



AN RIALTÓIR CÓGAIŚÍOCHTA
THE PHARMACY REGULATOR

Report of the On-Site Compliance Visit to
the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme
in Pharmacy provided by Trinity College Dublin (TCD)

February 2019

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Master's Degree Programme in Pharmacy provided by Trinity College
Dublin (TCD)

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

and

*Part 3, Rule 8(1) of the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (Education and Training)
(Integrated Course) Rules 2014 [S.I. No. 377 of 2014]*

February, 2019

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Glossary of Abbreviated Terms

▪ APPEL	:	Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning
▪ CAO	:	Central Admissions Office
▪ 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
▪ IPL	:	Interprofessional Learning
▪ KPI	:	Key Performance Indicators
▪ NFQ	:	National Framework of Qualifications
▪ NPIP	:	National Pharmacy Internship Programme
▪ NUI	:	National University of Ireland
▪ OSCE	:	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
▪ PE	:	Practice Educator
▪ PRE	:	Professional Registration Examination
▪ PSI	:	Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
▪ QQI	:	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
▪ RCSI	:	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
▪ SEC	:	School Executive Committee
▪ TAP	:	Trinity Access Programme
▪ TCD	:	Trinity College Dublin
▪ TEs	:	Training Establishments
▪ TEP	:	Trinity Education Project
▪ UCC	:	University College Cork
▪ VLE	:	Virtual Learning Environment

i. Introduction

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, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) 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, and holds a qualification appropriate for practice as a pharmacist.

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 TCD 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 TCD was undertaken in February 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 TCD'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 TCD was undertaken in March 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 TCD on 13 February 2019.

iii. Documentation

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

- Cover Letter
- TCD Year 4 Joint Modules Overview
- Update on APPEL Experiential Learning Placements in TCD
- Update on APPEL Related Matters
- Mapping document 1 – module learning outcomes to programme learning outcomes
- Mapping document 2 – module learning outcomes to curriculum, assessment and CCF
- Update on Interprofessional Learning Activities

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

- Year 5 Curriculum Map
- APPEL 4th Year Placement Evaluations: TCD 4th Year Pharmacy Students: Quantitative
- APPEL 4th Year Placement Evaluation: Preceptors Feedback: Quantitative

iv. The Compliance Visit

The accreditation team held a preparatory meeting on 12 February, 2019, in advance of the on-site visit.

The on-site compliance visit took place in TCD on 13 February, 2019.

v. The Accreditation Team

The PSI 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 JJ Keating	Pharmacy academic with experience of developing and/or accrediting pharmacy degree programmes
Dr Jason Last	Healthcare non-pharmacist
Dr Norma Ryan	Quality assurance and regulatory expert
Olivia Murphy	Pharmacist practising in Ireland with experience as a tutor supporting experiential learning

along with

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

Dr JJ Keating declared a conflict of interest – as an employee of the UCC School of Pharmacy, he is a stakeholder in APPEL. He absented himself for the duration of the meeting with relevant staff involved in the coordination and quality assurance of practice placements with APPEL.

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

The School remains demonstrably committed to developing and delivering the MPharm programme in a manner consistent with the regulatory requirements of the PSI on the one hand, and the institutional objectives and goals of the Trinity Strategic Plan 2014-2019 and the Trinity Education Project (TEP) on the other. The TEP has supported the School’s move towards a fully semesterised teaching and assessment schedule, and the standardisation of module content. Much of the work required for the TEP had previously been implemented for the purposes of the MPharm.

The programme is committed to equipping graduates with the knowledge, skills and competencies to successfully and safely engage in pharmacy practice in all contexts. The programme is oriented towards the PSI CCF and has taken account of a wide range of stakeholder needs and input in its design and development. Of particular note is the presence of TCD student representatives on the Programme Management Committee, as stakeholders in their own learning.

The APPEL initiative appears to be working well and continues to offer the School robust mechanisms for managing the statutory experiential learning placements. APPEL maintains a clearly articulated set-out 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.

The School’s MPharm programme is explicitly research-led. This supports an approach in which continuous learning is delivered through innovative teaching, and emphasises and instills a deep sense

of the interprofessional nature of modern pharmacy practice. The programme retains its own specific character which is entirely in keeping with the broader academic context of TCD.

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

TCD has clear, transparent management structures and these are also reflected in the School's engagement with the School Executive Committee (SEC) and APPEL. The SEC plays an active role in shaping the programme and continues to be constituted of staff and student membership to ensure relevant stakeholder representation as the programme evolves. APPEL has implemented protocols and measures to allow remedial action to be taken and the appropriate levels of support to be provided. TCD's well-established structure of tutor-mentoring complements the APPEL mechanisms to provide a supportive interface for students whilst on placement.

