

**Keele University Master of Pharmacy (MPharm)
degree with preparatory year - accreditation event
report, June 2021**



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Event summary and conclusions

Provider	Keele University
Course	Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree with preparatory year
Event type	Accreditation
Event date	23 June 2021
Current accreditation period	2020/21 - 2022/23
Relevant standards	Future pharmacists Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists, May 2011
Outcome	<p>Approval</p> <p>The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the MPharm degree with preparatory year provided by Keele University should be approved until 2022/23 at which point the provision will be reaccredited alongside the University's MPharm degree against the Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists 2021.</p>
Conditions	There were no conditions.
Standing conditions	The standing conditions of accreditation can be found here .
Recommendations	No recommendations were made.
Registrar decision	Following the event, the Registrar of the GPhC accepted the accreditation team's recommendation and approved the accreditation of the programme until 2022/23.
Key contact (provider)	Dr Katie Maddock, Head of School
Accreditation team	<p>Professor Andy Husband (Team Leader) Professor of Clinical Pharmacy and Head of School, Newcastle University</p> <p>Dr Geoffrey Hall (Team member-academic) Retired, formerly Associate Head, Leicester School of Pharmacy, De Montfort University</p> <p>Dr Marisa van der Merwe (Team member-academic) Associate Head (Academic) Principal Lecturer in Pharmaceutics, University of Portsmouth</p> <p>Professor Anne Watson (Team member-pharmacist) Postgraduate Pharmacy Dean, NHS Education for Scotland</p>

	Farwah Bukhari (Team member-pharmacist recently registered) General Practice/Domiciliary Care Pharmacist, Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust Fiona Barber (Team member-lay) Independent Member, Leicester City Council
GPhC representative	Chris McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC
Rapporteur	Dr Ian Marshall (rapporteur) Proprietor, Caldarvan Research (Educational and Writing Services); Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology, University of Strathclyde
Observers	Parbir Jagpal (observer – accreditation panel member in training) Director of Postgraduate Studies and Programme Director - Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing, University of Birmingham

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

An MPharm degree with preparatory year is a single course that leads to a Master of Pharmacy award. It is recruited to separately from the accredited 4-year MPharm degree and is assigned a different UCAS code. For most schools this will be a 5-year course which includes a preparatory year (often referred to as 'year 0') followed by four further taught years that mirror that of the accredited MPharm degree.

An MPharm with preparatory year must meet all of the GPhC's initial education and training standards for pharmacists in all years of the course. All teaching and assessment of the learning outcomes is expected to take place in taught years 2-5, with the first taught year being set aside for foundation learning only. For the purpose of accreditation, it is assumed that the course content for the four taught years following the preparatory year will be identical for students on the MPharm degree and the MPharm degree with preparatory year.

The accreditation team will take assurance that the MPharm with preparatory year MPharm meets seven of the ten standards through its detailed review of these standards in relation to the current accredited MPharm provision. The review of the MPharm with preparatory year focuses on the following:

- Standard 1: Patient and public safety
- Standard 4: Selection of students and trainees
- Standard 6: Support and development for students and trainees

The Keele University Pharmacy with a Foundation Year programme (UCAS code B231), hereafter referred to as Pharmacy with a Preparatory Year to avoid confusion with the renamed pre-registration training year, was established in 2006 as part of the University Health Foundation Year provision to provide applicants not possessing the traditional entry requirements for Year 1 entry an opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge required to be successful on the Masters in Pharmacy (MPharm) course. This included students who had not studied chemistry or biology at A level or their equivalent or students who had studied one of these subjects but not met the grade requirement. Additionally, the course is designed to provide the opportunity for those who have been out of study for a long period to return to full time education as part of the institution's widening participation activity. The core content of the preparatory year encompasses modules based on chemistry, biology, maths, and professional development/study skills.

There are 34 students currently in the preparatory year, all of whom are due to progress to year 1 of the MPharm in September 2021 subject to meeting the progression requirements of the course. The annual intake target is no more than 40 students and is projected to be between 30 and 40 students per year in each of the next three academic years.

