MPharm FAQs

1. What is an MPharm?
   It is a Masters level undergraduate programme that all aspiring pharmacists must complete before taking a 12 month pre-registration placement.

2. What is the difference between the 4 year programme and the 5 year programme?
   The 4 year programme is the normal MPharm degree. After completing an MPharm a student must take a 12 month pre-registration placement before they take the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) competency examinations to become a registered pharmacist. This takes place outside of the University after your graduation and requires the student to apply for a pre-registration job. At Birmingham we also offer an integrated pre-registration year within the degree programme, making the 5 year programme. You will complete 2 six month blocks (one at the beginning of year 4 and one at the end of year 5) of pre-registration training. These placements will be provided by the University. You will then graduate from University and then take the same set of competency examinations set by the GPhC to register as a pharmacist.

3. What are the entry requirements?
   For both the 4 year and 5 year programme we are looking for at least AAB at A level (or equivalent) to include Chemistry and one other science subject. GCSE Maths at Grade A (or an AS Maths Grade C can be used as a replacement) and English Grade C. We do not accept Critical Thinking or General Studies.
   Why are the entry requirements the same for both programmes?
   The two programmes are both the same level, and we therefore have the same academic expectations of students. The 4 year course is no easier than the 5 year course in terms of university assessments or academic work load.
   Why would a student want to do the 4 year programme in that case?
   Students can do their pre-registration placement wherever they want in the country so a student may want to move away or have commitments in a certain part of the country, or may want to experience their placement in a specific demographic area.

4. Can I put the MPharm down as my fifth choice for Medicine or Dentistry?
   We will give preference to those applicants whose first choice of subject is Pharmacy, and expect this to be made clear in the personal statement.

5. How many places do you have available?
   For 2013 entry we are recruiting 70 students. We are expecting a split of roughly 50/50 between the two programmes. However, if we have a higher demand for the 5 year programme we may recruit more people onto that programme. Each application will be judged on individual merit and suitability for the programmes within a competitive application process.

6. Can I switch between the two programmes?
   “I am on the 5 year programme and wish to move to the 4 year programme”: It will be possible to switch from the 5 year programme down to the 4 year programme until the middle of the third year, however once placements have been allocated it will be unfair to our providers to withdraw students at short notice. Additionally, students have to be aware that they need to plan to organise a standard pre-registration placement for the end of the 4th year.
“I am on the 4 year programme and wish to move to the 5 year programme”: To switch from the 4 year programme up to the 5 year programme you will need to inform us of your intentions before the end of year 2 as we would need to secure additional placements for your pre-registration year. Such moves are dependent on securing additional placements and the demand from students.

*We would advise that students apply for the programme they wish to do.*

7. **Can I transfer from another programme within Medicine and Dentistry to the MPharm?**
   No, we do not allow transfers between any of these programmes. Neither is this course a route into dentistry or medicine.

8. **Will there be a chance to do a study abroad or intercalate?**
   At present this is not part of the curriculum, but is under review. Subject to availability, or through student identification, the opportunity exists for the final year project to be undertaken overseas.

9. **Where will my placements take place?**
   We are currently negotiating the placements that are available for students within community pharmacies, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies etc. The GPhC state that at least 6 months of your 12 month pre-registration year needs to be patient facing, but the other 6 months could be within a research environment or industry placements.

   **Will I receive a salary on my pre-registration placements?**
   The pre-registration training students usually receive a stipend from their employers. This can vary greatly from employer to employer as it is their choice how much of the stipend they pass on to the student. We are currently in the middle of securing our placements and will be negotiating the terms of the stipend for our students who go out on their pre-registration placements.

10. **Is relevant work experience required?**
    We understand that it is not always easy to get work experience within a pharmacy (either in the community or in a hospital) but we would advise you to speak to your local pharmacist and perhaps see if you would be able to shadow them for a day/half a day so that you understand what being a pharmacist is all about. If that is not possible at all, we will be looking for any work experience that shows you can communicate with the public, particularly in a healthcare setting (e.g. volunteering in a care home). However, any public facing work (such a retail or restaurant experience) would be ideal for you to include in your personal statement. Additional activities you are involved in that show evidence of communication and team working skills are also beneficial. We need students who not only can learn the science of pharmacy, but who can use it to benefit patients.

11. **What do you look for in a personal statement?**
    That it is geared towards pharmacy and you understand what it is; that you are driven and committed to a degree in pharmacy; that you have good people and communication skills; that you are a well-rounded individual – information on extracurricular activities are welcomed, such as sports you play, hobbies you have etc.

12. **Will I be interviewed?**
    We will interview all shortlisted candidates before making a decision on their application.

13. **What are my careers prospects after completing the degree?**
    Pharmacists are involved in many areas of direct patient care, and also in more scientific roles. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s website [http://www.rpharms.com/about-
sets out the career options for pharmacists. In 2008 71% of pharmacists worked in the community sector, 28.6% in hospital or primary care (such as General Practice surgeries), and 7% in the pharmaceutical industry or research. While the majority of graduates go on to become practicing pharmacists, it should be remembered that the MPharm is a broad-based science degree that can be used to enter a variety of different careers that require critical thinking and communications.

14. **What are the fees for the course?**
   - 2012/13 Fees have been set by the University as:
     - 4 year programme: For Home/EU students the fee is £9,000 per year
     - 5 year Programme: For Home/EU students the fee is £9,000 for years 1-3 and then 0.75 fee for years 4&5.
     - For International students on the 4 year programme the course is classed as lab based and the fee is therefore £16,200 per year.
   The fees for 2013/14 are likely to rise by at least the cost of living.

15. **Is the programme fully accredited now?**
   - We are currently working with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) to gain accreditation for our programme. The programme is subject to annual inspection and approval by the GPhC. The GPhC have allowed us to advertise the course and list the course via UCAS.