



EMPLOYER FEEDBACK SURVEY 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This survey follows the one that was carried out in 2013. Given the introduction of the BNatMed programme it was important to establish the trends of any early feedback from employers about the characteristics of graduates from the new programme of studies. Questions and topics are broadly similar to the 2013 version, but some minor changes have been made, and new questions introduced.

In June 2015 e-mail enquiries about the survey were sent to a range of people known or believed to employ SPCNM graduates; 8 responses were received, and six or seven (?) employers were subsequently interviewed by telephone. All but one of them then completed the questionnaire [Annex 3].

The respondents currently employ approximately 23 graduates, and have employed a total of around 55 graduates in recent years. There is a mixture of full-time and part-time employment.

SPCNM graduates are employed in three main types of role:

- Clinical practitioners.
- Retail workers – some of whom also consult with clients when required.
- Commercial locations involving technical, research and development or product management roles.

Employers' positive responses may be summarised as follows:

- There is a high level of satisfaction with SPCNM graduates.
- They are seen as professional and engaged with the industry.
- They are also seen as well-trained, having a good range and level of knowledge, able to continue learning.
- All of the employers would recommend SPCNM graduates to other employers.

Employers also made comments about graduate limitations, and potential areas for improvement, that tended to be biased according to their type of business: client, retail or product focused.

These suggest that graduates need to be stronger with respect to their understanding of:

- Quality assurance procedures;
- Pharmacognosy;

- Rongoa;
- Retail products and the retail environment isn't always strong – could be bolstered by appropriate placements;
- The traditional element of the profession – it was suggested by one employer that graduates' strength in, and the curriculum's early emphasis on, science overshadows or limits their ability to master the traditional aspects of herbal medicine.
Another employer suggested that the interval between herbal theory and practice is too long, and therefore counter-productive in terms of graduates being comfortable in dealing with herbs.
Another employer made a similar comment, suggesting that graduates' knowledge base could be broader – thus enabling them to deal with other professions more effectively in the healthcare environment.

Questionnaire

The responses to the questionnaire are consistent with the commentary above. The responses are generally positive and likely to relate as much to the individuals as to the curriculum – certainly in the cases of the graduates who are working as practitioners.

Conclusion

The introduction of the BNatMed programme has had a positive effect, although graduates' strengths are understood to be as much about the individual as their education.