

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN THE SIPBS MPharm PROGRAMME

Sabrina Anne Jacob, Anne Boyter



## Nationwide survey

**Objectives:** To determine the current structure and challenges in experiential learning (EL) in MPharm programmes in UK universities

**Subjects:** Directors or people in charge of EL in MPharm programmes in 30 universities in the UK.

**Findings:** Twenty (66.7%) universities responded. EL coordinators were mostly academic/teaching fellows (95%), and spent  $0.29 \pm 0.31$  Full Time Equivalents on coordination. Tutors completed training annually in 53.8% of universities.

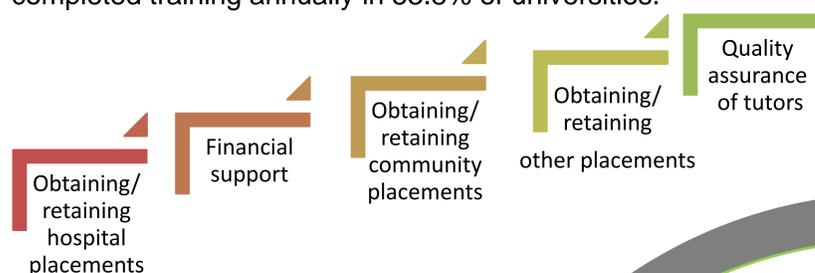


Figure 1: Challenges faced in providing EL

Total placement hours in all practice sites over four years of study ranged from 54 – 496 hours, and included EL in hospices, hospitals, prisons, nursing homes, and community pharmacies

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Numerous studies have reported on the challenges currently faced by those involved in or affected by the EL programme in the pharmacy curriculum e.g. lack of tutors and placement sites, staffing and tutor-training issues, and student dissatisfaction with the programme.<sup>1-4</sup> There is a paucity of studies conducted in the UK, and specifically Scotland which assessed the effectiveness of the EL programme.

This necessitated a 360 degree exploration of the current situation to determine if our students are achieving what is required in terms of skills, knowledge, and professionalism.

Based on the findings, it can then be decided if the MPharm EL programme is adequate, or needs improvement.



## Students

**Objective:** To ascertain students' views on the EL programme

**Study design:** Mixed-methods exploratory study

**Subjects:** MPharm students who have undertaken EL

PART 1

**Objective & Design:** A pre and post study where students will be asked to record on their mobile phones their views of what they expect to gain in terms of skills and knowledge during placements, and if these were fulfilled.

**Subjects:** MPharm students who are about to undertake placements

PART 2



## Tutors

**Objective:** To determine tutors' perceptions of the EL programme and their training needs

**Study design:** Mixed-methods exploratory study (Phase 1: survey, Phase 2: qualitative)

**Subjects:** Hospital and community pharmacists, who have experience as EL tutors for SIPBS

**Phase 1 study instrument:** 16-item survey consisting of open and closed questions, with Likert-style responses

**Preliminary findings from Phase 1:** 32 community, 43 hospital responses. 80.6% believed it was part of their professional responsibility to tutor a student undertaking EL. Majority believed EL programme was effective in developing student's clinical and communication skills (**Fig 2**). For tutor-development, respondents wanted topics on teaching/tutoring strategies (85.7%), how to engage & motivate (80%), and provide constructive feedback to students (75.5%).

Formulate/develop pharmaceutical care plan (64.8%)

Demonstrate problem-solving skills (63%)

Assess patient adherence (51.9%)

Figure 2: Effectiveness of EL in preparing students

**Open-ended comments:** While some respondents lamented the lack of time as well as the negative attitudes of some students, most found the experience as a tutor enjoyable, and found it as a way to give back.

*"Having EL students is beneficial to the hospital and the whole pharmacy department including myself as a tutor. The students bring their own perspective and natural curiosity to our current practice. They keep me on my toes by asking questions I had not thought about; and they make me go back to first principles and review my knowledge of pharmacology and clinical practice. I believe they have a positive impact on patient care because they are not in so much of a rush when it comes to spending time with patients; they also help me to focus on the patient in terms of thinking through what I should be saying, my demeanour and bedside manner."* (Hospital pharmacist)



## Stakeholders

**Objective:** Obtain feedback from stakeholders with regard to the effectiveness of the SIPBS EL programme in preparing MPharm students for practice

**Study design:** One-on-one interviews or focus group discussions

**Subjects:** Pharmacists including Directors of Pharmacy, practicing pharmacists, NHS Education for Scotland, and patient groups

## References

1. Talley CR. Experiential rotations for pharmacy students. American journal of health-system pharmacy : AJHP : official journal of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. 2006;63(11):1029.
2. Chaar BB, Brien JA, Hanrahan J, McLachlan A, Penm J, Pont L. Experiential education in Australian pharmacy: Preceptors' perspectives. Pharmacy Education. 2011;11(1):166-171.
3. McCartney J, Boschmans S-A. South African pharmacy student perspectives of a hospital-based experiential learning programme. Pharmacy Education 2018; 18
4. Devine PS, Darbishire PL. National trends in IPPE programs at US schools of pharmacy from 2008-2013. Am J Pharm Educ. 2015;79(3):39.

This project is funded by NHS Education for Scotland

