

**Title:** Preparing students for professional practice: integrating the CPD requirement of professional pharmacists into our curriculum for undergraduate pharmacy students

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**Background:** The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland is the pharmacy regulator in Ireland and in 2013 devised the Core Competency Framework for Pharmacists. It outlines 6 domains of practice, divided into 25 competencies that are further sub-divided into 178 behaviours. Pharmacy students and practicing pharmacists in Ireland must attain and retain a consistent level of competency in these behaviours. The Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IloP) was established in 2011 to oversee the implementation of continuing professional development (CPD) for pharmacists and developed a bespoke electronic platform for pharmacists to document and reflect on their learning in and for practice.

**Description of work:** Our challenge is to ensure that students are ready for professional practice and ongoing CPD when they graduate. We must ensure that the behaviours identified in the Core Competency Framework are integrated into our curriculum and that the tasks our students complete reflect real-life expectations. As part of a collaborative project with Medicine, Nursing and the Office of the Vice President for Teaching and Learning in UCC and national Higher Education Institutional partners we investigated the use of PebblePad. We have adopted the PebblePad eportfolio to help integrate what we do with our students at undergraduate level with what will be expected of them in their profession. We have mimicked the reflective CPD cycle used by the IloP and students have used this CPD cycle to reflect on formal, informal and non-formal learning. We have also mimicked the core competency self-assessment tool devised by the IloP, which students will use to identify their learning needs against the specific behaviours expected of them. We believe it is essential that we instil reflective, developmental, independent learning in students at an early stage, so that lifelong learning is ingrained and that students will recognise that the responsibility for learning and identifying learning needs resides predominantly with the learner.

**Proposed evaluation:** We will organise focus groups with students to evaluate their experience with PebblePad as a tool to monitor and track competencies, document reflections and identify learning needs.

**Core Competency Framework:**

[http://www.thepsi.ie/libraries/publications/psi\\_core\\_competency\\_framework\\_for\\_pharmacists.sflb.ashx](http://www.thepsi.ie/libraries/publications/psi_core_competency_framework_for_pharmacists.sflb.ashx)

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