Documentation

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

- Appendix 1: MPharm Fitness to Practice procedure
- Appendix 2: Academic and Professional Development for Health module descriptor
- Appendix 3: Academic and Professional Development for Health portfolio handbook
- Appendix 4: PhaB recruitment and admissions SOP 2020-21

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 video conference on 7 June 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 video conference between Keele University and the GPhC accreditation team on 23 June 2021 and comprised of meetings between the GPhC accreditation team and representatives of the MPharm with preparatory year programme.

Declarations of interest

Dr Van der Merwe informed the team that the Head of School at Keele University was an external examiner at her own institution. This was not considered to be a conflict of interest.

Schedule

Day 1 – 23 June 2021

Meeting number	Meeting	Time
1.	Review of MPharm with preparatory year (provider joins zoom meeting at 15:15) Questions focusing on Standards 1, 4 and 6	14:15 – 15:30
2.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	15:30 – 15:45

Attendees

Course provider

The team met with the following representatives of the University:

Name	Designation at the time of accreditation event
Professor Katie Maddock	Head of School
Dr Rebecca Venables	Lecturer in Clinical Pharmacy
Kalpesh Thakrar	Academic Clinical Educator
Alison Cooper	Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice
Matthew Stibbs	Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice
Tracey Coppins	Head of Health Foundation Year
Dr David Morgan	Reader in Pharmaceutical Sciences & Technology

Key findings

Standard 1: Patient and public safety

Standard is met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

Preparatory year students work with simulated patients under the supervision of academic staff. If it is alleged that a student has demonstrated unprofessional behaviour, or has a disciplinary offence recorded by the University, they are first referred to the School Health and Conduct process, as outlined in the University FtP procedure. The GPhC *Standards for Pharmacy Professionals* are used to guide and inform this process. The team was told that currently all preparatory year students are required to complete an enhanced DBS check and an occupational health check before they are allowed to attend their first placements after progressing to the MPharm; thus all preparatory year students go through this clearance process once they have achieved the academic progression requirements at the end of the second semester. However, the team learned that from September 2021 onwards, applicants will be required to provide the School with a copy of their DBS certificate, or a letter of good standing from their local police authority for international students, prior to enrolment on the course. In addition, it was stressed that any criminal convictions must be declared on the UCAS application form. The team ascertained that students were required to pay for the necessary vaccinations but were advised on financial grounds to be vaccinated at home rather than at the University. The team was told that there had been no major behavioural problems with students on the Pharmacy Preparatory Year and that the 30-credit module on developmental skills at the start of the programme covered behavioural expectations and fitness to practice. Any problems would be referred to the Head of School. The team was told that Preparatory Year students do not undertake any specific pharmacy practice activities and all laboratory work is conducted under academic supervision; students are made aware of their health and safety responsibilities and are expected to adhere to all processes to assure these. Students are expected to gather evidence of competencies and key skills, professional attributes, and the skills required of a reflective practitioner. Students are assessed on a satisfactory/unacceptable basis in a role play situation with a simulated patient to ensure that they are able to communicate safely and effectively with patients once they begin their Stage 1 MPharm studies, but it was emphasised that these activities did not include any diagnosis or giving of advice but were more of fact-finding and communication skills exercises; students write a reflective account of the activity which can help to remedy any unacceptable performance. The Student Services website provides support about health and wellbeing, and academic life. A Link Tutor meets with the preparatory year students for formal sessions across the year covering content such as the roles and values of a pharmacist and professionalism and is available at any time to answer queries. Alongside this, the University's Fitness to Practise procedures are outlined.

