



Master of Pharmacy  
degree (MPharm)

University of Strathclyde  
Report of an interim event  
February 2017

## Event summary and conclusions

<b>Provider</b>	University of Strathclyde
<b>Course</b>	Masters of Pharmacy degree (MPharm)
<b>Event type</b>	Interim event
<b>Event date</b>	1-2 February 2017
<b>Accreditation period</b>	2013/14 – 2019/20
<b>Outcome</b>	Continued accreditation confirmed  The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the University of Strathclyde should continue to be accredited to provide an MPharm degree for the remainder of the accreditation period.
<b>Conditions</b>	There were no conditions
<b>Standing conditions</b>	Please refer to Appendix 1
<b>Recommendations</b>	No recommendations were made
<b>Registrar decision</b>	The Registrar of the GPhC accepted the accreditation team's recommendation and approved the continued accreditation of the programme for the remainder of the accreditation period.
<b>Key contact (provider)</b>	Professor Robin Plevin, Head of the Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences
<b>Accreditation team</b>	Mr Peter Curphey, (Team Leader), Pharmacy Consultant  Professor Angela Alexander, (Academic), Professor of Pharmacy Education, University of Reading  Professor Andrew Husband, (Academic), MPharm Programme Director and Professor of Pharmacy Education , Durham University  Mrs Barbara Wensworth, (Pharmacist), Freelance Consultant Pharmacist
<b>GPhC representative</b>	Ms Joanne Martin, Quality Assurance Manager, GPhC
<b>Rapporteur</b>	Mrs Jane Smith, Chief Operating Officer, European Association for Cancer Research

## Introduction

### Role of the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and is the accrediting body for pharmacy education in Great Britain. The GPhC is responsible for setting standards and approving education and training courses which form part of the pathway towards registration for pharmacists. The UK 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. 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.

The powers and obligations of the GPhC in relation to the accreditation of pharmacy education are legislated in the Pharmacy Order 2010. For more information, visit:  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/231/contents/made>

### Purpose of this event

Interim events take place three years after a main successful accreditation or reaccreditation visit and the report of the event forms an appendix to the main accreditation report. The purpose of an interim event is to allow an accreditation team to:

- Monitor progress of delivery of the accredited MPharm degree since the accreditation or reaccreditation to the *GPhC Standards for initial education and training of pharmacists*.
- Evaluate a selection of the educational activities on the accredited course in conjunction with information provided at the main accreditation visit. The accreditation team will wish to satisfy itself of the quality, particularly of the practice opportunities available, and to ensure that they continue to meet the *GPhC Standards for initial education and training of pharmacists*. In particular, the accreditation team will be evaluating how well the accredited MPharm degree meets standard 5.6, which states:

*The MPharm/OSPAP curriculum must include practical experience of working with patients, carers and other healthcare professionals. We are not suggesting that off-site placement visits are the only way to achieve this. Schools should articulate their strategy for meeting this criterion, which may include off-site placement visits, using patients, carers and other healthcare professionals' in-class, and simulation.*

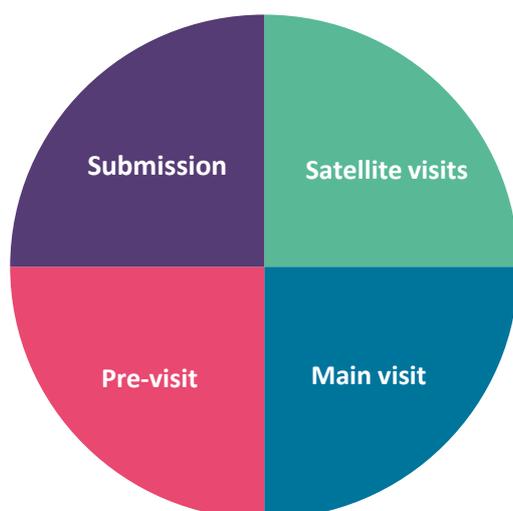
- Evaluate these practice activities in relation to the student's ability to demonstrate the relevant outcomes in Standard 10.

### The interim event

The interim event is divided into four components:

- the submission of documentation
- a pre-visit meeting
- satellite visits
- a main visit to the university

## The four components of the interim event



### Background

The MPharm programme at the University of Strathclyde was reaccredited for six years following a visit in February 2014. Significant changes to the programme were approved at the 2014 visit, for implementation from the 2014-15 academic year onwards. There were no conditions or recommendations.

### Documentation

Prior to the event, the provider submitted documentation to the GPhC in line with the agreed timescales. The documentation was reviewed by the accreditation team and it was deemed to be satisfactory to provide a basis for discussion.

### Pre-visit

In advance of the main visit, a pre-visit meeting took place by teleconference on 10 January 2017. The purpose of the pre-visit 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 visit.

