

National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation

Terms of Reference

Background:

In May 2008, the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI) commissioned a root-and-branch review of the five-year programme of education and training for the pharmacist qualification in Ireland, together with a review of accreditation models and accreditation criteria – the Pharmacy Education and Accreditation Reviews (PEARs) Project. The final report made a series of recommendations around the move to a five-year fully integrated programme of education, training and assessment leading to the award of a Masters degree as the basis for application for registration as a pharmacist, the development of new educational standards and the development of a new accreditation methodology. A key recommendation included an appropriate approach to the governance of the system through the establishment of a National Forum:

‘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.’

To that end, the PSI Council established a National Forum for Pharmacy Education and Accreditation (the National Forum) in March 2011.

Purpose of the National Forum:

The overall aim of the National Forum is to advise and assist the Council of the PSI in its oversight of the development and ongoing delivery of the new fully integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment for roll-out in 2012/13. Its outcomes shall be subject to formal approval by the PSI Council.

Specific Activities of the National Forum:

- 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 towards the key implementation milestones in establishment of the new integrated programme of pharmacy education, training and assessment in Ireland (dates may be subject to review):
 - Propose future funding model for pharmacy education and training by July 2011
 - Establish draft educational standards by September 2011
 - Develop national system for practice-based learning by March 2012
 - Deliver communication programme to profession by November 2011
 - Establish interim pharmacy education model by July 2011
 - Establish draft accreditation standards by December 2011

- Approved degree programmes launched in academic year 2012/13
- Advise the PSI on the undertaking of research to support the development of the pharmacy profession
- Work, via a sub-forum structure, to inform the development of approaches such as:
 - Funding of pharmacy education
 - Development of the curriculum and assessment strategies
 - Development of practice-based learning
 - Development of educational and accreditation standards
- Facilitate future collaborative working of the training establishments group and the schools of pharmacy and work with schools, employers and practice-educators to support the change process required to establish the fully integrated 5 year degree 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 the full establishment of the new fully integrated programme
- Oversee the marketing of the new fully integrated programme and coordinate engagement with stakeholders and public

Ways of Working:

- A task-based body focused on delivery of PEARs implementation plan, with the services of a Chair and a separate Secretariat function procured to help progress action between meetings.
- A representative approach to embed a cross-school and cross-profession dynamic in the development and delivery of pharmacy education, training and assessment.
- A collaborative approach to ensure that needs of schools of pharmacy, employers, educators and the wider profession are reflected in the pharmacy education system.
- A theme-based approach to provide focused analysis of needs, issues and problems through the establishment of a sub-fora structure focused on particular themes.
- A formal approach to recording decisions with minutes kept by the Secretariat to ensure that decisions are clearly recorded and agreed by members.
- A monitoring role with 3 monthly PEARs progress reports prepared by the Forum.
- A majority-based approach to decision-making with a 50% +1 rule in place, i.e. the quorum for a meeting to validly deliberate will be set at 8 members of the National Forum.

Membership of National Forum:

The membership of the National Forum will be set at 14 members comprised as follows:

- Chair of the Forum, appointed by the PSI Council
- Nominee of the PSI Council (1)
- Nomination from the Health Service Executive (HSE) (1)
- Joint nomination by Head of Institution and Head of School of Pharmacy for individual representative from RCSI, TCD and UCC (3)
- Selection of three pharmacists through an open call for expressions of interest, one each from the main practice settings of community, hospital and industry (3) (alternates for each of the three should also be selected)
- Nomination advocating on behalf of patients (1)
- Nomination advocating on behalf of students (1)
- Nomination from the Higher Education Authority (HEA) (1)

- Nomination from IDA Ireland (1)
- An appropriate international expert (1)

The National Forum will require input from senior management at all three higher education institutions at key stages of the process.

A sub-forum structure will be set up around key themes (e.g. funding, curriculum and assessment, practice-based learning, educational standards). Membership of the sub-fora will be derived from individuals of the National Forum and individuals deemed to hold the required expertise and skill-set as identified by the Chair of the Forum. These individuals will be appointed to the sub-fora subject to the approval of the National Forum.

Frequency of Meetings and Lifespan of the National Forum:

- The National Forum meetings should be held on a monthly basis until the launch of the 5 year fully integrated degree programme (currently envisaged for Autumn 2012). Subject to the approval of the Chair a member of the National Forum may participate in meetings via teleconference, video conference or other electronic means.
- The case for continued operation of the Forum as an ongoing coordination and development body should be reviewed at this stage.
- The thematic sub-fora should operate as ‘task and finish’ groups with a fixed remit and timeframe for delivery.

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