

PERIODIC REVIEW OF PHARMACY

INTRODUCTION

- 1 An internal review of programmes in Pharmacy was held on 19 and 20 March 2018. The members of the Panel were:
 - a. Carol Padgett, Chair (ICMA Centre, UoR)
 - b. Kate Harvey (Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, UoR)
 - c. Rebecca Harris (Institute of Education, UoR)
 - d. Matthew Blackie (student member) (Part 3: BSc Geography (Human))
 - e. Zoë Waller (University of East Anglia)
 - f. Trevor Beswick (Health Education England)
 - g. Carmel Hughes (Queen's University Belfast)
 - h. Vicky Howard, Secretary (Centre for Quality Support and Development, UoR)

- 2 The Panel met the following members of staff:
 - a. Silvia Amadesi (Senior Tutor & Part 2 Academic Year Tutor)
 - b. Kat Bicknell (SDTL)
 - c. John Brazier (Part 1 Academic Year Tutor, Director of Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Chemistry)
 - d. Sumita Elendran (Lecturer in Pharmacy, UoRM)
 - e. Kate Fletcher (Acting Heading of Section, Pharmacy, UoRM)
 - f. Kevin Flint (Technical Services Manager)
 - g. Sini George (Senior Tutor, UoRM)
 - h. Dan Grant (DDTL)
 - i. Ellen Hackl (Technician – Teaching and Research)
 - j. Kat Hall (Director of Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET))
 - k. Vitaliy Khutoryanskiy (Pharmacy Director of Postgraduate Recruitment; Programme Director of MSc (by Research) Programmes)
 - l. Amy Lang (Student Support Co-ordinator)
 - m. Mong Lee (Lecturer in Pharmacy, UoRM)
 - n. Kok Fui Liew (Lecturer in Pharmacy, UoRM)
 - o. Simone Magee (Academic Director, Physician Associate Programme)
 - p. Caitlin McCulloch (Library)
 - q. Alister McNeish (School Director of Outreach & Pharmacy Exams Officer)
 - r. Wee Kiat Ong (Lecturer in Pharmacy, UoRM)
 - s. Helen Osborn (Acting Head of Department)
 - t. Nilesh Patel (MPharm Programme Director)
 - u. Julie Pendleton (Timetabling)
 - v. Charlotte Rowland (JJT Support Centre)

- w. Rav Savania (Part 3 Academic Year Tutor)
 - x. Gary Stephens (Director of Pharmacology and Therapeutics)
 - y. Sophie Tilling (Student Support Co-ordinator)
 - z. Raj Vaiyapuri (Lecturer in Pharmacy, UoRM)
 - aa. Rhian Walker (JJT Support Centre)
- 3 The Panel met PhD demonstrators and students who represented the following degree programmes:
- a. MPharm (UoR)
 - b. MPharm 2+2 (UoRM) (Parts 1 and 2)
 - c. PGDip Physician Associate (Part 2)
 - d. MSc by Research programmes
- 4 The Panel met also with recent graduates from the MPharm, PG Cert Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists, PG Diploma in Foundation Pharmacy Practice and PGDip Physician Associate programmes.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- 5 The Panel noted that the Department of Pharmacy had undergone key changes since the last Periodic Review, including:
- a. The opening of the School of Pharmacy in Malaysia and the introduction of the MPharm 2+2 (UoRM);
 - b. Introduction of the new MPharm curriculum from 2014-15;
 - c. Expansion of provision of postgraduate programmes, including the two-year PGDip Physician Associate (PA) programme and PGCert/Dip in Foundation Pharmacy Practice; and
 - d. Centre of Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET) programmes have been fully included in Periodic Review for the first time.
- 6 The MPharm and CIPPET prescribing programmes are accredited by the General Pharmaceutical Council (MPharm and Pharmacist Prescribing) and Nursing and Midwifery Council (Nurse Prescribing) and all programmes have been verified as meeting the relevant standards. The MPharm 2+2 programme is currently undergoing annual steps of accreditation.

Conduct of the Review

- 7 The Review Panel held meetings with a range of staff from across the Department (UK and UoRM campuses), wider School and support services. The staff were fully engaged with the review process and made the Panel feel very welcome. They provided a useful tour of the Department's facilities. The Review also benefitted from a comprehensive and well-organised Blackboard organisation. The Panel extends its thanks to all staff members on the UK and UoRM campuses who participated in the Review.
- 8 The Panel received four written Student Submissions in respect of the: UoR MPharm Part 4; UoR MPharm Part 3; UoRM MPharm 2+2 and PGDip Physician's Associate. The Panel also received some specific feedback at its meeting with postgraduate taught students.
- 9 The Panel expresses its thanks to those students and alumni who attended meetings over the course of the Review, and to all those who contributed to the written Student Submissions, for their valuable input to the Review.
- 10 The Panel noted the Department's plans to embark upon a review of its programmes in line with the Curriculum Framework from the late Spring/Summer 2018. In response to a request from the Department, the Panel has identified specific recommendations throughout its report which the Department should consider when undertaking curriculum review.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF THE PROGRAMMES

