

## Supporting you through your learning, training and career



#PDAstudent



### Welcome to the October 2023 PDA Student Newsletter

In this edition, read about the rise in misconduct investigations in universities following the use of AI by some students and what happened at the Welsh Pharmacy Awards. Also, learn more about how the PDA has helped students over the last year and some of the benefits for you when you join the PDA FREE as a Student member.

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### New and returning students, join the PDA today!

The PDA is an independent trade union established for pharmacists, by pharmacists. We support, advise, empower, and train hundreds of students, trainee pharmacists and qualified pharmacist members.

We know how important you are to the future of the profession, and how challenging and rewarding being an MPharm student can be. That's why PDA student membership is free. Below are just some benefits of PDA student membership:

- **Access to support and advice** - We employ experienced pharmacists, union professionals, a legal team, and support staff, and can give students support when they need it. Members can call the PDA Member Support Centre on 0121 694 7000.
- **The PDA Education Hub** - We provide professional development and training to support you in your journey to qualifying. Have a look at our upcoming member events [here](#).
- **Opportunity to become a PDA Student Rep** - Representatives in your university feedback on your concerns and signpost you to the support you may need. Find out how to become a PDA Student Rep [here](#).
- **Indemnity Insurance** - Pharmacy students are doing more clinical placements than in previous years, making indemnity insurance more important than ever.

If you know a fellow student who is not yet a member of the PDA, encourage them to [join today!](#)

[Click here to join the PDA today!](#)



## Rise in misconduct investigations over the use of AI

As a pharmacy student, you are held to the same standards of professionalism and patient care as a pharmacist. This includes demonstrating the values, attitudes and behaviours expected of a pharmacist.

Through case work and speaking to members teaching at universities, we have noticed a concerning rise in the number of students using Artificial Intelligence (AI) programmes like Chat GPT and QuillBot to write or enhance assessments. This is plagiarism. Students must be the author of their own work or face the university's disciplinary processes and a potential fitness to practice investigation. Plagiarism detection programmes like Turnitin are developing at a pace and getting better at detecting the use of AI.

Plagiarism is a breach of trust and your professional integrity. MPharm students must demonstrate the professional standards through their behaviour. Trust requires pharmacists to maintain throughout their career high standards of personal and professional conduct and performance to meet the standards set out by the GPhC/ PSNI. Moreover, the assessments that you do to pass the MPharm course are one of the checks and balances that protect patients from harm. Submitting work that is not your own weakens this and is dishonest. We strongly advise students to ensure their work is their own and not to use AI programmes to enhance their work.

PDA Education and Casework Officer, Dr Cheryl Smyth supports PDA student members in cases of misconduct and is concerned this development will see more students accused of misconduct and having to face fitness to practice hearings.

Cheryl said, *"It is imperative that students react to any allegations in the correct manner, being honest and open and admitting if they have used AI to enhance their work. If students react in this way, the outcome is always more favourable."*

If you haven't heard from Cheryl and her team yet, please email [students@the-pda.org](mailto:students@the-pda.org) to see if we can arrange a talk at your university.

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## PDA Student Reps attend the Welsh Pharmacy Awards

*By Kandace Pereira, 3rd year PDA Student Rep for Cardiff  
and Martina Aikon, 3rd year PDA Student Rep for Swansea*



Attending the Welsh Pharmacy Awards was very exciting and a new experience for both of us. We were inspired listening to the stories and achievements of nominees and winners and hearing how their hard work contributed to the pharmacy profession. The evening was also a great opportunity to network and socialise. We felt so welcomed by PDA Wales and West Regional Committee members Helen Lewis and Richard Evans.

The evening was a reminder of how important it is for pharmacists, pharmacy teams, and students to get recognition for the hard work they do.

The PDA sponsoring the student leadership award made us proud to be PDA Student Reps. We know how hard we work to become pharmacists and it was great to see that celebrated!

We highly recommend joining the PDA as a student member and getting involved with all that the PDA has to offer, especially being a student rep to gain opportunities to expand your network and enhance your professional development.

[Click here to become a PDA Student Rep!](#)



## Welsh Pharmacy Award Winners 2023



Last month on Wednesday 13 September, the Welsh Pharmacy Awards returned for 2023. The annual event celebrates healthcare initiatives being led throughout the last 12 months and beyond, from business development to female health.

