

**Kingston University London Master of Pharmacy
(MPharm) degree with preparatory year -
accreditation event report, May 2021**



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Event summary and conclusions

Provider	Kingston University London
Course	Master of Pharmacy (MPharm) degree with preparatory year
Event type	Accreditation
Event date	19 -20 May 2021
Current accreditation period	2020/21 - 2022/23
Relevant standards	Future pharmacists Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists, May 2011
Outcome	The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the MPharm degree with preparatory year provided by Kingston University London should be approved until 2022-23, at which point the provision will be reaccredited alongside the University's other MPharm degree against the Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists 2021.
Conditions	There were no conditions.
Standing conditions	The standing conditions of accreditation can be found here .
Recommendations	No recommendations were made. However, the team did have significant concerns, which are detailed in the report.
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)	Reem Kayyali, Professor of Applied and Clinical Pharmacy, Head of Department
Accreditation team	<p>Professor Andy Husband (Team Leader) Professor of Clinical Pharmacy and Head of School, Newcastle University</p> <p>Catherine Boyd (Team member-lay) Chair of Fitness to Practise Panels HCPTS</p> <p>Laura Doyle (Team member-pharmacist) Head of Undergraduate and Pre-reg Foundation Pharmacist, Health Education and Improvement Wales</p> <p>Daniel Grant (Team member-academic) Associate Professor in Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmacy Education, University of Reading</p>

	Cristian Ioanas (Team member-pharmacist recently registered) Senior Pharmacist, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust Professor Barrie Kellam (Team member-academic) Professor of Medicinal Chemistry, University of Nottingham
GPhC representative	Damian Day, Head of Education, GPhC
Rapporteur	Jane Smith (rapporteur) Chief Executive Officer, European Association for Cancer Research
Observers	Dr Gemma Quinn (observer – accreditation panel member in training) Lead for PGT Pharmacy Practice Programmes, Deputy Director of Studies and Senior Lecturer Clinical Pharmacy, University of Bradford

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 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. It is 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 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 MPharm at Kingston University London achieved accreditation in June 2008 and is taught in the School of Life Sciences, Pharmacy and Chemistry, part of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing. The preparatory year ('Foundation Year for Pharmacy') is part of a broader Foundation provision within the Faculty and was first offered in 2004-5, when the MPharm was launched. It was initially delivered in conjunction with a local FE partner and from 2014-15 was brought in-house.

The preparatory year is designed to enable students from diverse educational backgrounds to develop the key subject knowledge necessary for admission to the MPharm programme and ultimately for entry into the pharmacy profession. It comprises four compulsory, 30 credit modules:

- Professional and Scientific Skills for Pharmacy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Maths for Pharmacy

60-70 students are admitted to the course each year and must achieve an average score of at least 70% in all modules with a minimum of 70% in the chemistry module to transfer to the MPharm. Transfer to year 1 of the MPharm is also subject to satisfactory performance in an interview and to satisfactory health and DBS checks.

An accreditation event was arranged to review the preparatory year on 19 May 2021, followed by an interim review of the MPharm and Foundation Degree content and a meeting with students on 20 May 2021. The interim review of the MPharm and Foundation Degree is the subject of a separate Report.

Documentation

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

- Appendix 1 – Programme specification
- Appendix 2 – Module descriptors
- Appendix 3 – Pharmacy scaling report 2020

- Appendix 4 – Admission data and commentary
- Appendix 5 – MPharm Assessment Strategy 2018
- Appendix 6 – Progression data and commentary
- Appendix 7 – FtP information and reports
- Appendix 8 – Staff List and CVs
- Additional information submitted prior to the event: management schematic diagram

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 11 May 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 Kingston University London and the GPhC accreditation team on 19 and 20 May 2021 and comprised of meetings between the GPhC accreditation team and representatives of the MPharm with preparatory year programme.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Schedule

Day 1 – 19 May 2021

Meeting number	Meeting	Time
1.	Accreditation team leader meets with GPhC representative	09:00 – 09:20
2.	Break	09:20 – 09:30
3.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	09:30 – 11:00
4.	Break	11:00 – 13:30
5.	Private meeting of the accreditation team	13:30 – 14:30
6.	Meeting with the provider: review of MPharm with preparatory year	14:30 – 16:00
7.	Private meeting of the accreditation team A meeting with a group of 12 students on the Preparatory Year, Foundation Degree and MPharm took place on 20 May 2021.	16:00 – 17:00

Attendees

Course provider

The team met with the following representatives of the University:

Name	Designation at the time of accreditation event
Dr Gianpiero Calabrese	Admission tutor, Faculty personal tutor scheme (PTS) lead
Professor Mehmet Dorak*	Head of School
Dr Amr El-Shaer	Chair of FtP Committee and admission tutor
Nicky Harrap	Teaching fellow
Professor Reem Kayyali*	Head of Department
Dr Mariko Kishi*	Course Director
Leanne May*	MPharm course director
Ricarda Micallef	Professionalism lead and accreditation and QA lead
Dr Huda Morgan	Module leader
Dr Liz Olusegun-Osoba	Module leader
Swati Patel	Department PTS lead
Dr Ian Piper	Faculty Foundation Provision lead
Talut Saqi	Teaching fellow
Dr Angus Westgarth-Smith	Module leader

*Attended pre-event meeting

Key findings

Standard 1: Patient and public safety

Standard is met? Yes No

On application to the course, the School considers the criminal record self-declaration on the UCAS form and follows up on any disclosures. On admission to the course, students are required to sign an online declaration to confirm that they have read the GPhC's Standards for Pharmacy Professionals and agree to abide by its principles. Students also are asked to declare any issue that would impair their fitness to practise, such as a police caution or illness.

