



INDIGENOUS PHARMACY
PROFESSIONALS OF CANADA

RECOMMENDATION: *That each pharmacy program incorporates the equivalent of at least 8 hours per month (the hours of which do not have to be made up) and permission for attendance at pharmacy board meetings and/or events for advocacy initiatives in each experiential education rotation block.*

This statement is addressed to all administrators of pharmacy schools across Canada, especially those in leadership of experiential education programs. Through CAPSI's discussions with Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada (IPPC), it was noted that pharmacy students on experiential rotations are not provided sufficient time to partake in professional development activities, including advocacy initiatives. Students also noted difficulties in getting time off for these professional development activities through the school.

Advocacy has been deemed as an “essential competence” to advance the pharmacy profession. The Association of Faculties of Pharmacy (AFPC) and the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs (CCAPP) also identify advocacy as a key skill of graduates to meet the expectations of patients and society, with an emphasis on cultural safety, humility, and responsiveness.

*CCAPP Standard 3 (June 2023): The required curriculum includes content in biomedical, pharmaceutical, behavioural, social, and administrative pharmacy sciences; clinical sciences including practice skills; practice experiences; intra- and interprofessional collaborative practice; **cultural safety, humility, and responsiveness**; and Indigenous history, values, and healthcare needs. [bolding added for emphasis]*

*CCAPP Preface (June 2023): Pharmacy graduates must have a broad understanding of health, the factors that contribute to a healthy community including the social determinants of health, and the structure and role of the healthcare and public health systems. Graduates must also be able to manage, evaluate, and communicate information, and **possess the skills needed to advocate on behalf of individuals and the community**. [bolding added for emphasis]*

The pharmacy curriculums are designed to build competent pharmacists who hold a responsibility to advocate on behalf of the profession and the community. This responsibility also extends to pharmacy students and is a difficult skill to teach in a classroom setting. The constraints of the pharmacy curricula mean that opportunities to build upon advocacy skills are often lacking. Given that advocates are built through hands-on approaches, pharmacy curriculums can take the opportunity of experiential rotations to allow for student engagement in advocacy initiatives.

Experiential rotations are a critical time for upcoming pharmacy graduates to establish themselves as health advocates who care for individual patients, communities, and populations by using pharmacy expertise to understand health needs and advance the health and well-being of others. Allowing students designated time to incorporate advocacy roles will allow students to develop their interests and skills to serve as leaders throughout their careers.

The pharmacy curricula strives to graduate students with leadership and professionalism skills; for example, criterion 3.3 of the CCAPP standards (June 2023) states that “the curriculum supports development of student leadership, professionalism, and professional identity”, of which examples of evidence include “documentation of the ways student leadership groups work with faculty to support curricular activities” and “examples of leadership development activities for students”. Previously, the guidance document for this standard went on to state that:

*“In the context of this standard, leadership and professionalism development evidence should **go beyond documentation of student-led organizations or initiatives in extracurricular settings.** Consider providing evidence of how leadership (or professionalism) is developed, for example, by incorporating specific learning outcomes into the curriculum, through reflective professional development retreats or journal clubs that focus on leadership or professionalism, or developing continuing professional development learning portfolios.” [bolding added for emphasis]*

Given the constraints of the pharmacy programs, expectations of participation in professional development activities that go beyond student-led organizations or initiatives in extracurricular settings are burdensome and can lead to student burnout. While some students have a natural interest in advocacy efforts and seek these opportunities on their own, others require additional resources and support to do so. Nevertheless, opportunities for *all* students to hone these skills are limited by course load and academic pressures.

Additionally, the current CCAPP standards hone in on advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion across Canadian programs. Criterion 8.3 of the new CCAPP standards outline that “the Faculty and University recognize and commit to anti-racism and anti-oppression of equity-deserving groups, celebrate a diversity of cultures, and engage in respectful and reciprocal relationship building”, of which an example of evidence is “faculty or institutional policies, processes, or leadership activities that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion.” CAPSI and IPPC believe that the provision of time for advocacy initiatives would strive to meet this standard.

