



Report of the On-Site Compliance Visit to
the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme
in Pharmacy provided by Royal College of Surgeons in
Ireland (RCSI)

March 2019

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Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by Royal College
of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)

In accordance with Article 7(2) of the Pharmacy Act 2007

and

*Part 3, Rule 10 of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Education and Training) (Integrated
Course) Rules 2014 [S.I. No. 377 of 2014]*

March, 2019

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Glossary of Abbreviated Terms

▪ APPEL	:	Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning
▪ CCF	:	Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists
▪ DARE	:	Disability Access Route to Education
▪ ECTS	:	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
▪ HEAR	:	Higher Education Access Route
▪ HEI	:	Higher Education Institute
▪ IPE	:	Interprofessional Education
▪ IPL	:	Interprofessional Learning
▪ KPI	:	Key Performance Indicators
▪ NFQ	:	National Framework of Qualifications
▪ OSCE	:	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
▪ PDP	:	Professional Development Planning
▪ PE	:	Practice Educator
▪ PRE	:	Professional Registration Examination
▪ PSI	:	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
▪ QEO	:	Quality Enhancement Office
▪ QQI	:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
▪ RCSI	:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
▪ REACH	:	Recreation, Education and Community Health (Community Outreach and Access Programme)
▪ SMT	:	Senior Management Team
▪ TCAP	:	Traveller Community Access Programme
▪ TCD	:	Trinity College Dublin
▪ UCC	:	University College Cork
▪ VLE	:	Virtual Learning Environment

i. Introduction

This document should be read in conjunction with the relevant PSI Accreditation Standards as published on the PSI website at www.psi.ie.

Stemming from the Pharmacy Act 2007 (as amended) and recognised in Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament of the Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI), the pharmacy regulator, has responsibility and powers for the approval of the programmes of education and training of pharmacists in Ireland.

The present accreditation concerns the accreditation of the five-year fully integrated Master of Pharmacy degree delivered by the School of Pharmacy, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) against the relevant PSI Accreditation Standards that were approved by the Council of the PSI on 2 October 2014. Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of the MPharm degree and confirmation by the Higher Education Institute (HEI) that a graduate fully demonstrates the competencies necessary to apply to enter the register of pharmacists kept by the PSI.

ii. Process of Review

A first review of the programme against the PSI Standards was conducted in June 2015. On that basis, at its 17 September 2015 meeting, the PSI Council approved the recommendation of the accreditation team that the Five-Year Fully Integrated Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by RCSI be recognised and approved for an initial period of two (2) years, with a compliance on-site visit at or towards the end of the first year of delivery. There were no conditions.

Subsequently, and in accordance with the PSI Council approval of the programme in 2015, an on-site visit to RCSI was undertaken in January 2016. Following this visit, at its 7 July 2016 meeting, the PSI Council approved the recommendation of the accreditation team that the recognition and approval of RCSI's Five-Year Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy be confirmed for the initial period of two (2) years with a further on-site visit during the second year of delivery.

This compliance visit to RCSI was undertaken in January 2017. Following this visit, at its 22 June 2017 meeting, the PSI Council approved the recommendation of the accreditation team that the Five-Year Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy be approved and recognised for a period of three (3) years, commencing June 22, 2017 and expiring June 22, 2020, with a focused compliance visit during the first quarter of 2019.

This is the report of the on-site compliance visit to RCSI on 14 March 2019.

iii. Documentation

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

Report on the Five-Year Integrated Masters Degree Programme in Pharmacy March 2019

Appendix 1: RCSI Governance Structures, Boards, Working Groups, and Committees

Appendix 2: RCSI Organisational Chart

Appendix 3: RCSI School of Pharmacy Organogram

Appendix 4: RCSI MPharm Curriculum and Assessment Framework Years 1-4

Appendix 5: RCSI MPharm Learning Outcomes and Assessments Map

Appendix 6: RCSI MPharm Year 4 Co-delivered Modules Review

Appendix 7: RCSI MPharm Curriculum and Assessment Framework Year 5

Appendix 8: MPharm Year 5 Module Descriptors

Appendix 9: Quality Improvement Plan 2018/19

Appendix 10: RCSI MPharm Teaching and Learning Strategy

Appendix 11: Update on APPEL Related Matters

Appendix 12: APPEL Experiential Learning Placements at RCSI Years 2 and 4

Appendix 13: Experiential Learning as Integrated Throughout RCSI MPharm Years 1-4

Appendix 14: Experiential Learning as Integrated Throughout RCSI MPharm Years 5

Appendix 15: RCSI MPharm Assessment Strategy

Appendix 16: Marks and Standards 2018/19

The following documents were provided by the provider during the course of the accreditation visit:

APPEL Preceptor Feedback Year4 Placements 2018 2019

APPEL Student Feedback Year4 2018 2019

Business Planning - Launch 2019

Business Planning Template

MPharm Curriculum 2018/19

RCSI Roles and responsibilities

A range of external examiner reports 2017/2018

iv. The Compliance Visit

The accreditation team held a preparatory meeting on 13 March 2019, in advance of the on-site visit.