Committee structures

- 11 The Panel was satisfied that the committee structures in place were appropriate and effective for the quality management and enhancement of the programmes. It considered that the membership of the School Board for Teaching and Learning (SBTL), Department-level Board of Studies (BoS) and Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) was broadly appropriate. In its discussions with staff and students, the Panel noted, however, that there had been inconsistent attendance at BoS from students and that there was no student representative from Pharmacy on the SBTL. The Panel recommends that the Department articulate to Course Reps at the first meeting of the SSLC the functions of the BoS and SBTL and arrange for Course Reps to be nominated to membership of these committees (**advisable recommendation a**).
- 12 The Panel was pleased to note as an example of good practice (**good practice a**) that the Department had updated its arrangements for the operation of SSLCs to ensure the timely, effective and comprehensive consideration of student feedback. The Department hoped to achieve greater consistency and impact by requesting student feedback in advance and identifying immediate actions and solutions; this would enable the meetings to focus specifically on matters which required further discussion.

Programme design

- 13 The Panel was provided with a range of evidence including module descriptions, programme specifications, student handbooks, student portfolios, external examiners' reports, annual programme reports, and samples of students' work and feedback. These, along with discussions with staff and students and the Panel's own deliberations, enabled the Panel to confirm that the academic standards of the programmes under review were appropriate, engaging and comparable with programmes in other universities.
- 14 The Panel considered that, overall, the degree programmes offered were coherent and of appropriate scope. The programmes demonstrated evidence of students thinking critically and creatively and this was supported by the external examiners.
- 15 The Panel noted that the aims and learning outcomes of individual modules were properly documented in the relevant module descriptions at undergraduate level. Progression of modules and content over the programme was evidence of a 'spiral curriculum'. The outcomes clearly map across to the expectations of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the main regulator for the profession. There was evidence of integration across the programme and this was recognised and appreciated by the students. The Physicians' Associate programme is informed by the relevant professional body (Faculty for Physician Associates) and meets the expected outcomes. Postgraduate taught programmes focus on prescribing for pharmacists and nurses, and again, meet the required outcomes expected by the relevant regulatory bodies. In terms of the MSc by Research, the content is largely dominated by a research project with two additional taught modules. Following feedback from students to members of the Panel, this did not appear to align with their expectations for the course, including fewer taught modules than anticipated. The Panel checked the website and could see that it clearly outlined that the programme would be mainly research.
- 16 The Panel was of the view that the learning outcomes were consistent with the aims of the programmes. As stated above, there appeared to be some confusion on the part of the MSc by Research students regarding their expectations of the course, and the description provided by the Department. The Panel therefore agreed to recommend that the Department fully articulate the nature of the taught element of the MSc by Research in written communications with applicants prior to enrolment (**advisable recommendation b**).
- 17 Following discussions with students and alumni, the Panel further recommends that staff ensure that CIPPET students understand the outline of the curriculum from the outset of the programme (**advisable recommendation c**). CIPPET students had commented that they had not fully understood the curricula from the outset and that their timetable had been slightly delayed. The Panel noted, nonetheless, that the relevant programme specification was available on the University website.

- 18 The Panel noted that there appeared to be progression towards the outcomes through careful monitoring of students through formative and diagnostic assessments, and implementation of student support where required e.g. additional tutorials for those students who did not have a Biology background.
- 19 The MPharm course had undergone a radical redesign based on the GPhC standards. The Physicians' Associate course has recently graduated its first cohort of students. As the MPharm and prescribing programmes are professionally regulated courses, there is the requirement for continual reference to the required outcomes. Hence, any small changes are always considered in the light of these outcomes.
- 20 As stated above, staff do consider carefully the needs of the student body through diagnostic and formative assessment, and listen carefully to student feedback. The latter is achieved through module feedback and SSLC. The staff explained to the Panel the mechanism through which feedback on content was acted upon. The Panel noted the importance of ensuring that students who make the recommendations are aware of these changes, as they progress to the next year of a programme. See also *Enhancement of quality and academic provision* below.
- 21 In the view of the Panel, the programmes reviewed were coherent and of appropriate breadth and scope.
- 22 Integration is at the heart of many of the programmes, notably the MPharm, and again, this is a requirement of the GPhC. This was emphasised by staff and recognised by students. Integration was clear in terms of delivery of material and its assessment, and the Panel commended the School on this (**good practice b**).
- 23 There is some flexibility in the curriculum to support Study Abroad opportunities for MPharm students to undertake their projects in Malaysia. Part 2 students currently attending the University of Reading Malaysia (UoRM) will be transferring to the Reading campus at the start of the 2018/19 academic year to undertake their Part 3 studies.
- 24 The documentation and testimony from staff highlighted the importance of research-led teaching. Students have the opportunity to learn about current research as part of their final year projects, and are also exposed to high-quality research laboratories/facilities over the course of the various programmes.