Providing allotted time for students to engage in advocacy activities during experiential rotations will allow them to build on essential skills required to become competent pharmacists and leaders for the profession of pharmacy.

CCAPP Criterion 4.1 (June 2023). The academic program leading to the PharmD degree includes a total of forty weeks (minimum) (1600 hours) of practice experiences. The total hours of practice experiences provide the opportunity to develop proficiency in all competencies required for entry to pharmacy practice.

Criterion 4.1.b (June 2023). The sustained period of required concluding practice experiences (advanced pharmacy practice experiences) near the end of the program involve a minimum of thirty-two weeks (1280 hours) of which at least twenty-four weeks (960 hours) comprises full-time direct patient care practice in both primary care and acute care. Programs can allocate 8 weeks (320 hours) or more in non-patient care or combinations of non-patient care/patient care experiences if the requirement for 24 weeks (960 hours) of direct patient care practice has been met.

With 960 hours dedicated for direct patient care, this allows 320 hours towards non-direct patient care activities including professional development initiatives. Table 1 outlines the lack of specifications regarding time off for professional development initiatives across the pharmacy schools. Indicating that advocacy initiatives can be a part of these non-direct patient care hours will guide faculty and experiential rotation preceptors to allow students with dedicated time for such initiatives. Without specifications, faculty and preceptors may be unaware or unsure if they are able to allot such time off to students during rotations, leading to refusal of requests to do so.

“The role and input of student voices and perspectives at decision-making tables for the evolution of pharmacy practice is critical. In particular, for the Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada, Indigenous pharmacy students provide a perspective on the training and educational standards that have been called to be addressed by multiple National Reports regarding Indigenous health and social disparities. I was unable to ensure authorization of the attendance of Indigenous pharmacy student board members to board meetings or board development gatherings. Board activities commonly include environmental scanning of pharmacy practice, Indigenous health and governance training, and mentorship by pharmacy professionals with diverse experience. Although there remained to be an option to discuss with each students’ individual preceptors, I feel strongly that student representation at professional stakeholder tables and events must be assured, without prejudice, to empower our future leaders’ exposure and capacity to contribute to systems evolution.”

- Amy Lamb, BSP, Executive Director, Indigenous Pharmacy Professionals of Canada

Having clear policies and procedures regarding student engagement in advocacy initiatives is important to ensure that students, preceptors, and involved stakeholders recognize students have the structural ability to engage in advocacy initiatives, even if they may overlap with their curricular responsibilities. Not only will this ensure future pharmacy students become stronger advocates and leaders, but it also ensures that students are represented in discussions where their voices are valuable.

Table 1. Overview of policies allotting time for professional development activities for pharmacy students on experiential education

<p><u>University of British Columbia</u></p>	<p>“A student receiving an award or in a leadership position may request time away from practicum to attend a professional conference. The student must formally make a request for this absence with the practice educator and course coordinator <u>in advance</u> of the practicum and the event itself. The student is required to make up the missed time and must be flexible to completing their practicum during a different month and/or at a different practice site.”</p>
<p><u>University of Alberta</u></p>	<p>“The Faculty supports student participation in professional development activities such as conferences, PDW and career fair, if feasible with the placement schedule, preceptor approval, and the time away from the placement is reasonable. Absences for professional development activities must be approved in advance of the activity by the preceptor and logged within CORE ELMS. The preceptor may</p>

