

**A Review  
of the operation of the  
National Forum for Pharmacy Education and  
Accreditation**

**By  
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# National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation

## REVIEW

### Introduction

Under an operational objective in the PSI Service Plan for 2014 to '*Oversee and monitor the implementation programme for the five-year fully integrated degree in pharmacy*', an action is identified to review the operation of the National Forum for Pharmacy Education & Accreditation ('the National Forum').

### Scope of the Review

- To review the terms of reference of the National Forum with regard to their scope and feasibility
- To evaluate the achievements of the National Forum with respect to the specific activities defined in the terms of reference
- To evaluate the *modus operandi* of the National Forum
- To evaluate the relationship of the National Forum led by the Chair to the PSI's governance structures (e.g. Registrar, Professional Development and Learning Committee, Council)
- To consider the type of structures the PSI can feasibly implement to support the academic institutions in their ongoing commencement and implementation activities for the five-year integrated pharmacy degree programme
- To consider the type of future structures that could enhance the way the PSI carries out its functions, duties, powers and ancillary powers in relation to the initial education and training of pharmacists.

### Background

The National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation (the National Forum)<sup>1</sup> was established by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) to advise and assist in the implementation of the Pharmacy Education and Accreditation Reviews report (PEARs report) which was published in June 2010<sup>2</sup>.

The PEARs report was initiated by the PSI in response to the Pharmacy Act 2007 (the Act). Section 7<sup>3</sup> of this Act confers responsibility on the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland, the pharmacy regulator, with respect to pharmacy education and training.

The PEARs Project had the following aims<sup>4</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> See Interim Report of the National Forum at [www.PSI/education/national\\_forum.ie](http://www.PSI/education/national_forum.ie) for full membership and terms of reference of the National Forum

<sup>2</sup> The Pharmacy Education and Accreditation Reviews (PEARs) Project. Prof Keith A Wilson and Dr Christopher A Langley. Final Report: June 2010. Available at [www.PSI/education/PEARs.ie](http://www.PSI/education/PEARs.ie)

<sup>3</sup> Section 7 (1): The principal functions of the Society shall be -

(a) To regulate the profession of pharmacy.....

(b) to promote and ensure a high standard of education and training for persons seeking to become pharmacists,

(c) To ensure that those persons and pharmacists obtain appropriate experience.

Section 7 (2)(a) it is the duty of the Society to -

(ii) determine and apply the criteria for registration,

(iii) draw up codes of conduct for pharmacists,

(iv) Determine, approve and keep under review programmes of education and training suitable to enable persons applying for registration to meet those criteria and pharmacists to comply with those codes.

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- To undertake a comprehensive review of the complete five-year education and training process for entry to the pharmacy profession in Ireland and to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current system
- To identify potential models for future education and training and to explore the ways in which the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland can regulate (accredit) the education and training programme.
- To draw upon the experiences and views of all the stakeholders informed by international experiences and to make recommendations on a future strategy for pharmacy education and training in Ireland.

Following an extensive consultation process, the PEARs report made a number of important recommendations the first two of which are:

1. The current 4+1 model of pharmacy education to first registration should be replaced by a five-year fully integrated programme of education, training and assessment as the basis for application for registration as a pharmacist<sup>5</sup>.
2. To ensure success, the development and delivery of the new integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment should be assisted by a National Forum that meets regularly. This Forum should be led by the pharmacy regulator (the PSI) and comprise all relevant stakeholders including representatives from each school of pharmacy and from all sectors of the profession where work-based training will take place<sup>6</sup>.

Council of the PSI (Council) formally adopted the five-year fully integrated degree as Council policy in June 2010.

## **The National Forum**

The purpose of the National Forum, as set out in its terms of reference, was to advise and assist Council 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**

Provide a mechanism for clear communication to the profession and wider stakeholders on the introduction of an integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment.

Drive progression toward the key implementation milestones in the establishment of the new integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment in Ireland:

- Agree future funding model for pharmacy education and training by July 2011.
- Establish educational standards by July 2011.
- Deliver a communication programme to the profession by November 2011
- Develop a national system for practice based learning by March 2012.
- Establish an interim pharmacy education model July 2011

<sup>4</sup>PEARs Report , p34.

<sup>5</sup> Pears Report p21

<sup>6</sup> Ibid p22

- Establish accreditation standards by December 2011.
- Approved degree programmes launched in academic year 2012/2013

Advise the PSI on the undertaking of research to support the development of the pharmacy profession.

