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	For completion by External Examiner:		
Name of External Examiner:	Professor Karl Malcolm		
Home Institution / Employer of External Examiner:	Queen's University Belfast		
Programme and / or Modules Covered by this Report	MPharm		
Academic Year / Period Covered by this Report:	2017/18	Date of Report:	26/06/18

Please complete all information in the spaces provided and submit within **six weeks** of the Examining Board.

Please note this form will be published online and should not make any reference to any individual students or members of staff in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Please extend spaces where necessary.

1. Programme Structure (curriculum design, programme structure and level, methods of teaching and learning)

The MPharm curriculum at Cardiff University, comprising 18 modules across 4 years, is designed to provide students with a detailed knowledge and experience of both the fundamental and evolving issues governing the practice of pharmacy. The modules and their content are entirely similar to those offered in other leading UK Schools of Pharmacy.

The fundamental principles of pharmaceutical science, pharmaceuticals and drug delivery are deeply embedded in many aspects of the curriculum and are often assessed alongside other topics in a highly integrated manner.

The course makes use of a wide range of teaching methods, including lectures, workshops, seminars, laboratory classes, placements, projects, computer-assisted learning and directed study,

The course is taught by a dedicated and experienced staff team with appropriate expertise across a wide range of relevant disciplines.

2. Academic Standards (comparability with other UK HEIs, achievement of students, any PSRB requirements)

The MPharm degree at Cardiff University is of a very high standard, and on a par with other leading UK Schools of Pharmacy.

Most students in the 2018 cohort were awarded either a 1st or 2.1 degree and a small number of students were awarded a 2.2. The results are in line with other UK Schools of Pharmacy.

It was noted that the proportion of students obtaining a first classification seems to be increasing, as noted in other Schools of Pharmacy across the UK. Given the perennial concerns over grade inflation, both the School and the University are encouraged to consider the longer-term implications of any further increase in grades which could erode or undermine the value of the first classification.

3. The Assessment Process (enabling achievement of aims and learning outcomes; stretch of assessment; comparability of standards between modules of the same level)

Overall, the MPharm degree makes good use of a wide range of formative and summative assessment tools tailored to the subject matter being taught. Exam questions are generally very well constructed, and their degree of complexity/challenge builds as the student progresses through the course.

PH2107 – Well-designed worksheet / Robust marking scheme / Clear annotation of marks

PH2203 – The relatively high mean mark for this module was noted (75.3%, no fails), with high marks allocated across all three sections of the assessment (MCQ, B1 and B2).

PH3114 – A good range of marks was reported for the module (mean $6\%5 \pm 10$; highest 86%; lowest 38%). Some very high marks were noted for the practical component (class test) – the highest marks were 100%; 36% of students scored 95% or higher; 72% of students scored 90% or higher. Upon reviewing the tests, the high marks were deserved. However, the high marks might suggest that the practical component is not challenging enough to differentiate between students. Great annotation of exam papers; it was easy to see how the marks were allocated and where marks were lost. In the exam assessment, students are required to select and answer 5 from 6 questions from Section B. Some students who failed the exam paper have attempted 6 questions rather than 5. It appears that the School or University policy is to award marks for the first five questions in the exam booklet, rather than the five questions with the highest marks. This policy could disadvantage students, and it might be worth discussing this issue further.

PMY4117 – Some great examples of integrated questions, e.g. Q3 / includes elements of prescribing, physiochemical aspects of drugs, formulation, fitness to practice issues. Scripts were well annotated; it was easy to see where marks were awarded. Presentation marks (Developing New Therapies Group Presentation) were very narrowly distributed (64–77); it might be worth thinking about how the assessment could be further refined to offer greater challenge to students and/or provide a more diverse range of marks.

General comments/suggestions

- Supplied paperwork was helpful.
- Module mark sheets are currently provided in order of decreasing score. It would be useful to have them (additionally?) in alphabetical order by surname, even if this was only in electronic format.
- Module stats include overall mean \pm SD. It would be useful to include Mean \pm SD for individual exam and coursework components.

4. Examination of Master's Dissertations (sample of dissertations received, appropriateness of marking schemes, standard of internal marking, classification of awards)

PMY4116 – Electronic copies of final year Drug Delivery projects and marking schemes were provided and reviewed. Overall, the projects provided an excellent opportunity for the students to be introduced to various aspects of research methodology, and it is clear that both staff and students invest a lot of time and effort in ensuring high quality educational outcomes.

Mean marks for the projects across the four disciplines (Drug Delivery, Medicinal Chemistry, Pharmacology, Practice & Education) were similar and typically fell within the range 64-67%. Excel-based marking schemes were used to assess the projects, with clear information provided to staff on the marking criteria. The mark schemes also included capture of feedback from markers, the quality of which was generally very good.