Assessment and Feedback

- 25 Within the MPharm in particular, assessment is informed by Standard 10 of the GPhC Requirements for MPharm programmes. Assessments should be progressive from "knows" to "does". The Panel noted that these outcomes are being achieved given the successful re-accreditation of the programme. The Panel also noted that changes to assessment had been implemented with a view to preparing students for their pre-registration assessments.
- 26 In response to student feedback in module evaluations and SSLC discussions, the Department had reflected on assessment deadlines across each year of each programme and revised some to ensure that deadlines were as evenly dispersed as possible.
- 27 The Panel found evidence of a good balance of formative and summative assessments across the programmes, and a variety of assessment methods (including coursework, PBL, portfolio, in-class tests, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), group work), but students were not always clear about the purpose of assessments and how they contributed to their learning and skill development. This could be improved by ensuring that learning outcomes are clearly aligned to the purpose of group and formative work and are articulated to students (**advisable recommendation d**). The Panel noted that including students from across the year groups in the SSLC appeared to enhance students' appreciation of the value of formative assessments. The Panel considered the examinations well designed with a broad variety of question format testing both breadth and depth of knowledge and including integrated questions incorporating both the science and practice of Pharmacy.
- 28 The Panel received feedback from a number of MPharm students it met from across the campuses that there was a perceived imbalance in the workload and credit-weightings of assessments within some modules; some modules also had weightings which were unusual when compared to other modules at Reading. An external panellist further commented that the use of

three hour exams was prohibited at their own institution and students with extra time would have very long examinations. As part of the forthcoming review of the curriculum, the Panel recommends that:

- a. the Department consider weightings of modules, assignments and the duration of exams; (**advisable recommendation e**) and
 - b. staff work with students to increase their assessment literacy with a view to ensuring students have a clear understanding before beginning an assignment of the amount of hours they "should" allocate (especially formative assignments and group work) alongside the learning outcomes and marking criteria (**advisable recommendation f**).
- 29 The Panel also noted some confusion amongst students in respect of the referencing style to be used in assessment and recommends that the Department agree on a referencing style (or a short list of permissible styles) that students should use across assignments (**advisable recommendation g**).
- 30 External examiners' reports verified that the standards achieved by learners met the minimum expectations for awards, as measured against the relevant Subject Benchmarking Statements and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. It was clear to the Panel that comments made by the external examiners were considered by the Department. In particular, the Panel noted that upon a recommendation by external examiners, the Department had implemented a policy that formalised the provision of feedback on exam performance, pioneering exam feedback provision within the University.
- 31 Major pieces of written coursework on the MPharm are double marked, and written examinations and other coursework are moderated in line with University guidelines. External examiners had commented positively upon the video recording of OSCE-type assessments, to enable moderation and double marking, and review by external examiners. To address some issues with variability in approach of staff to marking, the Department reported that it would introduce moderation meetings between markers for coursework that was not double-marked.
- 32 The Panel was pleased to note the Department's plans to consider the use of anonymous marking for course-work and in-class tests. The Department also planned to introduce exam question writing "parties", where staff would be encouraged to collaborate on question writing, with support from experienced members of staff acting as facilitators.
- 33 All programmes had experienced problems with a lack of central support for departmentally-run assessments and in-class tests. This extended to the management of special arrangements for students with disabilities. The Panel was pleased to note that the Sub-Committee on the Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (DELT) had recently approved a proposal to convene a working group to consider support for exams held outside of the standard University examinations period and the wider implications for teaching and learning, quality assurance and the student experience, and to consider the level of extra resources which would be required to expand central support in this area. The Panel endorses this development and recommends that the University improve support for in-class tests and non-standard provision, for example CIPPET students whose periods of registration are different from those of full-time students (**advisable recommendation to the University a**).
- 34 The SED identified that the MPharm programme had been associated with high numbers of extenuating circumstances applications, with a considerable associated staff workload in processing and addressing these. The Panel recommends that the Department undertake an audit of the proportion of ECs from Pharmacy and across similar programmes in UoR, with the aim of determining if there are specific issues in Pharmacy relating to student well-being/workload (**desirable recommendation a**). The Panel noted that the Department intended to explore the rationale for recent changes to the DNS (deemed not to have sat) process which related to in-class tests.
- 35 In the 2017 National Student Survey (NSS), 65% of respondents agreed that they had received helpful comments on their work. The Department continued to address this area and in 2017/18 had introduced a feedback form for the Part 4 MPharm project draft submissions, to help improve and standardise the quality of feedback provided. The Panel noted that students on the prescribing programmes had commented positively upon the extensive feedback provided by CIPPET. PA students receive ongoing feedback based on formative assessments and problem-based learning; in the survey of PA students conducted as part of the Student Submission, 88% agreed that feedback on assignment was timely and 85% agreed that feedback was useful.

- 36 The Panel noted that most recently the Department had achieved 100% compliance with the 15 day turnaround for work (Autumn Term 2017) and had gained exemptions from the requirement due to the nature of some assessment methods used. Within the NSS 2017, 79% of respondents agreed that feedback had been timely.