Facilitate future collaborative working of the employer group and the schools of pharmacy and work with schools, employers and practice-educators to support the change process required to establish the integrated five-year programme

Put in place a plan for placement provision and facilitate the development of a national coordinating mechanism for this provision

Oversee the phased expansion of work-based learning provision and assessment leading to full establishment of the new integrated programme

Oversee the marketing of the new integrated programme and coordinate engagement with stakeholders and public.

### Review of Terms of Reference

The following review:

- Outlines the terms of reference of the National Forum with regard to their scope and feasibility
- Evaluates the achievements of the National Forum with respect to the specific activities defined in the terms of reference
- Evaluates the *modus operandi* of the National Forum.

1. Provide a mechanism for clear communication to the profession and wider stakeholders on the introduction of an integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment.

The National Forum, made up of persons representative of the principal practice settings and major stakeholder groups, provided an opportunity for the schools of pharmacy and the three main strands of the profession to meet and share opinions on the future of pharmacy. In many respects, this was the Forum's most significant achievement in that it fostered a dialogue between academics and practitioners that influenced both the outcome of the Forum's work and has laid the groundwork for on-going interaction. Through their participation with the work of the Forum, Forum members were in a position to discuss the proposed initiatives with their respective professional colleagues and were able to report feedback to the Forum for consideration and discussion.

The National Forum meetings were successful in that they facilitated open and at times robust discussions of the issues. Initially much of this discussion centred on the value of a five-year integrated degree itself but in time the discussion covered areas such as funding, curriculum design and development, tutor incentives, student status whilst on placement, supervision requirements, oversea placements, duration of placements and availability of placements.

2. Drive progression toward the key implementation milestones in the establishment of the new integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment in Ireland:

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.

At the initial National Forum meetings it became clear that whilst the three schools of pharmacy were supportive of Council policy in principle, they were of the view that the introduction of a five-year integrated degree was not feasible from a financial perspective. The three schools expressed a preference for the existing 4+1 model which they believed should be delivered by the three schools.

A second concern expressed by the schools was the availability of placements across the five-year programme particularly in hospitals.

It was not part of the terms of reference of the National Forum to identify alternative educational models to Council. The National Forum was charged with facilitating the introduction of the five-year programme and if it was satisfied that the programme was incapable of being delivered it would have reported accordingly to Council. Therefore, establishing the feasibility of the five-year programme became the main focus of the Forum. This required looking beyond the assertions of the schools that the programme was not deliverable and trying to establish independent evidence. The National Forum had a wider focus than the schools of pharmacy. It had to consider the public good, patient safety and the development of the profession within the current healthcare environment as well as the circumstances of the individual schools.

The National Forum, through its appropriate sub-fora addressed the two principal concerns – funding and placements - and other concerns of the schools.

The Interim Report of the National Forum, published in November 2013 and available at [http://www.thepsi.ie/gns/education/fiveyearintegratedpharmacydegreeprogramme/National\\_Forum.aspx](http://www.thepsi.ie/gns/education/fiveyearintegratedpharmacydegreeprogramme/National_Forum.aspx) contains a detailed outline of the work done by the various sub-fora over the past two and a half years.

The sub-forum concept which was designed to allow parallel work streams to operate concurrently did not work as planned. One reason for this was the belief held by the schools and some Forum members that funding was such an insurmountable obstacle that it was futile to pursue any other elements of the programme until funding had been resolved. This effectively prevented progress in any area other than funding for the first eighteen months of the Forum's work.

A further difficulty with the sub-forum concept was the demand it placed on the heads of school in terms of time commitment. It became clear that the three schools of pharmacy had to work in tandem across all the work streams of the Forum and this would have meant at least four meetings per month for each head. Whilst delegation by the head of school might have relieved this burden to an extent, the ultimate decision-making role of the school head made their engagement necessary.

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By dealing with the issues consecutively, the heads of school could give their undivided attention to each issue but meetings were spread over a longer period.

Concurrent engagement would have speeded up the process and would have been the more efficient approach if it had proved possible.

- Agree future funding model for pharmacy education and training by July 2011.

The challenge presented by Funding was considerable and led to a measure of dissonance around the table.

Through the Funding sub-forum, the recommendation was made that the funding of the five-year degree should be through the imposition of a student fee in the fifth year. A full report was delivered to the December 2011 meeting of Council outlining the reasons for this recommendation and a copy of that report is appended hereto<sup>7</sup>. Council accepted the recommendation unanimously.

The schools of pharmacy were of the view that the cost of delivering a five-year programme made it impossible to implement Council policy in this regard and that the fee that would have to be charged would be prohibitive.

