



**INTERIM ACCREDITATION  
STANDARDS FOR THE LEVEL 9  
MASTERS DEGREE**

**awarded on the successful completion of  
THE NATIONAL PHARMACY  
INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME**

**(approved by the Council of the PSI  
on 30 September 2010)**

**SEPTEMBER 2010**

## **STANDARD 1: PROFESSIONAL AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **The Programme and development process**

- There should be an appropriately robust process for establishing, maintaining and reviewing the National Pharmacy Internship Programme Competence Standards approved by the PSI Council (e.g. RCSI Pharmacy Intern Competence Standards) and the Programme must meet the required standards as approved by the PSI Council from time to time with a view to ensuring patient safety and public protection at all times.
- Education and training must be planned and maintained through transparent processes which must show who is responsible for each stage.

### **The Content and curriculum framework**

- The goals and objectives should build upon the undergraduate degree curriculum and embrace the scope of contemporary practice responsibilities to patient-centred care as well as emerging roles.
- The following professional and generic attributes should continue to be fostered: empathy; leadership; communication; critical thinking; cultural understanding; a commitment to lifelong learning; professional and ethical conduct; reflective practice; awareness of limitations and risk; information literacy; team work and problem-solving.

**There must be clearly defined learning outcomes to demonstrate that at the end of the year the intern is competent to practise pharmacy in a patient-centred professional and ethical manner.**

The Learning outcomes must cover the following areas as a minimum:

- The promotion and contribution to **optimal, rational, safe and effective use of medicines**;
- The **preparation, dispensing and supply** of medicines having regard to the best interests of patients and the public and to the regulatory and legal requirements relating to these activities;
- The provision of **health services** to optimise patient care, with an understanding of wider determinants of health for all population groups and human rights both in an Irish and international context;
- The provision of relevant **medicines and health information, education and advice**, including information in line with current and evolving health policy, services and priorities.
- The **management of work issues and interpersonal relationships** in pharmacy practice.

## **STANDARD 2: CLEARLY DEFINED ENTRY AND EXIT REQUIREMENTS**

**A National Pharmacy Internship Programme (NPIP) provider must have in place policies and procedures for admission to the internship programme and for its successful completion and these must be open and available to prospective applicants.**

- There must be a clear statement of the entry requirements and of the requirements for progression on the programme and for its successful completion and these must also conform to any requirements that are laid down by the PSI Council from time to time.
- Processes must be open, fair, not impose unreasonable requirements on applicants and incorporate a fair and just complaints and appeals process.
- Processes must include specific and appropriate criteria relating to the requirements for professional standards and Garda vetting and for how any health requirements appropriate for the practice setting are met.

### **STANDARD 3: WORKPLACE BASED TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

**The pharmacy practice experiences must integrate, apply, reinforce and advance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values developed through the prerequisite initial degree programme and/or other such qualification as may be required from time to time by the PSI Council for entry to the programme (including, for example, as part of a required adaptation period).**

- The NPIP provider must demonstrate that it has appropriate policies and procedures in place that ensure that all training establishments and tutor pharmacists meet the requirements that are laid down by the PSI Council from time to time.
- The objectives for each pharmacy practice experience and the responsibilities of the intern, tutor pharmacist and training establishment are defined.
- Practice experiences should be of adequate intensity, breadth, structure and duration so as to achieve the defined educational outcomes. They should include the opportunity for the interns to experience ongoing interaction with each other during the course of the internship programme. The aggregate of practice experiences should ensure that all educational outcomes and competencies are met by interns prior to the completion of the programme.
- The NPIP provider should ensure that there are clear quality management systems and procedures in place for workplace-based progress/review/appraisals which should be fit for purpose.

## **STANDARD 4: PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND LEARNING METHODS**

**Educational techniques and technologies should be appropriately integrated to support the achievement of professional competencies and outcomes and to reasonably address the needs of diverse learners in diverse locations.**

- The curriculum must be designed, delivered and regularly reviewed to ensure that interns demonstrate the outcomes described in Standard 1 and can practise safely and effectively according to the statutory Code of Conduct for pharmacists and any other guidance and requirements that are laid down by the PSI Council from time to time.
- Delivery of content and learning methods must correspond to contemporary and potential future requirements of pharmacy practice, have the appropriate mix of methods and styles and be in step with current healthcare developments and provision, reflective of changing client and service needs to ensure that registrants wishing to work in the health service are 'fit for purpose'. Adult education principles should be utilised to guide education strategies and be a combination of didactic, experiential and direct observational educational activities.
- Academic quality requirements must meet the standards for the National Framework of Qualifications for a level 9 qualification. Where topics or content are not exclusively specific to pharmacy (for example, IT or human resource management) the NPIP provider must take appropriate steps to ensure that the core content is related to contemporary pharmacy practice in order to maintain the coherence of a pharmacy programme.
- The NPIP provider must have in place a 'learning and assessment strategy' which considers the predicted preferred learning format of the intended audience as well as the most effective methods to demonstrate competency against the required learning outcomes.

