Surveys of 2013/14 pre-registration trainees and tutors - summary of findings and points for consideration
Background and introduction

This year, we launched our first ever survey of pre-registration tutors and repeated the trainee survey we ran in 2013. Both surveys were developed and run by the University of Bradford and Information by Design.

The surveys were run online and trainees and tutors were invited to respond via email. The overall response rates were approximately a third for both surveys.

We sent this year’s trainee survey to pre-registration trainees sitting the registration assessment for the first time only in 2014 because trainees sitting the registration assessment for the second or third time were already surveyed in 2013. Our initial analysis is summarised below and focuses on some of the identified key points.

The results from these surveys allow us to compare views of pre-registration training from both tutor and trainee perspectives. This year, we are also able to compare the results from the surveys of the 2012/13 and 2013/14 trainees. In January, we also launched an analysis of the group of dissatisfied trainees from the 2012/13 trainee survey. This has helped us to understand further trainee experiences during the pre-registration training year.

These surveys are part of a three year project and we will run a further survey of pre-registration tutors and the first ever survey of pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians later this year. We will use the results from this project to inform how we develop our approach to the future education and training of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

We expect these survey results to be of interest to pre-registration trainees, pre-registration tutors, others involved in the initial education and training of pharmacists, national health education training organisations and governmental departments of health.
Overview

1. Summary of findings

   a. Pre-registration trainee survey

   A total of 829 trainees, approximately a third of the total surveyed, completed the survey and the overall findings were positive. Most trainees were satisfied with the overall quality of their training (78%) and rated the quality of their support as excellent or good (66%). A smaller group of trainees rated their educational supervision as excellent or good (60%).

   Nearly all trainees (92%) who completed the survey undertook their training as a single placement with the remainder undertaking a split placement (8%). Most trainees trained in the community sector (70%), with nearly all others completing their training in the hospital sector (29%). Under one per cent undertook their training in the industrial sector.

   Most agreed that their training covered the pre-registration performance standards (87%) and 78% thought their training adequately prepared them for their role as a pharmacist. Only 69% thought their training fully prepared them for the registration assessment.

   Most (94%) said they had formally discussed their progress with their tutor at least quarterly and 77% agreed or strongly agreed that their progress reviews were of value.

   Just over three quarters (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had received constructive feedback to aid their development and 74% agreed or strongly agreed that feedback was an accurate reflection on their performance.

   b. Pre-registration tutor survey

   675 tutors completed the survey, approximately a third of the total number surveyed. Nearly all of the tutors who completed the survey (89%) tutored a single trainee in 2013/14. Just over three quarters (78%) were a tutor with the same trainee for the full 12 months. Most tutors had been qualified for 11 years or more (73%) with the remaining 27% qualified for less than 11 years. More than half of all tutors had been a tutor for 5 years or less (57%) with 27% a tutor for 6-10 years and 16% for 10 years or longer. Likewise, 60% of tutors had reported that they had only tutored five trainees or less since becoming a tutor.

   Most tutors who responded work in community pharmacy (69.6%) with 29.6% working in the hospital sector and under 1% in industry. Overall, 52% of respondents were White, 35% Asian or Asian British, 5% Black or Black British and 8% from other ethnic groups.

   In 2013/14, most tutors felt that they were well supported and that they had access to a training programme (90%). The main support mechanisms available to tutors were through a training programme either run by their community organisation, an NHS organisation or through a private provider external to their organisation. The remaining 10%, who didn’t have access to a training programme, were less likely to agree that they had access to sufficient support in 2013/14. Nearly all tutors (99%) reported having access to other forms of support in 2013/14, with the most popular being access to another tutor (68%), access to offsite tutor training opportunities (48%) and access to a pre-registration manager in their employing organisation (39%).
Most tutors (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in assessing their trainee as a professional. Likewise, 92% agreed or strongly agreed that they could provide effective feedback following assessment. Tutors were also asked how interested they were in undertaking further training in a number of areas. The most popular areas identified by tutors were identification and management of a trainee in difficulty, giving effective feedback and assessing a trainee’s progress against the pre-registration performance standards.

When asked about the quality of support their organisation provided for trainees, 91% rated this as good, very good or excellent. We also asked tutors to respond to a set of questions from the point of view of their trainee/s. Tutors were asked how their trainee/s would rate the quality of their training experience, the quality of support provided and their educational supervision. Most (93%) tutors thought their trainee would rate the overall quality of their pre-registration training as good, very good or excellent. Likewise, most tutors thought their trainees would rate the quality of support they received as good or excellent (91 %), but a smaller number thought their trainee/s would have rated the quality of their educational supervision as good or excellent (85%). Overall, tutors had a more positive perception of pre-registration training than trainees.