Council commissioned a Cost Analysis to establish at a high level the cost to the schools of providing the fifth year. The Forum recognised that it could not direct schools on what fee should be marked but it could provide reassurance that the degree could be introduced at a cost that would allow for the imposition of a reasonable fee.

PA Consulting was commissioned to do this work and their preliminary report was delivered in June 2012. Subject to a number of clarifications that were sought by members, Council agreed the high level figures outlined in the interim report and recommended that they be stress tested. Further work was done on the report and the final Cost Analysis was presented in October 2012. This Analysis identified a cost per student of between €10.7k and €7.5k depending on the model used and the amortisation period applied. TCD and UCC are both entitled to a HEA post graduate grant of €4k. which would further reduce this cost. As a private institution, RCSI is not entitled to this subvention although the HEA did indicate at a meeting with the PSI that it would be open to representations on this from the RCSI.

Both at school level and at institutional level, the figures provided by PA Consulting were not accepted.

The schools of pharmacy have not reverted to the Forum with revised figures for the cost of the programme but they have indicated that they will deal with funding the five-year programme through their own committees and from Q4 2013 the issue of funding was no longer the principal focus of the Forum's work.

- Establish educational standards by July 2011.

Educational standards were drafted by the PSI in 2012 and were considered by a meeting of the Accreditation sub-forum with the Heads of School and two of the experts who had drafted the

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 1

standards in July 2012. Following a public consultation process these standards were approved in principle by Council in December 2013.

- Develop a national system for practice based learning by March 2012.

The doubts expressed by the schools of pharmacy in the capacity of the profession to absorb the extra placements required under the integrated degree became a stumbling block to progress from Q4 2012 onwards. Providing reassurance to the schools on this and also designing a framework for practice –based learning was identified as an important task for the Forum. A three-pronged approach was adopted:

- A centralised placement selection system was suggested - the Office of Experiential Learning (OEL). This office would be a shared service across all three schools and would employ a National Co-ordinator who would oversee practice placements across all practice settings and across the five years of the degree.  
The schools are very supportive of the OEL concept and they are actively engaged in establishing such an office.
- A Framework was agreed after extensive consultation with practitioners and academics that will accommodate practice placements in community, hospital and industry settings<sup>8</sup>. This Framework provides for an 8 month patient-facing placement in fifth year, a 4/6 month placement in fourth year and shorter placements dispersed throughout first, second and third year. This basic framework has been agreed by the three schools and curricula design is now proceeding in accordance with this framework.
- A wide-ranging and comprehensive engagement with the pharmacy profession and with stakeholders in hospital and industry was undertaken in 2013 to identify the level of co-operation that might be expected in the provision of placements. This engagement provided significant support from the profession for the proposed programme of placements and may be summarised as follows:

*I. Industry Pharmacists*

The two industry pharmacists on the National Forum have been instrumental in the formation of PIER, a voluntary group of pharmacists employed in industry, education and regulation. This group is already identifying placement opportunities for pharmacy students under the present 4+1 programme and will continue that as the new five-year degree becomes established.

The Registrar, Marita Kinsella; Head of Professional Development and Learning (PD&L), Lorraine Horgan, and Marian Shanley, Chairperson of the National Forum have engaged in a broad and wide-ranging series of meetings with industry representatives<sup>9</sup> and these have all expressed enthusiasm and support for the proposed initiatives.

*II. Community Pharmacists*

The PSI engaged in a series of National Meetings to which all pharmacists were invited in order to discuss the three main initiatives being promulgated by the PSI: the Core

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<sup>8</sup> See p13 of Interim Report of National Forum for Framework Outline.

<sup>9</sup> Abbott Ireland; Industrial Development Authority, Pharmaceutical Division, Irish Pharmaceutical Healthcare Association; Pharmachemical Ireland; Irish Medical Devices Association

Competency Framework for Pharmacists; the Irish Institute of Pharmacy and the Continuing Professional Development model; and the Five-Year Integrated Programme.

All participants were invited to express their views in a questionnaire after the presentation by the Chairperson of the National Forum and an analysis of these questionnaires is appended hereto<sup>10</sup>.

The overwhelming support from the profession for the new education programme was extremely encouraging. Whilst these meetings were open to all pharmacists, the majority of those attending were engaged in community practice.

The Chairperson of the National Forum also had a number of one-to-one meetings with Superintendent Pharmacists representative of a cross-section of ownership structures from large multiples to owner-operators. The level of support amongst this group was unequivocal and many of them asserted that they would anticipate greatly increasing their intern positions under the new regime.

The Irish Pharmacy Union has been generous in its engagement with the National Forum and it will have a vital role to play in the successful roll-out of the new degree.

