Community Pharmacy Thames Valley

Student Work Experience

Employer Guide

Introduction & Planning

1. Introduction

Students currently studying the MPharm degree will be Independent Prescribers from when they join the register as Pharmacists. Therefore, earlier on, students will be looking for clinical placements within community pharmacy. This guide supports contractors who wish to host work experience students to give an insight into clinical community pharmacy. This may be of particular use for independent pharmacies that may not have internal work experience programmes. This guide has been developed to provide a clear and practical template for offering safe, meaningful, and structured placements. Work experience placements typically involve students aged 15–17 and will offer them valuable insight into pharmacy careers.

As community pharmacy evolves, pharmacy technicians themselves are playing an increasingly vital role, taking on greater responsibilities in provision of clinical services, and supporting the safe and efficient running of pharmacy teams. This placement guide also looks to give work experience students a greater insight into this.

The first part of this document provides an introduction to work experience placements for students and preparation / planning suggestions. The second part of this document provides an overview of governance considerations for contractors / placement providers.

Please note this is a guide document and is to be amended and adapted for each individual contractor / placement provider prior to use.

2. Why Offer Work Experience?

There are a number of benefits to offering early work experience to students. Some of which include:

- Supports workforce development and inspires future pharmacy professionals
- Widens access to opportunities in community pharmacy and supports greater diversity and inclusion
- Promotes pharmacy careers and provides real world experience
- Builds links with your local community
- Helps young people make informed decisions about their future
- Gives your staff development opportunities in mentoring and teaching

3. Planning the Placement

Consider the following steps when planning a work experience student placement at your community pharmacy:

1. Agree on a suitable time for the placement (e.g. school holidays or summer term)
2. Decide how long the placement will be (typically 1-5 days)
3. Ensure your staff are briefed and supportive
4. Identify a main contact and consider assigning a ‘buddy’ (e.g. a trainee pharmacist)
5. Prepare a timetable of activities
6. Think about which roles the student can observe and what they can learn

4. Designing a Meaningful Placement

Work experience can build knowledge and understanding in:

- What it is like being a pharmacist/pharmacy technician and your role in the community
- Interacting, communicating, and offering treatment/advice to patients
- Wider clinical roles in a multi-disciplinary team
- Importance of clinical knowledge and professional judgement
- Administration aspects of being a pharmacist

It may be an idea to consider the following when designing your student placement:

- Where possible provide the placement timetable in advance as it will help participants to see what they will be doing each day (see Appendix 5)
- Include a range of observation opportunities (e.g. dispensary, counter, consultation area)
- Encourage students to complete their workbook and reflect daily, using quieter moments to complete structured tasks from the workbook (if possible, find a member of the team who can talk to the participant about what they have done, answer any questions they might have, and explore what they have learnt)
- Let students interview staff members to learn about different roles (interview prompts available in Student Workbook)
- Teach key employability skills like punctuality, teamwork, and communication

5. Induction Checklist (to be discussed with Student)

Get to know your student:

- What they want to gain and learn from the experience
- Any concerns they have, including anything they may find upsetting
- Their experience of healthcare
- Their future plans and aspirations
- Any needs they may have (for example prayer facilities)
- If there is anything specific, they wish to see

Housekeeping:

- Assign a 'buddy' that can help answer informal questions and help the participant reflect on their experience. If you have a trainee pharmacist/pharmacy technician, they would be ideal at fulfilling this role
- Confidentiality
- Health and safety
- Dress code and professional behavior
- Location of facilities (toilets, kitchen, exits)
- What to do if they feel unwell, cannot attend, or have concerns (identify the main contact that participants can go to in the event of a query or concern)
- Timetable and daily routine
- Introductions to team members and a tour of the pharmacy

6. Supporting Student Reflection

Consider ways to support each individual student's reflections:

- Discuss with students what they've learned each day

- Ask questions and answer their questions to help them think about their skills and understanding
- Help them make connections between their observations and possible career paths

Governance Considerations

1. Legal and Safety Considerations

- Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive makes it clear that if you already employ people under the age of 18 years old you will not need to repeat risk assessments for work experience placements. However, if you have not recently employed a young person it is advisable to review your risk assessment before the placement starts
    - Schools and colleges do not need to separately run a risk assessment. Your risk assessment will be more than sufficient
- Obtain parental consent and a health questionnaire (see Appendix 2)
- Keep students under supervision at all times
- Provide a health and safety induction
- Do not involve students in clinical activities (e.g. taking BP) - limit student activity to observation and administrative tasks only

2. Confidentiality and Consent

Ensure patient confidentiality is upheld - students must understand they cannot share anything they hear or see about patients

- This can be covered in the pre-work experience information you send out. This includes a placement agreement form that includes agreeing to keep all information, including the identity of the patient confidential (see Appendix 3)
- Include an onsite induction / confidentiality discussion with the student on starting the placement

Be sure that patients understand the status of those on placement, for example they are not a medical, nursing, or healthcare student. Informing them is enough but you may wish for them to sign a patient consent form (see Appendix 4)

3. Insurance and Indemnity

Indemnity is not a barrier but ensure this is accounted for and induction covers safety and confidentiality. The benefits of indemnity would apply to members only and would not extend to the provision of assistance to those on work experience placements if a claim were made directly against them. As work experience is purely observational, it is unlikely that individuals undertaking such experience would find themselves facing such an action