### Satellite visits

Satellite visits took place on 7 October 2016 and 18 November 2016 to allow team members to observe off-site activities in advance of the main visit.

### The main visit

The main visit itself took place on site at the University of Strathclyde on 1 and 2 February 2017, and comprised a series of meetings with staff and students of the university, along with observations of a number of teaching and learning activities.

### Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## Summary of key findings

The accreditation team advised the School that the team's conclusions from this event were based on what team members had been told, what they had observed, and documents that they had read over the course of the visit and the satellite visits. The purpose of this interim event was to monitor the progress made with delivering the MPharm degree since the 2014 reaccreditation, and to observe a range of educational activities that related to practice and the standard 10 outcomes. Interim events cover selected topics and not all standards are discussed; thus, standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were not addressed at this event.

A presentation by senior members of staff built on the information provided in the submission and gave an update on progress since the last visit in 2014. Points raised in the presentation, as well as other matters, were discussed with the staff and with students and the following narrative incorporates those discussions.

### Progress since last event

#### Standard 1: Patient and public safety

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

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

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

#### Standard 3: Equality, diversity and fairness

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

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

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

#### Standard 5: Curriculum delivery and student experience

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

The University of Strathclyde provides a year-long Science Foundation programme, successful completion of which may lead to entry to the MPharm. In the submission and in this Report, the Foundation Programme is referred to as Year 1, with the four years of the MPharm referred to as Years 2-5.

The MPharm programme has recently been completely redesigned. Since the last reaccreditation in 2014, Years 2 and 3 have been delivered in full and are being reviewed and adapted where necessary. Year 4 is being taught for the first time in the current academic year and Year 5 will be taught from September 2017. As well as a large team of academic and administrative staff, the School has involved external partners such as local NHS and patient groups in the work to redesign the course. There is now a patient representative on the MPharm Management Group who acts as a facilitator between the School and patient groups, looking to identify potential areas for collaboration.

The philosophy of the redesigned course is to produce outstanding pharmacy professionals by providing a

truly integrated course focused on learning rather than teaching. The number of lectures has been dramatically reduced in favour of workshops. Staff have enjoyed the opportunity to work in integrated teams and have developed in terms of their teaching capabilities and, for non-pharmacist staff, in terms of their understanding of pharmacy as a career. Students said that they benefit from material being linked to one topic, rather than taught in silos, and their understanding is helped by topics being revisited in increasing complexity as the course progresses. Students also value the move from lectures to workshops, which they find interactive and engaging.

There is some patient involvement in the course and students place great value on their interaction with patients, commenting that it helps them to develop their empathy. The students also value hearing patients talk about their expectations of a pharmacist.

The School has arranged IPE sessions in each year of the course. In Years 2 and 3 these take place with dental students and in Years 4 and 5 with medical students. The students said that when the IPE sessions work, they are very good, but that in some cases the two groups of students do not mix. A workshop with medical students was observed on one of the satellite visits and was found to be engaging and meeting its aims and objectives.

The assessment strategy for the programme is based on assessments becoming more complex as the course progresses and ensuring that students apply their learning rather than just their knowledge. A recent external examiner's report had suggested that exam questions could require more evidence of wider reading and deeper learning and the provider has responded to this by ensuring that some questions are now based on extended reading. Students are encouraged to explore topics further out of class.

The School has worked to improve the range of feedback mechanisms built into the programme, and students noted and valued the improvements.

Experiences of the Personal Development Advisor (PDA) system are varied. However, students said that most staff in the School are very approachable so support is available when needed. Two PDA meetings each year are now scheduled as Academic Family meetings, where all of a PDA's students meet as a group. This is designed to allow students from different years to meet and share experiences. Students told the team that these meetings are very popular.

Placements take place in each year of the course, with placement tasks building in number and complexity as the course develops. Placement tasks are linked to the teaching on the course and take place in both hospital and community pharmacy, although the students said that the hospital placements are very short. The provider takes feedback on placements from both students and hosts, and takes action if a particularly poor experience is reported. Students value their placement experiences, and are strongly encouraged to obtain part-time work in pharmacies to supplement their experience and to support their career development.

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

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

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

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

## **Standard 8: Management of initial education and training**

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

## Standard 9: Resources and capacity

**The team was satisfied that all criteria relating to this standard continue to be met.**

## Standard 10: Outcomes

**The team was satisfied that all 58 outcomes relating to Standard 10 continue to be delivered at the appropriate level.**

The outcomes in standard 10 are discussed in more detail under observation of student activities below.

## Observation of student activities

A list of the activities that were observed during both the satellite visits and the main visit is given in Appendix 1. The following summarises comments made by those team members who observed the activities.

