

## **Cardiff University Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree interim - event report, March 2021**



# Contents

<b>Event summary and conclusions</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Role of the GPhC.....	2
Background.....	3
Documentation.....	3
Pre-event.....	4
The event.....	4
Declarations of interest .....	4
<b>Schedule</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Attendees</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Key findings</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Standard 1: Patient and public safety .....	5
Standard 2: Monitoring, review and evaluation of initial education and training.....	6
Standard 3: Equality, diversity and fairness .....	8
Standard 4: Selection of students <i>and trainees</i> .....	8
Standard 5: Curriculum delivery and student experience .....	9
Standard 6: Support and development for students <i>and trainees</i> .....	11
Standard 7: Support and development for academic staff <i>and pre-registration tutors</i> ..	13
Standard 8: Management of initial education and training .....	14
Standard 9: Resources and capacity.....	15
Significant pedagogic developments.....	15

## Event summary and conclusions

<b>Provider</b>	Cardiff University
<b>Course</b>	Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree
<b>Event type</b>	Interim
<b>Event date</b>	18 March 2021
<b>Current accreditation period</b>	2020/21 - 2022/23
<b>Relevant standards</b>	<a href="#">Future pharmacists Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists, May 2011</a>
<b>Outcome</b>	Continued accreditation confirmed  The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the MPharm degree provided by the University of Cardiff should continue to be approved until 2022/23, at which point the provision will be accredited against the Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists 2021.
<b>Conditions</b>	There were no conditions.
<b>Standing conditions</b>	The standing conditions of accreditation can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Recommendations</b>	No recommendations were made.
<b>Registrar decision</b>	Following the event, the Registrar of the GPhC accepted the accreditation team's recommendation and approved the continued accreditation of the programme until 2022/23.
<b>Key contact (provider)</b>	Dr Mathew Smith, Director of Learning and Teaching
<b>Accreditation team</b>	Barbara Wensworth (Team Leader) Currently Freelance Pharmacy Lecturer, Standards Verifier, assessor and writer  Dr Geoffrey Hall (Team member - academic) Retired, formerly Associate Head, Leicester School of Pharmacy, De Montfort University  Dr Ruth Edwards (Team member - academic) Head of Professional Experience, Aston University  Dr Hayley Wickens (Team member - pharmacist) Lead Pharmacy Training Programme Director (South), Health Education England  Christine Walker (Team member - pharmacist recently registered) Clinical Pharmacist

	Susan Bradford (Team member - lay) Adjudicator, Social Work England
<b>GPhC representative</b>	Chris McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Jane Smith (rapporteur) Chief Executive Officer, European Association for Cancer Research
<b>Observers</b>	<p>Professor Antony D'Emanuele (observer – accreditation panel member in training) Head of the Leicester School of Pharmacy, De Montfort University</p> <p>Professor Daniel Grant (observer – accreditation panel member in training) Associate Professor in Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Education, University of Reading</p> <p>Liam Anstey (observer) Director for Wales, GPhC</p>

## Introduction

### Role of the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacies and is the accrediting body for pharmacy education in Great Britain (GB). The GPhC is responsible for setting standards and approving education and training courses which form part of the pathway towards registration for pharmacists. The GB qualification required as part of the pathway to registration as a pharmacist is a GPhC-accredited Master of Pharmacy degree course (MPharm).

This interim event was carried out in accordance with the GPhC's 2011 *MPharm Accreditation Methodology* and the course was reviewed against the GPhC's 2011 education standards *Future Pharmacists: Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists*.

The GPhC's right to check the standards of pharmacy qualifications leading to annotation and registration as a pharmacist is the *Pharmacy Order 2010* (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/231/contents/made>). It requires the GPhC to 'approve' courses by appointing 'visitors' (accreditors) to report to the GPhC's Council on the 'nature, content and quality' of education as well as 'any other matters' the Council may require.

## Background

The MPharm at Cardiff University is taught in the Cardiff School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. It is the School's only undergraduate programme. The course was last reaccredited, with no conditions and no recommendations, at an event held in April 2015. At that event, the team recognised the effective leadership within the School, the collegiate nature of the staff team and the shared enthusiasm and commitment to the development and delivery of the MPharm degree. An interim accreditation event was held in December 2017, as a result of which the accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the MPharm degree provided by Cardiff University should continue to be accredited for the remainder of the accreditation period.

A further interim event was scheduled for 18 March 2021, prior to the course being subject to accreditation against the new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists 2021.

