Quality Improvement / Quality Assurance

**Follow-up Report: School of Pharmacy**

**Introduction**

A meeting was held on 14th December in the School of Pharmacy to consider the implementation of the recommendations for improvement made by the PRG in the Report on the quality review of the School of Pharmacy which took place in 2008/09.

Present: Profesor Catriona O’Driscoll, Head of School

Dr. Anne Moore

Dr. Frank van Pelt, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics

Ms. Noreen Moynihan

Dr. Cormac Gahan

Dr. J.J. Keating

Mr. Michael Cronin

Dr. Steven Byrne

Dr. Tim O’Sullivan

Dr. Suzanne McCarthy

Ms. Kathryn Neville, Manager, College Medicine and Health

Dr. Norma Ryan, Director, Quality Promotion Unit

The School has worked to implement the recommendations over the past two years since the quality review took place. The School is understaffed at present by comparison with national and international norms and, while recognising the economic situation the University finds itself in, is also aware that a significant challenge is facing the School within the next couple of years. It is very likely that the BPharm will, in the immediate future, will no longer be recognised as the accreditation standard for pharmacist and that the School will be obliged to provide an integrated 5 year Masters Programme in Pharmacy. The School has already commenced planning for this eventuality and is considering the implications for curriculum reform, staffing and resources, together with the constraints on space and laboratories already in existence. The workload of the academic staff is already higher than norms within UCC and other Universities in Ireland and the delivery of an additional year to students will present the School with significant staffing and funding challenges. The School is very willing to cooperate in new ventures and reforms.

Another challenge faced by the School is that it is required to repay the mortgage on the Pharmacy Building and this is an additional constraint on resources. Notwithstanding this, the School is approaching financial viability. It must be stressed, however, that the staff are very appreciative for the excellent facilities available in the state-of-the-art Cavanagh Pharmacy building.

###### *Abbreviations*

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| *PRG: Peer Review Group* | VP: Vice-President |
| *QPC: Quality Promotion Committee* | QIP: Quality Improvement Plan |
| HR: Human Resources | PSI: Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland |
| UMT: University Management Team | SOP: School of Pharmacy |

