Identifying gaps in intern competencies to inform scaffolding for pharmacy students: Bridging from undergraduate to postgraduate

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Background

Registration as a pharmacist:
- Pharmacy degree generally:
  - 4 years full time undergraduate
- 1 year internship
  - paid work plus study
  - accredited ITP
  - approved preceptor
  - approved practice site
## National Competency Standards Framework For Pharmacists in Australia

### Standard 2.2: Collaborate with professional colleagues

#### Enabling competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance criteria</th>
<th>Transition level</th>
<th>Consolidation level</th>
<th>Advanced level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General level</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Show a commitment to interprofessional practice.</strong></td>
<td>Builds expertise and understanding of interprofessional relationships and roles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Seeks opportunities to work with or network with other health professionals to understand their complementary roles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explains the roles and areas of practice of other disciplines to patients and other clients.</td>
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<td> </td>
<td><strong>2. Engage in teamwork and consultation.</strong></td>
<td>Builds collaborative and respectful relationships within the pharmacy team, and with other health professionals with whom they work/associate.</td>
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<td>Works as a member of the pharmacy team, liaising with other disciplines as required.</td>
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<td>Works as a member of a multidisciplinary team.</td>
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<td>Works across workplace boundaries to build relationships and share information, plans and resources.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provides expert advice within and beyond the workplace/organisation as a recognised opinion leader.</td>
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#### Evidence examples

- Assists patients and others to understand the complementary roles of health professionals.
- Recognises personal limitations and demonstrates ability to refer to more experienced colleagues.
- Avoids the use of discipline-specific language in interprofessional communications.
- Identifies circumstances where additional expertise is required.
- Explains discipline-specific issues or information in terms that are readily understood by other health professionals.
Objective

To describe how identification of gaps by intern pharmacists, in readily achieving the competencies required for initial registration as a pharmacist, has enabled scaffolding to be implemented in pharmacy education across the undergraduate and intern years to future proof graduates for contemporary practice.
Methods

Identification of recurring gaps in intern pharmacists’ competencies

• ITP staff and teaching associates
• Preceptors
Results

Recurring competency gaps

• Integrity
• Oral and written communication
• Reflective practice
• Problem solving
• Inquiry
• Compounding
## Scaffolding: focus on skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Within pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>About, from, &amp; with other professions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral</td>
<td>Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>Answering questions &amp; questioning answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Contributing new knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
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Scaffolding: Reflective practice

Undergraduate
• Skills coaching, regular written reflections
• Regular feedback
  • Format – Keep, Start, Stop

Intern year
• Written reflections
• Learning portfolio tutor
• Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
Scaffolding: Integrity

Undergraduate

- Professional practice
- Ethics and Professionalism
- Skills coaching
- Personalised learning plan
- Academic integrity
- Experiential learning
- Interprofessional learning

Intern year

- Academic integrity quiz – revision
- Legal, ethical and professional practice
- Learning portfolio exercise and tutorials
- One year of supervised practice
Scaffolding: Oral communication

Undergraduate

- Active learning/workshops
- Skills coaching
- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)
- Let’s Chat – 10 week face to face program for students to improve their oral communication skills, led by trained facilitators

Intern year

- Active learning
- Small group workshops
- Role plays
- Simulated patients
- Learning portfolio tutor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scaffolding: Written communication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coursework with requirement for written work</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA)</td>
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<td>• Skills coaching – personalised learning plans</td>
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<td>• English support programs including assistance from library and language skills advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intern year</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Coursework with requirement for written work</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learning Portfolio exercises</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Preceptor assessments</td>
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<td>• English support programs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Scaffolding: Problem solving

Undergraduate
- Active learning model
- Adapted flipped classroom
- D.E.A.R.

Intern year
- Practice scenarios
- Clinical and primary care
- Professional and ethical dilemmas
Scaffolding: Inquiry

Undergraduate

• Evidence based practice
• Professional practice
• Inquiry and Innovation methods
• Applied Inquiry and Innovation

Intern year

• Practice scenarios and medicine enquiries
• Option to complete a research project
Scaffolding: Compounding

Undergraduate

- Revised calculation exercises
- Revised practical classes, spread over multiple years
- Compounding of common products, known to cause confusion
- MyDispense – product selection and labelling

Intern year

- Revision and expectations, presentation by a compounding pharmacist
- Examples of correct documentation
- Evidence of competency in compounding
- Stagger timing of evidence of satisfactory compounding to avoid repetition of mistakes

Extemporaneous dispensing: second year practical class

Extemporaneous dispensing: second year practical class
Conclusion

Identification of gaps in intern pharmacists’ competencies for independent practice has enabled scaffolding to be developed and implemented in undergraduate and intern pharmacy education to future proof practitioners for practice.