Suggestions for further enhancement:

- Students currently design project posters in multiple-page A4 format. A0 poster format is more common at research conferences these days and requires advanced use of Powerpoint or other design software. Presentation of data is an important key skill.
- Many of the drug delivery projects I reviewed did not correctly format in-text reference citation numbers. Most students chose a bracketed number system, but the brackets were often placed after the final punctuation mark. If the School does not already formally teach referencing technique and use of reference management software (Mendeley is a great free option for undergraduate students), it might be worth considering this in future years. Accurate referencing of sources is an important skill and one that many undergraduate students struggle with.

5. Year-on-Year Comments

[Previous External Examiner Reports are available from the Cardiff University Website [here](#).]

This is my first year acting as external examiner for the MPharm course at Cardiff University. I reviewed the comments made in previous years by the external examiners. Previous examiners commented on the School's willingness to consider advice and suggestions offered by the examiners, particularly for the design of the new programme going forward.

6. Preparation for the role of External Examiner (for new External Examiners only) (appropriateness of briefing provided by the programme team and supporting information, visits to School, ability to meet with students, arrangements for accessing work to review)

School of Pharmacy staff members introduced the examination procedures and paperwork to the new external examiners and were on hand during the visit to offer help and advice and deal with queries. All the necessary paperwork was provided in a specially-prepared examiners room. Helpfully, the most relevant paperwork and sample examination scripts were pulled in advance and carefully presented on individual tables for the examiners. All the exam scripts were accessible to examiners, and coursework material was provided on a USB drive.

The secondary rule was explained and uniformly applied in arriving at a final degree classification.

Examiners had the chance to meet with four MPharm students. A wide range of topics were discussed, including assessment procedures, feedback, OSCEs, placements, group presentations, and the recent lecturer strike. The students were very positive about the MPharm course and confident that their education prepared them well for their future careers.

7. Noteworthy Practice and Enhancement (good and innovative practice in learning, teaching and assessment; opportunities for enhancement of learning opportunities)

Generally, exam scripts were very clearly annotated and it was easy to see where marks were allocated.

The 'reflective learning' component in many modules, and particularly the final year project module, was noteworthy. Students seemed to genuinely engage with this practice, with many insightful comments.

Most of the exam papers I reviewed sought to assess the students' knowledge in a highly integrated manner. Of particular note was the PH4117 exam paper.

8. Appointment Overview (for retiring External Examiners only) (significant changes in standards, programme/discipline developments, implementation of recommendations, further areas of work)

N/A

9. Annual Report Checklist

Please include appropriate comments within Sections 1-7 above for any answer of 'No'.

		Yes (Y)	No (N)	N/A (N/A)
Programme/Course information				
9.1	Did you receive sufficient information about the Programme and its contents, learning outcomes and assessments?	Y		
9.2	Were you asked to comment on any changes to the assessment of the Programme?			N/A
Commenting on draft examination question papers				
9.3	Were you asked to approve all examination papers contributing to the final award?	Y		
9.4	Were the nature, spread and level of the questions appropriate?	Y		
9.5	Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments?	Y		
Examination scripts				
9.6	Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?	Y		
9.7	Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	Y		
9.8	Were the scripts marked in such a way as to enable you to see the reasons for the award of given marks?	Y		
9.9	Were you satisfied with the standard and consistency of marking applied by the internal examiners?	Y		
9.10	In your judgement, did you have the opportunity to examine a sufficient cross-section of candidates' work contributing to the final assessment?	Y		
Coursework and practical assessments				
9.11	Was the choice of subjects for coursework and / or practical assessments appropriate?	Y		
9.12	Were you afforded access to an appropriate sample of coursework and / or practical assessments?	Y		
9.13	Was the method and general standard of assessment appropriate?	Y		
9.14	Is sufficient feedback provided to students on their assessed work?	Y		
Clinical examinations (if applicable)				
9.15	Were satisfactory arrangements made for the conduct of clinical assessments?			N/A
Sampling of work				
9.16	Were you afforded sufficient time to consider samples of assessed work?	Y		
Examining board meeting				
9.17	Were you able to attend the Examining Board meeting?	Y		

9.18	Was the Examining Board conducted properly, in accordance with established procedures and to your satisfaction?	Y		
9.19	Cardiff University recognises the productive contribution of External Examiners to the assessment process and, in particular, to the work of the Examining Board. Have you had adequate opportunities to discuss the Programme and any outstanding concerns with the Examining Board or its officers?	Y		
Joint examining board meeting (if applicable)				
9.20	Did you attend a Composite Examining Board, i.e. one convened to consider the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.21	If so, were you made aware of the procedures and conventions for the award of Joint Honours degrees?			N/A
9.22	Was the Composite Examining Board conducted according to its rules?			N/A

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