

# MENTORING DOCTORATE OF PHARMACY STUDENTS: AN INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The Doctorate in Pharmacy course is a post-graduate 3 year course for pharmacists intended to develop advanced patient-focus competencies through experiential placements. One of the clinical rotations is offered within the rheumatology unit at Mater Dei Hospital.

## AIM

To develop a 6 week experiential programme focusing on rheumatology patient needs, use and application of innovative medications such as biologics and biosimilars and participation within an interprofessional team.

## METHOD

The student attends ward rounds and ambulatory clinics, follows up rheumatology patients as necessary, sets day case appointments for treatment administration, provides patient counselling, participates in educational sessions for healthcare professionals and handles medicine information queries. In addition to the daily activities, the student is assigned a weekly task which is documented in a portfolio (Table 1).

Table 1. Weekly tasks

Week	Learning objective
1	Introduction and observation of clinical activities
2	Identification of 2 patient case
3	Discussion of chosen cases
4	Identification of another 2 cases
5	Discussion of medicines information queries
6	Journal club: critical appraisal and hot topic discussion

## RESULTS

- The assessment consists of a self assessment form which students fill in at baseline, midpoint and the end of the placement. The self assessment consists of identifying areas of weakness, strengths and addresses opportunities to resolve the weaknesses identified.
- The preceptor evaluates the presentation and discussion of the clinical cases in terms of case description, case evaluation, prioritisation of patient pharmaceutical needs and oral communication.
- The rheumatology placement was chosen by 3 students over a period of 4 times when it was offered.
- Two of the students were Maltese and one was an international student.
- The students had previous experiences as a pharmacist related to policy and community pharmacy backgrounds.

## CONCLUSION

The rheumatology placement offers exposure to advanced clinical pharmacy services with direct patient interaction within an interprofessional approach. The next step is to evaluate the placement from a students point of view in order to feed suggestions in the improvement loop for the experiential placement.