### *III. Hospital Pharmacy*

Hospital Pharmacy has long been recognised as the most challenging sector from the point of view of placements. The hospital representatives on the National Forum have worked with PA Consulting and the PD&L unit of the PSI to address the structural changes that are necessary to support pharmacy placements in hospitals. A series of meetings have been scheduled with the Department of Health and the HSE to discuss how pharmacy students can be supported in our hospitals. The Hospital Pharmacists Association of Ireland (HPAI) has met with the Chair of the National Forum together with PSI representatives and these meetings have been very useful. These one-to-one meetings with key personnel in hospital pharmacy, Department of Health and HSE are proving to be very significant. The schools of pharmacy have now undertaken to continue this dialogue by calling together a meeting of hospital tutors. This is where the National Forum has proved most effective – it has begun a conversation that can be continued by the profession and the academic institutions and which should be part of any academic development in the future.

An initial scoping exercise undertaken by Prof. Paul Gallagher of RCSI indicates that taking the entire hospital sector into account, there is significant un-tapped capacity within the sector that could be accessed.

This is a continuing task and one which will ultimately pass to the schools of pharmacy themselves. There is however, scope for PSI involvement in the development of structures for the support of pharmacy placements. It may be necessary for the PSI to commit further personnel resources to this work for some months to come.

The key finding from the engagement process has been a strong indication that the pharmacy profession in its various practice settings has the capacity, with appropriate supports put in place, to absorb the extra burden of placements that the five-year integrated programme will require.

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix 2 : Feedback from Roadshows



The National Forum cannot source the placements that will be required by the new programme but it can offer assurance to Council that placements should not be an insurmountable burden to the schools in implementing the five-year programme. The work done in this regard offers such assurance and leaves the way open for the schools, working through the OEL to secure individual placements for students.

- Establish an interim pharmacy education model July 2011

Following a Public Procurement Process, the RCSI was awarded the contract for delivering the interim programme in January 2014. This contract is for three years with an option to extend for up to two further years.

The National Forum did not suggest any alternative to the single provider model that has been in place since 2009.

- Establish accreditation standards by December 2011.

Accreditation Standards were considered by the Curriculum and Development Assessment Sub-Forum and were adopted in principle by Council in December 2013.

- Approve degree programmes launched in academic year 2012/2013

The draft Statutory Instrument outlining the new five-year programme has been sent out for public consultation with a return date of March 3, 2014. One of the main points to be decided will be the start date of the new programme which will either be 2014 or 2015. This proposed legislation reflects many of the suggestions and recommendations of the Forum as expressed by members in the course of meetings over the past two and a half years.

The National Forum has worked to achieve the introduction of the Five-Year Programme according to the Terms of Reference outlined above. The objectives of the Terms of Reference to the point of delivering the five-year degree have been met although not within the time frame indicated. Some of the time lines were already passed before the National Forum was operational but there were undoubted delays in solving some of the problems.

Fundamentally the issue was that the National Forum and its Terms of Reference was predicated on the understanding that the three academic institutions which provide pharmacy education in this country, (RCSI, UCC and TCD) were fully behind the introduction of a five-year fully integrated degree for pharmacy. This was not the case. The schools regarded the five-year programme as undeliverable and were strongly of the view that the current 4+1 model should be continued but with each of the schools graduating their own students from the +1 year.

The Forum had no mandate to consider alternative models to the five-year programme. All it could do was establish the feasibility of the programme as adopted by Council in June 2010 and report accordingly.

Notwithstanding their reservations, the three schools of pharmacy have worked tirelessly and with a very high level of commitment to work through the challenges the five-year programme presented

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to them. They have been generous with their time and their expertise and have facilitated the Forum in every respect. Their concerns for the feasibility of the programme were genuinely held and their reluctance to commit to such an initiative was based on apprehensions regarding the quality and excellence they aspired to for pharmacy education. The task for the National Forum was to weigh their concerns against the benefits to the wider community of a pharmacy profession that was ready to face the challenges of a changing and expanded role in healthcare delivery. The National Forum concluded that the concerns of the schools should not prevent the reform of pharmacy education.

The Terms of Reference referred to a number of outcomes that were not directly connected with delivering the Five-Year Programme:

Advise the PSI on the undertaking of research in education, training and assessment to support the development of the pharmacy profession.

There is a very important role for a forum, meeting three or four times a year and made up of academics and practitioners, to look at educational research in pharmacy to support the development of the profession. This forum should be chaired by a pharmacist/academic who will bring personal knowledge and expertise to the issue. Obviously such a body would be co-ordinated by and work alongside the PD&L section within the PSI. The objective would be to encourage continued dialogue with practitioners across all branches of the profession and academics.

