

# Welcome to the July 2026 PDA Student Newsletter



## Everything you need for placements, leadership development, and career growth

In this edition, read about the leadership journey from a two-time award winning pharmacy student. Here you can access two guides specifically designed to help students set smart goals and support them on their placements. Finally, learn more about the PDA's EDI Networks Conference 2026 and one student's experience of the event.

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### Student spotlight

Debby Olanrewaju from Swansea University (Prifysgol Abertawe) said, **"Broaden your horizons, pharmacy is a diverse industry that can only be experienced when you step out of your comfort zone. Don't be afraid to receive "no" for an answer and when you do continue fuelling your curiosity for pharmacy. Ask questions and seek help from pharmacy professionals."**

### Do you want to begin your leadership journey?

Pharmacy students have the opportunity to become a PDA Student Rep and play a key role in supporting student members and shaping the future of pharmacy.

[Become a rep today!](#)



# Empowering students: A two-time pharmacy leadership award winner's journey

*By Fatema Mohammad, PDA Student Rep  
and two-time Student Leadership Award winner for Northern Ireland*



## The Pharmacy Student Leadership Award

I think I was awarded the Pharmacy Student Leadership Award because of the consistency, passion, and commitment I've brought to improving student experiences and contributing to the profession.

Over the past few years, I've been involved in leadership, research, mentoring, interprofessional education, advocacy, outreach, and public engagement.

As Chairperson of the Ulster University Pharmacy Society, **I helped grow engagement from three committee members to over 150 active student members within two weeks.** This led to the society receiving its first nomination in almost a decade for Course-Based Society of the Year.

Alongside this, I've represented students at school and national level, led international research collaborations, contributed to oncology pharmacy research, presented research internationally, and promoted patient safety initiatives. Most importantly, I've always tried to ensure that leadership was inclusive. I wanted students to feel involved and inspired to take opportunities they may never have considered.

[Read Fatema's award-winning leadership journey](#)



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## PDA Emerging Leaders Programme has successful first cohort

The Emerging Leaders Programme is designed for pharmacy students and early-career pharmacists and provides a structured and supportive introduction to leadership within the profession. Participants in the first cohort completed a series of modules covering key areas such as understanding and defining leadership.

A wide range of interactive elements, including micro-teaching sessions, drop-in webinars and peer discussions, enabled participants to reflect on their existing skills while building confidence and capability.

[Discover how the Emerging Leaders Programme works](#)



# Preparing for placements: A practical guide for pharmacy students



Pharmacy students have made it clear that they need clearer guidance when preparing for placements. In response, the PDA has developed a practical guide to support students as they step into the workplace for the first time.

Placements are an important opportunity for students to build confidence, develop professional skills, and gain insight into future roles. Approaching them with the right preparation and mindset can make a significant difference to the overall experience.

## What you'll learn

- Professional behaviour and attitude
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Confidentiality
- Work safely
- Learning and reflection

The guide also highlights the importance of teamwork in pharmacy as it is a collaborative profession, and placements provide a valuable chance to observe how different roles contribute to patient care.

[Download your placements guide](#)



# SMART goals: a guide for pharmacy students

Many pharmacy students report that setting goals during their MPharm degree can feel challenging, and at times may lead to unrealistic expectations. In response, the PDA has developed a practical guide to support students in setting effective goals and understanding how to achieve them.

Setting goals is an important part of a pharmacy student's development. Establishing realistic and manageable goals can be especially beneficial when preparing for exams, placements, Oriel applications, and other key milestones.

## What you'll learn

- A structured approach that helps students move from broad intentions to clear, measurable progress through the SMART framework.
- A practical example of a SMART goal in action.
- Advice on how to avoid setting goals that are unachievable



Students are encouraged to make full use of the guide, take an active role in their learning.

[Download your SMART goals guide](#)



# Beyond exams: Discovering new perspectives at the PDA EDI Conference 2026

*By Ruby Howarth, MPharm Student*



Often after exams, students can feel unsure of what to do next. Many don't want to stray too far from pharmacy over the summer whilst retaining knowledge and preparing for the year ahead. It is a period of opportunity to explore new avenues and uncover different aspects of pharmacy. This is exactly what I did by attending the PDA's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Conference 2026.

Joining online did not take away from the energy and inspiration of the talks and workshops. I had the opportunity to network, ask questions, and be involved with activities ongoing in the main conference room with other pharmacy professionals, students, trainees, network members and allies.

The conference started off with a keynote speech from Melanie Holloway, which set off the tone and inspired attendees by talking about intersectionality and what it means to be an inclusive leader.

After attending, I feel more confident in the current progress of the PDA EDI Networks and gained valuable insight into equality developments affecting the profession from exploring practical examples throughout the day.

[Read more of Ruby's experience](#)



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## PDA EDI Networks Conference 2026 champions inclusive pharmacy practice



Pharmacists, pharmacy students and trainees from across the UK gathered on 6 June 2026 for the PDA's EDI Conference, a dynamic event focused on advancing inclusivity within the profession.

Held in Birmingham and online, the event brought together the PDA's four EDI networks – Ability, BAME, LGBT+ and NAWP – to share experiences and explore inclusive pharmacy practice.

Overall, the conference reinforced a shared commitment across the profession to move beyond representation towards truly inclusive and equitable pharmacy practice.

[Click here to read more](#)



# Discover FREE learning and development opportunities with PDA Education

As a PDA student member, you have access to a growing range of FREE learning opportunities designed to support you throughout your pharmacy journey. With PDA Education, you can access training, workshops, and events that help build confidence, develop professional skills and prepare for future career opportunities.

There are plenty of events available throughout the year, covering topics such as professional identity, employment rights, CV writing and interview skills. These sessions are designed to help you develop the knowledge and confidence needed to succeed, both during your studies and your pharmacy career.

Whether you're looking to strengthen your CV, build your professional network or gain new skills outside the classroom, PDA Education offers something for everyone. Be sure to keep an eye on the PDA Events section of the website and make the most of free learning opportunities throughout the year.

## Some upcoming sessions include

- PDA Student Reps Induction Programme
- Neurodiversity at work
- Live the life you want to lead
- Decision Making and Problem Solving

[Click here to explore PDA Education events](#)



## New students, join the PDA today!

We know how important you are to the future of pharmacy, and how challenging being a student can be. That's why you can join for free. Below are just some benefits of PDA student membership:

- Access to support and advice
- The PDA Education Hub
- Become a PDA Student Rep
- Indemnity Insurance
- Plus so much more!

[Click here to learn more](#)



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