QUALITY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE PROGRAMMES

Teaching and learning

- 37 The Panel found much evidence that demonstrated the very good quality of teaching and learning in Pharmacy. The NSS and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results show a positive student reaction to teaching, and module evaluations and meetings with students highlighted examples of very good practice, with a number of particular individuals being named as excellent practitioners.
- 38 Pharmacy has a large number of University Teaching Fellows (UTFs) and Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) projects. Teaching and Learning is characterised by a good range of teaching approaches and a variety of assessments. This provides an engaging and appropriate learning environment for students and is indicative of a strong teaching team (**good practice c**).
- 39 As noted previously, there are clear signs of very good integration between the scientific and practical aspects of the provision, and this was reflected in how many sessions were taught. Staff are keen that students learn the knowledge that is required and are then expected to apply this through team-based and problem-based learning. This was reflected in the student work provided to the Panel, and exemplified the practical application of what had been learned.
- 40 The Panel noted a culture of sharing good practice within Pharmacy; staff undertake peer review and there are regular T&L training opportunities within the School. The proportion of staff undertaking peer review is improving and steps are in place to increase this. Attendance at weekly research and scholarship sessions was variable and probably reflects the heavy teaching commitment of staff, who appear to be working at capacity. The Department may wish, as part of a wider review of workload, to look at ways of providing more opportunities for staff to share good practice.
- 41 There are systems in place for induction of new staff, and staff from UoRM have the opportunity to spend a week on the UK campus as a way of understanding the pedagogical approaches and ethos of delivery of the MPharm programme. New staff also attend an orientation visit to a local hospital and community pharmacy; this helps develop an understanding of the work carried out, which links to the programme (**good practice d**).
- 42 The UG and PGT programmes include an emphasis on the development of reflective practitioners. This was evident from discussions with students and the assessed and portfolio work carried out. Students are taught models of reflection; these seem to work best when students can refer to real life examples, e.g. UG students commented on the value of 'real' patients who have come to speak to them about the impact of their conditions on their lives. PGT students also noted that the programme helped promote effective reflection on their role. The Panel noted that a move to an e-portfolio system would have a range of practical advantages, in addition to preparing undergraduates for pre- and post-registration development. The Department could consider developing the use of an e-portfolio system as part of the forthcoming curriculum review (**desirable recommendation b**).
- 43 Although there are opportunities for students to work with patients and the public, including via the Healthy Living assessments, the Department could also consider as part of the curriculum review how to provide further physical examination opportunities (including opportunities to gain experience and practice with communication skills) in the programmes (**desirable recommendation c**). Students had commented that they lacked confidence in this area and with experience in the working environment.
- 44 Research seems to be embedded successfully into the programme. There are opportunities for students to work individually and as teams to investigate issues, drawing on their developing

knowledge, and the facilities available mean staff and students are able to generate data themselves to be used in investigations.

- 45 There is a very good use of TEL. Staff regularly screencast or podcast and students are highly appreciative of this, particularly screencasting. The Panel was pleased to note the use of Blackboard Collaborate, which had been particularly effective for delivery with UoRM. Colleagues at UoRM are keen to lead and drive forward enhancements via TEL and had developed excellent links with the TEL team at Reading (**good practice e**).
- 46 The Panel noted ongoing discussions at institutional level in respect of lecture/personal capture: additional funding had been allocated for lecture/personal capture development and IT infrastructure refurbishments in the T&L planning outcomes 2018/19 and lecture/personal capture was considered to be a priority as far as implementing and supporting the University's renewed Teaching and Learning Strategy. In particular, the University and RUSU had announced funds to develop personal capture as part of the annual £1m Capital Fund. The Panel hoped that this would facilitate further developments within this area in Pharmacy.
- 47 Students who met with the Panel were clearly very engaged in their studies and found the programmes to be highly appropriate for their career aspirations. Many students did express frustrations with some of their peers, who seemed less engaged in their studies, either in a lack of contribution to group work or inattentiveness in lectures. Staff are responding to the concerns through the development of guidance on expectations of engagement, attendance and behaviour. In particular, the Department is undertaking work to improve the recording of attendance, to enable staff to more easily identify students at risk and to facilitate appropriate action. It is investigating the use of a card reader to record student attendance using their campus cards.

Student admission, retention, progression and attainment

- 48 The Panel noted that the process of admission to the MPharm was more complicated than admission to some other programmes because the professional nature of the programme required additional screening to ensure that potential students exhibit professional values. It was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit students with high A level grades, so the average grades achieved by entering students was falling in line with experience across some other Schools within the sector. The Department has responded by creating the MPharm with Foundation programme, to attract students with relatively lower A level grades or A levels in non-science subjects. The objective is to avoid the need to go to clearing. Following the Foundation Year, students who fulfil the requirements for entry can then transfer to the MPharm programme. The first cohort of these students would join Part 1 of the MPharm from 2019.
- 49 The Department is in the process of developing an MPharm 4+0 (UoRM) and a BSc Pharmaceutical Sciences programme for Industry (UoRM & UK), which were intended to facilitate recruitment of a broader cohort of students. The BSc at the UK campus would not be used for direct entry, but would enable students to transfer from the MPharm if they had not met the programme-specific requirements for progression. The Panel agreed to recommend that the Department consider how to develop the BSc Pharmaceutical Sciences for Industry programme and explain the benefits and T&L and careers opportunities it would provide to students (**advisable recommendation h**), who might perceive it to be a less prestigious option.
- 50 The Panel noted that recruitment to the MPharm on the Reading campus was undertaken in the context of the University's commitment to provide 20 spaces to students undertaking the MPharm 2+2 at UoRM and transferring to Reading. The recruitment cycle for students who apply to UoRM is rather different because potential students take a variety of qualifications whose results are announced at different points during the year. The number of applicants is relatively small, allowing each one to be interviewed in person, by phone or via Skype. At present there is no values-based test and calculations assessment, but this will be introduced in future.
- 51 Whilst the Postgraduate programmes offered by CIPPET attract many applications, the administrative workload for considering applications is significant. Some applicants are interviewed and, in all cases, regulators require the completion of additional documentation. Patient representatives and NHS stakeholders are included in the interview process for the PA programme. The Panel noted that the MSc by Research attracts few applicants and that the future of the programme was under review.

