

ACADEMIC PHARMACY SECTION SPECIAL ISSUE

WORKING GROUP UPDATE OF ACADEMIC PHARMACY SECTION

Career and continuing professional development opportunities for global pharmacists as educators

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Keywords

Academic career development
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)

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Abstract

The educator and career development team of the academic section of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is working on one of the five goals of the strategic plan. The team are initiating a needs assessment to determine how many pharmacists have a desire to expand their careers into the academic setting. Additionally, the team want to discover what types of training they feel would be useful in entering this field. This article describes the process used to develop the instrument to gather this important information.

Introduction

Traditional entry into an academic career usually involves starting a faculty position after residency training, at the completion of a post-doctoral fellowship, or by direct entry after earning a Doctor of Philosophy degree in some disciplines. However, many pharmacists may be interested in early-career, mid-career, or late-career entry into academia.

There is a definite need for unique career development opportunities for pharmacists who may be drawn to academia and for educators who wish to expand their careers. In addition, there is a lack of the required resources, model career paths, and recommendations for training for global pharmacists. Thus, a requirement has been identified for a global survey platform to learn about the training support and skills development needs, and the requirements of potential and current educators to accomplish this career transformation.

There is a significant need for a globally acceptable short training course for pharmacists' career development in order to allow them to become educators/trainers or become more competent ones with enhanced skills. This project has been designed to

facilitate the development of skills and knowledge for access to academia.

Efforts of the career and continuing professional development opportunities team

The academic section of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) developed and approved a strategic plan in 2019. The first goal of the Educator and Career Development plan is to:

“provide support for all educators (faculty, continuing professional development providers, and preceptors) using development tools, competency frameworks for educators, and educational scholarships to advance and promote pharmaceutical education that meets societal needs.”

Objective 5 of this goal is to:

“identify career needs through engagement with appropriate stakeholders.”

The Objective 5 team has concentrated on identifying the different career needs of pharmacists, who might be considering entering into the world of academic pharmacy, by engaging with appropriate stakeholders. In order to implement this plan, the team met regularly to: 1) Create a survey instrument to collect relevant data; 2) Plan to and, in due course, collate, analyse, and categorise collected information to enhance educator career development; 3) Identify the requirements for professional development and career development to allow for entry into academia; and 4) Call for working group members interested in contributing to the larger aim of identifying professional development needs and requirements regionally and nationally based on current requirements in different countries and by different councils.

The vision of the working group is to thus develop continuing professional development (CPD) recommendations for transforming pharmacy globally and provide resources for global pharmacists, be it in academia, pharmaceutical sciences, or practice.

Step 1 involved the creation of a list of stakeholders to survey. The catalogue of potential interested parties included: 1) Current academic pharmacists (residents, fellows, post-doctoral scholars, and faculty); 2) Community practitioners (ambulatory clinic and community pharmacists); 3) Institutional practitioners (hospital and transitions of care clinic pharmacists); 4) Independent practitioners; 5) Technology career practitioners (drug information, information technology, scientific writing, and biotechnology pharmacists); 6) Pharmaceutical industry employees (clinical trials and research pharmacists); 7) Insurance corporation employees (Pharmacy benefit managers, claims adjusters); 8) Professional society practitioners (professional organisation or non-governmental organisation pharmacists); 9) Policymakers (ministries / departments of health or pharmacy council practitioners); 10) Correctional institutions (intake and in-patient care pharmacists); 11) Regulatory agency practitioners; 12) Veterinary health pharmacists.

Step 2 was survey development, designed to identify the regional- and country-specific career development needs of their pharmacists as educators, potential educators / trainers, or preceptors. This step was followed by review between 2020 and 2021 by active members of the career and continuing professional development opportunities team and two members of the executive committee of the academic section of FIP. As part of the vision of this project was for overall professional development, in addition to career development for educators, the group issued a call to all team members to contribute to the review of continuing professional development requirements for

pharmacists in different regions and countries. As well as this, they were also requested to collate information on postgraduate programmes and career pathways in specific countries.

These area-specific data compilations were not designed to identify new needs, but rather to review current guidelines and recommendations in these countries about CPD for pharmacists. The goal was to generate a comprehensive document relevant to global pharmacists to use as a reference. It was anticipated that this focus on global pharmacists would encourage membership in FIP, produce a comprehensive guidance document for career development and CPD, and initiate a FIP portal to support CPD achievements and records for members.

The team constructed a 12-question survey designed to gather demographic information, to determine the career and professional development needs of pharmacists who would consider a change to an academic career, and to ascertain the roles of FIP. The questionnaire has been submitted for Institutional Review Board (IRB) review as an exempt study, category two, using survey methodology with de-identified data. IRB approval was obtained in August 2022 (NSU IRB Protocol Number 2022-300).

Key deliverables

Planned deliverables for this project include: 1) A framework to support career and professional development as an educator; 2) A short course on educator development; 3) A manuscript for publication with guidance and recommendations on career and professional development for educators, researchers, practitioners, and other identified stakeholders; 4) An FIP portal for recording CPD records for its members and thus encouraging membership.

Seeking your input

As a reader of this article, how can you assist in meeting the goals for this career and continuing professional development opportunities_workgroup?

- Go online and complete the survey
- Join the academic section of FIP
- Volunteer to serve on a committee
- Attend one of the World Congresses in person (see www.FIP.org/congress).