a profession and to ensure that the unique skills of the pharmacist continue to deliver the highest possible standard of care to the patient and to the community.
- The National Forum is an exciting and invigorating forum for discussion and the exchange of ideas. It has provided a platform for stakeholders to consider the future of pharmacy education and of pharmacy as a profession and it has brought a wide and disparate interest group together to look at how pharmacy can best move forward in the interests of the public good and the patient.
- The National Forum looks forward to completing its work towards implementation of the PEARs report recommendation in the coming months and is grateful for the support it is continuing to receive from the PSI, the pharmacy profession and the third level institutions that provide pharmacy education.