

How far do you want to go?

The BPSA student exchange programme

Cast your mind forward a few months and think about one of the most important decisions a pharmacy student has to make. What are you going to do in your summer vacation? If you can't face staying at home doing another pharmacy placement then maybe you should consider pharmacy abroad.

The Pharmacy Student Exchange Programme was set up to allow pharmacy students around the globe to experience different cultures at the same time as gaining experience in any pharmacy field. The scheme is now well established and not only looks great on any CV but is also a great excuse to travel to far flung shores! To give you an idea of what you could be looking forward to, join the world tour of pharmacy below:

Caroline Souter — exchange to South Africa “One of the main differences I noticed is that the laws concerning the supply of medicines are a lot more relaxed. No questions were asked if customers wanted to purchase 1,000 paracetamol tablets. The preregistration exam is still in its infancy and even if you fail you can still register as a pharmacist. During my free time, I was really well entertained by my hosts and made many

good friends from the university. I managed to fit in a visit to the national elephant park, which was truly amazing, and a trip into the hills where there was about a foot of snow. The other extreme was a visit to the beach at Port Alfred. I spent my last weekend in Grahamstown doing a parachute jump followed by an abseil down Table Mountain. I then steadied my nerves with a wine tour round Cape Point! I undoubtedly had the best time of my life. No words can adequately describe how much I enjoyed myself and all the work and life experiences I have gained.”

Elly Wakeling — exchange to Finland “I found my time at Keskustorin Apteeki fascinating. Having just studied the law and practice modules at university I was really able to pinpoint all the differences in Finnish pharmacy law to at home. I made use of the Finnish trains at weekends too, visiting the capital city of Helsinki; the more northern towns of Kajaani and Paltamo where the midsummer sun never sets (a bizarre experience); and Turku, the old royal capital, which boasts a pharmacy museum and a 19th century pharmacy turned into a pub!”

Lindsay McClure — exchange to Zimbabwe “The community pharmacy I was based at was pretty different to what you'd see in Britain — no counting machine, a balance which had a minimum measure of 1 gram and tablets packed into plastic bags. One of the first days I was working there a man came in with a bad skin infection but he couldn't afford to see the doctor so he ended up buying aqueous cream and calamine lotion to heal the open sores over his body. Overall I found that the facilities were very basic, but the pharmacy work they were doing and the difference they were making was unbelievable. Being in Zimbabwe really changed my outlook on life, I learnt a lot about pharmacy and myself.” ✂

For more information on the Pharmacy Student Exchange Programme visit the BPSA website at www.bpsa.com or e-mail the student exchange officer at seo@bpsa.com.