Questions were asked about tutor workload, staff resourcing and the support provided by their employing organisation as a way of understanding the impact these had on a tutor’s ability to carry out their role. Tutors were less likely to agree that staff resourcing (22%), workload (38%) and the support provided (32%) were barriers in allowing them to carry out their role.
Points for consideration

1. Trainees

Like last year, there were significant differences between different groups of respondents.

**Sector and country/region comparisons**

Trainees who trained in the hospital sector were more likely to rate the overall quality of their training experience as good or very good, the quality of their support as adequate, good or excellent and the quality of their educational supervision as good or excellent. This was also the same for trainees who trained in Scotland and Wales.

**Ethnicity comparisons**

Trainees from white ethnic groups were also more likely to rate the overall quality of their pre-registration training experience as good or very good in comparison to those from Asian and other ethnic groups.

**Community pharmacy comparisons**

In this year’s trainee survey, we saw greater differences in response between trainees who trained in a large organisation (national chain), medium-sized organisation (non-national chain) or independent community pharmacy.

Trainees who trained in a large organisation were more likely to agree that their training prepared them for their role as a pharmacist. They were also more likely to rate the quality of their educational supervision as good or excellent (68%), in comparison to those who trained in an independent community pharmacy (53%) or a medium-sized organisation (49%).

**Comparing 2012/13 and 2013/14 trainee results**

In the trainee survey we are also able to compare the data from both the 2012/13 and 2013/14 cohorts for the first time. Responses were similar although trainees from 2013/14 were more likely to agree that their training fully covered the pre-registration performance standards, fully covered the registration assessment syllabus and that they were fully prepared for the registration assessment.

2. Tutors

The tutor survey report highlights significant differences between responses to questions based on the number of years a respondent has been a tutor. While most tutors had been registered for 11 years or more, over half of respondents had only been a tutor for five or less years (57%). These tutors were less likely to agree that they were fully supported in 2013/14 and to agree that they were confident in assessing their trainee as a professional.
Tutors who worked for a large organisation or independent community pharmacy were more likely to agree that the quality of support their organisation provided for them was good, very good or excellent (96% for large organisations and 94% for independent community pharmacies) in comparison to those who worked in a medium-sized organisation (80%).

91% of tutors rated the quality of support their organisation provided for trainees as excellent, very good or good.

3. Tutor vs trainee perceptions

For the first time we are able to compare the responses from trainees and from tutors to the same questions. After last year’s trainee survey, we commissioned a further analysis of responses from trainees who were dissatisfied with their training. We discovered that some of the greatest differences between satisfied and dissatisfied trainees related to how trainees felt about the quality of support they received and their educational supervision.

When developing the tutor survey, we decided to ask tutors these key questions along with further questions looking at coverage of the performance standards, registration assessment syllabus and the trainee experience. We used the same questions we asked in the trainee survey, but asked tutors to answer the questions from their trainee’s perspective.

The results showed there were large differences between how trainees rated the quality of training provided and how tutors thought their trainee/s would rate the quality of training they had provided. Tutors gave higher ratings in all of their responses in comparison to the responses from trainees. The largest differences (25%) occurred in the questions about the overall quality of their pre-registration training experience and the educational supervision provided.
Preliminary conclusions

**Differing perceptions:** This is the first time we have been able to compare trainee and tutor perspectives of pre-registration training. We have highlighted differences in perceptions of training experience from both tutor and trainee viewpoints. By highlighting these differences, we hope to improve trainee and tutor understanding of their roles, responsibilities and expectations.

**Levels of satisfaction:** Some findings identified in last year’s survey are repeated in this year’s - specifically that those who trained in Scotland, Wales or in the hospital sector reported higher levels of satisfaction with their training than others. This year, trainees who trained in large organisations were also more satisfied than trainees in medium-sized organisations and independent pharmacies.

**Dissatisfaction:** Again, there are a small group of dissatisfied trainees and we will undertake further research in this area (1) to see if the characteristics of this group match those identified in the trainee dissatisfaction report we commissioned last year and (2) to understand more fully the reasons for their dissatisfaction.

**Using these findings:** We recognise that surveys can only give us a partial picture of the overall initial education and training experience for pharmacists. They can, however, inform important and relevant debates about the current state of pre-registration training and ensure that options for reform are based on the best available evidence. We hope that these surveys contribute to that process.

**GB country education reforms:** Each country in Great Britain is considering proposals for reforms of the initial education and training for pharmacists and we suggest that the quality assurance of pre-registration training, including trainee support and tutor development, should be regarded as being central to their proposals.

**Forthcoming conference:** We will be holding a conference in November 2015 about the education and training of the pharmacy team which will be an opportunity to discuss further the findings of these surveys and wider education issues.