



## Supporting you through your learning, training and career



#PDAsStudent

### Welcome to the May 2022 PDA Student Newsletter

In this edition, read about top tips that can benefit you while preparing for exams, what it is like to be a PDA Student Rep and the PDA's advice for returning to in-person examinations.

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### PDA meets pharmacy students at the BPSA 80th Annual Conference



The PDA team attended the BPSA Annual Conference where they spoke to MPharm students about the work of the PDA, the benefits of taking advantage of FREE membership and all the support offered to pharmacy students and trainees.

PDA Chairman, Mark Koziol delivered a keynote speech to students at the conference where he discussed the history of the BPSA and how the PDA was formed. Mark also highlighted the importance of indemnity insurance and how it benefits students.

The PDA's policy team delivered a workshop titled, How the PDA's Pharmacy Safety Charter supports pharmacists' well being and good patient care. The workshop was designed to guide students through the Safer Pharmacies Charter and how to use it when working in pharmacy.



Hannah Baker, PDA Student Organising Assistant and Manuella Asso, PDA Organising and Engagement Assistant spoke to students about becoming a PDA Student Rep. The PDA offers support and gave advice to students about future PDA Student Skill Sharing sessions.

The PDA also sponsored the annual curry night at the event where they were happy to meet some amazing pharmacy students.

## Top tips from PDA Student Reps on preparing for exams

PDA Student Reps got together to summarise their techniques, advice, and tips for preparing for an exam.

### Techniques

- Be organised, ensure that you have a diary of your assessments and examinations and plan in revision time and study sessions.
- Take regular breaks from studying to help keep your concentration. Consider looking into the Pomodoro technique; 25 minutes of studying then a 5 minute break.
- Try and teach what you have learnt to a family member, friend, or record yourself and play it back, particularly when studying for OSCEs.
- Try out the spaced repetition technique; learn something and then come back to it in a few hours or days and see what you can remember.
- Take part in as many group studying sessions as you can as this can help you cover gaps in your knowledge and you can support one another.

### Advice

- Ask your lecturers any questions as early as possible so they have time to reply.
- Watch YouTube videos like Osmosis or Geeky Medics.
- Use box breathing in the run up to the examination during periods of stress.
- If you have any specific issues regarding in-person exams, for instance reasonable adjustments or shielding, and you are a PDA member, please contact your PDA Student Rep or contact the PDA at [enquiries@the-pda.org](mailto:enquiries@the-pda.org).
- Pharmacist Support is a charity for pharmacists, trainees, and students in Great Britain. They have a student section of their website with tips and advice which may be helpful, as well as services like Listening Friends.
- Create a designated study space with all your stationery and revision materials. That way, when you sit down to study, you can be in the right mental space. It should also make it easier to wind down when you step away from your study space.
- Although you will be sitting the assessment under exam conditions, it will be different to sitting exams at home, alone. Try revising for your assessments outside of your home, in a busy space like the library or a coffee shop.

### The day of the assessment

- Have a quick look at your notes the day before, but don't try and cram any more revision in.
- Make sure you know when and where your exam will be and get there with time to spare!
- Try and have a good breakfast and stay hydrated so that you have energy for your exam.
- Consider travelling to the exam with a friend so that you can support each other on the way.

The PDA team and the PDA Student Rep Network wishes all students good luck during the assessment period!

## Pharmacy students return to in-person examinations

The PDA has been contacted by many student members who are apprehensive about the return to in-person assessments. This is due to their continuing worry of Covid-19 transmissions and anxiety caused by changing exam formats and procedures.

Pharmacy schools are able to decide how exams are conducted and should communicate the process to students in advance. A return to normal university life is considered to be beneficial to student health and well-being. In-person exams are an important part of preparing for students' future trainee assessment examinations, GPhC accreditation for pharmacy schools, and ensuring the integrity of exam results. As future healthcare professionals, face-to-face interaction is also an integral part of the role.

The PDA encourages all universities to take an empathetic approach during this period of change from online to in-person exams. Communication with students is crucial. For some students, this will be their first time taking in-person examinations, and all will need to adjust to these changes and prepare accordingly. The PDA asks that universities provide students with any additional support needed.

[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 members and help students to learn more about the PDA and the pharmacy sector. Below two members discuss why they became PDA Student Reps.



**Kandace Pereira**

*First-year Cardiff University student*

"I have experience in various hospital placements in the UK and in Tanzania. I learned about this role through a PDA workshop held at my university and it made me want to apply to become a PDA Representative because I enjoy helping people solve their issues as well as learn more about my course and be able to share that knowledge with



**Zahra Nawaz**

*Fourth-year University of Wolverhampton student*

"I became a PDA Student Rep in my second year of university because I saw how many students had concerns, they would like to address but were too nervous to speak up about. I saw this as an opportunity to help my peers so that I can be a voice for the student body, allowing the PDA to lobby these concerns with the university on their behalf.

I became the relay between the PDA and the student body to update them on what the PDA can do to help them and since then more students from my university have become members and even shown interest in becoming reps.

I have really enjoyed being a Student Rep; it has enhanced my written and verbal communication skills along with my ability to network, which are vital skills to have as a future pharmacist. So not only has this role enabled me to help other students but also helped me develop skills which will be essential for my future career as a pharmacist and help me to excel."

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



## PDA sponsors Pharmacist Support's ACTNow Campaign

MPharm students face multiple stressors during their time at university. Ensuring that all students are aware of the professional mental health support available is crucial so that when you are facing any issue, you can seek informed help and guidance.

As well as university wellbeing support services, pharmacy students can receive help from the PDA's charity partners Pharmacist Support, an independent charity that has been supporting pharmacists since 1841. They understand mental health and the issues that face pharmacists, students, and trainees.

Pharmacist Support offers an amazing range of services, and has created a guide specifically for students so that you can find out what support best suits you.

[Click here or scan the QR code to download the guide](#)



## PDA launch its first Campaigning & Organising Workshop

These workshops aim to help PDA Student Reps to be more active in the PDA on issues important to MPharm students and to develop transferable organisational and communication skills.

PDA Student Reps took part in their first workshop on Campaigning and Organising. During the workshop, Student Reps learned from union professionals how to collectivise issues and create campaigns that matter to students.

Student Reps that participated in the course came up with ways to ensure that all MPharm students at university know about the PDA and the free help and support that they can receive during their MPharm and trainee year.

The PDA Student Reps Network hopes to empower students at their universities to get more involved with the PDA, develop a strong student voice, and a student community that supports each other and shares their skills.

## 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](mailto: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. [#PDAstudent](#)



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

For more information or to join the PDA, visit: [www.the-pda.org](http://www.the-pda.org)