

JOINING THE PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN PHARMACY



Want to develop your skills in advanced clinical pharmacy? Interested in furthering your studies at a Doctorate level? Then consider joining the Professional Doctorate in Pharmacy!



WHAT IS THE PHARM D COURSE?

The Pharm D programme is a new course being offered by the Department of Pharmacy of the **University of Malta** in collaboration with the College of Pharmacy at the **University of Illinois at Chicago** in Chicago, USA. This course was developed to provide for the rapidly growing niche area in pharmacy related to a professional doctorate. It is a means to develop professionals with a research-oriented approach and with skills in advanced clinical pharmacy practice.

Pharmacists who would like to take up the area of clinical pharmacy as their specialisation will be able to develop the skills and attributes of undertaking research in the field while reading for a level 8 doctorate-level degree.

This course will prepare graduates who are able to deliver

a significant contribution to pharmacy practice and policies in clinical pharmacy and applied areas.

COURSE DETAILS

- The programme is delivered using a blended learning model that includes lectures, distance-learning and practice-based learning
- Integrate learning experience with assessment and contextualisation in professional practice
- Course includes a number of taught modules as well as clinical experience and research modules
- Based over three years of study covering a total of 9 semesters
- Successful completion of 90 ECTS will entitle students to a Masters in Advanced Clinical Pharmacy if they opt not to proceed with the course





SKILLS DEVELOPED

- Cooperate and collaborate with healthcare professionals and patients to provide individualised treatment and support patient care
- Manage medication knowledge, mitigate errors and support decision-making based on evidence-based sources, including information technology
- Efficiently collect, analyse and apply required literature sources for the appropriate clinical management of patients
- Evaluate, analyse and synthesise information and knowledge available to undertake and propose rational decisions
- Identify opportunities for improvement of a medication-use system
- Collect and critically assess clinically relevant data to facilitate monitoring and management of drug therapy plans
- Contribute significantly to development of practice research

CAREER PROSPECTS

The programme will empower pharmacists practising in the professional areas to take up leadership roles that will drive policies, developments in clinical practice and service provision which draw on a scientific and evidence base.

CONTACTS



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
L-Università ta' Malta

Professor Lilian M. Azzopardi
Department of Pharmacy
University of Malta
lilian.m.azzopardi@um.edu.mt
Tel: (356) 21 344 971

UIC UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

Professor Alan Lau
College of Pharmacy
University of Illinois at Chicago
alanlau@uic.edu

PHARM D STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS

RICHARD DESPOTT

The course has a very broad scope and has therefore provided a holistic view of pharmaceutical care, which is most interesting at a personal level with regards to strategic management of services. The majority of course material is oriented at clinical specialisation.

The mixed learning approach in the Pharm D. programme greatly enhances professional development as it provides access to foreign tutorship (via teleconferencing) with different skills and styles, flexibility (recorded lectures on the Virtual Learning Environment) and full immersion practice-based clinical experience. The approach is stimulating and delivers a broad and in-depth volume of taught material. With the online lectures, students may benefit from more time allowed for preparing lecture notes, revising technical concepts and background, carrying out research to complement the text or digest the material provided, particularly mature students who are returning to their studies after a number of years.

The course provides a strong emphasis on clinical research and evidence based practice, as well as an advanced insight to key areas (particularly health systems at a personal level) where research studies can contribute to improving healthcare delivery. The course also provides a deeper appreciation of the potential offered by clinical pharmacy services and better understanding of the systems and structures needed to support these services.

In my view, the course offers good prospects for career paths in clinical specialisation, strategic management of pharmaceutical care delivery systems and processes, as well as tutoring. In view of the fact that this is the first intake, feedback from students on the details of course dynamics may be useful to enhance the experience and outcome.

ALISON ATTARD

I have just finished my first semester in the Doctorate of Pharmacy course and although it was very intense I must admit that it was one of the best educational experiences I have ever had.

As a working pharmacist with family obligations, it was very interesting to see how this course offers flexibility in the sense that most of the lectures were via online teaching. We also had live recitations from experienced specialists from various areas who gave us the opportunity to discuss and apply the knowledge from the online sessions to real case scenarios. These practice scenarios helped me improve my critical thinking and problem-solving skills while increasing my knowledge in areas such as pharmacotherapeutics. This programme also offers the opportunity for students to have a broader perspective regarding different healthcare systems, policy and practice in local and international settings.

I really enjoyed my first clinical rotation in a local Rehabilitation Hospital where clinical pharmacists have the opportunity to intervene in patient care by managing and improving the medication use process. The interventions carried out by clinical pharmacists were always evidence-based with a patient-centred approach within multidisciplinary teams.

I am sure that this course will not just enhance my professional competence but will also help me develop leadership skills in pharmaceutical service development. It is definitely the next step for practicing pharmacists who would like to improve their career.



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ROBERTA AGIUS

The Pharm D. program provides an exceptional teaching and learning environment for pharmacists to enhance their knowledge and practice skills in performing the pharmacist's role in health care delivery. The mixed learning approach which includes lectures, distance learning and practise based learning such as clinical rotations, is a new concept which is the major contributor to a collaborative learning experience. The distance learning lectures and live recitations which take place with specialised pharmacists from the University of Illinois in Chicago, is a unique experience which gives us a great opportunity to learn and discuss the latest updates which are taking place in the pharmaceutical sector.

This course is giving me an opportunity to strengthen skills such as communication abilities, critical thinking and decision-making, management of medication knowledge and support decision-making using appropriate information sources and technology, inter-professional collaborative practice, patient pharmacotherapy assessment, plan and management. This will enable me to advance in my career and be more confident in assuming leadership roles in the management of pharmaceutical care. I highly recommend this course to other potential candidates so that we, as pharmacists, can enhance our contribution in all pharmaceutical areas including clinical pharmacy, community pharmacy, regulatory affairs, pharmaceutical industry and research and development.

NOELIA HELGADO SANCHEZ

I find that the lectures are very interesting and cover several clinical scenarios. I believe that the course is highly educational as well as innovative in the way lectures are taught. Lectures taught via video-conferencing are interactive and highlight the level of organisation and excellent communication between the University of Malta and University of Illinois in Chicago.

DANIKA AGIUS DECELIS

The triangulation teaching approach gives a broader picture and knowledge of how to deal with situations via multiple approaches. The course, being segmented as it is, helps to add more dimensions to the ability to improve patient care and exposes us to different learning techniques while giving us a more holistic approach. These are areas one would not have covered had the programme been simply based on research.

Education is not the learning of facts but the training of the mind to think. This is the precise tool that is passed on to us from this course. The Pharm D. programme demonstrates how pharmaceutical issues are handled in other countries. It gives a different perspective to various issues and it also allows one to think on a completely higher level, enabling oneself to broaden the knowledge, gain more experience and learn from others.

Pharmacists are the bridge between patients and other health care professionals. With this tool in hand one can be able to integrate the knowledge and experience gained and use it both at administrative and policy-making levels as well as a clinical level, always keeping the patient's interests a priority. It gives more status to the profession while working in a multidisciplinary team at all levels.

I will definitely recommend the course to other potential candidates. Education is our passport to the future. Although it requires a lot of sacrifices, it is definitely worth it at the end.

KHALED ABDELMAULA

I believe that the course will be an asset for my career in pharmacy due to the variety of subjects covered whilst getting an extensive view of healthcare systems. This is emphasised by the contribution of foreign lecturers who give us an idea of the international scenario.