



Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain

Code of Conduct for Pharmacy Students



Introduction

Your pharmacy course is preparing you to enter a profession. Pharmacy is one of the registered healthcare professions, and carries both privileges and responsibilities. As a pharmacy student you must demonstrate you are able to exercise those privileges and bear those responsibilities. This means you must conduct yourself professionally at all times. This **Code of Conduct for Pharmacy Students** (called the **Code of Conduct** in the rest of this document) applies to you from the first day of your course to the day you graduate. This **Code of Conduct** applies both on and off campus. Remember that wherever you are, you are representing the profession of pharmacy and your university.

Pharmacists in Great Britain registered with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain must abide by its **Code of Ethics for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians**. When you become a pharmacist in Great Britain it will apply to you. It is based on seven principles: each one is explained by a number of examples; others will arise when you are working as a pharmacist. Applying the seven principles is central to the way you conduct yourself and is what being a professional is about. All the principles are equally important.

Pharmacists in Northern Ireland register with the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland and must abide by its **Code of Ethics**. When you become a pharmacist in Northern Ireland, it will apply to you. This **Code of Conduct** has been adopted by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland.

This **Code of Conduct** is based on the same seven principles as those in the Society's **Code of Ethics** and it explains how the principles apply to you as a student. It will help you as you develop your understanding of what it is to be a pharmacist. The **Code of Conduct** indicates how the principles apply to you now and shows what is expected of you during your time as a student.

It is a requirement that your school has fitness to practise procedures for pharmacy students. If you do not abide by the **Code of Conduct** you may be subject to those procedures.

This **Code of Conduct** is for students studying on MPharms, Overseas Pharmacists' Assessment Programmes (OSPAPs) and foundation degrees in pharmacy.

This **Code of Conduct** has been produced in partnership with the Council of University Heads of Pharmacy (CUHOP) and the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association (BPSA). The **Code** has been endorsed by both CUHOP and the BPSA.

Code of Conduct for Pharmacy Students

The seven principles

1. Make the care of patients your first concern
2. Exercise your professional judgement in the interests of patients and the public
3. Show respect for others
4. Encourage patients to participate in decisions about their care
5. Develop your professional knowledge and competence
6. Be honest and trustworthy
7. Take responsibility for your working practices

1. Make the care of patients your first concern

The health, wellbeing and safety of patients must be your main concern. To support this, you will learn about the design and development of medicines and their safe and effective use. Even when you are not in direct contact with patients, you will be developing values, attitudes, knowledge and skills that you will use as a pharmacist. As a student you must:

- always bear in mind your future role as a pharmacist when studying: this applies equally to the science elements of the course as to pharmacy practice
- apply your learning to ensure you know how to develop and use medicines for the maximum benefit of patients
- promote the health of patients

2. Exercise your professional judgement in the interests of patients and the public

You will need to exercise professional judgement at all times: your course is designed to help you understand what this means. As a student you must:

- consider and act in the best interests of patients and the public
- ensure your beliefs do not compromise patient care
- make sure your judgement is not influenced by personal interests
- be prepared to challenge the judgement of others if you have reason to believe that their decisions could compromise safety or care

3. Show respect for others

Demonstrating respect for the dignity, views and rights of others is fundamental in forming and maintaining appropriate professional relationships with patients, carers, colleagues and other individuals with whom you come into contact. As a student you must:

- recognise diversity and respect the cultural differences, values and beliefs of others, including students and staff
- treat others politely, with consideration and with respect
- listen to, and respect, others' opinions and be non-judgemental in your attitudes toward them
- maintain proper professional boundaries in the relationships you have with others, especially with vulnerable adults and children
- recognise and respect the rights of patients
- respect patient confidentiality and consent, but disclose relevant information as required

4. Encourage patients to participate in decisions about their care

Patients have the right to be involved in decisions about their treatment and care. Pharmacists must respect this right and help patients to take part in decisions which affect their health and wellbeing. As a student you must:

- learn how to listen to patients and their carers and communicate effectively with them in a way they can understand
- learn how to give patients information and advice so they can take part in decisions about their care, including recognising their right to refuse care
- learn how to work in partnership with patients, their carers and others to manage a patient's treatment and care

5. Develop your professional knowledge and competence

At all stages of your pharmacy career you must take responsibility for ensuring your knowledge and skills are up-to-date and that you maintain your competence. As a student you must:

- reflect on and develop your professional knowledge and competence throughout your course
- recognise and stay within the limits of your competence
- make rational and informed decisions
- engage constructively with assessments
- ensure you are aware of the continuing professional development requirements for pharmacists



6. Be honest and trustworthy

The public trust healthcare professionals, and at all times pharmacists must justify that trust. As a student you must:

- act with honesty and integrity
- honour your commitments and take responsibility for your work
- not plagiarise the work of others
- use research and laboratory data honestly and ethically, seeking permission to use data as required
- supply accurate information in response to lawful requests and update that information as necessary
- respond honestly, openly and courteously to complaints and criticisms concerning yourself or others
- cooperate with formal investigations about you or others
- abide by the rules and regulations of your university and other organisations linked to your studies

7. Take responsibility for your working practices

Pharmacists, like all healthcare professionals, must take responsibility for their work. As a student you must:

- obey the law and comply with this **Code of Conduct**
- take responsibility for your learning and your actions and work constructively with others
- take responsibility for your own health, especially if it may impact negatively on other people
- tell your university if there is anything that could impair your ability to study
- ask for help when you need it and respond appropriately
- plan and use your time effectively
- follow dress codes
- attend classes and conduct yourself appropriately
- be punctual
- be contactable
- ensure you have adequate English language skills
- abide by health and safety requirements

Useful contacts and further reading

If you are unsure about how this **Code of Conduct** applies to you as a pharmacy student, contact a member of the pharmacy staff where you are studying.

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020 7735 9141
enquiries@rpsgb.org
www.rpsgb.org

1 Lambeth High Street
London SE1 7JN

British Pharmaceutical Students Association (BPSA),

<http://www.bpsa.co.uk/>

Code of Ethics for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians (Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 2007)

Council of University Heads of Pharmacy (CUHOP),

<http://www.cuhop.ac.uk/>

General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC),

<http://www.pharmacyregulation.org>

MPharm Student Code of Conduct: a Literature Review (Schaufheutle et al on behalf of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 2009)

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE),

<http://www.oiahe.org.uk/> (Higher Education complaints in England and Wales)

Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI),

<http://www.psni.org.uk/>

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman,

<http://www.spso.org.uk/> (Higher Education complaints in Scotland)

Student Fitness to Practise Procedures in Schools of Pharmacy (Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 2009)

For detailed information on student support, health and safety requirements, fitness to practise procedures, dress codes, rules and regulations and other course information contact your university.



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