## Documentation

Prior to the event, the provider submitted documentation to the GPhC in line with the agreed timescales:

- Appendix 1: Admissions and interviewing policy and standards, including contextual offers policy
- Appendix 2: Aggregate applications data and entry profiles for the last three academic years (including the current academic year)
- Appendix 3: Critical evaluation of the applications data and entry profiles in Appendix 2
- Appendix 4: Aggregate progression data for the three cohorts by:
  - Entry qualification(s)
  - Sex
  - Age
  - Ethnicity
  - Disability
- Appendix 5: Critical evaluation of the progression data in Appendix 4
- Appendix 6: MPharm risk register for the next two academic years
- Appendix 7: Staff list and vacancies (with timelines for filling them)

At the request of the team, the provider also submitted in advance:

- External examiner reports 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20
- Student-Staff Panel Meeting Minutes 2019-20 and 2020-21
- Information on attrition rates, the BAME attainment gap and disability support services

The documentation was reviewed by the accreditation team and it was deemed to be satisfactory to provide a basis for discussion.

## Pre-event

In advance of the main event, a pre-event meeting took place via videoconference on 2 March 2021. The purpose of the pre-event meeting was to prepare for the event, allow the GPhC and the university to ask any questions or seek clarification, and to finalise arrangements for the event.

## The event

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the GPhC modified the structure of the event so that it could be held remotely. The event was held via videoconference between Cardiff University and the GPhC accreditation team on 18 March 2021 and comprised of meetings between the GPhC accreditation team and representatives of the MPharm programme.

## Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## Schedule

### Day 1 – 18 March 2021

Meeting number	Meeting	Time
1.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	09:00 - 09:30
2.	Progress meeting, including presentation by the provider	09:30 - 11:30
3.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	11:30 - 11:45
4.	Admission, progression, monitoring and support meeting	11:45 - 12:30
5.	Lunch	12:30 - 13:30
6.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	13:30 - 13:45
7.	Significant pedagogical developments including presentation	13:45 - 14:30
8.	Break	14:30 - 14:45
9.	Student meeting	14:45 - 15:45
10.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	15:45 - 16:45
11.	Deliver outcome to programme provider	16:45 - 17:00

## Attendees

### Course provider

The team met with the following representatives of the University:

Name	Designation at the time of accreditation event	Meetings attended
Dr Mathew Smith	Director of Learning and Teaching	2, 4, 7, 11

Professor Mark Gumbleton	Head of School	2, 4, 7, 11
Professor James Birchall	Deputy Head of School; Chair Recruitment and Admissions Group	4
Dr Alex White	MPharm programme Director	2, 4, 7, 11
Eleanor Hoare	Education and Students Manager	2, 4, 7, 11
Dr Louise Hughes	OSCE lead; SSP convenor	2, 4, 7
Dr Chris Thomas	Year 1 representative	2
Dr Will Ford	Year 2 representative	2
Dr Youcef Mehellou	Year 3 representative	2
Dr Jenna Bowen	Year 4 representative	2, 7
Dr Allan Cosslett	Senior Tutor	2, 4
Wyn Davies	Welsh Language Lead	2, 7
Lizanne Duckworth	School Manager; Chair ED&I committee	2, 4
Dr Emma Kidd	Chair Board of Examiners	4
Dr Sion Coulman	Assessment and Feedback Lead	2, 4
Martine Woodward	Head of Quality & Standards, Registry	2

## Key findings

### Standard 1: Patient and public safety

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

Appropriate policies and processes are in place to maintain patient and public safety.

All students who accept the offer of a place on the MPharm programme complete a health questionnaire which is reviewed by the University's health centre. Potential patient safety issues are followed up by the School. From 2017-18 onwards, the provider has also required and arranged Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all students prior to enrolment. Students are required to make an annual declaration to indicate that they have read and understood the University and GPhC's Fitness to Practise requirements, that they recognise that failure to disclose any relevant information related to their fitness to practise may result in an investigation and that they must notify the School immediately if there are any subsequent changes to the information provided in the declaration.

If health issues arise during the programme, then an occupational health assessment is arranged. Any concern about an imminent contact of the student with patients leads to the postponement of their placement.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all students have been required to complete the All Wales Covid-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool prior to attending placements. A small number of students were identified as being in the 'High Risk' category. For these students, placement activities have been postponed pending a further review.

The team asked if students have reported being asked to work beyond their competence during placements and if so, how this has been managed. The provider stated that it has a partnership with the Cardiff and Vale Volunteering Service which provides non-pharmacy specific

placements for students. Some students had reported that were being asked to move or feed patients in hospital without having had training in these roles. The provider liaised with the Service to ensure students are no longer asked to carry out these tasks.

In assessments that are close simulations of practice, an error of omission or commission that would in practice put a patient at risk of harm results in a failure of that assessment. These assessments always have a preceding formative assessment so that students understand the nature of critical fails and can receive feedback prior to the summative assessment.