Facilitate future collaborative working of the employer group and the schools of pharmacy and work with schools, employers and practice-educators to support the change process required to establish the integrated five-year programme

The OEL will have a Steering Group made up of practitioners, academics and representatives of the PSI. This steering group should offer a platform for future collaborative working. Practice placements will become the sole responsibility of the schools of pharmacy once the five-year degree is introduced. It will be for the schools to ensure continued dialogue and co-operation with employer groups and practice educators and the PSI will have an important supportive role in this.

Put in place a plan for placement provision and facilitate the development of a national coordinating mechanism for this provision

Under the terms of the interim programme tender, a sum of money was made available from the PSI to the successful tenderer to assist in the development of a central matching and selection data-base. This data-base will form the basis of the OEL data-base once it is established.

The OEL is in the process of being developed by the three schools of pharmacy. They are considering how best to establish this shared service and ensure that all students can get equal access to quality placements. If the OEL works as it is intended, it will fulfil the role of a national co-ordinating mechanism for placements.

The PSI should consider offering interim support to the schools of pharmacy pending the establishment of the OEL.

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Oversee the phased expansion of work-based learning provision and assessment leading to full establishment of the new integrated programme

The National Forum did not directly engage with the schools on the gradual expansion of work-based learning as this was a matter that was dealt with through the accreditation process for the existing programme. The National Forum understands that the schools have commenced an expansion of work-based learning as a general development of their existing programmes.

Oversee the marketing of the new integrated programme and coordinate engagement with stakeholders and public.

The marketing of the new degree is a matter for the three schools. There will be an opportunity for the PSI to use the commencement of the new degree to deliver its message of change and development of pharmacy. As the new degree will not commence until Autumn 2014 at the earliest and more probably in 2015, the marketing of the programme is some time in the future and is not something the National Forum can contribute to directly. An important element in the marketing of the new degree will be the overall context in which this educational reform is occurring – i.e. the enhanced role for pharmacy in a new healthcare delivery model which places much greater emphasis on safe, accessible and efficient primary care.

#### **To evaluate the relationship of the National Forum led by the Chair to the PSI's governance structures (e.g. Registrar, Professional Development & Learning Committee, Council)**

The relationship of the Chair to the PSI's governance structures worked extremely well. The support of the PD&L Committee and Council proved crucial in ensuring that the work of the National Forum remained focused on the delivery of the five-year integrated programme. The reporting requirement meant that the PSI was kept abreast of developments and was in a position to provide such support as required.

#### **To consider the type of structures the PSI can feasibly implement to support the academic institutions in their ongoing commencement and implementation activities for the five-year integrated pharmacy degree programme.**

The OEL is the key office in the implementation and delivery of the Five-Year Programme. Under the governance structures suggested by the National Forum, there will be a Steering Group made up of academics, practitioners, other stakeholders and the PSI, which will support the Board of Management of the OEL. This Steering Group should offer the PSI an opportunity to engage with the academic institutions and to get perspective from both the schools and the profession on how the MPharm programme is developing.

The PSI should ensure that this Steering Group is established at the same time as the OEL itself is established and that its terms of reference allow for a line of communication between the OEL management, the PSI and the Steering Group.

During the interim period, whilst the OEL is being established, the schools will need on-going support from the PSI for the provision of placements. The Delivery Group structure that has been operating alongside the National Forum for the past 15 months is a good template for how that support structure could be put in place. The schools would have the opportunity of liaising directly with the

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PSI and clearly deliverable goals and timelines could be agreed for individual tasks that would lead to the roll out of the programme.

What became clear from the National Forum experience is that the most effective engagement is directly with the Heads of the three schools of pharmacy. Attempts to delegate functions to other staff members within the schools did not appear to work. It may be that that will change now that the five-year programme is actually being delivered. Any structures put in place should have a strong emphasis on project management, deliverable outcomes and minimum time burden on the schools and the PSI. The Delivery Group is currently chaired by PA Consulting's Pierre-Henri Baviera and he has been very effective in this.

It is not being suggested that the current Delivery Group be continued. A new group which could be called the Implementation Group should be established with clearly defined goals around placements and curriculum development. It would have a term of 12 months after which the OEL would be operational and would take over most of the functions of the Implementation Group.

