

# Pharmacist Preceptor Education and Support Program

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An innovative on-line national core pharmacist preceptor education and support program has been written focusing on rural and remote pharmacists who are preceptors for undergraduate pharmacy students. The program was developed for use throughout Australia by four universities across three states, with input from pharmacy professional bodies.

Reflecting a recruitment imperative, the aim of the program is to assist pharmacy preceptors to optimise the rural placement experience for undergraduate students thus encouraging students to consider rural pharmacy as a career choice.

The program was designed with consideration of content, educational strategy, delivery strategy and professional and educational links. The model can be customised for specific undergraduate programs. The course is delivered on-line, with didactic components, and self-assessment of understanding. There are five core components:

- 'Introduction to Preceptorship' deals with attributes of a successful preceptor
- 'Focus on the Student' deals with the skills and knowledge that need to be learnt, and discusses the main types of learning
- 'Focus on the Preceptor' looks at teaching, styles of supervision, attitudes of preceptors and ethical principles
- 'Challenges in Preceptorship' deals with broad issues such as cultural differences, group supervision, stress and time management, identifying and dealing with problems, and problem prevention strategies
- 'Putting Theory into Practice' addresses the state-specific information for students and preceptors.

There are two levels: a short summary, and more detailed information, where reflective exercises and case studies are used. To foster communication between preceptors, discussion groups/bulletin boards were used to provide mentoring and peer support. Generic information is included, in addition to specific university and registering authority information. The material is comprehensive, flexible and user-friendly.

Although designed primarily for rural preceptors, the program is also suitable for metropolitan areas; and could be developed for use by preceptors of pharmacy graduates, and other health professions.

The program facilitates the maintenance of a skilled and responsive health workforce (*Healthy Horizons 2003-2007 Goal 4*) by up-skilling rural pharmacists, addressing issues of accessibility through an on-line delivery platform and encouraging undergraduate pharmacy students to consider rural practice as a viable career option.

### *Policy statement*

High-quality preceptor preparation and support should be available on a national basis and provide equivalent opportunity for professional development to that available for metropolitan counterparts.

## **PRESENTER**

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