Outside of summative assessments, concern forms can be completed by staff, supervising pharmacists, other health care practitioners or fellow students, to report incidents or observations regarding a student and potential risks to patient safety. On receipt of a concern form, the School's Fitness to Practise co-ordinator will consider whether the concern meets the threshold for a formal investigation under the University's Fitness to Practise procedures or whether the concern should be dismissed or raised with the student informally for raising self-awareness.

The team noted from the submission that the number of academic misconduct cases had increased recently and asked what the specific issues had been and what sanctions were imposed. The provider explained that most of these cases had been due to collusion between students in online exams during the Covid-19 pandemic. Additional reminders about their professional responsibility to work independently had been given to students. Students who had a case against them upheld were required to resit the assessment. The team asked students about these incidents and was told that the provider had handled them firmly, and had followed up with additional information on academic integrity and professionalism.

Students have access to a wide range of health and welfare support services in the University. All students are allocated a personal tutor to help with academic and pastoral matters (see Standard 6).

## Standard 2: Monitoring, review and evaluation of initial education and training

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

The academic entry requirements for the MPharm programme are reviewed each year by the Board of Studies, looking at experience and performance metrics.

The team asked about attrition rates on the programme. The provider stated that most students who do not complete the MPharm leave before the end of year 3, the attrition rate currently stands at 7%. The provider has therefore worked to identify struggling students earlier, either to put remedial measures in place or to support them to exit earlier.

The University operates a process of Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE). ARE focuses on four key areas:

- Student satisfaction
- Programme outcomes (progression, awards and non-continuation)
- Module evaluation and outcomes. These are carried out online and from 2020/21 onwards, feedback has been sought mid-module as well as at the end. This was to ensure that adaptations due to Covid-19 were suitable. The feedback showed that

students value live lectures as well as asynchronous learning, so extra live lectures were added to semester 2 teaching.

- Curriculum design and delivery.

The provider has a Student:Staff Panel (SSP) whose role is to ensure that the School is responsive to the needs and suggestions of the student body. The Panel meets at least three times a year (online through the Covid-19 pandemic). Items can be raised through the representatives or anonymously using drop-boxes available outside lecture theatres. Feedback from the Panel to students is through the representatives, the SSP noticeboard and the SSP area in the virtual learning environment, which hosts the formal minutes of the meetings.

More informally, the provider runs student conversation sessions which are an opportunity for students to give immediate feedback on all aspects of the programme, and for the provider to probe for more details. These sessions (currently online) have had very high attendance rates; around 90% of the student cohort.

The provider seeks feedback from the four external examiners appointed to the programme. Where critical comments or specific suggestions are made, they are considered within the School and reported to the Taught Board of Studies, with recommendations for changes to the programme or assessments where appropriate. During the Covid-19 pandemic, external examiner advice has been sought on the transition to online assessments and on the approach to the increase in academic misconduct cases (see Standard 1).

In 2018 the University introduced a Placement Learning Policy and incorporated placement learning into its central quality assurance processes. The School welcomed the University-supported approach for matters concerning insurance and liability, and standardised approaches to risk assessment templates and communications.

The team asked how the provider assures itself that when students are on placement their activities are adequately supervised. The provider explained that all placements focusing on pharmaceutical care are supervised by a registered pharmacist. It is a clear expectation that at least four out of the five placement days must be spent with the supervising pharmacist. Placements which are arranged through the Volunteering Service are more general and although not supervised by a pharmacist are supported with clear supervision guidelines. All placement providers are provided with a manual and a conversation takes place with each placement host about what can be delivered and how learning outcomes can be met. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, these conversations have included discussions about the capacity to continue to host placements and about suitable PPE for students.

The quality of the placement learning experience on the programme is monitored through student 'de-brief' workshops, where students share experiences with each other and with session leads, and through submission of a summative reflective portfolio. Marking of the portfolio allows academic staff to monitor that all placement providers are supporting students to achieve the learning outcomes. Any concerns identified by students or staff are followed up by the School. Placement providers deemed to be unable to offer a quality experience are discontinued. Students and providers are also asked to complete a post-placement questionnaire. This ensures that the provider receives feedback unrelated to the submission of coursework.

### Standard 3: Equality, diversity and fairness

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

The University recognises general and specific duties for eliminating discrimination and promoting equality under the Equality Act 2010 and has robust systems to support these commitments. The University has developed a Strategic Equality Plan which aims to promote equality and achieve equality improvements across the University through systematic collection and analysis of data on the protected characteristics. Welsh language is also included.

The provider monitors applications, offers, acceptances and enrolments and class of degree award by gender, ethnicity, disability and postcode. Findings are considered by the School Equality & Diversity Committee and are reported to the University through the ARE process.