**To consider the type of future structures that could enhance the way the PSI carries out its functions, duties, powers and ancillary powers in relation to the initial education and training of pharmacists.**

The PSI has a unique function under Section 7(2) IV of the Pharmacy Act 2007 to '*determine, approve, and keep under review programmes of education and training suitable to enable persons applying for registration to meet [those] criteria.....*'

The initiation of the PEARs Project, the adoption of the PEARs recommendation of the five-year programme and the promulgation of the Statutory Instrument amending the Education and Training rules to a five-year integrated degree are all significant developments in fulfilling the PSI function under Section 7.

The principal concern of the PSI must be to ensure that education for pharmacists continues to provide the basis for the development of the profession into the future to enable it to provide the most efficient, safe and effective care to patients. This will require dedicated communication between the PSI and the schools of pharmacy.

The format of this dedicated communication will have to be worked out between the schools and the PSI over the coming months and it is not possible to identify any particular model that might work. The important thing is that it should focus on the remit of the Pharmacy Act 2007 and should be closely linked to any projects being undertaken by the PSI to examine how the profession can develop into the future.

Any proposal to extend the services being provided by pharmacists must have an education component included. The schools must be kept advised of any such proposals and they should have the necessary flexibility to adapt their undergraduate courses to take account of new developments in practice.

### **Did the National Forum work as a Concept?**

The National Forum worked as a facilitating forum and it provided a valuable link between practitioners and academics. It was not an implementation forum and that distinction should have been made more clearly at the outset of its work. There was an expectation amongst some participants that the Forum could deliver solutions to Funding and Placement problems that it did not have the authority to do.

The establishment of the National Forum underscored the commitment of the PSI to careful and considered reform of pharmacy education. It provided all stakeholders with an opportunity to

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contribute to the final configuration of the new degree and the final iteration of the statutory instrument which went out to public consultation owes much to the discussions at the National Forum.

The appointment of a non-pharmacist as Chairperson of the National Forum provided an objective and unbiased mediator and advocate. This was particularly helpful in bringing the message of pharmacy reform into the public domain. It did however limit the capacity of the Forum to consider detailed curriculum design and reconfiguration. The Chair was well supported by the PSI and by PA Consulting administratively and as the work of the Forum unfolded this proved to be adequate. However, had the Forum had the opportunity to consider the detail of pharmacy curriculum design, the Chair would have required the support of a practising pharmacist.

The National Forum has brought together the three main strands of the profession – community, industry and hospital and it has clearly demonstrated the value of the profession speaking with one voice.

The National Forum has achieved its primary objective of facilitating the development of a five-year integrated degree. It has listened to the concerns of stakeholders and sought to address them. It has been able to confirm to Council of the PSI the value and feasibility of the five-year programme and it has opened up a valuable communication between professional practitioners and academics.

The National Forum opened up the process for engagement with the Heads of the three institutions and the Registrar and President of the PSI. The decision to proceed with the five-year integrated degree will ultimately be a decision for the institution itself and the dialogue between the institution presidents and the PSI has ensured that they are fully informed in making that decision.

The membership of the National Forum was designed to ensure representation from all stakeholders. Had the work of the Forum proceeded in four concurrent strands as originally anticipated, all members would have been able to contribute more fully. However, because so much initial time was dedicated to Funding, there was limited opportunity for participation by all members. Once Funding had been removed as an obstacle, greater engagement with practitioners was possible and this was extremely useful.

The National Forum owes a huge debt to the tireless work of Lorraine Horgan in the PD&L Unit of the PSI. She has guided and facilitated the Forum throughout its term and has been and will be instrumental in bringing much of the deliberations of the Forum to fruition.

The National Forum is also indebted to the President and Council of the PSI who provided support and encouragement when it was most needed.

The National Forum was supported by three outstanding Registrars: Ambrose McLoughlin, Ciara McGoldrick (acting) and Marita Kinsella.

Marian Shanley

Chairperson, National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation.

March 2014

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL FORUM**

#### **Funding for Five-Year Integrated Programme**

##### **Background**

The National Forum was established by the Council for the PSI to ensure the implementation of its decision to introduce a five-year integrated programme for the education of pharmacists qualifying into the profession in the future.

This forms part of the PSI's overall remit of developing the role of the pharmacist and of ensuring the highest standards for pharmacists operating in the community, hospital and industrial settings. The PSI has particular regard for enhancing patient safety and public accessibility to primary health care.

The introduction of a five-year integrated programme would ensure that pharmacists educated in this country are educated to internationally recognised standards and it would prepare pharmacists to take their place in the wider health care arena.

##### **Implementation Problems**

The schools of pharmacy recognise the value of a five year integrated degree and are committed to establishing such a programme in each of the three schools of pharmacy. There is however considerable concern about the funding of the extra year together with concerns about underfunding of the pharmacy degree generally.