Standard 4: Selection of students *and* trainees

Standard is met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The University's webpage for the preparatory year route provides a background to the course, including details of modules to be studied, academic entry requirements, progression requirements and the requirement for a successful interview. The team was told that the entry qualifications depended on the level of admission; there are two groups, those with A-levels in the wrong subject area, non-science, and those with A-levels with inadequate grades for direct entry to the MPharm. The

entry requirements are: BBB at A-level if neither Chemistry nor Biology is offered as a subject, CCC at A-level if either Chemistry or Biology is offered as a subject, DMM in BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma or National Extended Diploma in Applied Science, or DDM in BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma or National Extended Diploma in other subjects. Applicants are required to have achieved, or indicate that they are being assessed for, GCSE English Language at C or 4, IELTS at 7.0 overall with a minimum of 6.5 in each component, or their approved equivalent. English language requirements for the preparatory year are the same as for direct entry to Stage 1 of the MPharm. Applicants are required to have achieved GCSE maths at C or 4; this requirement differs from the requirements for direct entry to Stage 1 of the MPharm (grade B or 5) as preparatory year students are required to pass the level 3 Foundations of Numerical and Quantitative Methods for Health module during the year. The team was told that at confirmation (receipt of A level or other qualification results) prior to Clearing, applicants are considered by a small team and may be allocated places in either the MPharm or MPharm with Preparatory Year depending on their qualifications. The team was also told that the accepted level for pharmacy never drops to the lowest University Foundation level, although the Head of School said that the level drops each year. As indicated in the commentary to Standard 1 above, from September 2021 onwards applicants will be required to complete an occupational health assessment and be deemed fit to enter the course by the University occupational health team prior to enrolment. This assessment includes providing proof of receiving of the vaccinations required by MPharm placement providers. Prior learning is not recognised as an alternative to completion of modules during the preparatory year. All applicants who have achieved or are predicted to achieve the academic requirements for the course will be offered an interview. Prior to the pandemic, admission interviews were held at Keele or, in the case of international students, by telephone. During the pandemic the School moved to online interviews, using a standardised set of questions, via MS Teams. All interviews are conducted by an academic member of staff who has received interview training from the admissions tutor. All interviewers must have completed equality & diversity training. The team was told that less than 5% fail the interview, mainly as a result of non-attendance, although any answers which are a cause for concern are referred to the admissions tutor. It was confirmed that students successfully completing the MPharm with Preparatory Year proceed to the first year of the MPharm without further interview and that in subsequent years need only present a personal declaration of their DBS/health status. The team learned that for progression students must achieve 40% in the Semester 1 science subjects and 65% in the Semester 2 advanced science subjects and professional development. The provider's representatives were confident that the level achieved in the preparatory year was equivalent to the A-level requirement for direct entry to the MPharm; this has been benchmarked by external examiners and Foundation Year teaching staff with backgrounds in further education. Due to lack of sufficient data to date, the provider was unable to say which of the two groups of entrants described above was the most successful in terms of progression through the MPharm, but that marks and progression were largely even across the cohort.

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

Standard is met? Yes No (accreditation team use only)

The team learned that each student in the preparatory year is allocated a personal tutor from within the Foundation Year team of 22 tutors at Keele; students are contacted by tutors in cases of non-attendance. In addition the School has a Foundation Year link tutor, a resource available to students

should they require additional contact; the link tutor runs teaching sessions with students during the preparatory year. There is also a disability liaison officer who is involved in decisions on reasonable adjustments. The Academic and Professional Development for Health module is run by the Head of Health Foundation Year with input from the link tutor. If a student decides that they no longer wish to go on to study pharmacy they will receive full support from their personal tutor and the careers service to help them to decide what to do next. This may be to transfer to another degree course at Keele, or to apply to other universities using their Foundation Year qualification as their entry qualification. Any student failing to achieve the required threshold for entry to Stage 1 of the MPharm programme will receive the same support but will not be allowed to progress to pharmacy. The team was told that during the COVID-19 pandemic there had been extra support through 1:1 sessions, drop-in sessions and help from the link tutor and members of the MPharm staff. Additionally, the team learned that a member of the University Student Services was now embedded in the School. The team was also told that the University had set up a hardship fund to help students with IT issues, including providing laptops and funding broadband upgrades. The University campus had remained open during the pandemic with access to library, refectory, computer facilities and accommodation if needed.