|  | **PRG Finding/Recommendation** | **QPC Comment/Recommendation**  **March 2010** | **Follow-Up Report December 2011** |
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|  | Revise the mission statement to underline the dual mandate of producing graduates fit to enter health care teams and industry. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed  QPC noted and welcomed the action that has already been taken to implement this recommendation | Completed.  The mission statement has been revised to highlight the dual mandate of the School |
|  | Revisit the SWOT analysis; clarify and prioritise its outcomes. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed | Completed.  The School Board completed a SWOT analysis following the review which focused on the recommendations for improvement and the actions to be taken, and dealt with, *inter alia,* issues of governance, management structures, etc |
|  | Highlight the special features of the School of Pharmacy that differentiate UCC from its competitors. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed | Ongoing.  The School has established a ‘Promotion of Pharmacy’ Committee with a specific remit to engage with external environment. To date a U-Tube video clip has been published, very successful open days have been held which have been oversubscribed, the School has participated in Transition year work experience programmes, and a new branding of postgraduate programmes has been implemented. School has participated fully in UCC Open Day events. An SOP logo has also been designed and implemented. |
|  | Revise the governance structure to explicitly recognize the four disciplines   1. clinical pharmacy, 2. pharmaceutical chemistry, 3. pharmaceutics and 4. pharmacology. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed. | Implemented and ongoing.  The School has a clear governance structure communicated to all staff of School. The College MH confirmed that communications and engagement of the School with College activities and requirements is excellent. The School Board (all staff) meets once per month, and minutes are circulated to all members. The Executive meets once per month with minutes circulated to all members of the School, including reports from Subcommittees. |
|  | Revision of the terms of reference and membership of the Executive Board with the objective of empowering its leadership function, while continuing to ensure that each of the four disciplines of the School should be represented on the newly formed Executive Board. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed  Response of School was welcomed and in particular the commitment of the School to maintaining the School Board as the key decision making body, while consolidating the role of the disciplines. | Implemented.  The governance arrangements are under constant review to assure their appropriateness and fitness for purpose, and it was confirmed that the holder of the new Chair in Pharmacology will be appointed a member of the Executive Committee as soon as she/he takes up appointment in the New Year.  The School Board remains the key decision making body for the School. All members of the School receive copies of documents considered by the Executive Board. |
|  | Consolidate the committee structures within the School which will enable the School to respond to internal and external opportunities and demands and facilitate better flow of information between staff. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed | Completed in that the School has reviewed and revised its structures and are of the view that the present management and governance structures are fit for purpose and work well with engagement of all staff and full transparency with respect to decision making and activities. |
|  | Appoint an advisory board representing the pharmacy profession. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed | Pending.  There are interactions and engagement with the profession so the curriculum remains informed by current thinking in the profession. The School plans to appoint an advisory board within the next 12 months. |
|  | Ensure that all staff members provide information to the Research Office as sought by them to track publications, PhD students etc., otherwise the University master documents will not accurately reflect the extent of research performance in the School of Pharmacy. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed | Implemented.  All staff use the new UCC IRIS to maintain a full record of all research undertaken by members of the School.  Links in research activity to other disciplines in UCC are increasing and interdisciplinary research is being enhanced constantly both internally and externally with other Institutions, the Profession and the pharmaceutical industry. |
|  | Ensure financial issues are transparent.  The funding model for the School should be made available to staff.  Sharing of information relating to the allocation of research overheads is recommended. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed.  QPC welcomed the involvement of the College Financial Analyst and the efforts being made to develop an appropriate system | Implemented.  All members of the School have access to all decisions reached by the Executive Board of the School. The budget is distributed to each of the 4 disciplines within the School and is provided to the Board. Information from the College MH is made available to all staff in the School. The College MH Financial Analyst interacts closely with the School and has provided a lot of support and assistance in all budgetary matters. |
|  | Encourage the School to build its international reputation in research and scholarship by taking into account such activities as the amount of time spent on supervising masters and PhD students as part of the distribution of workloads. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed.  QPC endorsed the importance of academic workload allocations and allocation models to include all activities, not just teaching | School is committed to implementing the new UCC Workload Distribution Model in early 2012 and to operating within that structure for recognition of all contributions to activities relevant to the School.  The School is also actively engaged in discussions relating to the introduction of an integrated 5 years Masters Degree and is co-operating with the National Forum and the PSI in this regard. |
|  | Critically review the curriculum with the aim of increasing efficiencies and reducing volume without compromising quality. Consider more problem based learning or case based learning models as opposed to direct lecture style teaching.  It is the Peer Review Group’s perception that the volume and content of the syllabus may require adjustment. A review of teaching hours is recommended from a student perspective in each year of the course. Some comparison of data from the benchmarking schools may assist in this process. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed.  The QPC emphasised that the School should engage with the PSI and other Pharmacy Schools to rationalise the workload of students | Pending.  The School is aware of likely changes to be made to accreditation requirements by PSI on foot of the proposed MPharm. The curriculum is under constant review and planning for a more integrated approach which is competency driven is already under way at Teaching and Curriculum Committee. |
|  | Develop an **external** relations strategy to include engagement with all stakeholder groups including the graduate network, and potential funders in the future. The benefits are many and include the provision of work placements for undergraduate and postgraduate students. | Recommendation of PRG strongly endorsed | Pending.  The School remains very engaged with external stakeholder groups. Excellent interactions are already in place with many external stakeholders in the healthcare and industrial sectors; however, development of a formal strategy for external relations is timely.  The School has excellent interaction with the other two Schools of Pharmacy {in Ireland} including through 2 Strategic Research Clusters grants funded via Science Foundation Ireland. In particular one cluster in drug delivery incorporates the three Schools. |
|  | Consider the potential for international student recruitment particularly in the context of playing to the School’s strengths in clinical pharmacy and the industrially relevant facilities at the disposal of the School | Recommendation of PRG endorsed | Implemented and ongoing.  The School developed a number of international linkages, including agreeing MOUs with a number of overseas institutions, including the University of Alexandria, Egypt. International student s from Malta, UAE, Uganda, UK, Egypt and New Zealand have entered into our postgraduate programmes (taught and research), and the School is observing an increase in its numbers of international economic-fee-paying students with 10 registering in 2011/12. |
|  | Develop the current strong **internal** relations and explore the possibility of sharing clinical education facilities with other Schools in the College of Medicine and Health. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed | Improved.  School has very positive interactions with other cognate disciplines within the university, and especially within the college MH, including a sharing of resources where appropriate, a sharing of teaching in interdisciplinary areas, including chemistry, Nursing, pharmacology, Chemical engineering and MSc Biotechnology programmes. |
|  | Exploit UCC’s innovative teaching of clinical practice in the context of a future MPharm and devise a coherent Continuing Professional Development (CPD) strategy for Irish pharmacists. | Recommendation of PRG endorsed | Ongoing.  The School is actively engaged with discussions related to an MPharm and with consideration of possibilities for increasing and enhancing the cpd offerings of the School to the profession. |