If the schools could be satisfied that the funding of the five-year programme would not add to their financial burden, they would be prepared to implement the necessary changes to the curriculums. However, they have serious concerns about embarking on a redevelopment of their degree course without cast-iron assurances that it will be properly funded.

They would also contend that the current level of HEA underfunding is so acute that they would need that issue addressed as well as a pre-requisite to implementing change.

The National Forum acknowledges the financial pressure the schools are under. The current shortfall per student is estimated by the schools to be in the region of €5000 - €8000 per annum. The schools would require a very high level of funding to cover the cost of the fifth year and to reduce the deficit for the existing four years.

The NF would contend that whilst the students can be asked to meet the costs of an extra year leading to a Master' degree, it would not be reasonable to ask students to meet the shortfalls of the previous four years. These shortfalls would need to be addressed by other funding streams such as

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industry sponsorship, an increase in overseas students, co-operation across the three schools to achieve savings and identifying post-graduate courses that would attract EU and non-EU graduates. .

Long term funding of the degree would have to be sustainable and reliable. Therefore, industry sponsorship which could be withdrawn at any time is not an answer to the on-going funding needs. The only sustainable funding model is through the introduction of fees for students in the fifth year.

### **Student Fees**

The most important consideration in introducing a student fee is the students' ability to pay. If a fee is introduced that is outside the reach of students, Pharmacy will suffer. In principle however, the NF believes that it is entirely appropriate that students who are graduating with a Masters' degree into a lucrative profession should be asked to contribute to their qualification at the final stage.

The National Forum has looked at Masters' degrees in other comparable disciplines. The range of fees charged varies widely and are obviously dictated to a certain extent by market forces but there would appear to be a range of between €5000 and €8000 for most full time courses. The schools of pharmacy have indicated that they would be looking for a figure in excess of that.

The fully integrated degree recently introduced by the Engineering Faculty in UCD which incorporates most of the elements of the degree envisaged by the PSI, attracts a fee of €5500.00.

There is a wide divergence between the fee the schools consider reasonable to recoup their costs and the general costs of Masters' programmes at third level.

There is also a wide divergence between the fee the schools consider reasonable and the ability of students to pay based on comparable figures.

The National Forum has dedicated a considerable amount of time in trying to achieve agreement on this. It proceeded on the basis that if a figure for fees could be agreed 'up front' with the schools – not a final figure but a sufficiently accurate figure to allow incoming students in 2012 to be alerted to the financial commitment required in their fifth year - then the details of the roll-out of the programme could be ironed out over the next two years. The fully integrated degree would not be implemented until 2013 but students registering in 2012 would be allowed 'cross-over' to the new programme from 2013.

The schools were unable to agree a figure that met their needs and that represented a realistic figure for students.

The NF Forum notes that the Fottrell Report which was the medical equivalent of the PEARs report undertook a forensic analysis of the cost of medical education. This was done by Indecon Consultants and in their report, the Indecon Report, they identified the actual cost of educating a medical doctor through each of their five years in University.

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The NF would recommend that a similar exercise be carried out for pharmacy. This would clearly identify the actual cost to the schools of providing the extra year and the cost of moving to an integrated curriculum for the existing four years.

PA Consultants were asked to submit a proposal for undertaking this work and that proposal is attached hereto.

Marian Shanley

Chair, National Forum

December 2012

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## APPENDIX 2

### Feedback from workshops



**PA** Consulting  
Group

### Feedback from workshops

PEARS

Total workshops

Draft

## Contents

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### PEARS

- Summary average scores
- Question 1+2
- Question 3+4
- Question 5+6
- Question 7+8

## Summary – Change management feedback on PEARs: All

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In the table below we summarise the PEARs feedback questions (total of 325 respondents) from the feedback questionnaires at all the Road Shows in 2013

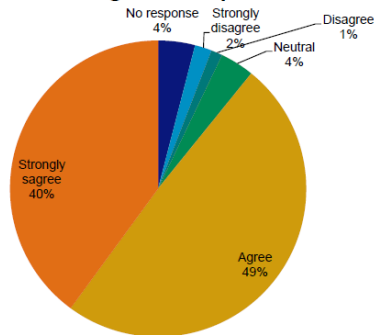
The average response is outlined below and a RAG status is applied to each area. These are more positive than the overall scores for Dublin.

