

A Supervisor's Perspective

Supervising an APPEL student — a pharmacist's experience

In 2015, a new model of pharmacy education was introduced and pharmacy students now undertake a fully-integrated programme. This programme includes placements in a breadth of practice settings throughout the five years of pharmacy education. Providing early and dispersed practical experience helps students to contextualise the

theory they learn in their school of pharmacy and provides them with the skills necessary to meet the demands of the future healthcare environment.

APPEL (Affiliation for Pharmacy Practice Experiential Learning) is a unique collaboration between University College Cork (UCC), the Royal College of



Shane Byrnes and the pharmacy team at Hickey's Pharmacy, Ballincollig

Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). It was established to manage, centralise and streamline the experiential learning placements of the three schools of pharmacy in Ireland.

In 2017, Shane Byrnes, from Hickey's Pharmacy in Ballincollig, was one of the first APPEL supervisors to facilitate a placement. Shane welcomed a second-year student into his practice for two weeks and has shared his experience of supervising an APPEL student.

What did you enjoy about your experience of having a second-year student on placement in the pharmacy?

It was great having a new person come in to the pharmacy. We have a continuous training culture within the pharmacy and going through the basic steps with the student, that we wouldn't normally go through or cover day-to-day, means it keeps everything fresh in the staff's mind.

Before the student arrived, how did you prepare for their placement?

I spoke with the student on the phone first, about a month out from the placement. I then met with the student about two weeks before the placement to discuss the uniform, a rough schedule for the two weeks and what her expectations were. This allowed me to determine the level of knowledge the student had, any previous experience gained and I used this to make a more specific plan for the two-week placement.

Now that you have supervised your first placement, how would you prepare for your next student?

I would follow a similar schedule. Meeting with the student in person two-to-three weeks beforehand gave me the opportunity to determine their previous experience, expectations and goals and understand the assignments the student is required to complete while on placement. This in turn allowed me time to prepare a plan in advance for the two-week placement.

What are your top tips for a successful student placement for other pharmacists?

It is great to meet in person before the placement starts, so that you can make a general plan for the placement. We used a peer-to-peer support system in the pharmacy; this meant that the student was assigned to someone in the pharmacy during their placement. That staff member knew the previous experience of the student and provided the student with a 'go-to' person for any questions, etc. My experience is that younger students tend to be quieter, however I would encourage all students to step forward, don't be quiet or nervous and ensure that they know that there is never a 'stupid question'.

Any other feedback on the APPEL Programme that you would like to share?

The programme was well organised; we had our Supervisor Handbook and everything was quite clearly set out on what to expect from both sides. Meeting the student before the placement was suggested in the APPEL Supervisor Handbook and this is a great idea. When our student started on day one, we both knew where we were starting off from. Our student had a good idea of what was happening, as they attended their APPEL pre-placement talk and I had also advised the student that the pharmacy can be quite busy. She had previous pharmacy experience, which helped a lot. Having the Supervisor Handbook beforehand was particularly handy for pre-placement preparation. Overall, it was a very positive experience. It was great having someone new come in to encourage us all to go over day-to-day basic steps. The programme was organised and it felt like there was no additional work for the pharmacy team.