



GPhC accreditation visits: a briefing for students attending meetings

The General Pharmaceutical Council (the GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacy in Great Britain (GB) and anyone wanting to work as a pharmacist has to register with the GPhC. If you want to register as a pharmacist with the GPhC you need to pass an accredited MPharm degree or Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programme (OSPAP). If a degree or OSPAP is accredited by the GPhC it means it has been inspected and has met a set standard.

The GPhC sends teams of experts – accreditors - to check the standard of MPharm degrees and OSPAPs. Normally the GPhC only visits a school once every six years (although the GPhC visits new schools every year until their first intake of students graduates).

You will find a list of accreditors on the GPhC's website at

<https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/approval-courses/accreditation-and-recognition-panel>

Every accreditation team has a team leader and four-five other members, most of whom will be pharmacists. In the future one member of the team will be a pharmacist who has recently registered - someone who has been a pharmacist for no more than three years. The decision-making members of the team are accompanied by GPhC staff and a rapporteur (a person who takes notes and writes the report of the visit). Sometimes there are more visitors but that tends to be when new accreditors are observing as part of their training.

No one who has a close link with a school can accredit it – even if the link is that they were a student there 30 years ago.

How a visit works

Well before a visit, a school sends the GPhC their written submission, which describes the course it intends to run in the future. When an accreditation team visits a school, it meets with university staff, school staff and MPharm students in separate meetings.

Meetings last about 60-90 minutes and there are four or five of them.

The final meeting on the last day is the feedback meeting in which the accreditation team tells the school what it intends to recommend to the GPhC.

After the visit, a report is written and circulated to the accreditors and to the school for comments. Once the report is agreed it is put on the GPhC's website.

The reports page is <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/pharmacist/accredited-mpharm-degrees>

The student meeting

During the visit there is one meeting between the accreditors and students. Well before the accreditation visit your school will have asked for volunteers from each year of your course to take part in this meeting.

If you have volunteered to take part in the meeting you don't need to prepare in advance, and during the meeting it doesn't matter if you disagree with the views of the other students: sometimes a range of views is just as useful as a single view.

It's important to remember that what is said in the meetings is confidential and that the GPhC doesn't make a note of who says what. You won't be mentioned by name in the accreditation report, the report will simply state that the accreditation team met with a group of students; including x number of students in year 1, x in year 2 etc. The report will provide a summary of the views of you and your fellow students e.g. 'the majority of students that met with the accreditation team reported that they had good access to online journals'.

After the student meeting, the accreditors do feed back the main points to staff in the school, but not in such a way that they can be linked to anyone who was in the student meeting. The normal format of the feedback is 'Students have told us XXXX, what's your view?'

The main things an accreditation team will want to know are:

- what you think of the school in general
- what you think about the student experience in general
- whether you think the course is preparing you to think and act like a healthcare professional
- what you think about the staff in general
- what you think about the teaching in general
- what you think about the facilities in general
- what you think about the resources in general (including online resources)
- How you have been engaged with the development of the new programmes
- what you think the main strengths of the school are
- whether there are areas that you think need improvement

The accreditation team won't:

- quiz you about your pharmacy knowledge
- ask you questions about specific members of staff
- ask unprofessional questions which invite you to be indiscreet

Further information

You will find more information about the GPhC's accreditation process at <http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/education/approval-courses>