The School is following the increased national interest in BAME students' attainment in the higher education sector and recognises that inclusivity of the curriculum is an important consideration in these discussions. The Chair of the School EDI Committee has been liaising with the University's Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion about the work of the University's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) attainment gap task and finish group. The provider is also engaging with analysis from the GPhC and other bodies on student performance data to understand the impact of multiple protected characteristics on MPharm student attainment and award gap. The provider has found that the low student numbers in each group make meaningful conclusions difficult. They have made a request to the university for access to disaggregated student data so that they can develop a better understanding of individual student journeys. The team will be interested to note the outcome of these discussions at the next accreditation visit. In the meantime, the provider is encouraging all students to disclose difficult circumstances and to access support where available.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion training is delivered throughout the four years of the MPharm programme, including an online interactive equality and diversity package tailored to pharmacy undergraduates in Year 1, and interactive workshops on professionalism and unconscious bias. Students also complete a variety of NHS training packages as part of their placement programme. The provider has recently improved the diversity of the actors used for OCSEs to ensure that they more closely represent the populations students will be working with in their clinical practice.

All staff, including teacher practitioners, are required to undertake equality and diversity training. The basic level of competency is demonstrated by successful completion of online training in EDI and unconscious bias, which must be updated every three years. Higher level training is required of all persons leading the recruitment and selection of staff or students or with the management of staff members.

The introduction of Practique, an online OSCE marking tool, allows for marking data to be analysed. The provider will use this to look at unconscious bias, taking student and marker characteristics into account.

### Standard 4: Selection of students *and trainees*

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

In 2018, the School established a Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group which meets monthly to discuss and agree selection criteria and events, recruitment strategy and to monitor admission figures and targets. The provider admits around 130 students to the programme each year. More than 85% of these students hold A-levels as their primary qualifications. The School continues to retain a standard A-level offer of Grades AAB/ABB. As a result of a review in 2018, criteria were changed to allow Chemistry *or* Biology A-level as an absolute requirement for study. The provider is carefully monitoring the small number of students on the programme that do not have a Chemistry A-level.

Since 2019/20 all applications are screened by a central university team, using criteria supplied by the School. If information is missing and before any applicant is rejected, the School reviews the UCAS form.

All applicants who meet the initial screening criteria are invited to interview. Interviews are conducted using a semi-structured script and are designed to screen out those applicants betraying a lack of knowledge, understanding, commitment, professional awareness or communication skills. All staff that interview applicants undertake training and will initially observe an experienced member of staff. The Senior Admissions Tutor always reviews with the relevant interviewer their reasoning and evidence-base when a recommendation is made to not offer an applicant a place on the programme, to ensure consistency of decision-making.

The team noted that at the last accreditation event the provider had been considered moving to Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs) and asked for an update. The provider stated that they continued to keep this under review, but at this stage were not convinced that it would bring benefits.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews have been conducted by video-conference. Students are also invited to a virtual open day and a virtual offer-holder day. More flexibility has been applied to the requirement for relevant work experience, noting that it has been more difficult than usual for students to obtain experience during the pandemic.

## Standard 5: Curriculum delivery and student experience

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

The course is structured so that Year 1 provides the foundation and is principally concerned with the healthy individual and self-care. Students learn about the respective roles of a pharmacist as professional, clinician, scientist and leader. Years 2 and 3 develop the core knowledge and skills. Year 2 has as its focal point body systems and looks at medicines in priority clinical areas under the theme 'providing pharmaceutical care'. Year 3 focuses on complex disease states and medicines usage in complex clinical areas under the theme 'optimising pharmaceutical care'. Year 4 emphasises clinical problem solving, challenging the students to draw upon their professional and personal competencies, reflective and critical analysis skills in decision making, taking responsibility, managing change and dealing with complexity.

Interprofessional education, focussed on the themes of clinical skills, prescribing and therapeutics and the patient journey is embedded in each year of the programme and is aligned to the taught curriculum.

Placements in both traditional and emerging environments are designed to contextualise

learning. They begin in year 1 and across the four years of the course cover community pharmacy, hospital pharmacy, GP practice and secondary care, including a specialist clinic (pain, renal unit, the virtual ward) or in areas of practice that deal with different patient populations such as care homes or a prison pharmacy. In year 4, students conduct health and lifestyle clinics in community settings where they meet a variety of patients and discuss with them health behaviour, take a range of measurements in relation to blood pressure, height and weight, and discuss any use of medication, utilising appropriate signposting where needed.

To further enhance exposure to patients beyond placement activities, a variety of expert patients are used throughout the programme within timetabled teaching, but particularly in years 3 and 4. The patients provide a personal perspective on their condition. The visits are aligned to taught sessions that cover the pathophysiology, therapeutic options and patient factors related to the condition.

