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# 'Addressing the Need to Modernise Professional Identity for Pharmacy Clinical Education; Focusing on Strategic Pedagogic Design'

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## CHANGING TIMES

The stringent procedures underpinning all educational practice at the University of Sunderland ensure the safety of patients who regularly engage in the development of cognitive, psychomotor and affective domain learning across the undergraduate MPharm curriculum.

One of the fundamental strengths of pharmacy educational provision here, is our capacity for the spiral curriculum to integrate clinical skills at the very earliest stages of education and training, a complex system of integrated learning experiences frame each stage of knowledge and skill acquisition – leading to autonomous pharmacists capable of complex clinical decision making upon completion of their undergraduate studies.

The seamless provision of educational provision in providing progressively more complex case scenarios, affords students the opportunity of managing and assessing risk on an ongoing basis. In relation to their potential actions and decision making in the clinical environment this pedagogic approach affords them the opportunity of observing the potential consequences of human error and lack of concentration first hand; whether this is in hospital or community pharmacy settings.

## EMERGING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

At the heart of the General Pharmaceutical Council's current engagement with patient-centred professionalism, lies the capacity of pharmacists to engage with the operational definition of what this term actually means to them. (Elvey et al, 2015) The outcomes of this will shape and form future regulatory frameworks and issues relating specifically to professional conduct, ethical practice and individual performance.

Equipping students with the basis of these skills throughout each individual level of the MPharm programme at Sunderland, is one of the School's major strengths. The resonance of our educational provision remains one of excellence in relation to pre-registration examination results of our graduating students.

Modernising Pharmacy Careers (2011) continues to resonate in terms of the great potential for pharmacy professionals to lead the way in patient-centred professionalism with clinical skills being an integral part of this provision. The emergent role of the pharmacist is now one whereby patients will soon be accustomed to undergoing clinical assessment, monitoring of physiological conditions and interprofessional referral as an integral part of the pharmacists work in the multidisciplinary team (Smith and Darracott, 2011).

Trust is the keystone of all professional interaction, our programme equips students to consider issues of ethics, cultural competence, the protection of human rights and dignity from the very first interaction students have with their clinical skills facilitators.

## OUTLINING PEDAGOGIC DESIGN

Situated learning is underpinned by approaches in social constructivism that permits the regular benchmarking of skill acquisition, regardless of cohort size. By remaining faithful to this underpinning philosophy of education students are equipped to recognise what they don't know, alongside celebrating the development of their pre-existing knowledge.

Based on a spiral curriculum, the MPharm programme focuses on the development of graduates capable of integrating information holistically from the course of their four years of study. The programme is deliberately fully integrated so that students do not overemphasise the significance of one part of the programme over another and their trajectory through the programme is reflective of consolidated learning with due regard for each element of their undergraduate pharmacy education.

Levels 4 and 5, clinical skills sessions ensure students engage in deliberately structured seminar and clinical integration sessions. At Levels 6 and 7, the educational scaffolding supporting these sessions is dissolved (Vygotsky, 1978) and morphs into problem-based scenarios and work-based learning opportunities that afford students the opportunity to develop their autonomy. This autonomy is the basis of being able to undertake complex decision making and the patient centred professionalism that characterises and frames UK pharmacy practice.

## PROFICIENCY IN CLINICAL SKILLS



Proficient, reliable and empathic assessment skills...



Unquestionable reassurance, expert advice and timely interprofessional referral...



Proficiency at the heart of compassionate holistic care...

## IMPACT ON PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

With public confidence paramount to the professional integrity of students the University has an extensive resource in its patient and carer database. These volunteers provide an invaluable opportunity for our students to engage with patients and their families and carers living on a daily basis with conditions that, once qualified our pharmacists will be responsible for managing in relation to their pharmacological regimen.

Facilitating students to become pharmacists who at all times respect and protect people's dignity and privacy is a key role of our clinical skills facilitators. Students are encouraged to stringently take all reasonable steps to prevent accidental disclosure or unauthorised access to confidential information as a matter of priority since trust underpins every professional interaction of the pharmacist.

The reality of these interactions provides an authenticity that provides a degree of perspective for our pharmacy students away from their functional learning around core diagnostic equipment. This founds their practice in empathy and understanding of the human condition we all share and is a source of great pride and significance throughout our educational provision at the University of Sunderland.

We educate 'people' first and students second in a manner equalled only by our capacity to care for 'people' first and patients second. This ethos lies at the heart of our practice as clinical educators and one in which we take great pride.

## SHAPING FUTURE PHARMACY PROVISION

We aspire to maintain the reputation and integrity of our institution as one of the most respected Schools of Pharmacy in the UK.

As advocates of care and compassion at the heart of healthcare provision we strive to ensure that our pedagogic approach is not only robustly designed. We aim to serve the future demand of the workforce with pharmacists of competence, professionalism and character and one which encourages ongoing debate of how these approaches can be continuously improved and further developed.

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