The on-site compliance visit took place in RCSI on 14 March 2019.

v. The Accreditation Team

The accreditation team comprised:

Name	Designation at the time of visit
Prof Brenda Costall	Chair, Pharmacy academic with experience of developing and/or accrediting pharmacy degree programmes (international academic)
Dr Aislinn Joy	Healthcare non-pharmacist representative
Leonie Clarke	Quality assurance and regulatory expert
Prof Jane Portlock	Pharmacy academic with experience of developing and/or accrediting pharmacy degree programmes

along with;

Damhnait Gaughan	Head of Education and Registration, PSI
Cora O'Connell	Education Manager, PSI
Siobhan Fitzgerald	Education Standards Officer, PSI
Dr Matthew Maltby	Rapporteur

There were no declarations of interest.

vi. Meeting the Standards

Standard 1: The Professional Degree Programme Provider and Mission

The Professional Degree Programme Provider must engage in a systematic planning process and have a current strategic plan that facilitates achievement of the Professional Degree Programme Provider's mission, goals and objectives.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

As an institution, the RCSI, and accordingly the School of Pharmacy, places a considerable emphasis on excellence, integration and innovation. During 2018, the RCSI implemented a new strategic plan to drive a greater consistency of these values across the institution, with the vision of demonstrating and achieving international leadership in supporting healthcare professionals, through high quality education and research that enables people to live long and healthy lives. The School of Pharmacy has been at the forefront of the development of the new strategy and is sharing best practice from its experience of implementing a leading edge MPharm degree programme.

All Schools within the RCSI are now closely aligned to an institutional strategic plan that is clearly articulated around core values of respect, collaboration, scholarship and innovation. The School has been instrumental in its development and remains highly committed to contributing to the wider institution on the basis of its own past successes in this regard.

The programme continues to be carefully planned, with ongoing reviews of module content as the development for the fifth year of the programme enters its closing stages. The curriculum integrates science and practice, and embeds experiential training in practice as a key element of pharmacist training. Throughout, patient-wellbeing and patient-care are maintained as central.

The APPEL initiative appears to be working well and continues to offer the School robust mechanisms for sourcing and managing the statutory experiential learning placements. APPEL maintains a clearly articulated cycle of preceptor accreditation and training. Similarly, training establishments (TE) are accredited according to predefined criteria. APPEL continues to develop its quality assurance measures; these are central in maintaining confidence in public and patient safety.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 1 continues to be met.

Standard 2: Leadership, Organisation and Governance

There must be clear management structures for the Professional Degree Programme with a schedule of roles and responsibilities, and a defined structure and process to show lines of accountability and authority for all those involved in the delivery of the Professional Degree Programme.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The RCSI School of Pharmacy has developed a clear, transparent and robust structure to its management mechanisms. The Leadership Team roles are clearly delineated and consists of:

- Head of School (Chair)
- Academic, Quality and Operations Manager
- Lead in Pharmacy Research
- Lead in Pharmacy Education
- Laboratories and Technical Manager

At the time of writing, the Head of School and Academic, Quality and Operations Manager roles were filled on an interim basis, with recruitment to these positions ongoing. The accreditation team looks forward to learning of the appointment to the Head of School position in due course. Recruitment is also ongoing to the role of Laboratories and Technical Manager.

Programme content is planned, developed, delivered and reviewed by means of a clearly documented protocol which outlines key deliverables, the owner, and delivery timelines, which has ably supported the development of the new Year 5 modules, to be delivered for the first time during the 2019/2020 academic year. This approach to curriculum planning and development continues to enhance the programme's integration and spirality, and will allow for further refinement and development of the programme in the future.

RCSI is highly supportive of the APPEL function as it continues to make progress. Lines of reporting and accountability are clearly defined. Additionally, RCSI remains committed to fostering strategic collaborative relations with organisations out with the APPEL function.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 2 continues to be met.