TCD remains highly committed to the further development and provision of IPL opportunities currently in place. In addition to the statutory experiential work placement contexts, TCD's appointment of an Assistant Professor in IPL is making a significant impact in ensuring that students have numerous opportunities to learn alongside those from other disciplines within the Health Sciences Faculty. The Trinity Simulation Suite is central to TCD's programme of IPL opportunities and it is envisaged that the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences will make use of the facilities from the start of the 2019/2020 academic year.

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

TCD is a state-funded university and operates within closely monitored financial resources. The School staff continues to be highly committed to successfully delivering the MPharm programme and this is supported by facilities which are modern and allow a broad range of teaching methods to be used. The teaching and learning environment include a model dispensary and aseptic suite, and these are complemented by the Trinity Simulation Suite, which the School will access from September 2019. Members of staff possess the required professional and academic expertise and where relevant, staff from other Schools within the Faculty of Health Sciences contribute to the programme to ensure students are exposed to the wide spectrum of scientific developments and research.

The School's programme is research-led; research is one of TCD's cornerstones and the School has been extremely successful of late in securing a considerable number of national and international research grants. The MPharm programme is very much informed by the School's research activities and thus maintains its currency and relevance as pharmacy practice evolves. Integrated approaches continue to be increasingly embedded within School teaching and a network of stakeholders, both internal and external to the School, supports the ongoing programme development.

The School is highly supportive of the APPEL functions and this productive, collegial engagement will bear fruits in terms of progressing towards 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 the TCD PE, the 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 progressive and innovative course, with clear spirality and a substantial level of integration, both horizontally and vertically. Integrative approaches are becoming much more firmly embedded in the School, supported by recent changes required by the TEP, which has resulted in the standardisation of module content and a rationalised examination schedule. However, although the School staff are increasingly mindful of making and presenting linkages throughout the curriculum, a more rigorous approach to the articulation of the curriculum in the programme's documentation must be adopted.

Conceptualisations of professionalism are introduced and consolidated throughout the programme, Specific module components address ethics and professionalism and are woven throughout the programme. These are consolidated and contextualised during the experiential learning placements. The School continues to cultivate its formalised links with several general and specialist hospitals.

The range of IPL activities incorporated into the programme is impressive and the School is making judicious use of the Assistant Professor in IPL as a valuable resource for the further enhancement of the multi- and interdisciplinarity aspect of the MPharm.

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 primary objective of the TCD programme is to develop pharmacists whose practice will maintain and improve patients' health, wellbeing, care and safety. The curriculum is student-centred and profession-focused and accounts for the full range of pharmacy practice settings. The TCD programme is progressive and forward-looking and the team is of the opinion that recent developments such as adapting to the principles of the TEP indicate that the School will continue to refine the MPharm and ensure that it remains responsive to changes in modern pharmacy practice.

Professionalism and conceptualisations of the professional pharmacist 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 practice. As a result, the CCF forms a core for all teaching and learning on the programme and the environment is supportive and professional. The School staff is highly committed, both to ensuring student well-being, but also to developing and delivering an innovative programme that inspires academic success.

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 School has further developed its Assessment Strategy to ensure that consistency with the Teaching and Learning Strategy is maintained and that the strategy meets the requirements of the TEP, which has been implemented on an institution-wide basis. A wide range of assessment methods are used and OSCEs are distributed throughout the programme to ensure students are sufficiently familiar with this assessment method for the purposes of the final PRE. Rubrics have been jointly developed with the consortium partners to ensure that the assessment and marking criteria of the co-delivered modules in Year 4 are benchmarked consistently.

Mechanisms by which assessments are collated and reviewed remain to be clear and transparent. Both the appeals process and the protocol for appointing external examiners are in line with wider University governance protocols.

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 university 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 successfully 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 is highly committed to further embedding integrative principles into the programme, with a view to delivering a high-quality, innovative MPharm.

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 TCD website and they are also available via the University Calendar.

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 continues to demonstrate 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 Trinity environment fosters 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 accreditation team continue to be pleased with the programme and are happy that the programme continues to meet the Standards.

While the team recognise that APPEL is in early stages, the team believe that there is space for enhancing clarity around governance structures. The team were also of the opinion that there was additional work to do by APPEL on preceptor and student expectations, and preparation for placements, particularly in the Year 4 context. The team will be interested, particularly with the introduction of the Year 5 placements, that the current resourcing of the PE role will be sufficient.

The team will also be interested to review all module descriptor at the next visit, particularly in the context of learning outcomes and how they are correctly aligned to assessment strategies, for the entire programme.

The students spoke very enthusiastically and supportively of the programme for which the University is to be commended.

viii. Conclusions and Recommendations

The accreditation team agreed the following in relation to the Five-Year Integrated Master's Degree Programme provided by Trinity College Dublin (TCD):

- 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 the delivery of the entirety of the programme and review the plans for the continuation of the programme for another five years in accordance with the provisions of Rule 9 of the PSI (Education and Training) (Integrated Course) Rules 2014.

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.