

Supporting you through your learning, training and career



#PDAstudent



Welcome to the February 2022 PDA Student Newsletter

In this edition, read about how the PDA aims to improve the student experience at universities, what it is like to be a PDA Student Rep and how you can join the PDA's Ability Network.

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Improving the student experience at universities

Following the tragic death of pharmacy student Mared Foulkes, we would like to reiterate to students that we will continue to work with Schools of Pharmacy and stakeholders to improve the support available.

Based on recent casework experience and student member feedback, we have met with the GPhC to explore how together we can better support students throughout their learning and training. Key stakeholders should support universities to review and where necessary improve policies and procedures.

In many cases, a student's progression to becoming a qualified pharmacist is not linear. Support for student mental health, reasonable adjustments, examination procedures, resit support and fitness to study policies need to be reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose. We need to work together to ensure we discharge our duty of care and effectively support future pharmacists.

We hope that Pharmacy Schools in the UK are reviewing their processes for releasing results and are working to make sure that they are clear and correct. Students receiving exam results should be given contact information so that they can speak to someone at their university about their results. This is particularly important in cases where students will not progress onto their next year of study.

We hope the GPhC, the Pharmacy School's Council and Schools of Pharmacy will work with us to ensure students can access the health and wellbeing support they require throughout their degree.

If you feel you need mental health support, you can contact the Samaritans helpline on 116 123 or you can contact the professions' charity [Pharmacist Support](#).

Life isn't a race and failure will only make you stronger

Ayah Abbass, PDA NAWP Network Committee Member and Community/GP Pharmacist has taken the opportunity to speak about her experience of failing the GPhC pre-reg assessment and its affect on her wellbeing.

Below Ayah also discusses her hopes for the profession to better support those who have failed an exam.

After reading Mared Foulkes' story, I felt heartbroken. My prayers and thoughts are with her family and friends. I imagine many students have been or are going through the same feeling of failure. It has raised questions as to how we can better support potential pharmacists and help students and trainees to see that failing an exam is a temporary hurdle. Students and trainees should feel the support of the profession behind them and know that there are people to talk to. These people may be fellow pharmacists, PDA Reps, and organisations such as Pharmacist Support and the PDA.

[Click here or scan the QR code to learn more](#)



Being a PDA Student Rep

PDA Student Reps work in universities to develop student networks, support student members and play a key role in communicating with members and non-members to make them aware of FREE PDA membership. Here, some PDA Student Reps talk about their experience of the role.



Scott Rutherford

PDA Student Rep at Manchester University

"I am a pharmacy student at the University of Manchester. Since joining the PDA in my first year of the MPharm, I have written for newsletters, connected with a fantastic network of people, and became the first President of the PDA's LGBT+ Network, which aims to support, celebrate, and advance LGBT+ pharmacists and students."



Anjuli Bali

PDA Student Rep at Huddersfield University

"I am currently in my fourth year of pharmacy and undertaking my third year of being a PDA Rep. This role has given me a valuable insight into what else pharmacy is about and the support available for students. I love to give back to the local community and fellow students and peers."



Stephanie Ogborogu

PDA Student Rep at Portsmouth University

"It is an honour to support and represent the views and interests of my fellow pharmacy students. The main goal of the PDA team is to work for a continuous positive change and raise the profile of the pharmacy profession to fair and high standard. I love being able to forward this work at universities."

[Become a PDA Student Rep today!](#)





The PDA Ability Network



The Ability Network is one of the PDA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Networks, all of which are FREE for PDA student members. The Ability Network represents those who consider themselves to be disabled and anyone who falls under the The Equality Act 2010 protections from disability discrimination at work and elsewhere if a person has "...a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities."

Examples of disability can include: long-term medical conditions such as asthma and diabetes, fluctuating or progressive conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis or motor neurone disease, mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder or depression and conditions including dyslexia and autism.

Allies are also welcome to join the PDA Ability network to support and learn more about how disability effects the lives of colleagues and patients.

The GPhC student code of conduct states that students should 'take responsibility for their own health', and students should 'tell their university if there is anything that could impair their ability to study'. Being a member of the PDA Ability Network could provide an important support system for PDA student members who fall within these parameters.

[Click here or scan the QR code to learn more](#)



Reasonable adjustments

In UK higher education around 1 in 125 students have disclosed a mental health condition to their university. However, figures from the Departments of Health indicate that a far higher number of adults in the UK population experience mental health illness. This suggests students underreport their experiences, and potentially may not be receiving the support they require.

Universities have a legal duty to try to remove the barriers faced in education because of disability. These are called reasonable adjustments. We hope to release information to support students struggling to understand and obtain reasonable adjustments and empower students wherever possible to ensure they receive the help they need. Any student member struggling to secure reasonable adjustments can also contact us for free support and advice by calling 0121 694 7000.

An award-winning pharmacy student's motivation to keep striving to improve pharmacy



Fatimah Khan, winner of the 2021 Northern Ireland Pharmacy Student Leadership Award, has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring that the student voice of her peers is heard. From helping with the mentorship of other students to being part of many different groups, Fatimah has had an inspirational pharmacy journey so far.

Fatimah has been class representative for the last three years and her training as a NICE Student Champion equipped her with the understanding of the importance of evidence-based medicine, and the skills to best use this resource.

We recently caught up with Fatimah to find out her experience of studying pharmacy and her advice for first-year pharmacy students. Fatimah also describes what it meant for her to win the NI 2021 Pharmacy Student Leadership Award.

My pharmacy journey

I began working as a pharmacy assistant in 2011, shortly after the start of my undergraduate degree and have stayed in this role ever since. Working as a pharmacy assistant gave me first-hand insight into how pharmacists play a key role in supporting the health and wellbeing of their patients. I really enjoyed seeing how the pharmacist was able to build close-knit relationships with their patients and assist in a patients' treatment journey.

[Click here or scan the QR code to learn more](#)



Getting in touch

We want the PDA student newsletter to be representative of students' experiences. If you would like to feature in a future issue, we would love to hear from you. Get in touch by emailing your views to Hannah.Baker@the-pda.org.

We also encourage you to forward this email to pharmacy students who are not yet members of the PDA. Membership is FREE to students and trainee pharmacists. [Join today!](#)

Let's stay connected. Follow us on social media. **#PDAsstudent**



Just search 'Pharmacists' Defence Association' on any of these platforms.

For more information or to join the PDA, visit: www.the-pda.org