

Developing Experiential Sites for the PharmD Program



Suggestions for maximizing resources

Providing quality student rotation experiences are paramount to educating our next generation of practitioners. Additionally, providing the experience is well planned, and expectations are well described for all parties, the pharmacy stands to gain from the associated positive impact on the department, and individual staff. This document provides some suggestions for getting the most out of student experiences to create a win-win for all involved.

1. *Plan student capacity.*

- Set expectations for preceptors. Avoid preceptor burn-out with planned down-time
- If space and state intern law allows, it is more efficient to take 2 students concomitantly.
- Diversify. Use experienced preceptors to help develop new preceptors so that everyone can participate (avoiding the potential burn-out factor again)

2. *Provide a group orientation session.*

Ideas for which elements to cover include:

- Who's who
- Overview of pharmacy structure & distribution system
- Typical patient care activities performed
- Overview of pharmacy system
- How to access to patient care data (labs, flow sheets, H&P, progress notes etc...)
- Formulary
- Therapeutic interchanges
- Where to find clinical policies & guidelines
- Facility policy on chart documentation

3. *Each preceptor to provide a rotation-specific orientation*

- Introduce student to nurse manager, educator, unit clerk, and other appropriate staff
- Provide an overview of the unit workflow including where new orders are placed, how charts are filed, etc
- Introduce student to physicians, residents, etc...
- Show student where to place personal belongings, restrooms, etc
- Review rotation expectations and goals (see template rotation document)
- Put together schedule
- Exchange emergency contact information
- Explain how to use phones, pagers, etc
- Discuss evaluation methods and frequency of feedback the student should expect

- Provide a typical day scenario so the student knows up-front what to expect
- Provide written communication to medical teams advising students are coming, when and for how long, what you would like by way of feedback for student performance and how often (a Dear Doctor letter)
- Communicate clearly that pharmacists are thrilled to precept students and are volunteering their time to precept. They must place patient care as the top priority, and the student is there to support this priority as well as learn. Students are expected to develop self-sufficiency in certain areas with preceptor facilitation.

4. Develop a list of projects that students can work on that will also support the pharmacy department goals

- Make this list readily available and communicate to rest of staff what students will be working on (web site?)
- Where possible, include department personnel that have a vested interest in completing projects/goals – this helps to ensure that the student can produce a result that will match the desired output (rather than being “busy work” that must be redone)
- Provide clear instructions. Schedule reviews that are closer in frequency at the beginning to ensure the student is set up for success. This list will be specific to the institution, deployment of technology, and pharmacy services model, however, some examples are listed below:
 - Medication reconciliation
 - IV to PO
 - Renal dosing
 - IV drips
 - Non-formulary issues
 - MAR reconciliation
 - P&T projects
 - Medication Safety analysis/reports
 - ADE summary/analysis
 - MUE
 - Joint Commission Patient Safety Goals
 - Policies, procedures, guidelines, protocols
 - Journal club
 - Develop staff competencies
 - Pharmacist, Technician, Intern, & other healthcare professional training modules
 - Poster
 - Brown bag sessions
 - Community outreach (contraception lectures, geriatric patient assistance, care-giver assistance, patient support groups)
 - Run experiential session for students in lower classes
 - Quality improvement evaluation & recommendation
 - Audits (legal, quality, patient care, distribution)

- 5-minute teaching moments
- Newsletters
- CMS reports
- Missing medication projects
- Review optimization of technology use (such as automated medication cabinets)
- Help sheets for dosing, formulary selection, drug information
- Drug of the month
- Discharge or other patient counseling
- Department web site resource production
- Get involved in interview process (positions, resident, intern or technician applicants)
- Every department has a wish list of projects they just never quite get the time to do – encourage staff to brainstorm and contribute!

5. *Make teaching topic discussions an activity that is shared among staff*

- Develop a list of core topics and assign to a couple of pharmacists (or others). If you can share resources with other disciplines, this will also help increase efficiency. These types of activities are great for residents who have interest in teaching. This is also a great way to develop interdisciplinary relationships – PT, RT, OT, CD, MD, RN, etc, may all have common teaching areas
- Have all students attend the sessions and participate. This will free up time for the other preceptors to work on individual projects, etc

6. *Avoid the pitfall of preceptors feeling they have to be with students all day.*

- Set clear time parameters along with sufficient time for feedback and mentoring. Providing quality planned time can help reduce anxiety relating to spending time with students
- Provide project time
- Coordinate so groups of students have project time to work together
- Set up student schedule so the busiest times of the day are also time when they are expected to help/contribute
- If a patient care emergency occurs when preceptors and students are together, provide the student with the opportunity to observe and participate (if possible). This fosters the notion of patient-centered care and re-enforces the need for schedule flexibility in healthcare settings.