

## Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education

### WHO UNESCO FIP Pharmacy Education Taskforce

#### **Background**

As the practice of pharmacy has become more complex and more accessible and as medical therapies have been used in more and diverse patients, patient safety and accountability for outcomes of therapy have become a greater focus of attention. Consumers and governments are demanding higher standards and seeking assurances of quality. Likewise, greater attention is being paid to the quantity and quality of pharmacist and pharmaceutical human resources, including the systems in place to assure the quality of education and training and the ongoing competence of practitioners.

Consequently, many countries are introducing, expanding or undertaking major reform of pharmacy education. Such developments must be accompanied by robust systems to assure the quality of the educational structures, processes and outcomes; the latter primarily being graduates who are competent and capable of performing safely and effectively in their practice setting and contributing to the delivery of healthcare.

#### **Introduction**

To promote and facilitate international dialogue and collaboration in the area of quality assurance of pharmacy education, the International Forum for Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education was established in 2001. It operates under the auspices of the Academic Section of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), primarily as an informal network of individuals interested in the quality assurance and quality advancement of pharmacy education.

The Forum has identified that countries seeking to establish or improve their quality system would benefit from an internationally-developed and adopted QA framework. The Quality Assurance Project Team of the Pharmacy Education Taskforce was convened to continue the development of this “global framework”. The framework incorporates core principles and elements considered essential for an effective approach to quality assurance.

The objectives of the Quality Assurance Project Team are to:

1. Validate and further develop the Global Framework for Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education.
2. Examine accreditation and quality assurance models and systems in country case studies
3. Provide guidance for the development of national and regional quality assurance systems

#### **Global Framework for QA**

In September 2008, FIP formally approved the first version of *A Global Framework for Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education*, a document that incorporates core principles and elements considered essential for an effective approach to quality assurance of pharmacy education. The framework was intended to

be a tool that governments or institutions could use to establish or further develop quality assurance systems.

The Framework was drafted with the belief that setting up one system of quality assurance and one standard for pharmacy education globally was unrealistic at the time. In many countries, quality assurance systems are well-developed; in others, they are nonexistent. Furthermore, educational and health systems and societal needs differ from country to country.

Despite these differences, core elements and principles of quality assurance should remain essentially the same. Thus, the framework is intended as a foundation that can be adapted and built-upon to suit national needs, systems and conditions. It was designed to be used at a national level in the context of quality assurance for pharmacy education specifically, but it may also be applied to all levels of formal education.

In 2009, the Global Framework underwent a validation exercise and an updated version is under development, with an expected finalization and release in September 2010.

### **Resources and Contacts**

Version 1 of the Global Framework for Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education is available at <http://www.fip.org/files/fip/Global%20Framework%20Final%20Draft.pdf>.

In September 2009, FIP Council approved the *Statement of Policy on Quality Assurance of Pharmacy Education*. The policy statement is available to download at: <http://www.fip.org/www/?page=statements>.

The Project Lead for the Quality Assurance team is Mike Rouse ([mrouse@acpe-accredit.org](mailto:mrouse@acpe-accredit.org)).

About the Pharmacy Education Taskforce: [www.fip.org/education](http://www.fip.org/education)

About the International Pharmaceutical Federation: [www.fip.org](http://www.fip.org).