



The Journey to Establishing a Pre-Registration Pharmacy Training Programme in SHP

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Introduction

To become a registered pharmacist in Singapore, one has to obtain a recognized degree in Pharmacy, undergo an internship programme at an accredited pre-registration pharmacist training centre to attain the full set of Entry-to-Practice competencies stipulated by the Singapore Pharmacy Council (SPC), and pass a written examination administered by SPC.

In alignment with SHP's mission of nurturing future generations of healthcare professionals, SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) Pharmacy Department set out in 2014 to develop an internship programme for pre-registration pharmacists and to apply for accreditation of this programme by SPC.

SHP's Challenge

The development of a 12-week training programme, which will help trainees become competent to practise in a primary care environment and, at the same time, fulfil the requirements prescribed by SPC's Competency Standards Framework (Entry to Practice), poses a challenge as pre-registration pharmacists will have to acquire many competencies within a short 12-week rotation.

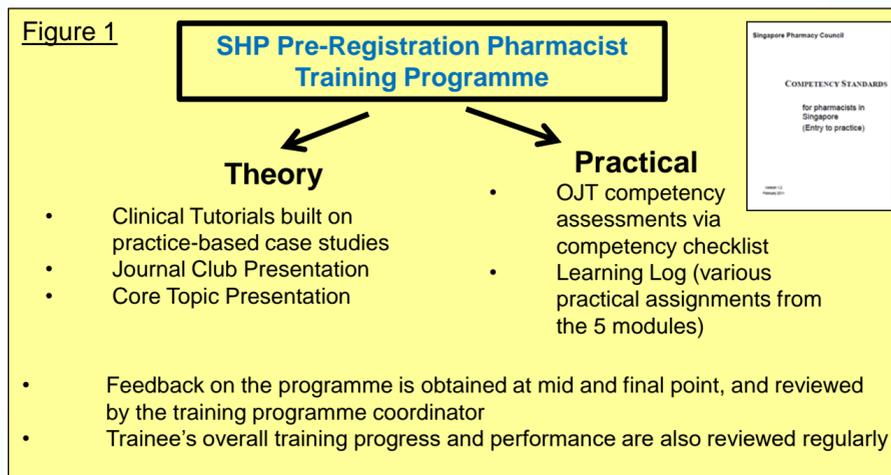
Development of SHP's Training Programme

SHP used a competency-based approach to develop the programme, in accordance with the SPC's Competency Standards Framework (Entry to Practice), with the concept of Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) embedded within.

(i) Trainees' learning needs were scoped:

- A list of professional and clinical duties of a junior pharmacist at the primary care setting was mapped out, and broken down into a list of competencies required for performance of the duties.
- These were then organized into 5 modules in alignment with SHP's practice environment.
- To ensure this list was comprehensive enough to fulfil SPC's requirements, it was checked against SPC's Competency Standards.

(ii) Hands-on competency-based training was complemented by a theory component, to help trainees enhance their professional and clinical knowledge. The trainees were also provided with an opportunity to hone their presentation and communication skills by doing journal club sharing and a core topic presentation (see Figure 1).



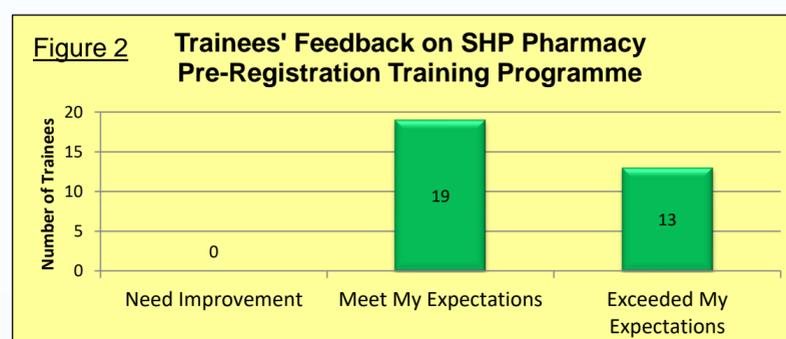
(iii) Learning references and materials were identified/developed and compiled into a training manual to guide trainees.

(iv) All SHP preceptors were put through a Preceptor Course organized by SPC to ensure that they would be effective preceptors.

(v) Upon completion of its development of the training programme, SHP - Pharmacy successfully applied to SPC for accreditation as an approved training site for pre-registration pharmacists.

How Well is SHP Doing?

- Since its inception, 32 trainees have undertaken SHP's training programme and gone on to secure professional registration with SPC.
- Besides feedback collected by SHP (see Figure 2), responses gathered by SPC has also generally been favourable.



Conclusion

Training up pharmacy undergraduates into competent primary care pharmacists within a short time frame of 12 weeks is a challenge but with proper planning and systematic processes in place, it is possible to overcome this hurdle.

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