

Joanne Martin
Quality Assurance Manager (Education)
General Pharmaceutical Council
25 Canada Square
London
E14 5LQ

25th May 2018

Re: Outcome of interim event of the MPharm degree course at Keele University

Dear Joanne

I am writing to you with the response of the School of Pharmacy at Keele University to the conditions forwarded by the GPhC following our interim accreditation event of 17th to 18th January 2018. The two conditions were:

- 1. The School must review its admissions procedures to ensure that all necessary information is readily available to prospective students and that the criteria for admissions are explicit; this is to meet criteria 4.1 and 4.2. This is because it was unclear to the team how applicants are made aware that gaining at least one month of work experience in a pharmacy would facilitate their admission, especially in relation to the operation of the University's unconditional offer scheme*
- 2. The School must review its interview processes to ensure the fair and equitable application of the interview criteria; this is because the team agreed that the application of these criteria is currently too subjective to ensure that the selection criteria are applied fairly. This is to meet criterion 4.3*

The School has conducted a thorough review of our admissions processes, involving both internal and external oversight, which has concluded that our processes ensure applicants are treated fairly. Our external review involved representatives of the University's central admissions team, and a review, independent from Keele University, conducted by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for a faculty overseeing a school of pharmacy from a Russell Group university.

In response to condition 1, the review identified that sufficient information is available to applicants across our website, from open day presentations and in our prospectus. It should be noted that around the time of the interim event the University was conducting a review of its total website including the location and clarity of entry criteria and the admissions process. Updates were applied to the university's website on 27.4.18. For pharmacy, the entry requirements and details of the admissions process can be found at

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/undergraduatecourses/pharmacy/#entry-requirements>

In response to condition 2, following both internal and external review, our reviewers have concluded that our interview processes are fair, robust, and also conducted in line with Health Education England's approach of Values Based Recruitment. Minor amendments have been made to the admissions interview documentation for the 2019 application cycle to clarify whether an applicant has an outstanding commitment to studying pharmacy at Keele; this is to ensure that any criteria are applied consistently to all applicants, and is something the School were looking to do during our annual review process. We can further confirm that all entrants to the MPharm in 2017 were interviewed, including those admitted through Clearing.

The School will continue to monitor and review its admissions processes annually at the end of the recruitment cycle; these reviews takes place annually following Clearing and is in addition to the

University's Internal Quality Audit (IQA), which has previously and consistently found our admissions system to be fair and equitable to students, something our students themselves expressed through our Student Voice Committee (SVC), which we convened in response to the conditions, to enable us to explore comprehensively the views of our students around our admissions processes. No problems were voiced by our students.

Should you require further information the School has maintained a record of the review process which can be made available upon request.

Our final comment is that the Accreditation Team here at the School of Pharmacy are very disappointed with the conduct of the GPhC throughout the interim event, including failure to follow the advertised procedure, the failure to generate an accurate record and report of the event, and the unwillingness of the GPhC to engage in dialogue with the University, which would have made any conditions unnecessary. As is your process, Keele University expect this response to be recorded in full alongside your final report on the GPhC website.

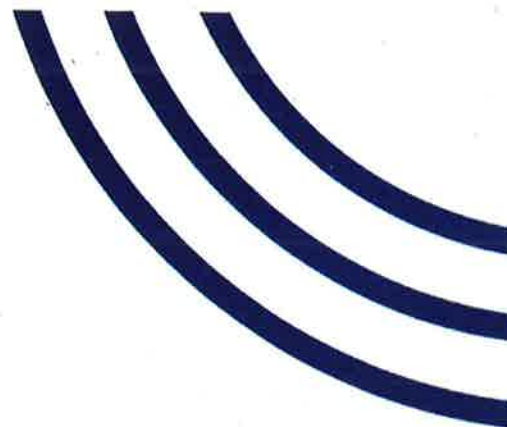
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nigel T. Ratcliffe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Professor Nigel Ratcliffe
BPharm. PhD, DMS, FBIRA, FRPharmS. CBiol, FRSB, SFHEA, FCMJ

Head of School of Pharmacy, Keele University

Cc: Nigel Clarke, Chair, General Pharmaceutical Council
Cc: School of Pharmacy Accreditation Team, Keele University



Professor Nigel Ratcliffe
Head of School of Pharmacy
Keele University

By email

Thursday, 07 June 2018

Dear Professor Ratcliffe

Outcome of interim MPharm degree visit, Keele University

I write further to your letter dated 25th May 2018, addressed to my colleague Ms Joanne Martin, Quality Assurance Manager (Education) and acknowledge its contents. In light of the nature and content of your letter, I considered it was important for me to write to you personally, in the interests of transparency, to be fair to both parties, and to clarify the GPhC's position.

In your letter you express your views about the conditions imposed following the interim visit and you have criticised the GPhC in respect of the outcome of the interim visit. I am, of course, disappointed that you feel this way. That said, the substantive points raised and the criticism advanced have been raised previously and the issues have been duly addressed. The GPhC cannot add anything further, save for reiterating that we do not accept the criticism advanced.

I am satisfied we have followed our documented procedures, our record and report are accurate, and, finally, that the university's admissions procedures were discussed with you at length as part of the interim visit. While you may be disappointed with the outcome of the interim visit, the university was given ample opportunity to make representations and to present evidence during the visit.

Furthermore, in line with GPhC procedures and the legislation governing our work, the university was informed of its right to submit a formal appeal against the outcome of the interim visit to our independent Appeals Committee, if it wished to do so. With respect, if the university wished to challenge the outcome, then an appeal would have been the appropriate vehicle for such a challenge, giving both parties the opportunity to submit its evidence with representation. I am aware that despite an earlier indication that the university would be lodging an appeal, one was not advanced and the deadline passed.

In your letter of the 25th May 2018, you have asked for your letter to be published, as your formal response to the interim visit/report, I can confirm that in line with our processes it will be published on our website, and in the interests of transparency, fairness and balance, so will this response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Duncan Rudkin'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'D' and 'R'.

Duncan Rudkin
Chief Executive & Registrar