	deny a request for professional development should the standard of care to patients or practice site be negatively affected by the absence of the student or it's anticipated that the time missed will impact the student's ability to complete the placement successfully."
University of Saskatchewan	<p>"If an absence is feasible within the placement schedule, and if the preceptor approves and is agreeable and the time away from the placement is reasonable (does not exceed one day per placement), the student may be granted absence from the rotation for attendance at College-endorsed activities. For examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Development Week (PDW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrangements to be absent for PDW must be made with the preceptor at the beginning of the rotation and agreed to by both the student and the preceptor. The College will NOT reschedule academic activities so that students can be away all week. There should be no pre-conference events. - Educational courses, conference, or workshops related to pharmacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where it is felt that attending the course will be beneficial to the student, and relevant to the current rotation and the clinical work, the student may be permitted to attend an educational course. - The time off should not be disruptive to patient care. - Instructors may elect to take students to workshops, etc. if directly beneficial to the student's clinical experience - Requests for time off outside of the above will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis."
University of Manitoba	APPE students are allowed 2 days off for professional development/conferences over the course of the entire APPE year that do not need to be made up. IPPE students are required to make up all time missed during their rotations for professional development reasons. Time off must be approved by the Experiential Program Coordinator. Students may be asked to submit a reflection or conduct a presentation describing how their activities met course objectives. In addition, students are permitted one "reflective day" per APPE rotation, which may be potentially rescheduled with mutual agreement of the preceptor, student, and Office of Experiential Education.
University of Waterloo	Waterloo's planned absence policy allows for one day (per rotation block) for a preapproved professional activity, the hours of which do not have to be made up. Students must contact the Experiential Coordinator for prior approval. In addition, Waterloo's patient care rotation model includes a flex week at the end of each 8-week rotation block that allows for the student to participate in any activity of their choosing during this time period (i.e. professional activities, wellness break, etc). Alternatively, the flex week may be utilized to make-up missed time from a pre-approved professional activity that takes place during the rotation block that is longer in duration than the allotted 1 day.
<u>University of Toronto</u>	The Faculty recognizes the value of student participation in professional conferences (e.g. PDW, PPC, CPhA, OPA) however, APPE rotations are a mandatory

	<p>academic requirement. Careful consideration must be given to allowing student absences from the rotation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each APPE student may be approved to have a maximum of 2 days during the APPE year as conference time for which they do not need to make-up. The preceptor must be in agreement with the missed days and students should be progressing successfully in rotations. - If the preceptor agrees to student attending conference days but requires the student to make-up some or all of the missed days, then a specific plan on how this will occur must be in place. - Conference Requests are submitted to OEE and approved or denied. <p>The absence policy for EPE-1 and 2 does not reference time off for professional development. The general rule is that you can miss one day of EPE without a petition, but any additional days have to be petitioned and are assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>Université de Montréal</p>	<p>Case-by-case basis.</p> <p>The student has to submit a request to the faculty detailing the event. For a well-known/major congress, the procedure is simpler than for lesser-known events.</p> <p>After approval, the rotation policy states that “ Students have to provide an absence notice (with their associate clinician in cc) as well as their confirmation of inscription from the congress and the “hour make-up form”. It is the usual procedure for any absence during a rotation.”</p>
<p>Université Laval</p>	<p>No clear statement in the faculty’s rotations policies & procedures.</p> <p>Appears to be a case-by-case scenario, as for other types of absence.</p>
<p><u>Dalhousie University</u></p>	<p>Excused absences of greater than two days per rotation or a combination of excused absences and professional leave greater than two days per rotation must be made up. Professional leave must be requested in advance of a placement by both the preceptor and PEP coordinator.</p>
<p><u>Memorial University of Newfoundland</u></p>	<p>“Absences related to professional development (e.g., professional meetings) will not normally be required to be made up. These absences must be approved, prior to the activity, by both the preceptor and the PPE Coordinator”</p>

CAPSI recognizes that the discrepancies revealed above may be due to differences in overall practicum hours and structures at each pharmacy school; however, the onus should be upon pharmacy program administrators and the architects of these programs to create an experiential education that allows space for initiatives that adequately meet the competency of a health advocate.

Students’ lack of allotted time towards initiatives that will shape them to become a competent health advocate creates a barrier to students’ professional development as a well rounded pharmacist. Integrating advocacy into experiential rotations will allow upcoming pharmacy graduates to build skills that will play a key role in the advancement of the profession and well-being of the community.

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