

## Self-funded/Sponsored PhD Project information

**Funding Source:** Self-funded /own sponsorship

**Proposed start date:** negotiable

**Closing date for applications:** open until filled

**Eligibility:** UK & International

**Home fee:** £5,003 (2025/6 fee) plus 1.5k pa RTSG/bench fees

**Tuition fee band:** Band 3 £25,350 pa, to cover baseline fee and 1.5k pa RTSG/bench fees

**Department/School:** Healthcare / Pharmacy Practice

**Supervisors:** David Wright. [d.j.wright@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:d.j.wright@leicester.ac.uk), Nadiyah Bahadur [n.bahadur@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:n.bahadur@leicester.ac.uk), Dan Greenwood [Dan.greenwood@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:Dan.greenwood@leicester.ac.uk)

**Project Title:** *PhD in Pharmacy Practice - Longitudinal Placements within the Undergraduate Pharmacy Degree: Defining the value*

### Project Description (max 700 words):

Longitudinal placements, defined as a minimum of 13 weeks of continuous learning in the workplace, optimise student experiential learning as they enable students to be effectively inducted into the workplace, develop a role within the team and increase autonomy as the placement progresses.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the extended duration, compared to many undergraduate healthcare professional placements, results in placement providers investing more time in the placement student in recognition of the fact that they will be able to eventually contribute positively to patient care.<sup>2</sup>

Longitudinal placements or clerkships, initiated originally by the medical profession, have been tested within the pharmacy profession in the pre-registration year on hospital wards in the UK. Pharmacy trainees were found to gain membership within the multi-disciplinary ward team over time, and as they gained more autonomy this resulted in an enhanced learning experience. The extended period of the placement enabled them to make a greater contribution to patient care, provide more medicines-related consultations and reportedly improve discharge times.<sup>3</sup>

The value of longitudinal clerkships within the undergraduate pharmacy curriculum is currently unknown. A recent UK government initiative to fund up to 40 weeks of experiential learning within the pharmacy undergraduate years provides an opportunity to assess the educational value of longitudinal clerkships, rather than the usual shorter duration placements.

The new MPharm program, at the University of Leicester, includes longitudinal placements in each of the first three years of the program, being located in community, primary care or hospital pharmacy settings. Pharmacy students undertake 4 days a week placement for 13 weeks with one day a week assigned for enhancing experiential learning, through related workshops and enabling students to record all assigned learning opportunities and formative assessments into their portfolios. Reflective essays are created at the end of each placement to inform personal development planning for the oncoming semester and future placements.

The value that this model of education adds to pharmacy student development would be assessed through this PhD.

Underpinned by experiential learning theory the PhD will first review the evidence for longitudinal clerkships to identify the most appropriate experiential learning theory on which to construct subsequent evaluations and define the parameters for evaluation.

A cohort of pharmacy students and their placement supervisors will be interviewed after each placement in years one, two and three to understand how the placements operate, what value they provide to the learner as the course progresses and how the experience can be further optimised to improve learning efficiency.

The PhD would provide an opportunity for an individual to better understand pharmacy education and its evolution, plus how placements or clerkships contribute to knowledge retention and understanding when integrated into the first three years of a pharmacy degree curriculum.

#### **References:**

1. Walters L, Greenhill J, Richards J, Ward H, Campbell N, Ash J, Schuwirth LW. Outcomes of longitudinal integrated clinical placements for students, clinicians and society. *Med Educ*. 2012 Nov;46(11):1028-41. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2012.04331.x. PMID: 23078680.
2. John J, Brown ME. The impact of longitudinal integrated clerkships on patient care: a qualitative systematic review. *Educ Prim Care*. 2022 May;33(3):137-147. doi: 10.1080/14739879.2021.1980438. Epub 2021 Oct 26. PMID: 34702143.
3. Kinsey H, Sokhi J, Christou M, Wright D. Longitudinal placements for trainee pharmacists: Learning whilst improving patient care. *Med Educ*. 2022 Feb;56(2):220-228. doi: 10.1111/medu.14684. Epub 2021 Nov 19. PMID: 34715721; PMCID: PMC9298918.

#### **Entry requirements:**

Applicants are required to hold/or expect to obtain a Bachelor Degree 2:1 in pharmacy

The University of Leicester [English language](#) requirements apply where applicable.

#### **Application advice:**

To apply please refer to ([Population Health Sciences | Postgraduate research | University of Leicester](#))

With your application, please include:

- CV
- Personal statement explaining your interest in the project, your experience, why we should consider you in addition to confirmation of how you will pay your fees.
- Degree Certificates and Transcripts of study already completed and if possible transcript to date of study currently being undertaken
- Evidence of English language proficiency if applicable
- In the reference section please enter the contact details of your two academic referees in the boxes provided or upload letters of reference if already available.

In the funding section please specify that you wish to be considered for **David Wright Pharmacy Practice**

In the proposal section please provide the name of the supervisors and project title (a proposal is not required)

**Project / Funding Enquiries:**

Application enquiries to [pgradmissions@le.ac.uk](mailto:pgradmissions@le.ac.uk)