

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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## Oral Presentation

### Student pharmacists' perceptions of facilitator involvement in competency-based assessments within practice-based experiential learning

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**Keywords:** Competency-based assessment, Experiential learning, M.Pharm., Pharmacy, Student pharmacist

**Background:** The Pharmacy additional cost of teaching (ACTp) (Wright, 2019) evaluation project seeks to explore the practicality of experiential learning (EL) facilitators undertaking competency-based assessments of students during EL.

**Aim:** To obtain students' perceptions of placement facilitators assessing students during their EL.

**Method:** Undergraduate M. Pharm. students from Robert Gordon University (RGU) and the University of Strathclyde (UoS) were surveyed using an online questionnaire. It contained only one open-ended question which sought to capture their thoughts on facilitators assessing them during EL. Thematic content analysis was undertaken on the responses received.

**Results:** Eighty-two responses were received; 13 incomplete responses; 69 included: 42 UoS, 27 RGU. Favourable responses were received from 34 (49%) with regard to facilitators assessing students. Thematic content analysis revealed five key themes: 1) Current perceptions and expectations of EL placements; 2) Perceived benefits of facilitators assessing students; 3) Perceived drawbacks of facilitators assessing students; 4) Potential barriers and challenges in facilitators assessing students, and 5) Suggestions and concerns. Students were concerned about the extra stress and the impact of the assessment on their overall grades; however, they acknowledged the benefits of being assessed and receiving feedback from trained practitioners in the real-world setting who would be engaged in the students' EL. Variability in marking as well as facilitators' lack of experience with assessments, were also highlighted, with suggestions that facilitators should be trained in assessment and equipped with information on students' level of knowledge. Students also thought that quality assurance measures should also be adopted to ensure standardisation in marking.

**Discussion:** Students were on the whole ambivalent about the suggested approach, with concerns raised about the impact of the assessments as well as the capability of facilitators to assess them. To allay these anxieties, students should be involved as co-creators in the design and structure of the assessment components.

### Reference

Wright, S. (2019) Scottish government invests £2.85m to expand experiential learning of student pharmacists to new settings. *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, March, Online.  
<http://doi.org/10.1211/PJ.2019.20206248>