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**W**ith the festive season well and truly over, it is time to get back to the grindstone. This, the sixth issue of *Tomorrow's Pharmacist*, provides practical information to help you prepare for, and make decisions about, your future career as a pharmacist.

The issue, which is sponsored by Boots The Chemists, kicks off with an article that looks ahead to what pharmacy might be like in five years' time. The profession is currently undergoing a period of change and with change comes new opportunities — there is no doubt that this is an exciting time to be embarking on a career in pharmacy.

As a student you may be more concerned about making it through to the end of the week than life after your degree; however, it is important to look ahead. It is never too early to gain work experience in pharmacy. This will stand you in good stead when it comes to applying for your preregistration placement. An article on p12 describes a pharmacy student's experience of vacation work in the hospital and community sectors. If you want to combine travel with work experience, you might want to consider a student exchange (p18), which can be organised through the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association (p22). There is also advice on how to apply for your preregistration placement (p28) and articles from pharmacists who have recently undertaken their training in a

hospital (p29) and in the pharmaceutical industry (p32).

Once you have registered as a pharmacist, you will need to decide on the next step in your career. An article on p35 looks at some of the many options available to you. Another article looks in more detail at the benefits, in terms of training, salary and career progression, of working in each sector (p38).

Still having trouble deciding? Have you ever wondered what your lecturers do during an average day? Or what it would be like to work in a private hospital? To give you an idea we have a series of "A day in the life of . . ." articles starting on p41.

There are also articles on pharmacy at the Olympic Games, complementary medicine, the impact of the expanded EU, the new pharmacy contract and a round up of the major clinical developments during 2004. To test your observation skills try our spot the difference competition on p74 — you might win a £50 music/book voucher.

I hope that you find *Tomorrow's Pharmacist* useful and that it makes some of the many decisions you will have to make a little easier. Feedback is always welcome, so if you have any comments on this issue or thoughts about what you would like to see in future issues then please get in touch. Most importantly, I hope you enjoy your undergraduate and preregistration years and find time to have some fun. ✨

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Editor