Change readiness	PEARs Questions	Average	RAG Status	
Business need for Change	1 I Understand the importance of this change for the profession	4.3		
Business need for Change	2 I Understand that the profession must take these changes for the future	4.2		
Organisational vision	3 The vision for the future of pharmacy education is clear to me	3.9		
Business transformation plan	4 It is clear how this will be implemented over the next 5 years	3.4		
Business capability	5 I feel the profession has the capability to implement the change	3.9		
Personal desire for change	6 I am excited about the prospect for change	3.8		
Personal transitional path	7 I understand how this will affect me as a pharmacist	3.8		
Involvement and participation	8 I would like to act as a tutor pharmacist and provide placements	3.6		

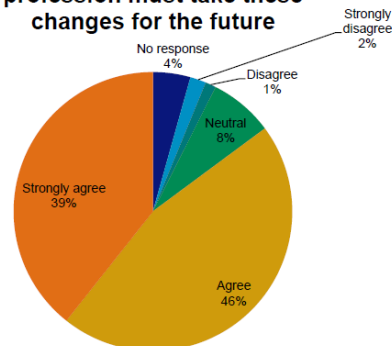
Reminder of scale:

- Strongly Agree 5
- Agree 4
- Neutral 3
- Disagree 2
- Strongly Disagree 1

## PEARS

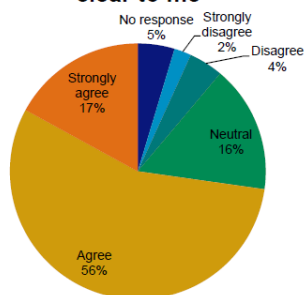
**Q. 1 I Understand the importance of this change for the profession**

89% of respondents identified that they agreed/strongly agreed with the importance of the implementation of an integrated degree for the profession. An additional 4% were neutral.

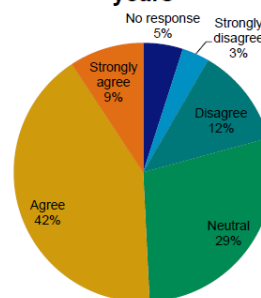
**Q.2 I Understand that the profession must take these changes for the future**

85% agreed that the change to the integrated degree had to be made for the professional going into the future

## PEARS

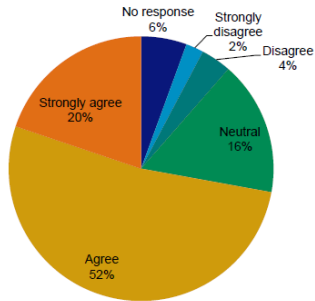
**Q3 The vision for the future of pharmacy education is clear to me**

73% agreed that they understood how these changes would affect them. 7% did not respond, and 10% did not understand. 18% were neutral

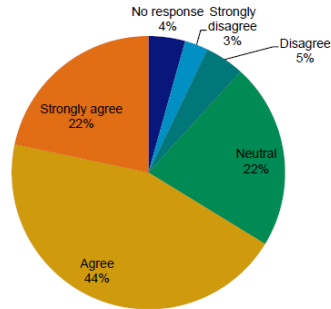
**Q4: It is clear how this will be implemented over the next 5 years**

50% were clear on how it would be implemented over the next five years with 28% neutral. 16% disagreed with this and did not identify any clarity.

## PEARS

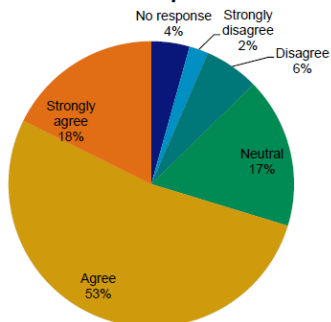
**Q5: I feel the profession has the capability to implement the change**

72% agreed that the profession had the capability to implement the change. 16% were neutral.

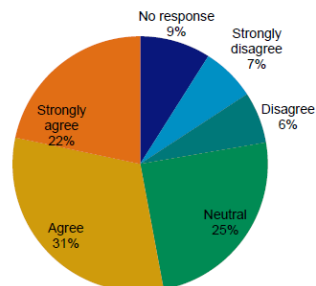
**Q6: I am excited about the prospect for change**

65% of respondents agreed that they were excited about the change.

## PEARS

**Q.7 I understand how this will affect me as a pharmacist**

70% agreed that they understood how this would affect them as a pharmacist

**Q. 8 I would like to act as a tutor pharmacist and provide placements**

53% of respondents identified that they agreed/strongly agreed with acting as a tutor pharmacist. An additional 25% were neutral. 9% of respondents did not give a response to this and 13% did not agree with acting as a tutor pharmacist.

DRAFT

Table for determining sample size from a given population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is population size

"S" is sample size.

Krejcie, Robert V., Morgan, Daryle W., "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities", Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1970.