

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, CORK

PERIODIC REVIEW

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

ACADEMIC YEAR 2016

May 2016

PRG Members

1.	Professor Ian Marshall	Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology	University of Strathclyde
2.	Professor Paul McSweeney	School of Food & Nutritional Sciences	University College Cork
3.	Ms. Lorna Kelly	Student	University College Cork
4.	Professor Marcus Rattray	School of Pharmacy	University of Bradford

Introduction

The School of Pharmacy commenced its new five-year integrated MPharm degree in September 2015, superseding the existing four-year BPharm degree. The new degree is subject to annual review as part of the accreditation process by the regulator, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI). One of the conditions of accreditation was that the School of Pharmacy undertake a Teaching Quality Review. The School approached the Quality Promotion Unit and requested a periodic review be conducted. The review was held on 24th and 25th May 2016. The timetable for the visit may be found at Appendix A.

The PRG agreed that the Self-Evaluation Report was well-prepared and comprehensive. Requests by the Panel for additional information and clarification in advance of the site visit had been responded to efficiently and fully. The Peer Review Group received the benchmarking report at a later stage to the rest of the documentation.

General Observations

The PRG agreed that the School of Pharmacy is a well-led and coherent group working well as a team. The PRG appreciated the openness of the staff during the site-visit. The Panel complimented them on their development of the new integrated MPharm qualification and their effective engagement with the other schools of pharmacy to develop the new APPEL initiative (Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning). The School had well-developed approaches to gaining student feedback on an on-going basis which included both formal and informal mechanisms. The PRG heard that the School was held in high regard by stakeholders that it met.

The PRG noted the School of Pharmacy has an academic development link with Futures University in Egypt which serves to support the exchange of ideas and practices for Pharmacy education between the two institutions.

The PRG also noted high QS ranking (number 49) within the category of Pharmacology and Pharmacy.

Overall the School appears to provide a thorough and rigorous education to the students. The PRG would like to commend the School on delivering excellent teaching and excellent research.

Academic standards

Aims and Outcomes (is the provision still located correctly on the NFQ?)

The Panel considered that the current B Pharm is correctly positioned at level 8 on the NFQ and the new MPharm is correctly positioned at level 9 on the NFQ. Other programmes, such as the MSc in Clinical Pharmacy and MSc in Pharmacy Technology and Quality Systems are correctly positioned on the NFQ.

Learning outcomes of the M Pharm were deemed to meet accreditation standards as assessed by Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) and are deemed to meet professional standards subject to meeting certain requirements. The BPharm is currently accredited by the PSI. The PSI specifies certain core competencies which are reflected in the Learning Outcomes of the programme.

Strategic and curriculum planning

The PRG recognised that in recent years the School has significantly revised its curricula with the introduction of the MPharm; this was also reflected in changes to final cohorts of BPharm. The School has an active Teaching and Curriculum Committee which guided these changes and which also reflected national expectations set by the PSI. In their recent site-visit the PSI detailed a number of requirements for continued accreditation and the PRG is confident the School will address these requirements within its resource, noting additional staff appointments to develop and deliver the practice education element of the revised programme. The PRG agreed with the PSI requirements.

PRG noted that the new MPharm has large numbers of small modules (5 credits) and that some current modules have a large amount of lectures and large volume of in-course assessment. Given the SWOT analysis and feedback from staff about teaching overload, student contact hours and student feedback about assessment burden, the PRG recommended that new learning and assessment strategies be developed and used to streamline the programme in order to provide students with more opportunities for self-directed learning.

Student progress and attainment

The PRG commended the School on producing highly regarded pharmacy graduates. Students interviewed by the PRG were thriving, enthusiastic and confident of gaining employment. The Panel learned that the employment rate of graduates is 100%. The PRG expressed no concerns about student drop-out rates during the course of the programme.

The PRG viewed data on the distribution of honours categories which were in keeping with the calibre of students recruited into the programme, with approximately 20% of students receiving a first class honours qualification.

The Panel would have found it useful to have access to module grade distributions. However, the PRG appreciate that university IT systems does not generate these at present.

External reference points (including external examiners' reports and requirements of PSRBs)

The PRG was satisfied with the external examiner reports which were positive about the course and the externs attended exam board meetings.

The PRG noted that the course has been accredited for two years by the PSI and noted the requirements of the latest report from the PSI.

Student Experience

Teaching and learning, including the impact of research on teaching.