- 52 The Panel noted that the Department had experienced issues with the central support provided for admissions and the time-frames for processing applications; this had been raised through Annual Programme Reports and the T&L committee structure and the Department hoped that the processes would run more smoothly in future years.
- 53 For undergraduates, the induction process starts before arrival on campus, with students being encouraged to complete the Study Smart online course in the summer. At the outset of the programme, students meet with their Personal Tutors, are introduced to Reading University MPharm Society (RUMPS), and to have a STaR mentor.
- 54 The Panel noted that UoRM students have the opportunity to "meet" and work with Reading-based students and staff via Blackboard Collaborate as part of their programme, and in Part 2, students are allocated a UK Personal Tutor who they meet via Skype in the Spring Term.
- 55 Induction arrangements have been put in place for Part 3 students arriving from UoRM in 2018-19. The students are looking forward to studying at Reading and are aware that there are going to be challenges, particularly integrating into a cohort that has already been together for two years; the students also raised some specific concerns around transfer in their Student Submission. Students will have a two week transitional "settling in" period upon their arrival in the UK and it will be important that the Department monitors how effectively it is able to support students in this transition stage.
- 56 Physician Associate students receive a bespoke induction programme in the first three weeks of their course. Additional support is sometimes required for PGT students where there has been a long gap from the last period of study; this support tends to be individualised, with students being supported by their workplace supervisor, the programme team and their personal tutor.
- 57 The Panel found evidence in the form of annual programme reports, committee meeting minutes and meetings with staff that the Department reflected regularly on the performance of its students and on a range of student management information. The Department is undertaking further work to consider attainment across the demographic categories following completion of the first cohort of students on the new MPharm programme.
- 58 The Panel was satisfied that student progression was appropriate to the stated aims of the programmes and consistent with the attainment of intended learning outcomes. External examiners confirmed that student attainment was consistent with sector norms.
- 59 Despite a lowering of entry tariff, it was noted that Part 1 passes at first attempt had improved. This is seen to be the result of a change to the MPharm programme, which appears to be supporting students in being more successful. The Panel noted that individual students' needs are recognised through the Learning Needs Analysis and all students have extensive opportunities for formative feedback, including the chance to take mock exams: this is an example of good practice (**good practice f**). The programme recruits a large number of students from BTEC and foundation degree backgrounds, plus provides additional support for students with weaker grades or limited background in Biology.
- 60 The Department advised the Panel that it planned to investigate feedback from students that they found the transition from Part 1 to Part 2 to be particularly difficult. Students had cited an increase in workload and in complexity and had raised their concerns in the Student Submissions.
- 61 The Panel noted that attainment on the MPharm was good. The proportion of students graduating with a "good" (upper second or first class) degree had declined slightly over the last four years, but ranged between 74 and 78%. The outcomes for students on the MSc by Research were, in the main, good but the small numbers meant it was not possible to comment upon trends. Cohort statistics were not available for other postgraduate programmes because they did not conform to the usual pattern of the academic year.

Learning environment and student support

- 62 Staff on the programmes have an abundance of expertise to support the students effectively. All programmes benefit from input from practising healthcare professionals from a wide range of specialties. These staff ensure that programmes remain current and relevant to practice. Students are also taught by a range of guest lecturers and professionals with visiting positions.