The delivery of placements during Covid has been, and continues to be, a challenge. For the 2019/20 session, every student received at least one placement experience in their year of study. Students confirmed that the placement team worked hard to support them, and also said that the provider highlights opportunities to gain experience through part-time work or summer placements.

For the 2020/21 session, the provider's aim is to deliver a meaningful, if truncated, experience for all students:

- the year 1 community pharmacy placement has been replaced by a 'virtual placement' experience.
- the Cardiff and Vale Volunteering service is also currently suspended.
- the Year 2 community pharmacy placements which ordinarily take place in January were postponed because of the acute pressures in the sector. Following discussions with providers, the provider is confident that they will be able to deliver the placement to all students after the Easter break.
- year 3 hospital placements were delivered to some students and the remainder will be completed during semester 2.
- All year 4 GP placements had been allocated by the time of the event and would be completed by the Easter recess.

The team asked about the provider's contingency plans if these placements could not be delivered and was told that the provider is fortunate to have a dedicated team working on placements scheduling. 4<sup>th</sup> year placements were prioritised to ensure that students were prepared for their pre-registration training. Year 3 placements were now being arranged, to fit around OSCEs and exams. If necessary, some of these will be delayed to the start of Year 4. Similarly year 2 placements might also be delayed, but University policies have been changed to allow students to progress with placements outstanding. All placements for all students will be completed by the end of Year 4.

The team asked how the provider has ensured that students who are vulnerable or extremely vulnerable to Covid are still able to meet the learning outcomes associated with placements. The provider stated that a pre-placement questionnaire for all students discloses these vulnerabilities and the provider works with students on a case by case basis to find solutions. All 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students have been offered Covid-19 vaccinations.

All modules are compulsory and must be passed before students can progress to the next year of study. There is an appropriate mix of diagnostic, formative and summative assessments, in conjunction with regular constructive and timely feedback. Assessments are designed to ensure that students meet pass criteria that reflect safe practice. The School has clear procedures to deal with patient safety issues in assessments, set out in a Critical Errors Policy. The policy states that where a student response would harm a patient in a practice-based assessment it will be 'yellow flagged' in formative assessments or result in failure of summative assessments, after review by the marking team.

In 2019-20, a small number of changes were made to the assessment requirements as a consequence of the rapid transition to home study and home working in March 2020 (see Significant Pedagogic Developments). These changes were made following a policy laid down by the University. The provider reviewed the results of the summer 2020 assessments and found that, in the majority of cases and probably because of the open-book approach, marks were higher than usual in most modules. Using the University scaling policy, the provider therefore adjusted marks downwards for 8 modules, upwards for one module and made no changes for one module. These changes and the scaling process were explained to students. For 2020-21, whilst the mechanism for assessment will be online rather than paper or classroom-based, all assessments will be delivered in their entirety.

The team asked how the provider was preparing first year students for assessments, given that many of them will not have taken an exam for over a year due to the cancellation of A-level examinations in summer 2020. The provider stated that first year students have been very engaged from the outset. They were provided with resources to support them in the advance of the January exam, including podcasts and access to online Zoom discussions. Results from the January exam were consistent with previous years and students were now being prepared for the summer assessments.

The team asked how and when feedback is given to students who fail assessments and was told that the University policy is for feedback on all formative and summative assessments to be given within 20 working days of submission. The only exception made to this policy is for the final year dissertations; feedback on these is provided within 25 days. At the start of each academic year, students are given a Gantt chart showing the assessment, resit and feedback dates. Students are entitled to verbal feedback on all assessments. This can be given in timetabled group sessions or can be one-to-one if requested by the student.

## Standard 6: Support and development for students *and trainees*

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

On arrival in the School, every student is allocated a personal tutor who provides academic and pastoral support for the duration of the student's time at Cardiff. Tutors provide general welfare support and signpost students to the support services run by the University and Students' Union. They also provide support to students in relation to assessment outcomes. Tutors meet with their tutees a minimum of once per semester and students can arrange additional meetings as and when required.

Personal tutors adhere to a Code of Practice, are supported by their peer network and receive training in their role. The School has established a Personal Tutor Advisory Team, overseen by

the School's Senior Tutor. Its members have specialist knowledge, interest, experience and training. The team is available to provide advice and guidance to all personal tutors and to students where their tutor is absent.

All students are required to attend a placement preparation workshop before attending any placement. For all placements, students are provided with contact details of the scheme organiser. They are required to make contact prior to the placement and discuss any special requirements. Students have regular and emergency contact details provided to them whilst they are on placement in their student handbook.