## **STANDARD 5: ASSESSMENT OF INTERNS**

**An NPIP provider must establish and employ effective and validated formative and summative assessment methods within both the supervised practice and the training components of the internship programme.**

- The programme must include assessment of professionalism and the process of professionalisation appropriate for entrance to the Register of Pharmacists held by the PSI and consistent with the requirements of Standard 1 and of any professional requirements that are laid down by the PSI Council from time to time.
- The programme must take a holistic approach to assessment and include for example, mechanisms which measure cognitive learning, mastery of essential practice skills, ability to communicate, numeracy and use of data in problem-solving.
- There must be clear guidance relating to assessment of stated professional and learning outcomes, with objective reporting on assessments and fair and just complaints and appeals processes.
- The NPIP provider must have rigorous processes for review, monitoring and evaluation of all elements of the assessment strategy that identify and take account of inconsistencies and so ensure fairness and reliability.

## **STANDARD 6: INTERN SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

**An NPIP provider must provide appropriate and timely support mechanisms to respond to and manage professional and relevant personal difficulties of interns undertaking the National Pharmacy Internship Programme to include:**

- Processes to identify and, where appropriate, provide additional educational, cultural and professional support needs as appropriate.
- Support in securing and maintaining placement(s) with dedicated tutor pharmacist(s) recognised by the PSI Council.
- Orientation programmes to both the programme and the learning environment, especially where innovative/virtual learning is incorporated into delivery methods.
- A student complaints policy, including procedures to be followed and clarity regarding interns' rights to 'due process', to be included in orientation sessions. The NPIP provider must maintain a chronological record of interns' complaints.

## STANDARD 7: PROGRAMME QUALITY

**The quality of pharmacy education and training provided must be managed, monitored, reviewed and evaluated in a systematic way by the NPIP provider and there must be evidence that this process is being used to enhance the quality of the provision.**

- There should be clear management structures for the programme with information about roles and responsibilities, lines of accountability and the authority to act for all those involved in education and training.
- The NPIP provider must establish and maintain indicators of performance that facilitate monitoring the extent to which the Accreditation Standards for the National Pharmacy Internship Programme set by the PSI Council are being met.
- The NPIP provider must implement a reliable means of reviewing intern proficiency over the period of the professional placement to provide reliable evidence of each intern's performance over a sustained period.
- The NPIP provider must be able to demonstrate a thorough evaluation of the process and how outcome data are used to achieve continuous development and improvement of the programme. The views and experiences of the interns and tutor pharmacists on the quality of the programme should be considered. Wherever appropriate, interns should be represented on committees and other groups that have responsibility for the design, implementation and review of the programme.
- The NPIP provider must be able to demonstrate how it is taking account of the views of employers and service users, where appropriate and feasible.
- The NPIP provider must establish and operate a vigorous system for the external examination of the programme. This system must include explicit policies and regulations covering the appointment, terms of office and role of the external examiners.

## **STANDARD 8: RESOURCES**

**The NPIP provider must have sufficient allocated resources, financial, physical, teaching staff and tutor pharmacists, to ensure effective delivery of a programme that meets the Accreditation Standards of the National Pharmacy Internship Programme as may be approved from time to time by the PSI Council.**

- The physical facilities must include sufficient teaching rooms, library facilities, administrative systems and IT facilities including appropriate interactive distance learning technology.
- There must be policies and procedures to ensure that training establishments are appropriate for the delivery of the internship programme and meet any requirements as may be set down by the PSI Council from time to time.
- Teaching staff must be of sufficient number, appropriately qualified and experienced, and must include an appropriate number with contemporary experience of pharmacy practice.
- Tutor pharmacists must be of sufficient number, appropriately qualified and experienced and be role models of professional attributes and behaviours so as to effectively mentor, monitor and evaluate interns.
- There should be an organised professional development programme for all teaching staff and tutor pharmacists consistent with their respective responsibilities. The professional development activities should further skills in teaching interns and evaluating their progress. The programme for tutor pharmacists must meet the requirements and be amenable to flexible delivery as set down by the PSI Council from time to time.

## STANDARD 9: MANAGEMENT

**The institution responsible for the NPIP provider must make a commitment to delivery of a programme that meets the Accreditation Standards of the National Pharmacy Internship Programme as may be approved from time to time by the PSI Council. There must be a management structure appropriate to deliver the programme that is transparent and which clearly shows who is responsible for all elements of the provision.**

- The NPIP provider must develop, implement and regularly revise a strategic plan to facilitate the advancement of the programme.
- The NPIP provider must be led by an appropriately qualified and experienced individual committed to the academic leadership and the delivery and development of the programme.
- The NPIP provider must maintain a reliable, accurate and workable management information system for recording, retaining and reporting any data required by the PSI Council in its role of regulator.

## REFERENCES

The following have all been considered in drawing up these interim accreditation standards:

- **Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education** (2007). *Accreditation Standards and Guidelines for the Professional Program in Pharmacy leading to the Doctor of Pharmacy Degree.*
- **Australian Pharmacy Council/Pharmacy Council of New Zealand** (2010). *Accreditation Standards for Australia and New Zealand Pharmacy Intern Training Programs 2010.*
- **Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs** (2006). *Accreditation Standards and Guidelines for the Baccalaureate Degree Programme in Pharmacy.*
- **FIP - International Pharmaceutical Federation** (2008). *A Global Framework for Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education.* (International Forum for Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education)
- **General Pharmaceutical Council** (2009). *Draft education and training standards for pharmacists.*
- **General Pharmaceutical Council** (2009). *Draft standards of proficiency for pharmacy professionals.*