- 63 Pharmacy modules have a high number of contact hours (lectures, tutorials, workshops, practicals), which combined with the strong support provided for students relating to assessments, meant staff have a very heavy teaching load. This demonstrates staff commitment to student success. The Department appeared to be mindful of staff well-being and might further consider this issue as part of curriculum review. The Panel noted successes in Athena SWAN work and was pleased to note that the Department explicitly looked at workload as part of Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs), indicating that it appreciated staff contributions and workload (**good practice g**).
- 64 Despite lacking a central space of their own, NSS scores indicate that students do have a sense of belonging to a learning community. Given the geographical spread of the Department, this is a highly positive indication of the success of staff in promoting a sense of 'belonging'. Having a Student Support Centre in the JJ Thomson building was seen as a positive step in assisting with this. The students have ideas for promoting a stronger sense of communal identity (e.g. Reading Pharmacy-branded lab coats) and it would be worth exploring these further.
- 65 The Panel enjoyed a tour of the Teaching and Learning facilities. The Department has access to some excellent facilities, which contribute to the quality of the student experience, for example the use of the clinical suite to carry out Healthy Living Assessments (**good practice h**).
- 66 Many of these facilities are at capacity or close to capacity, which presents timetabling challenges. The facilities are also spread across four buildings and are in high demand. This potentially challenges the sense of subject community. In addition, the large cohort size means that lectures are timetabled into large spaces, but these can be in different locations, making it hard for students to move in a timely fashion between them. Indeed, in the NSS 2017, only 61% of students agreed that the timetable was working efficiently and the issue of moving across campus for consecutive lectures has been raised by students in a range of fora. PA students raised the issue of room allocation in their Student Submission, stating they would prefer to use a range of rooms, and, in response to the question 'does the learning environment improve your learning', 9 responded no and 12 said yes.
- 67 The high demand for facilities also creates challenges for the technical staff during change-over times as they have to set up for new classes. In light of these issues, the Panel believes that the University ought, at the very least, to consider the need for an additional clinical suite as part of a space audit (**advisable recommendation to the University b**).
- 68 Generally the library resources, particularly the use of e-books, were praised; there were, however, examples when key online resources became unavailable at a key point in the year. UoRM students also said that they were unable to access some of the key texts, particularly if they were e-books, due to licensing arrangements. Steps need to be taken to ensure consistent and reliable access to online resources within the UK and across campuses (**advisable recommendation i**).
- 69 Following the Professional and Administrative Services (PAS) review, the Support Centre and Student Support Centre staff reported that processes were working well and that they enjoyed a positive relationship with the School of Pharmacy; colleagues commended the Department for their excellent working relationship (**good practice i**). Staff within the Department, however, felt that they had had to take on a greater administrative role; the School had also made its own appointment internally to support admissions work due to concerns over recruitment.
- 70 There appeared to be effective communication between staff, including across campuses, to ensure consistent delivery of programmes. However, the Panel noted some feedback in respect of the provision of teaching materials to Malaysia and recommends that the Department ensure the timely provision of all teaching materials to UoRM-based staff (**advisable recommendation j**). In respect of UoRM, the Panel also discussed ways to enhance a collective identity across the University campuses and recommends that the University ensure that senior management increase their visibility to students and staff when visiting the UoRM (**advisable recommendation to the University c**). This could be done through informal visits by senior management to the various sections to meet with students and staff.
- 71 Through use of the inclusive teaching audit, the Department hopes to identify areas where greater emphasis needs to be placed in ensuring inclusivity in the way it teaches. The Department appears to be cognisant of the needs of the diverse community of learners, including those students with family and caring responsibilities. The SED specifies procedures in place to support students with disabilities both on their taught programme and when undertaking placements.

Employability

- 72 Discussions with staff and students demonstrated their focus and commitment to delivering, and participating in, programmes that fulfilled the needs of practising professionals. The Panel noted that work to integrate scientific and clinical content is essential in this.
- 73 Destination data for the MPharm programme demonstrated that 100% of Pharmacy graduates were in employment, full-time education or pre-registration training within six months, with the majority moving into a healthcare role. Destination data is not applicable to CIPPET programmes, as students are already in employment during their studies; CIPPET graduates who met with the Panel were all in posts that utilised their training and qualifications. The first cohort of PA students graduated in 2017 and DLHE data is not yet available for these students. The Panel was, however, advised that all graduates who went on to pass the Physician Associate National Certification examination were currently in employment.
- 74 The Panel noted that the pre-registration examination first attempt pass rates (taken by 2016 graduates) were below average for the University of Reading compared to its performance in previous years; recent first attempt pass rates had also fallen within the sector. The Department is aware of this and will monitor the impact of changes it has made to the programme design which will have full effect for the 2018 graduates.
- 75 The Department reported that most of its current Part 4 students had secured pre-registration training posts and that some had secured competitive training posts, for example, in central London teaching hospitals.
- 76 The MPharm and Physician Associate programmes include a series of compulsory placements. MPharm placement learning is supported by the Pharmacy Placements Lead and a Pharmacy Placements Officer; in respect of the PA, placement learning is supported by the Physician Associate Placements Lead, a Placements Officer, and Clinical Directors based at the host secondary care Trusts. CIPPET programmes are designed as workplace-based learning and do not include University arranged placements.
- 77 Students who met with the Panel clearly valued placements and expressed a desire for additional placement opportunities within the programme; there was, however, an awareness that Pharmacy students were limited as to the activities they could undertake whilst in settings and that it was not appropriate to compare the number of Pharmacy placements with other areas of healthcare education.
- 78 Whilst acknowledging issues raised above and the associated financial and logistical challenges, as part of the planned curriculum review the Panel would encourage the development of more opportunities for MPharm students to have more practice/clinical placements, as pharmacist roles develop in hospital, general practice, mental health services, care homes and primary care so that students gain an overview of future employment opportunities (**desirable recommendation d**). The Department had noted in its action plan an intention to increase GP Practice Placement capacity.
- 79 The Panel recognised the Department's plans in respect of the rolling programme of quality assurance visits to placement providers; to further align the placements undertaken in Malaysia with UK provision; and to clarify the roles that PAs can undertake on placement. The Department will soon engage in further Quality Assurance processes with Health Education England (Thames Valley), and also in programme accreditation processes in development by Faculty of Physician Associates; both of these will include quality assurance of placements.
- 80 Careers support for MPharm students is led by a practising pharmacist and all students have access to the Pharmacy Jobs and Advice Blackboard organisation. Nonetheless, feedback from students, including in the MPharm Part 3 Student Submission, indicated that students believed that they were not provided with enough information regarding jobs and the pre-registration process. Current second year PA students who met with the Panel also expressed some concerns about securing employment at the end of their programmes. In response to student comments, the Panel noted the benefits of reassuring all students that they would receive timely and appropriate support in respect of careers. The Panel agreed to recommend that central Careers continues to expand its tailored support for students across Pharmacy programmes (**advisable recommendation to the University d**).
- 81 The Department convenes stakeholder meetings on a biennial basis to obtain guidance on matters such as the portfolio and content of the programmes to ensure that graduates have the

broad range of skills required to succeed in the workplace. External invitees include visiting professors and fellows, representatives from local and national employers and, where possible, graduates.

ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY AND ACADEMIC PROVISION

- 82 The Panel was satisfied that the Department made appropriate and effective use of a range of datasets to inform enhancements to its provision. There was good evidence that the external examiner reports were being used as supportive inputs and that their recommendations were addressed by the Department.
- 83 As noted above, the MPharm, MPharm 2+2 and prescribing programmes are subject to regulation by the GPhC or the NMC, undergoing regular accreditation processes. The MPharm 2+2 programme is currently undergoing annual steps of accreditation and the Department's 2017 interim accreditation documentation for the MPharm is being used by the GPhC as an example of good practice.
- 84 Staff are clearly student-centred and there is a wide range of teaching delivery methods used. Academic staff are committed to enhancing their skills through University T&L initiatives and Pharmacy staff have led University sessions on writing Multiple Choice Questions, large group teaching and encouraging student attendance of lectures. There is a School-based University's Facilitating Learning and Teaching Achievement and Individual Recognition (FLAIR) mentor and 80% of pharmacy staff hold a teaching qualification such as FHEA. The Panel also welcomed the Department's commitment to developing further the peer review of learning and teaching.
- 85 The Panel found evidence that the Department listened carefully to its students and when changes were made in response to previous students' feedback on module evaluations, it informed the next group of changes. There are clear processes for reviewing the quality of Teaching and Learning that follow the University processes. Some of the module convenor responses to module evaluation feedback were exemplary, however others were less reflective of concerns raised by students. Internal processes need to ensure that issues are properly reported and acted upon. It would be helpful to ensure the module evaluation process includes all relevant stakeholders and that information (module convenor response to evaluation) is fed back to current students (i.e. issues raised in Part 2 are fed back to those students as they move into Part 3 so they are clear about what has been done) (**desirable recommendation e**). As part of this, the Department may wish to reflect upon the student feedback strategically and proportionately.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMMES UNDER REVIEW

- 86 Programmes are designed and continually updated in the context of the requirements of the various regulatory bodies and the Department is evidently responsive to these bodies and to the views of external examiners. The MPharm programme was substantially redesigned for 2014-15 and the Panel is very supportive of the Department's plans to undertake a further review of the programme as part of the Curriculum Framework and to prioritise student engagement within the planned work. The Department should do this in the context of the professional attributes and vocational characteristics of the industry.
- 87 As highlighted throughout this report, staff in Pharmacy are highly responsive to the needs of the diverse student body. Students are variously based on the UK and UoRM campuses and include those studying on a full-time basis and those also in employment throughout their studies. Consistent with its strong commitment to students, the Department has identified a number of student-centred developments in its action plan, including support for students in difficulty and work to investigate differences in attainment. The Department is also keen to undertake further improvements in response to student feedback, including: a review of Part 2 workload; the transition experience of UoRM; and GP placement opportunities.
- 88 As noted above, Pharmacy has a large number of University Teaching Fellows (UTFs) and Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) projects. 80% of staff hold a teaching qualification and Pharmacy is committed to developing its peer review of teaching. Teaching and Learning is characterised by a good range of teaching approaches and a variety of

assessments; all of these are characteristic of a strong teaching team which creates an engaging and appropriate learning environment for students.

CONCLUSIONS ON INNOVATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

- 89 The Panel identified the following as representing particularly good practice:
- a) The Department has updated its arrangements for the operation of SSLCs to ensure the timely, effective and comprehensive consideration of student feedback. The Department hoped to achieve greater consistency and impact by requesting student feedback in advance and identifying immediate actions and solutions; this would enable the meetings to focus specifically on matters which required further discussion.
 - b) Integration is at the heart of many of the programmes, notably the MPharm, and again, this is a requirement of the GPhC. This was emphasised by staff and recognised by students. Integration was clear in terms of delivery of material and its assessment, and the Panel commended the School on this.
 - c) Pharmacy has a large number of University Teaching Fellows (UTFs) and Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) projects. Teaching and Learning is characterised by a good range of teaching approaches and a variety of assessments. This provides an engaging and appropriate learning environment for students and is indicative of a strong teaching team.
 - d) There are systems in place for induction of new staff, and staff from UoRM have the opportunity to spend a week on the UK campus as a way of understanding the pedagogical approaches and ethos of delivery of the MPharm programme. New staff also attend an orientation visit to a local hospital and community pharmacy; this helps develop an understanding of the work carried out, which links to the programme.
 - e) Staff regularly screencast or podcast and students are highly appreciative of this, particularly screencasting. The Panel was pleased to note the use of Blackboard Collaborate, which had been particularly effective for delivery with UoRM. Colleagues at UoRM are keen to lead and drive forward enhancements via TEL and had developed excellent links with the TEL team at Reading.
 - f) Individual students' needs are recognised through the Learning Needs Analysis and all students have extensive opportunities for formative feedback, including the chance to take mock exams.
 - g) The Department explicitly looks at workload as part of Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs), indicating that it appreciated staff contributions and workload.
 - h) The Department has access to some excellent facilities, which contribute to the quality of the student experience, for example the use of the clinical suite to carry out Healthy Living Assessments.
 - i) Following the Professional and Administrative Services (PAS) review, the Support Centre and Student Support Centre staff reported that processes were working well and that they enjoyed a positive relationship with the School of Pharmacy; colleagues commended the Department for their excellent working relationship.
- 90 The Panel has concluded that the quality and standards of the programmes reviewed are appropriate.