The PRG was impressed by the clear commitment from staff towards their students and towards quality and innovation in teaching. Teaching is rigorous and academically of high level but the students and staff commented on the high workloads as a result of the volume of material presented. The students commented that some learning was rote learning and that there was insufficient time for self-study. The PRG noted the need for a learning strategy which embeds self-directed and student-centred learning as the programme develops. The PRG considered that the School would find it useful to benchmark the time spent in class with similar MPharm programmes in Ireland and the UK, and should consult with Schools that have transitioned to an MPharm programme in which science and practice are more fully Integrated.

The staff members in the School are research-active and the Panel learned from students examples of research-led teaching; students also conducted research themselves during the course of the programme. The Panel was confident that the students have a good understanding of the research being conducted by the School.

Assessment

The PRG noted that a range of assessments is used or is being developed, including OSCEs (objective structured clinical examinations), written examinations, laboratory reports, oral presentations, peer assessment and reflections (PebblePad). PRG noted that some modules have large numbers of assessments and a strategy should be adopted to reduce this number.

Staff development

The PRG noted that the majority of staff members have a recognised qualification in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education and all academic staff hold PhDs. Staff have attended leadership training and standards-setting courses. The School has made funds available to enable all staff to attend conferences. PRG noted that the School has proactively organised an OSCEology course which will be attended by its staff as well as staff from other Schools within UCC, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and Trinity College Dublin. A high percentage of staff are pharmacists and thus undertake on-going Continued Professional Development to maintain their registration.

The PRG noted that promotional opportunities in UCC have been very limited since 2008 and this has had a particularly negative effect on the School of Pharmacy because of the high proportion of early career staff.

Learning resources

The PRG considered that the facilities available in the Cavanagh Building are excellent for teaching and research and include good laboratory equipment, aseptic suite and industrial pharmacy equipment. The School has access to facilities in the School of Engineering (Process & Chemical Engineering) and the School of Food & Nutritional Sciences. The School makes use of the Blackboard virtual learning environment and other teaching technologies such as Panopto and PebblePad. Research students have online access to a wide range of journals through the Boole Library. The School subscribes to MedicinesComplete, an essential resource for pharmacy education. Students undertake experiential training placements in a range of settings as part of the programme.

Student support

The School is student-friendly and student-focused. Both students and staff reflected that the BPharm is an intensive programme and concerns about student stress and anxiety featured in the self-evaluation report and in meetings with the PRG. Students are supported through a mentoring system with access to University services. However, the PRG considered that the organisation of the mentoring system could be improved to ensure that all students have access to pastoral support from a member of staff who knows them.

Employability/involvement with the wider community

Employability is 100% with the vast majority of graduates going on to work as pharmacists initially. Students and graduates are held in high regard by stakeholders. Students are aware of all of the career opportunities available to them. The majority of students are able to get work experience in pharmacies, separate to their academic placements, by organising their own summer and part-time jobs in community pharmacies. The PRG noted that more work could be done to involve employers in the design and delivery of MPharm programme.

Collaborative partnerships

The PRG commended the School on its link with Futures University of Egypt which involves providing advice on curriculum development and maintenance of academic standards and through teaching in Cairo. The PRG commend this initiative for the amount of non-exchequer income earned by the School.

The School has a number of international research collaborations. The School also interacts closely with the other two providers of pharmacy in Ireland, for example, in relation to the development of APPEL, in placement provision where the preceptors will have honorary adjunct appointments across the three schools.

Enhancement

Effectiveness of quality management processes within the unit

The PRG had no concerns.

Conclusions on the way the unit enhances its provision and the experience of their students.

In general the Panel was of the view that staff members were actively engaged with students to improve the quality of their learning and had adopted innovative teaching approaches.

The School is cognisant of developments in pharmacy education, in Irish and international contexts.

Conclusions on innovation and good practice

A statement on any current aspects of the unit and its provision which the PRG feels is particularly innovative or representative of good practice.

The PRG commended the introduction of educational technologies including PebblePad and Panopto into its programmes, and the development of OSCEs, including training by world experts. There is appropriate emphasis on industrial pharmacy reflects links with the region.

Research strengths which inform the teaching and the students are involved in the research projects.

Recommendations

Comment on actions taken since last review (monitoring of action plan through annual monitoring process)

All of the recommendations from the Quality Improvement Plan have been implemented apart from item 7 and 12. The School should appoint an External Advisory Board to fulfil these recommendations.

