



University of Malta

Code of Conduct for Students

Professionalism and Appropriate Behaviour

September 2014



Introduction

The courses offered by the Department of Pharmacy are intended to prepare you to become a caring, dedicated and qualified healthcare professional who will be participating in activities that are, directly or indirectly, affecting patient safety and health. Your experience during the course is an important step in your personal and professional development. It provides the knowledge, skills and competences for you to acquire professional characteristics and to contribute and perform as a worthy member of the health profession.

The importance of professional behaviour cannot be emphasised enough. This document outlines some key issues aimed at helping you prevent misunderstandings or unfavourable attitudes about what is expected of you as a student. This will also serve as an important guide for your future profession.

Characteristics of Professionalism

A professional who abides by the most important characteristics of professionalism is an individual who:

- Acts in accordance with the professional code of ethics
- Is responsible, reliable, trustworthy, and punctual
- Behaves in a manner that is respectful, ethical and culturally sensitive
- Wears appropriate attire and observes personal hygiene
- Shows leadership, tactfulness and diplomacy
- Promotes creativity and innovation
- Follows through on assignments and is accountable for his/her work
- Accepts and learns from constructive criticism
- Demonstrates knowledge and skills of the profession
- Commits to Continuing Professional Development
- Takes pride in one's work and profession



b. Classroom Etiquette

Professional behaviour in the classroom starts with demonstrating respect for the lecturer, demonstrator and fellow students. There are several ways to show this respect. Punctuality is an important principle of being a professional and you should make every attempt to be on time when the session begins. If you arrive late, you should enter discretely with minimum disturbance. Moreover, try to avoid skipping too many classes. Justify any absence by completing a 'Notification of Absence Form' with a medical certificate, if applicable, and submit these documents to the Faculty Office by not later than **five** working days following your return. Rescheduling of any tutorial / practical session will be approved by the Head of Department on the sole basis that a valid reason for such an absence is given. Students who fail to do so will not have their absence justified.

It is also disrespectful to leave the class before the session is completed. If it is unavoidable and necessary, then it is important to advise your lecturer/demonstrator beforehand. Other potential distractions, such as electronic devices, should be put on silent mode during classes. Mobile phones should preferably be switched off. Sleeping in class or participating in other such behaviour, such as reading a magazine or a newspaper, is also distracting and disrespectful to your peers and lecturer/demonstrator. Furthermore, the most disruptive activity in the classroom setting is unnecessary chatter during course content presentation and/or discussion. There should be no conversation whatsoever during lecture presentations and/or discussions if not otherwise indicated by the lecturer/demonstrator.

Presentations should be forums for discussion and/or questions. Therefore, your colleagues' questions and/or comments should be respected. Material that is understandable to you might not be so to your classmates. A simple rule is to show respect for your classmates as you would want them to demonstrate to you, and allow them to express concerns and/or questions. You are also welcome to approach the lecturer after the sessions to ask questions. If as a student you have individual needs that you would like to have considered to facilitate your learning experience, it is important that you make these known to the Head of Department at the beginning of the semester/ course. Although it may not be possible to meet everyone's special needs, the goal of the staff is to guide your learning experience and to create an environment that is conducive to that end.

c. Laboratory Etiquette

Appropriate behaviour in the laboratory is primarily important for your safety and for the safety of your demonstrator and colleagues. When in the laboratory, adhere to the 'Laboratory Safety Rules' at all times (Appendix 1) and ensure that you read and understand the five main Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for laboratory practice namely; 'Master', 'Good Laboratory Practice', 'Health and Safety in the Laboratory', 'Training' and 'Laboratory Logbooks'. Ensure that you always come prepared for a practical session with the requirements stipulated in the handbook. When you are using equipment always read and understand the respective SOP (www.um.edu.mt/ms/pharmacy/coursework/labsops), and when using a chemical always refer to the respective Material Safety Data Sheet (www.um.edu.mt/ms/pharmacy/coursework/msds).

d. Experiential Etiquette

While participating in any experiential activity (placement), professional behaviour is expected at all times. During all experiential activities including pharmacy practice in community pharmacies, fieldwork for data collection for projects and dissertations, you should wear your student identification card at all times. You are expected to be well-groomed and dress in appropriate attire and according to the specifications given by the mentor at your experiential learning site. Attire which is strictly not allowed includes halter or low cut tops and dresses, sleeveless tops and dresses, miniskirts and shorts, see-through clothing, jeans, faded, bleached or torn clothing. Shoes should be clean and comfortable; flip flops should be avoided. Make-up and nail polish should be subtle and not overdone and jewellery worn must be discrete and subtle; in some sites particularly the manufacturing industry no make-up, nail polish or jewellery is allowed. If a lab coat is worn, it should be clean and neat looking.

Professional behaviour includes treating your mentor, employees, colleagues, patients and consumers, at the experiential learning site, with respect while upholding confidentiality and integrity, and following all the policies and procedures for that site. Remember that you represent yourself and the Department of Pharmacy in all that you will do at the site.

Prior to starting your placement you should get in touch with your mentor to ensure that you are able to contact the mentor/site and determine where, when, what to bring, and how to prepare before you arrive on your first day at the site. Inform your mentor if you will not be attending on specific days due to other commitments at university or if you are unwell. Complete a 'Notification of Absence Form' with medical certificate if applicable. At the end of your placement, it is recommended that you thank your mentor so as to be consistent with professional behaviour. You should submit a well-presented, organised portfolio to the Department of Pharmacy at the end of your placement, adhering to the stipulated deadline.

You should remember that these placements are unique learning experiences that have been established through hard work and communication by the Department of Pharmacy. It should not be taken lightly or carelessly. There will always be something to learn which will be helpful to you some time in your future career. It is important to be flexible and open to embrace new learning experiences with enthusiasm.

e. E-mail Netiquette

Check your mailbox regularly. Use a professional tone and language in the body of the e-mail and the subject line. Messages should be concise and to the point. Address superiors and those you might not know as Mr., Ms., Dr., or Prof., if applicable. Avoid use of emoticons and slang and avoid overuse of acronyms. After sending an e-mail, allow the recipient adequate time to access the e-mail and action follow-up required, before sending a gentle reminder. Refer to www.um.edu.mt/itservices/students/email/netiquette for further guidelines on effective, efficient and responsible e-mail communication.

Conclusion

Your greatest challenge right now might appear to be that of succeeding in your academic endeavours. However, it is equally important to develop a professional orientation that will serve as a basis for your career in pharmacy.

Relevant link:

www.um.edu.mt/studentscharter/studentscharter/studentresponsibilities

Laboratory Safety Rules

- Document your details into the 'Entry Logbook' on entering the laboratory.
- Always wear a lab coat and keep it buttoned at all times and wear long trousers to cover the legs.
- Wear closed shoes that adequately cover your whole foot and avoid sandals.
- Tie long hair.
- Do not eat drink, smoke, chew gum, apply cosmetics or manipulate contact lenses.
- Do not run or throw items.
- Do not leave bags and other personal belongings near your work station.
- Wash hands well with soap and water after handling chemicals.
- Always wear safety goggles when handling chemicals that can harm your eyes.
- Read the MSDS before handling chemicals and be familiar with the safety symbols on the containers of chemicals.
- Report any activities or situations which are deemed to be unsafe.
- Know the location of the first aid box, eye wash kit and fire extinguishers.

Call 112 in case of an emergency.