Standard 3: Resources

The School must have sufficient allocated resources, financial, physical and staff, and have developed and documented contingency plans to cover any deficiencies that may arise in order to ensure the effective delivery of a Professional Degree Programme that continues to meet the 'Accreditation Standards of the five-year fully integrated Master's degree programmes in pharmacy' as approved by the PSI Council from time to time.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The majority of the content for the MPharm programme is delivered by School members of staff as interdisciplinarity has become increasingly embedded into the programme. Several modules have been developed to provide students with a broader perspective of pharmacy as professional practice in a social and economic context, these optional modules being designed, developed and delivered in collaboration with a range of partner institutions external to and within RCSI.

With the implementation of the new RCSI strategic plan, research within RCSI has been given a great emphasis and its increased prominence will ensure that MPharm programme content maintains its currency and relevance to modern and advancing pharmacy practice and the pharmaceutical sciences. The School's research is in receipt of several major grants and awards, which adds further credence to its research undertakings.

The School is highly supportive of the APPEL functions and this productive, collegial engagement is assisting in the successful delivery of the programme. APPEL continues to make significant progress in extending the network of TEs and establishing the required protocols and measures to ensure all stakeholders in the experiential learning placements are suitably trained and accredited. Through its PEs the RCSI School is maintaining productive relations with the other Consortium Partners to share knowledge and best practice, and provide functional support where required.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 3 continues to be met.

Standard 4: Curriculum

The curriculum must be planned to deliver an integrated learning experience that combines and co-ordinates all components in a logical and cohesive manner with clearly articulated linkages between and across units within years and between years. The Professional Degree Programme must be planned as a whole to deliver graduates who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to meet the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists necessary for entry to the profession of pharmacy and to assure the accountability of the profession to society.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

Progress continues to be made in refining a very progressive and innovative course, with clear spirality and an impressive level of integration, both horizontally and vertically. Integrative approaches appear to be firmly embedded in the School and the proximity of other Schools under the same, institutional strategic plan means that a high level of collegiality and interdisciplinarity is taking root. Many of the modules within the School are developed and delivered in a multidisciplinary manner, and this approach easily supports the many IPL activities and opportunities which are interspersed through the programme.

Professional Development modules assist with student's progression along the journey to becoming competent, professional pharmacists who maintain a patient focus in all aspects of their practice. Conceptualisations of professionalism are introduced and consolidated throughout the programme, Specific module components address ethics and professionalism and are woven throughout the programme. Several innovative modules support this approach; students are exposed to issues surrounding mental health aspects of providing patient care in a pharmacy context and further elective modules address issues students might not be familiar or comfortable with. These modules bring patient care in a modern social context to the fore and have been developed in a manner to enable and support students engage with patients and their care in productive, professional ways.

The School consolidates the content introduced through these modules during the experiential learning placements. The School continues to cultivate its formalised links with its partner hospitals and a number of other pharmacy practice settings, to ensure that students are as exposed to as broad a spectrum of practice contexts as possible.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 4 continues to be met.

Standard 5: Teaching and Learning Strategy

The Teaching and Learning Strategy must be designed to deliver a curriculum that produces graduates that meet the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists as established by the PSI Council from time to time.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The School's Teaching and Learning Strategy supports the delivery of a curriculum that aims to facilitate the development of graduates with the required scientific and clinical knowledge, professional competence and commitment to continuing professional development, and who are prepared and able to engage with the challenges associated with their future roles in practice. The programme's aims, objectives and learning outcomes are clearly set out and the programme is anchored firmly within a structure based on Harden's (Harden, 2000) principals of integration as a continuum. Learning outcomes of the curriculum continue to be aligned and mapped to the attributes of the six domains on the PSI CCF, and active learning methods ensure students own their own learning, and that of others within IPL contexts.

An ethos of professionalism permeates all teaching and learning within the School, and there are considerable opportunities in addition to the experiential learning settings for students to develop the requisite skills for safe, effective and appropriate professional pharmacy practice.

School staff are highly committed and continue to progress towards a clear goal of establishing the RCSI MPharm programme as an innovative and ground-breaking programme.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 5 continues to be met.