There are appropriate disciplinary and fitness to practise policies and procedures in place at a School and University level and these apply to students on this Preparatory Year course. Students have sessions in the Professional and Scientific Skills for Pharmacy module which emphasise the key standards expected of students on the MPharm route. Students are made aware in teaching sessions of the need for pharmacists to be registered and the fact that the term 'pharmacist' is a restricted title. A health and safety induction is provided before any laboratory-based teaching takes place.

Prior to transfer to the MPharm programme, all students are required to complete an enhanced DBS check and anything adverse identified in these checks is referred to the School Fitness to Practise panel for review. Students are also required to complete a health questionnaire which is screened by the University's occupational health team. Students are informed of the screening outcomes and students with health issues are signposted to appropriate support. Reasonable adjustments are made to support students if recommended.

The team noted that School-validated health and fitness to practise and DBS checks based on national standards do not take place until transfer to the MPharm. If there is any formal or informal access to patients in the Preparatory Year, then these checks must take place on admission to this course on patient safety and public protection grounds; it is not acceptable to rely on the UCAS self-declaration. This will be checked at reaccreditation.

Standard 4: Selection of students *and trainees*

Standard is met? Yes No

Information about the course, entry requirements, the selection process and the criteria for transfer to the MPharm is made available to students via the University web site and open days. The School also makes a number of visits to local schools and colleges to promote its courses.

The typical entry offer is for a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 9-4 to include Double Science, English and Maths, and a minimum of 64 UCAS tariff points from at least two A-levels to include at least one science subject. A range of alternative qualifications is also accepted, but the majority of students are admitted on the basis of A-level qualifications.

The majority of offers are made on the basis of information provided in the UCAS application. Decisions are made by one of two admissions tutors within the School, who will discuss individual applications with each other where there are queries or concerns. The target for admission to the course is around 70 per year (66 in 2021-22). Application numbers are high this year, but the provider does not intend to grow the course.

The team was concerned about the low tariff entry points for the course. While it appreciated the provider's commitment to widening participation, there was a concern about students' future success in pharmacy. In this context, the team noted the low pass rates for the provider's graduates in the GPhC's Registration Assessment. Progression within the MPharm is not currently monitored on the basis of entry route. The team will therefore advise the GPhC's Registrar to treat the Preparatory Year separately with regard to reporting on performance in the Registration Assessment, in order to evaluate its effectiveness as a route to the profession. This means that the provider will be required to present data separately to the GPhC based on the three MPharm entry routes.

At the next reaccreditation, the team will pay particular attention to entry requirements, progression, success in the Oriel system and, therefore, success in Foundation training, and performance in the Registration Assessment. In other words, there needs to be an holistic and transparent view of the progression of the provider's graduates up to registration as pharmacists.

The provider acknowledged that the Registration Assessment performance of its graduates has not been good. Several measures have been taken to address this and these are detailed in the report of the interim review of the MPharm and Foundation Year. The provider therefore expects the performance of its 2018-19 cohort in the Registration Assessment to be improved such that it will be in the median range for pass rates nationally. If the performance of that cohort in the Registration Assessment does not improve then the current improvement strategy will not have worked. This is relevant to the preparatory year in that preparatory year students may progress on to the MPharm degree at Kingston or elsewhere.

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

Standard is met? Yes No

There are appropriate pastoral and academic support systems and services in place for students at School, Faculty and University level. Students are allocated a personal tutor upon admission to the course and efforts are made for students who transfer from this course to the MPharm to retain their tutor. Personal tutors have access to an online recording and referral system to ensure students are signposted to support where needed. The provider had identified a lack of confidence and transferable skills in students admitted to the preparatory year and has put in place a soft skills supportive toolkit and sessions to support them to develop skills and grow in confidence.

The provider uses Canvas as its virtual learning environment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of teaching and assessments were delivered entirely online. Initially, most lectures were delivered asynchronously, but in response to student feedback, more synchronous teaching was introduced. The provider conducted an audit of students' IT needs and laptops were provided to those students who did not have access to appropriate technology. Funding and dongles were made available for internet access for those who need it. Some practical classes were delivered face-to-face for those students able to come onto campus, albeit in smaller groups than usual.

Many students lived at home pre-pandemic and commuted to the University. Of those who did not usually live at home, many returned home during the pandemic, including international students. Arrangements were made for students who could not travel to on-campus practical sessions for these to be done remotely or to be deferred until the students' return. There are no placements during the preparatory year.

The students that the team met, which included students on this course, were very positive about the way the School handled its response to the pandemic. They felt very supported by staff and found staff easy to contact and responsive to feedback.

The aim of bringing the course in-house (from the external FE provider) was to ensure that students were taught in a pharmacy context from the beginning. The four modules are delivered only to preparatory year students, so pharmacy-relevant examples are used extensively. The Professional & Scientific Skills for Pharmacy module integrates science and professionalism, including discussions on fitness to practise and professional standards. The external examiner for the MPharm also examines the preparatory year modules.

Student performance is monitored and module leaders look at this alongside student feedback. The provider has a comprehensive dashboard which allows performance to be analysed in terms of protected characteristics.

As a result of stricter application of entry criteria and changes to the course content and structure, the proportion of students transferring to the MPharm has increased over the past two years. All students not transferring to the MPharm are interviewed by course staff to make sure they are going on to an appropriate alternative course, either at the provider or elsewhere.

The team noted that even though the provider has changed its approach to progression and resits, and taking pandemic-related no detriment policies into account, the current policy is still generous in terms of allowing multiple resits and repeat of modules. The team will recommend to the reaccreditation panel this is discussed in depth at the next GPhC visit.