- Contact your insurance provider to confirm cover for students
    - The Association of British Insurers, the British Insurance Brokers Association, and Lloyds of London have agreed that, as a matter of convention, individuals on work experience should be treated as employees for the purposes of insurance against bodily injury (that is, they will be covered by your employers' liability policy), where the employer is legally liable for a loss. You only need to notify your insurer of the sorts of activities that individuals on work experience will undertake if those activities are onerous or different from the normal business activities of your organisation
- It is recommended that work experience placements are maximum one week in length and involve no clinical, high risk, or out of the ordinary activity

- Due to risks involved it is recommended that you do not include home visits during the work experience placement

4. Safeguarding

- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is not required for staff supervising children aged 16-17 on work experience
- A DBS check may be required for a person who supervises a young person under the age of 16. This will be required where the person providing the training or supervision to the child is unsupervised and is providing the training or supervision frequently or intensively (at least once a week or more than 3 or more days in a 30 day period). In these circumstances, the work is likely to be regulated activity, and the education provider can request a DBS check for that supervisor
- No DBS is required for young people on work experience because they must be supervised at all times
- Be mindful that some students may find healthcare environments emotionally challenging. As part of your risk assessment, do consider how you can minimise those on placement coming into contact with a distressing situation. Some may have had experiences of ill or dying relatives and may be uncomfortable or upset with some of the patients' stories. You will not be able to prevent this entirely, and so consider how you will support

5. Templates and Appendices

This guide is supported by the following templates that can be adapted and amended for use by each individual contractor:

- Appendix 1: Suggested activities for student work experience
- Appendix 2: Work experience student health questionnaire
- Appendix 3: Student work experience pre-placement agreement form
- Appendix 4: Patient consent form for pharmacy work experience student observation
- Appendix 5: Student work experience timetable
- Appendix 6: Student work experience welcome letter

Appendices

Appendix 1: Suggested Activities

Dispensary:

- ☐ Observe prescription dispensing process
- ☐ Learn how stock is managed and ordered
- ☐ Assist with shelf-tidying and expiry date checking

Shop floor:

- ☐ Learn about 'over the counter' medicines and classifications
- ☐ Support staff in preparing health promotion displays

Clinics:

- ☐ Shadow pharmacist during consultations (with consent)
- ☐ Observe services such as flu vaccinations (if appropriate)

Other:

- ☐ Introduction, tour of pharmacy, health and safety, workbook overview
- ☐ Complete workbook tasks and reflections
- ☐ Post-placement feedback session

Appendix 2: Work Experience Student Health Questionnaire

Please complete this form prior to placement start date. This information will be passed on to your son / daughter's work experience placement for their confidential use

Please note that _____ (Placement Provider) cannot be held responsible for any eventuality arising if you do not provide essential health information

Name of Student:	
DOB:	
Name of Pharmacy & Branch:	
Emergency Contact Name:	
Emergency Contact Number:	

The following questions relate to the above referenced student:

1. Do you have any medical conditions we should be aware of? If yes, please specify:

2. Do you take any regular medication?

3. Do you have any allergies?

4. Do you have any mobility or learning support needs? Please also let us know if you require any other adjustments or support:

Parent / Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Signed: _____ (Parent / Guardian)

Date: __/__/____

Appendix 3: Student Work Experience Pre-Placement Agreement Form

Please complete this form prior to placement start date.

Name of Student:	
DOB:	
Name of Pharmacy & Branch:	
Placement Dates:	

The following statements are to be read and agreed to by the above referenced student.

I agree to:

1. Arrive on time each day and follow instructions from staff
2. Respect confidentiality of all patients and staff
3. Maintain professionalism at all times
4. Follow health and safety rules at all times
5. Ask questions if I don't understand something

Signature (Student): _____ Date: __/__/____

Parent / Guardian Name: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

Signature (Parent/Guardian): _____ Date: __/__/____

Name of Pharmacy Supervisor: _____

Signature (Pharmacy Supervisor): _____ Date: __/__/____

Appendix 4: Patient Consent Form for Pharmacy Work Experience Student Observation

Dear Patient,

We have a work experience student in the pharmacy today. Work experience helps students prepare for professional study and their future career. With your permission, they may observe part of your consultation.

Please note: the student is ***not*** a healthcare professional, is unable to provide any advice, and will not take part in any treatment.

'I consent to having a work experience student present during my consultation.'

Patient Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: __/__/____

Pharmacist Name: _____

Pharmacist Signature: _____ Date: __/__/____

Appendix 5: Student Work Experience Timetable

Day	Time	Staff overseeing
Monday	AM –	Name: Role:
	PM –	Name: Role:
Tuesday	AM –	Name: Role:
	PM –	Name: Role:
Wednesday	AM –	Name: Role:
	PM –	Name: Role:
Thursday	AM –	Name: Role:
	PM –	Name: Role:
Friday	AM –	Name: Role:
	PM –	Name: Role:

Appendix 6: Student Work Experience Welcome Letter

Dear _____ (Student Name)

We are looking forward to welcoming you to your student work experience placement at _____ (Pharmacy Name). This is a great opportunity to learn more about working in community pharmacy and the services community pharmacy offers.

Your placement will run from __/__/____ (Start date) to __/__/____ (End date).

Please arrive at __:__ (Start Time) each day and ask for _____(Supervisor Name).

What to bring:

- Packed lunch or money for food
- Comfortable clothes and shoes (dress code: [insert details])
- A pen

Please ensure prior to your placement you have completed and returned to the pharmacy:

- Work Experience Student Health Questionnaire
- Pre-Placement Agreement Form

During your placement, you'll be supervised at all times, and we encourage you to ask questions and take notes in your workbook.

We look forward to supporting your learning experience!

Best wishes,

_____ (Supervisor Name)

_____ (Pharmacy Name)