Standard 6: Assessment Strategy

The Assessment Strategy must ensure that all graduates demonstrate the competencies set out in the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists as established by the PSI Council from time to time. The strategy must align with the teaching and learning strategy (see Standard 5) and use effective and validated diagnostic, formative and summative assessment methods that are reviewed at frequent intervals and take account of developments in pharmacy practice within all components of the Professional Degree Programme.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The approach outlined in the assessment strategy document provided by the School ahead of the 2019 on-site visit continues to span a range of methods that are suitable for each level of study. The methods allow students to demonstrate the progressive attainment of all learning outcomes and they ensure that the assessment of students' attainment is robust and appropriate.

Marks and examination results are scrutinised within clearly set out protocols, and feed into improvement initiatives. External examiners provide additional input.

Overall, a wide variety of assessment modalities are used ranging from MCQ, written questions (short-notes, essays), laboratory practical examinations, projects, presentations, portfolios and OSCEs. Students also submit assessments within the framework of co-delivered modules online via the VLE.

The accreditation team is of the opinion that the assessment strategy is consistent with the Teaching and Learning Strategy and that it provides a robust framework in which students' progression can be measured.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 6 continues to be met.

Standard 7: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

All processes and activities related to the Professional Degree Programme must be clearly defined, documented, executed and controlled in accordance with a system of Quality Management which assures and demonstrates consistency, reproducibility and transparency of operations. There must be evidence that this process is being used to enhance the quality of the provision.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

The quality assurance mechanisms in place within the School and college are robust; the team is of the opinion that the measures in place will continue to ensure the development of a high quality MPharm programme.

Collaboration between the APPEL and the consortium partners remains a core value for all parties. The quality assurance measures for the Years 2, 4 and 5 experiential placements have been developed and implemented by APPEL, with responsibility for quality of the placements ultimately lying with the School. The quality assurance mechanisms currently implemented by APPEL continue to evolve.

APPEL continues to make significant progress; Year 4 placements have been undertaken and preparations for the roll-out of Year 5 placements are advanced. The APPEL operation is supported by the effective deployment of IT functionalities which support an innovative VLE, as well as efficient administrative operations.

The School staff is highly motivated and continues to show strong commitment to delivering a programme of the highest quality, and establishing suitable systems to monitor and sustain it.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 7 continues to be met.

Standard 8: Students

There must be processes at HEI and School level to assist prospective students in their application to the Professional Degree Programme., in securing and maintaining placements for the practice-placement elements of the Professional Degree Programme, and to support students' development as learners and as future practising professionals.

Summary of Main Findings and Observations

All relevant policies and procedures are published on the RCSI website.

The APPEL initiative continues to be committed to delivering a well-planned and executed process for delivering the statutory placements in Years 4 and 5. The School shows a tangible commitment to the operation and the accreditation team is of the opinion that further refinement of the student support mechanisms might further enhance students' practice experience.

The RCSI teaching and learning environment is modern and innovative and the School is leading from the front in terms of spearheading the implementation of highly progressive integrated approaches. The new facilities at the 26 York Street building are technically advanced and support a rich learning context in which aspirations to achieve the highest levels of success are valued.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The team agreed Standard 8 continues to be met.

vii. General Observations

The team enjoyed the visit to RCSI and is very pleased that the School continues to meet the accreditation standards.

The Team is keen to see the appointments to the Head of School and Senior Leadership roles within the school in place. The team is also conscious of the need to be aware of how significant staffing-changes might impact the delivery of the programme.

The team anticipates the School discussing the annual business plan and departmental development plan that illustrates how the School will map its delivery to the College strategic plan.

The team was pleased to learn about the IPL components on the programme and looks forward to seeing the College IPL strategy being developed and in place, and also how this will influence the development of the students and help build collaboration and understanding between professions.

The team looks looking forward to seeing the team at RCSI in early 2020.

viii. Conclusions and Recommendations

The accreditation team agreed the following in relation to the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme provided by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI):

- Standard 1 is met
- Standard 2 is met
- Standard 3 is met
- Standard 4 is met
- Standard 5 is met
- Standard 6 is met
- Standard 7 is met
- Standard 8 is met

On that basis, the accreditation team makes the following recommendations to the Council of the PSI;

An on-site visit be carried out towards the end of the current accreditation period (course accredited until June 2020), which will reflect on whether the delivery of the entirety of the programme continues to conform with requirements that the programme of education and training and all matters relating to its delivery and processes of assessment, including staffing, premises, facilities, in-service practical training, funding and procedures, conform with the accreditation criteria for recognition and approval of the programme of education.

The Provider should note that the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland regards the report in its entirety as the view of the PSI on the provision, and that the Provider should take all the comments of the team into account in any development of the provision in response to this report.