In two of the activities (3 and 8), an external company was used to teach students communications skills. The School may wish to consider having a pharmacist present in these sessions to address any pharmacy-specific issues as they arise.

In some of the activities, teaching technologies such as in-class online voting systems were used to good effect, giving students the opportunity to receive diagnostic and formative feedback as well as encouraging engagement.

The team found that each of the sessions met its aims and objectives and contributed to the intended learning outcomes. All of the activities were appropriately challenging for the stage the students are at in the course. Generally, students were focused and had a good understanding of the material and the required tasks. The level of engagement was variable in some of the sessions, and some of the teaching rooms were not well-suited to the size of the class.

## Conclusions

The range of activities observed during the satellite and interim visits gave the team an insight into the opportunities available to Strathclyde students to develop their skills. During these sessions the students were fully engaged and clearly demonstrated how they are developing skills to prepare them for practice.

The students commented positively on the patient engagement activities. They value these interactions and expressed how much they help them to develop empathy. They also hope these interactions will continue and the team encouraged the provider to build on these successes.

The students described variable experience in the placements and told the team that they had also fed back their concerns to the School. The students also expressed some concern related to inter-professional education activities with the medical and dental students. They felt that the students were not always equal partners in terms of commitment. It is clear the School is endeavouring to address these concerns and make changes where appropriate.

The Personal Development Advisor plays an important role throughout the course and the students described that some of them have a very positive experience but others have had some poor experiences, mostly in the later years. However they explained that they did not see this as a disadvantage as the staff in the School are always accessible and approachable. They also explained how invaluable they find the new

academic family.

The students clearly articulated how they are developing as integrative learners, which is being strongly supported by the teaching team and the integrated curriculum. This is a great achievement and the team commended the staff on how this has been embedded.

The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the University of Strathclyde should continue to be accredited to provide an MPharm degree for the remainder of the accreditation period with no conditions and no recommendations.

## Appendix 1 - Activities

### Observed activities

The accreditation team observed the following activities as part of the interim event:

Activity number	Activity	Year/Level
1.	Debate: <i>"This house believes that the use of methadone is not in the best interest of the patient"</i>	Final year of old course / SCQF 11
2.	Workshop – Treatment of Parkinson's Disease	Year 4 / SCQF 10
3.	Workshop – Communication Skills	Year 2 / SCQF 8
4.	Inter-professional Learning – Therapeutic Drug Monitoring	Final year of old course / SCQF 11
5.	Workshop – Cardiovascular Simulation	Year 2 / SCQF 8
6.	Workshop – Developing Patient Group Directions	Year 2 / SCQF 8
7.	Workshop – Design of Digoxin Dosage regimens	Year 3 / SCQF 9
8.	Workshop – Consultation and Interview Skills	Year 4 / SCQF 10
9.	Workshop – Pharmaceutical Care of Patient with Stroke	Final year of old course / SCQF 11
10.	Workshop – Communication Skills /Preparation for the OSCE	Final year of old course / SCQF 11

## Appendix 2 - Standing conditions

The following are standing conditions of accreditation and apply to all providers:

1. The record and report include other comments from the team, and providers are required to take all comments into account as part of the accreditation process. The provider must confirm to the GPhC that required amendments have been made.
2. The provider must respond to the definitive version of the record and report within three months of receipt. The summary report, along with the provider's response, will be published on the GPhC's website for the duration of the accreditation period.
3. The provider must seek approval from the GPhC for any substantial change (or proposed change) which is, or has the potential to be, material to the delivery of an accredited course. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. the content, structure or delivery of the accredited programme;
  - b. ownership or management structure of the institution;
  - c. resources and/or funding;
  - d. student numbers and/or admissions policy;
  - e. any existing partnership, licensing or franchise agreement;
  - f. staff associated with the programme.
4. The provider must produce and submit to the GPhC on an annual basis:
  - a. requested data on student numbers and progression and degree awards;
  - b. requested information about the extent of human and physical resources it enjoys for the delivery and support of the degree course.
5. The provider must make students and potential students aware that successful completion of an accredited course is not a guarantee of a placement for a pre-registration year or of future employment as a pharmacist.
6. The provider must make students and potential students aware of the existence and website address where they can view the GPhC's accreditation reports and the timescales for future accreditations.
7. Whenever required to do so by the GPhC, providers must give such information and assistance as the GPhC may reasonably require in connection with the exercise of its functions. Any information in relation to fulfilment of these standing conditions must be provided in a proactive and timely manner.

## Appendix 3 – Standards

### GPhC standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists

The standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists can be downloaded from the GPhC website at:

<http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/standards>

Or by clicking on the following link:

[https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/GPhC\\_Future\\_Pharmacists.pdf](https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/GPhC_Future_Pharmacists.pdf)