CONCLUSIONS ON NEW DEGREE PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

- 91 The Panel received no submissions with regards to new programme proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 92 The Panel **recommends** to the University Programmes Board that the following degree programmes taught by the Department of Pharmacy are re-approved to run for a further six years or, in the case of joint programmes, until the Periodic Review of the other discipline:

- MPharm

- MPharm with Science Foundation year
- MPharm 2+2 (UoRM)
- PG Cert & Diploma in Foundation Pharmacy Practice
- PG Cert Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists
- Practice Certificate Independent & Supplementary Prescribing for Nurses (level 6 & 7)
- PGDip Physician Associate Programme
- MSc by Research in Pharmacy Practice
- MSc by Research in Formulation Design & Analysis
- MSc by Research in Cellular & Molecular Neuroscience

- 93 The report will categorise any issues as follows, in order of priority:
- Those areas where the Review Team believes it is **necessary** for action to be taken urgently to safeguard the standard of provision;
 - Those areas where it is **advisable** that the issues be addressed as soon as possible;
 - Those areas where it is **desirable** that the issue be addressed over a longer time span.
- 94 The Panel does not consider that any recommendations must be addressed as a condition of re-approval.
- 95 The Panel makes the following recommendations to the **Department**:

Necessary recommendations to the Department

There are no necessary recommendations.

Advisable recommendations to the Department

- a) The Department articulate to Course Reps at the first meeting of the SSLC the functions of the BoS and SBTL and arrange for Course Reps to be nominated to membership of these committees.
- b) The Department fully articulate the nature of the taught element of the MSc by Research in written communications with applicants prior to enrolment.
- c) Staff ensure that CIPPET students understand the outline of the curriculum from the outset of the programme.
- d) The Department ensure that learning outcomes are clearly aligned to the purpose of group and formative work and are articulated to students.
- e) The Department consider weightings of modules, assignments and the duration of exams as part of the forthcoming review of the curriculum.
- f) Staff work with students to increase their assessment literacy with a view to ensuring students have a clear understanding before beginning an assignment of the amount of hours they "should" allocate (especially formative assignments and group work) alongside the learning outcomes and marking criteria, as part of the forthcoming review of the curriculum.
- g) The Department agree on a referencing style (or a short list of permissible styles) that students should use across assignments.
- h) The Department consider how to develop the BSc Pharmaceutical Sciences for Industry programme and explain the benefits and T&L and careers opportunities it would provide to students.
- i) The Department to undertake steps to ensure consistent and reliable access to online resources within the UK and across campuses.
- j) Noting some feedback in respect of the provision of teaching materials to Malaysia, the Department ensure the timely provision of all teaching materials to UoRM-based staff.

Desirable recommendations to the Department

- a) The Department undertake an audit of the proportion of ECs from Pharmacy and across similar programmes in UoR, with the aim of determining if there are specific issues in Pharmacy relating to student well-being/workload.
- b) The Department consider developing the use of an e-portfolio system as part of the forthcoming curriculum review.

- c) The Department consider as part of the curriculum review how to provide further physical examination opportunities (including opportunities to gain experience and practice with communication skills) in the programmes.
- d) As part of the curriculum review, the Department encourage the development of more opportunities for MPharm students to have more practice/clinical placements.
- e) The Department ensure the module evaluation process includes all relevant stakeholders and that information (module convenor response to evaluation) is fed back to current students (i.e. issues raised in Part 2 are fed back to those students as they move into Part 3 so they are clear about what has been done). As part of this, the Department to reflect upon the student feedback strategically and proportionately.

96 The Panel makes the following recommendations to the University:

Advisable recommendations to the University

- a) The University improve support for in-class tests and non-standard provision, for example CIPPET students whose periods of registration are different from those of full-time students.
- b) In light of the issues raised under *Learning Environment and Student Support*, the Panel believes that the University ought, at the very least, to consider the need for an additional clinical suite as part of a space audit.
- c) The University ensure that senior management increase their visibility to students and staff when visiting the UoRM campus.
- d) Central Careers continues to expand its tailored support for students across Pharmacy programmes.

97 The Panel does not have a recommendation to the University Programmes Board as to whether any proposal(s) for new degree programmes should be approved, as this is not applicable.