The provider works closely with the Academic and Skills Development Centre to support students to become mentors for junior colleagues. Through the mentoring scheme, all first-year students (mentees) are matched to trained student mentors from higher years of the MPharm whom they meet on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of issues including new ways of studying, settling into accommodation, budgeting, assignments, essays and exams and even finding housing. In the 2019/20 session, there were 22 mentors, including 8 mentor consultants in the scheme from the School, with each mentor supporting around five mentees.

The School has a dedicated careers adviser from the central Careers and Employability team who works closely with MPharm students to tailor training, support and advice, particularly with regard to pre-registration applications.

The provider recognises the responsibility of service providers in Wales to enable patients to communicate in the Welsh language. The provider has three Welsh-speaking part-time teacher practitioners who have developed and embedded Welsh language provision in patient-facing teaching sessions. The sessions are either oriented to Welsh language students, with the use of Welsh-speaking patients, or provide non-Welsh language students with exposure to the Welsh language, including the development of a limited vocabulary to aid patient interactions when students are on placements. The team has recently developed bilingual OSCE stations for summative assessments. Working with bilingual Welsh medical actors, a Welsh speaking student may choose to complete the station in their preferred language.

The provider has supported students on a case-by-case basis through the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the University instituted a remote learning policy allowing for students to apply to undertake some or all their studies remotely from Cardiff, the MPharm programme is exempt from this policy as a number of programme and module outcomes cannot be addressed without on-campus or placement attendance. However, where students are challenged by on-campus or placement attendance, members of the School's Personal Tutor Advisory Team meet with the student to discuss their needs and develop an action plan to address them.

Student Conversation Sessions have been used to consult students on the provider's approaches to dealing with the pandemic. The team met a number of students from all four years of the programme who confirmed that the provider had worked hard to support them with the transition to online study. Students said that their feedback was listened to and acted on, for example with the introduction of more synchronous teaching. Break-out rooms are used to enable students to interact and engage with each other and staff encourage students to switch on their cameras and microphones.

## Standard 7: Support and development for academic staff and pre-registration tutors

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

40 members of academic staff currently teach on the programme, including 13 registered pharmacists. In addition to academic staff there are five part-time teacher-practitioners, drawn from community and hospital. In preparation for the new Standards for Initial Education and Training, the provider has recruited two further teacher practitioners to join the School in the spring of 2021, both of whom are independent prescribers. The teaching and research activity of the School is supported by a range of technical and professional staff members.

All academic staff are directly accountable to the Head of School or Deputy Head of School who receive advice on specific aspects of staff roles from the Director of Learning and Teaching and the Director of Research and Engagement. This enables a consistent approach to staff review and development and allows the provider to integrate staff activity in a way that transcends traditional discipline boundaries. All staff members (including teacher-practitioners) have an annual appraisal with the Head of School or Deputy Head of School. These reviews provide regular, constructive and timely feedback, wherein objectives are aligned to the University's strategy.

The University has a comprehensive training and development programme, and all staff are encouraged to attend courses to support their job role and personal development and funding is made available to the School to support these activities. All new members of academic staff complete an 'Academic Practice for Early Career Staff' programme. The programme aims to ensure all academic staff are professionally competent as lecturers and achieve UKPSF Descriptor 2 (HEA Fellow) by the end of their probationary period. All new teaching staff are required to have a mentor during the probationary period, in addition to a mentor as part of the Academic Practice for Early Career Staff programme. More experienced staff may request a mentor within the wider College or University to provide support in particular development needs.

The provider has supported staff to work and teach remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a small number of staff working on-campus regularly (for example supporting core functions) or occasionally (for example to deliver essential on-campus teaching). Such on-campus access has been managed in a highly regulated manner with all staff requiring on-campus access provided with an extensive induction programme to explain the School's Covid-safe practices.

The provider has invested in laptops, and other IT equipment for staff to facilitate home working. All staff meetings continue to be held monthly (remotely) in order to provide a discussion forum on developments and challenges. A number of these forums have focussed on staff wellbeing. The Head of School also meets on a regular rotational basis in an online forum with groups of 4-6 academic staff. The School has also held a number of online social events in order to maintain the close-knit community. Adjustments to workload have been made where necessary, for example to support those with home schooling responsibilities.

The team asked how non-pharmacist academic staff are supported when needing to help students in pharmacy-specific ways, for example with careers advice. The provider explained

that the personal tutor training picks up on this and signposts staff to the Personal Tutor Advisory Group. In terms of development and support for non-pharmacist staff, the provider had been arranging for these staff to experience pharmacy practice through short visits. These will be offered again once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. More broadly, the team approach to developing modules and assessments also helps non-pharmacist staff to contextualise their teaching.

## Standard 8: Management of initial education and training

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

The programme is delivered in the School of Pharmacy, one of seven schools comprising the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences, one of Cardiff University's three colleges. There is a clear School Committee structure for the development, management and monitoring of the programme, and this feeds into the University governance structure.

