

ADVANCED EXPERIENTIAL PLACEMENTS - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRECEPTORS

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INTRODUCTION

The Doctorate in Pharmacy course offered by the University of Malta in collaboration with the University of Illinois, Chicago, offers six-week advanced experiential placements. Preceptors for the placement at Medicines Information guide international post-graduate doctorate students through an advanced clinical experiential education.

AIMS

- To identify skills required by pharmacist preceptors for an effective preceptor role
- To explore challenges and opportunities encountered by pharmacist preceptors when guiding international doctorate students

METHOD

In 2016, before the first cohort of doctorate students were admitted to the programme, the Pharmacy Department at the University of Malta offered a preceptor development programme for hospital clinical pharmacists. This short, intensive, training programme included sessions by speakers from University of Illinois, Chicago and the American College of Clinical Pharmacy in relation to clinical pharmacist activities and roles as preceptor.

This programme focused on how students rely on experiential rotations to explore the application of clinical pharmacy theory in practice and to prepare them for role modelling and student mentorship as preceptors themselves. Preceptors need to be able to prioritise areas during the post-graduate rotation to guide students to reflect on real-life, dynamic patient care situations.

RESULTS

The preceptor development programme served to highlight effective preceptorship skills for post graduate international clinical pharmacy rotations. The requirement to balance strong communication skills, assessment skills, teaching and leadership skills with technical skills is key to successful role modelling. Applying this educational preceptorship amidst a variety of cultural and pharmaceutical differences, and integrating students within local practice is essential for enhancing the educational experience. Moreover, presenting diverse learning scenarios and maximising clinical exposure during the experiential placement are fundamental for the students' successful learning experience.

Essential Skills

Communication skills
Assessment skills
Teaching and leadership skills
Technical skills

Challenges

Integrating students with local practice
Presenting diverse learning scenarios
Maximising clinical exposure

Opportunities

Rewarding professional experience
Satisfying preceptor-student relationship

Requirements for Preceptors

Performing self-assessment
Identifying areas that require further improvement

Figure 1: Challenges, opportunities and requirements for preceptors

CONCLUSION

Preceptors can benefit from a rewarding professional experience in addition to a satisfying preceptor-student relationship, when integrating students into their daily activities by bringing out their best potential. It is important for preceptors to periodically perform self-assessment and identify areas that require further improvement^{1,2}.

REFERENCES

1. Cuellar L, Ginsburg D. Preceptors Handbook for Pharmacists, 3rd ed. Bethesda, MD: American Society of Health-System Pharmacists; 2016.
2. Soric M, Schneider S, Wisneski S. The Effective Pharmacy Preceptor. Bethesda, MD: American Society of Health-System Pharmacists; 2017.