Comment on any recommendations made by the unit in its SER

The PRG endorses the Schools recommendations.

Recommendations by the PRG for consideration and response

The School should:

1. Set up an external advisory board that will help to develop the programmes and research.
2. Develop a strategy for increased international student recruitment.
3. Develop new learning and assessment strategies in order to streamline the programme to provide students with more opportunities for self-directed learning and to reduce in-course assessment load. The School should consider further integration of academic topics to reduce the number of 5 credit modules.
4. Work with providers to ensure placement quality noting that some students appear to have had a sub-optimal experience on placement. In addition, ensure that the number of placements in hospitals and community pharmacy is adequate.
5. To develop improved pastoral support for students.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
PEER REVIEW GROUP SITE VISIT
TIMETABLE

In Summary

- Tuesday 24th May: The Peer Review Group (PRG) arrives at the River Lee Hotel for a briefing from Ms. Aoife Ní Néill and Ms. Elizabeth Noonan, Director of the Quality Promotion Unit, followed by a meeting with the Heads of School and College. An informal dinner will be held with PRG and School staff that evening.
- Wednesday 25th May: The PRG meets with school staff, students and relevant officers of UCC. A working private dinner is held that evening for the PRG in order to work on the report.
- Thursday 26th May: External PRG members depart

Tuesday 24th May 2016	
Venue: Room 6, Business Centre, River Lee Hotel	
12.00 – 13.30	Meeting of members of the Peer Review Group. Lunch and briefing by the Director of the Quality Promotion Unit. Group agrees final work schedule and assignment of tasks for the following day. Views are exchanged and areas to be clarified or explored are identified.
14.30 – 15.30	Meeting with Head of School of Pharmacy
15.30 – 16.00	Tea/coffee. PRG move to <u>Tower Room 1, North Wing, Main Quad, UCC.</u>
16.00 – 16.30	Meeting with Head of College of Medicine & Health
16.30 – 17.00	Private meeting of PRG for discussion.
17.00 – 17.45	Meeting with Stakeholders Oncology Pharmacist, Bon Secours Hospital Pharmacy Manager, Mercy University Hospital Representative from Merck Representative from Pharmacy Department, Cork University Hospital O'Shea's Pharmacy, Blackpool Venue: Staff Common Room, North Wing, Main Quad
19.00	Dinner for members of the Peer Review Group & staff members of the School of Pharmacy Venue: The Weir Bistro, River Lee Hotel

Wednesday 25th May 2016

Venue: Boardroom, Pharmacy Building

08.30 – 09.00	Convening of Peer Review Group
09.00 – 10.00	Meeting with staff of the School of Pharmacy Venue: UG 22/23, Ground Floor, Pharmacy Building
10.00 – 10.30	Tea/coffee and private meeting of PRG
10.30 – 11.00	<u>Representatives of Pharmacy 1st and 2nd year students</u> B Pharm 2 – 3 x student representatives Venue: UG 22/23, Ground Floor, Pharmacy Building
11.00 – 11.30	<u>Representatives of 3rd and 4th year students</u> B Pharm 3 – 2 x student representatives B Pharm 4 – 3 x student representatives M Pharm 1 – 2 x representative students Venue: UG 22/23, Ground Floor, Pharmacy Building
11.30 – 12.00	<u>Representatives of Postgraduate students</u> PhD – 8 x student representatives Venue: UG 22/23, Ground Floor, Pharmacy Building
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch and private meeting of PRG
13.00 – 13.30	Tour of facilities
13.30 – 13.45	Meeting with officers of the university, to include College Financial analyst and other officers, depending on the PRG's line of enquiry College Financial Analyst
13.45 – 14.30	Preparation of first draft of final report
14.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Head of School of Pharmacy
15.00 - 15.30	Private meeting of PRG
15.30 – 16.00	Exit presentation to all staff, to be made by the Chair of the Peer Review Group or other member of Peer Review Group as agreed, summarising the principal findings of the Peer Review Group. This presentation is <u>not</u> for discussion at this time. Venue: UG 22/23, Ground Floor, Pharmacy Building
19.00	Working private dinner for members of the Peer Review Group to complete drafting of report and finalisation of arrangements for completion and

	submission of final report.
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	Venue: Room 5, Business Centre, River Lee Hotel
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