The School's Board of Examiners confirms marks and makes recommendations on progression and awards to the University Awards and Progress Committee. It also monitors the quality and standards of awards and makes recommendations for quality enhancements.

All placements are associated with and form part of MPharm modules. The School has a dedicated professional services placement team supported by two academic leads. The team plans, monitors and quality assures all placement provision and is the primary point of contact for students and placement providers. Evidence of attendance and achievement of intended learning outcomes is required from placements. Formal risk assessments are undertaken and there is appropriate insurance cover for practice placements.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in March 2020, the School constituted an MPharm Assessment Transition Group, which regularly consulted student representatives, to convert the remaining paper-based assessments for the 2019-20 session to online alternatives. The group considered the remaining schedule of assessment against the University's Variations Framework and made a small number of changes (see Significant Pedagogic Developments). The key consideration in considering any changes to assessments was assuring that all students achieved the programme learning outcomes.

The transition group also developed pilot tests for students to familiarise themselves with the online platforms, and podcasts, videos and drop-in session for online assessment literacy.

At the end of the 2019/20 session, the Transition Group focused on ensuring that the programme could be delivered via a blended approach featuring online learning (asynchronous and synchronous) and essential on-campus teaching in the 2020-21 session.

The team asked if attendance rates had been affected by the move to online learning and was told that in fact attendance has improved, with less than 10% non-attendance for live and on-campus events. Engagement with asynchronous teaching is more variable, but the provider monitors attendance and engagement and highlights concerns through the personal tutor system.

The team also asked how student projects had been affected by the pandemic and was told that the School had already been working to achieve a greater diversity of research projects. A number of staff received training in systematic reviewing and through partnerships with

stakeholders, a range of projects analysing clinical data was offered to students, spanning the breadth of pharmaceutical sciences.

## Standard 9: Resources and capacity

Standard continues to be met? Yes  No  (accreditation team use only)

All members of academic staff are holders of relevant PhDs and all post-probationary academic staff either are, or qualify for, membership of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Pharmacist staff work closely with their science colleagues to ensure that non-pharmacists do not undertake teaching on the programme in isolation. All module teams comprise both pharmacists and non-pharmacists.

All staff and students have access to the Microsoft Office 365 platform with a personalised single point of access to the main online resources for students and staff members. The provider makes extensive use of the University's virtual learning environment on which teaching presentations, handouts and other digitised resources (including podcasts and video content) are accessible to staff and students. From the start of the 2018-19 session, all timetabled lecture activities have been recorded and made available to students on the VLE. These recordings have been well used by students.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the provider offered additional digital and IT resources to students, including a financial hardship fund for students without access to appropriate IT resources. The team spoke to one student who had received a replacement laptop through this fund.

At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Library Service sought to ensure all core textbooks for the MPharm were available to students in an online format. Library services and study spaces have remained open in a managed way throughout the pandemic. In the student meeting, students acknowledged that study spaces had been offered but had found they were fully booked very quickly. When spaces were available, there were restrictions on working together and so their use had been limited.

Almost all teaching on the programme takes place in the Redwood Building. A rolling programme of refurbishment means that nearly all of the teaching accommodation used on the programme has been updated within the past five years. Since the 2017 interim visit, the number of consultation rooms has increased from 6 to 9, equipment for recording student communication and consultation sessions has been installed and workshop rooms have been refurbished with enhanced AV and improved acoustics. The lecture theatres are scheduled to be refurbished within the next 12 to 18 months.

The team asked about the impact, if any, of Covid-19 on the provider's longer term business plan. The provider stated that although the non-pay budget had been constrained, this has not limited activity, and will be increased back to pre-pandemic levels in 2021-22. In terms of staffing, the provider has been able to appoint new teacher-practitioners, so there has been no adverse impact.

## Significant pedagogic developments

Since the 2017 interim visit, the provider has focussed on further developing placement

experiences, refining assessments, including OSCEs, and sustaining Interprofessional Education.

A small number of changes have been made to the modular structure in Years 2 and 3. For the academic year 2019/20, two modules were merged to form a 30 credit 'Principles of Drug Design and Drug Disposition' module. This allowed pharmacokinetic principles to be integrated and contextualised with the discovery of new medicines, enabled a rational distribution of teaching over semesters 1 and 2 and gave a slightly reduced assessment load in year 2. Students were consulted and were supportive of the change. Students also provided the School with feedback that the distribution of material in year 3 was skewed towards semester 2. Consequently, one module was moved to semester 1.

