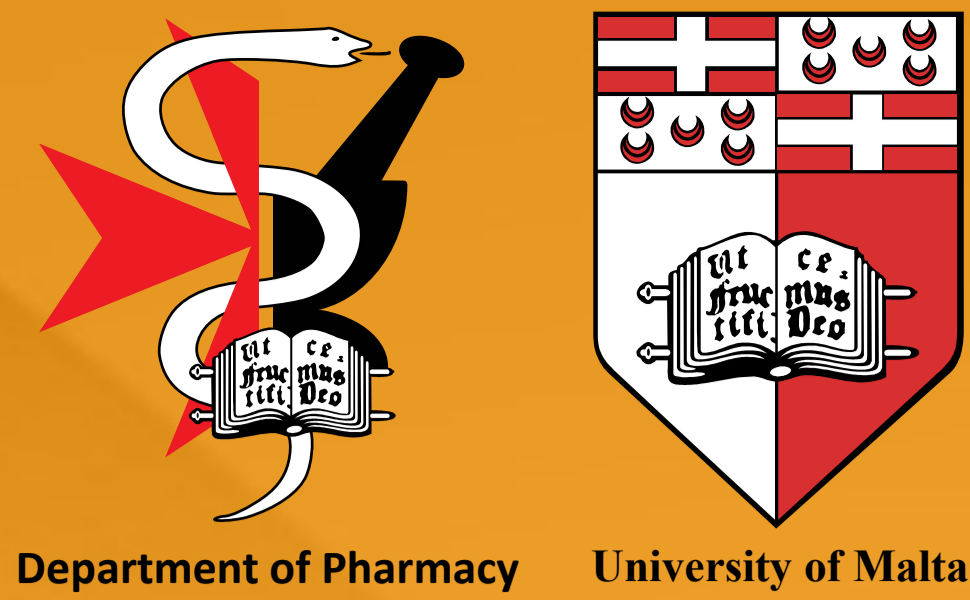


ACADEMIC-LED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH ERASMUS MOBILITY TRAINEESHIPS

Francesca Wirth, Maresca Attard Pizzuto, Lilian M. Azzopardi, Anthony Serracino-Inglott

Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

email: francesca.wirth@um.edu.mt



INTRODUCTION

The Department of Pharmacy is very active in the student Erasmus mobility programme. Pharmacy students may opt to carry out an experiential learning traineeship in a research laboratory or a hospital in a European partner university, for a minimum of two months during the first semester of the fourth year to obtain 20 ECTS.

AIM

To describe and evaluate Erasmus mobility traineeships for pharmacy students

METHOD

- A preliminary information session for students interested in an Erasmus mobility is organised every year, where students who have just returned from the mobility can share their experience with prospective applicants.
- A second information session is held before the students’ departure to explain the experiential learning handbook, learning outcomes and evaluation process.
- Each student must complete a learning portfolio to reflect on learning expectations at the start (Form EP1) and at mid-point (Form EP3) of the traineeship, document daily activities (Form EP2) and report on technical and personal skills gained (Form EP4).
- The evaluation process involves four virtual tutorials with an academic preceptor from Malta. These tutorials include an introductory tutorial and three discussion tutorials.
- Form EP1 is discussed during the introductory tutorial, while daily record sheets and Form EP3 are reviewed during discussion tutorials. The preceptor assigns a mark for each discussion tutorial, contributing to 50% of the final mark.
- Each student presents Form EP4 and delivers a final presentation on return to Malta to reflect on the experience, contributing to 25% of the final mark.
- Preceptor at the partner university evaluates the student’s performance for ten criteria specified in a developed evaluation form, contributing to 25% of the final mark.

RESULTS

- In the past three academic years, 61 (85%) pharmacy students took up an Erasmus traineeship (Table 1).
- The students carried out the traineeships in 20 partner universities in 7 countries: Belgium (Brussels), France (Grenoble, Lille, Paris), Germany (Bonn, Erlangen-Nürnberg), Italy (Bari, Calabria, Padova, Perugia, Urbino), Spain (Alcala, Granada, Madrid, Valencia), Poland (Krakow, Wroclaw) and the United Kingdom (Bradford, Cardiff).
- The highest mean final mark (87%) was obtained in academic year 2016-17 (Table 2).

Academic Year	Number of eligible students	Number of students taking up Erasmus mobility	Percentage of students taking up Erasmus mobility
2014-15	40	32	80
2015-16	19	16	84
2016-17	13	13	100
2014-17	72	61	85

Table 1: Students who took up an Erasmus mobility in the past three academic years

Academic Year	Mean Final Mark (Percent, %)	Lowest-Highest Mark (Percent, %)
2014-15	86	74-94
2015-16	86	72-91
2016-17	87	82-91

Table 2: Erasmus traineeship evaluation

DISCUSSION

Erasmus mobility traineeships are very popular among pharmacy students at the University of Malta and participating students did extremely well. The academic-led experiential learning through Erasmus mobility traineeships are providing a learning opportunity to students in another cultural environment where the student is followed and supported in the development of hands-on skills and is accumulating assessment grades.