The awards are a way to recognise and celebrate the dedication and extraordinary work of pharmacists from diverse disciplines, and the PDA is pleased to have sponsored the Student Leadership category of the awards once again.

Each year, the PDA sponsors the Student Leadership category of the Welsh, Scottish, and Northern Irish Pharmacy Awards to celebrate the successes of future professionals. This year's winner was Caitlin Edwards from Cardiff University.

[Click here to learn more](#)



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## Developing soft skills

*By Tran-Phuong Mai Vu, 3rd year PDA Student Rep for Nottingham*



The GPhC/PSNI launched new learning outcomes and standards for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists in 2021. The most significant change was the introduction of independent prescribing to the MPharm course. These are major reforms which mean that trainee pharmacists qualify as independent prescribers (from 2026) and are able to play a much greater role in providing clinical care to patients from their first day on the register.

These new standards are to ensure that when we join the register as newly qualified pharmacists we are confident about and capable of operating in multi-professional teams across a variety of healthcare settings.

We are able to meet diverse and changing patient needs and are dedicated to person-centred care both in person and through remote consultations. As pharmacists, we will ensure the high-quality use of medicines that incorporates both safety and effectiveness alongside compassion and empathy.

To be able to deliver that level of care, there is a higher demand for students, trainees, and pharmacists to develop the soft skills that are required to work more closely with patients. Developing soft skills are imperative at all stages of study, in whatever circumstances you can and in any formats. The earlier we start to enhance soft skills, the more effective and efficient healthcare professionals we'll be in the future.

Several pharmaceutical events are going virtual to accommodate students and guest speakers worldwide. I joined the International Pharmaceutical Students Federation's (IPSF) online Clinical Skills Event (CSE) competition this May and would love to share my experience.

During this CSE competition, I had the chance to learn more about diabetes management based on a complicated case study. I learnt about the differences in clinical treatment guidelines for diabetic pharmacological approaches between NICE (English guideline used in my university curriculum) and ESC/EASD (European guideline used during the competition). I believed this enabled me to gain more insights into diabetes globally!

Moreover, I connected with great student fellows in Europe who share a passion for learning. Although less quantifiable, events like these do grow our confidence in communicating, networking, and developing relationships to being assertive within new groups, practicing time management, and putting yourself out of your comfort zone. By joining in, we get to meet a range of people from different backgrounds and we develop these essential soft skills which will be so key to the role of a pharmacist to delivering patient centred care.

The PDA can help with skills development through our [Student Rep programme](#) and other training/[events](#).

## PDA Student Rep attends the FIP Annual Global Congress

PDA Student Rep, Ramisa Ahmed represented PDA student members at the 81st International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) World Congress of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. We took the interests of UK pharmacists to the global congress which was held in Brisbane, Australia in September. 2023.

Ramisa said, *"I had an invaluable experience attending the FIP World Congress with the PDA. I now have a stronger passion for pharmacists' involvement in humanitarian aid and achieving a sustainable future guided by UN development goals for 2030. The knowledge and skills that I have gained will be instrumental in sharing that passion with fellow students and trainees.*

*One learning that I will carry forward is how we can utilise our differences in skills, mindset, and ideas to collaborate towards a better future. A fundamental teaching for me was attending sessions hosted by countries around the world, which taught me how differently pharmacy is practiced. This was extremely beneficial and gave us all a unique perspective on addressing healthcare-related challenges we may have in the UK.*

*I am extremely grateful to the PDA for providing me with this opportunity and I hope that more students will participate in global health awareness and education."*

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### How the PDA has helped students over the last year...

We are committed to supporting future pharmacists. Below are just some of the things we have done over the last year to support you on your journey to becoming a qualified pharmacist.

- In the last academic year, we have hosted over 80 lectures in pharmacy schools around the UK.
- Supported 100s of student members on issues such as reasonable adjustments, exam guidance, misconduct allegations, and Fitness to Practise.
- Given student members the opportunity to attend a wide range of PDA events on topics such as stress management and preparing for exams.
- PDA student members have been given the chance to attend pharmacy congress' in Australia, and Norway by running a fundraising campaign.

[Click here to learn more](#)



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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)