Also, as a consequence of student feedback, and in order to reflect contemporary practice, some changes have been made to the programme assessments, outlined below:

Module	Outline of changes	Change effective from
PH1122 – The Role of the Pharmacist in Professional Practice	Dispensing assessment replaced with a Prescription assessment; traditional dispensing test replaced with assessment in an online platform (MyDispense) allowing a wider range of prescription assessment tasks to be addressed. Emphasises error prevention and clinical checking rather than the mechanics of dispensing.	2018/19
PH2110 – Clinical and Professional Pharmacy	Practice of Pharmacy assessment altered from Pass/Fail to awarding percentage marks. Student feedback indicated that their efforts were not reflected in Pass/ Fail criteria	2019/20
PH1123 – Structure and Function of Cells and Microbes	Practical write-up report (24 questions) replaced by a class test. Content tested is the same but practical write-up report was not discriminatory in terms of student performance and understanding.	2019/20
PH3000 – Professional Development	Professional Development Portfolio summative assessment moved from Year 4 to Year 3. Student feedback indicated that this would better align with and support the pre-registration recruitment cycle.	2019/20
PH3202 – Research Methodology	Paper appraisal assessment (individual; 50%) and SWOT analysis (group; 50%) replaced with a single coursework assessment based on writing a rapid review (individual; 100%). The rationale for this change was two-fold. Firstly, it helps students develop research skills in preparation for their Year 4 research projects. Secondly, it exemplifies how an evidence-base	2020/21

is developed.

In addition, the School made some temporary changes to the 2019-20 assessments in response to Covid-19. Programme level outcomes were still met, and the plans were reviewed and agreed by the University. The changes for the 19/20 session were:

1. OSCEs: Years 1 – 3, removed; Year 4, OSCE transitioned to an online platform using patient actor video vignettes. For the 20/21 session OSCEs restored using patient actors and video consultation.
2. Numeracy: Year 4, numeracy assessment removed on the basis that students undertake summative assessments in numeracy skills in Years 1 – 3. All final year students had passed these assessments and had therefore met the programme learning outcomes.
3. Examinations: Year 1, modular exams transitioned to a single synoptic online assessment; Years 2 – 4, existing paper-based exams transitioned to online time-limited assessments.

The University also introduced a 'Safety Net Policy'. The principle of the policy is that *"no student should be disadvantaged in terms of their achievement as a result of the coronavirus pandemic"*. The policy includes a package of measures including a revised Extenuating Circumstances procedure allowing students to defer assessments if circumstances mean they are unable to be assessed. In addition, degrees are classified using the higher mark from either the average mark, calculated on assessments completed on or before 16 March 2020 (in the 2019/20 academic session) or the final mark at the end of the year.

OSCEs take place in all four years of the programme (except for 2019-20). Stakeholders are involved in writing the stations and professional actors simulate patients and healthcare professionals. The provider has introduced 'near-peer' marking for mock OSCEs, with two stations marked by students in the year above. This has benefits for both the markers and those being assessed. 4<sup>th</sup> year students confirmed that they had found this exercise helpful. Summative OSCE marks are scaled to the 40% pass mark. The provider explains the scaling process to students, who prefer this to a pass-fail system. Students must reach the pass mark, and pass half of all stations with no critical fails. An electronic platform, Practique, is now used to mark all OSCE stations. This allows the provider to gather granular data on the performance of students and markers. Such data are used for marker feedback and training.

Communications skills teaching has been developed to support OSCE assessments. Actors deliver fishbowl sessions with students and provide feedback during teaching and following assessment. Given the increased role of technology in consultations, teaching sessions that specifically address video and telephone consultations have also been introduced.

The provider has also partnered with Hijinx, a theatre company of learning disabled and / or autistic artists. Hijinx deliver communication sessions with Year 2 and 4 students so that they can develop their communication skills with neurodivergent actors. The team encouraged the provider to publicise this worthwhile and valuable partnership to other Schools of Pharmacy.

The team asked how students interact with patients, rather than actors, and was told that as well as interacting on placements, expert patients and carers are invited into the School to take part in an interactive session with 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The provider also has a lay faculty that reviews projects and gives feedback. The school plans to engage with patients and public in

developing the MPharm with the introduction of the new IETP standards.

Interprofessional education is embedded in each year of the programme and is aligned to the taught curriculum. The IPE portfolio has been developed in collaboration with partner schools within the University. There are currently eight IPE sessions, a reduction of one session since the interim visit.

Placement provision has continued to expand and now includes two-day placements in primary care in Years 2 and 4 of the programme and eight days' experience in Year 1 with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Volunteering Service. Learning outcomes and activities for all placements have been reviewed and updated. To support students on placements, an electronic portfolio has been introduced that offers a structured framework for reflection on, and evidence of, their professionalism (against GPhC standards) and their development of personal and professional competencies.



