



British Pharmaceutical Students' Association
The Official Student Organisation of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Handbook for the Student Exchange Programme

www.bpsa.co.uk



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1. Welcome

This handbook is a guide to BPSA applicants of the IPSF Student Exchange Programme (SEP), to guide them through the process.

Throughout your SEP application process, please don't hesitate to contact both the Student Exchange Officer or European Officer for more information.

On behalf of the BPSA executive, we would like to personally wish you the best of luck with the IPSF Student Exchange Programme. We hope you enjoy this experience and it gives you an opportunity to experience another culture and pharmacy in the host country.



2. Introduction to SEP

The Student Exchange Programme (SEP) is a mobility programme that provides pharmacy students and pre-registration pharmacists with the unique opportunity to undertake professional work experience and intercultural learning abroad. Currently, close to 60 associations worldwide participate in SEP and over 800 international exchanges take place every year. In Great Britain, SEP is coordinated by the BPSA in association with the IPSF.

The member associations of IPSF organise the exchanges by finding host sites where participants are trained. Possible host sites include:

- Community pharmacies
- Hospital pharmacies
- Pharmaceutical industry
- Schools of Pharmacy university research

3. Eligibility

All full members of the BPSA are eligible for entry into SEP.

4. Duration

SEP runs throughout the year, but the majority of the exchanges will take place between May and September 2018. The duration of SEP varies accordingly depending on the country you participate with. Typically, exchanges range from periods as short as two weeks up to a period of twelve weeks.

5. What countries can you go to with SEP?

A list of all participating countries can be found here <<http://sep.ipsf.org/associations>>. You will be allowed to select up to three official countries to submit in your application form which you will put in order of preference.

Some countries are very competitive to go to with SEP such as Australia, USA and Canada. **We recommend that you choose a variety of countries.** Therefore we advise you to take a look at the list of countries and ensure you apply to one or two countries who offer many placements.

We ask all applicants to place the countries in order of which they would most like to go to. This is because your application will be viewable to each country at different times. Once you have submitted your application through the IPSF SEP website and the SEO approves your application, your preferred country will be notified immediately. One week after submission and approval of your application your second choice country will be able to view your application and the third country a week after this. Should your application form be reserved by any of these countries this means their SEO is trying to match you with a



placement. **Please do not contact the SEOs of the countries you have applied to unless they first contact you as this is strictly against IPSF rules!**

6. The application process

There is a three-stage application process with the BPSA. **Recruitment usually opens in November and the deadline for applications is early February.** Host application forms and guidance for your CV and motivational letter are available on the BPSA website during this time. Please also refer to the website for exact dates and deadlines.

Stage 1

Complete a Curriculum Vitae (CV), Motivational Letter and a Bilateral Information form available on the BPSA website or from the SEO.

Stage 2

Email completed documents to seo@bpsa.ac.uk. If successful the SEO will notify you by February 2018 allowing you to register on the IPSF SEP database.

Stage 3

Once registered on the IPSF SEP database you will be required to upload your CV and motivational letter. The SEO will then approve your application for your selected countries to review and place you.

If you are accepted into the stage 2 of the application process, a fee is then payable at this stage of €52.00. If you are unsuccessful during the second stage, you will then be refunded €18.00. Please note that if you are placed and then renounce your placement, there is no refund. Prior to being accepted into the second stage the SEO will attempt to verify your host, therefore it is important to provide the correct contact information for your host. Please do not register on the IPSF SEP website prior to notification from the SEO that your application has been successful.

SEP is a highly competitive process which attracts many applicants. For this reason it is not possible to provide individual feedback should you be unsuccessful this year, however generic feedback will be issued after successful students have been selected.



6.1 CV and motivational letter

It is important that your CV and motivation letter are of a very high standard! Respective countries choose their students by reading these documents, so you want to convince them that you are the best person for the placement!

Tips for Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Motivational Letter (ML):

- Ensure both documents are clear and concise (no more than two pages CV or one page for ML).
- Use the blank CV template and (ML) guidance provided on the BPSA website or provided from the SEO.
- Tailor your CV to the skills you will require whilst completing your SEP placement. These skills may differ depending which area you have chosen to complete your placement e.g. community, hospital or research.
- Highlight any previous work experience or specific interests which will help the SEO of your chosen countries match you with a placement.
- In your motivational letter include specific reasons as to why you want to complete a SEP placement and why you have chosen those particular countries.

6.2 Database instructions

Once registered on the IPSF SEP website:

Login to your account. Select "New application" under the tab "Applications". The application form will pop up.

It is structured as follows:

- Personal Information: Type in your date of birth, contact details etc.
- Miscellaneous: State an emergency contact, some medical information, the university you are at and which languages you speak.
- Documents: Upload your CV, ML and a photo (optional). Upload documents in .pdf, .odt, .docx or .doc format!
- Application: Select you two preferred fields of work, indicate the period in which you would like to do your exchange, state a deadline by which you would like to be placed and choose your three preferred host associations. The further away the deadline the more likely you are to be placed in time!
- After saving your application form, you can see your application under the tab "Applications". Then you can "view" and "edit" your application form.
- If everything is correct, "submit" your application form so that your home SEO can see and approve it.
- Note that you cannot edit your AF as soon as you have submitted it, unless your home SEO un-submits it.



- Remember that all the information you give in your application form has to be true and that by submitting you agree to the waiver of liability of SEP, which you have to read carefully! You can find it in the appendix of this document.

6.3 Application status

Status of your application on IPSF SEP database will appear as follows:

1. Submitted - application uploaded by you.
2. Approved - Your home SEOs approved your application form, including selection of countries. All approved application forms can not be changed by the SEO so please ensure all details are correct!
3. Reserved - The SEO in your selected country has reserved your application in order to find you a placement. You can be held on reserve for max of 30 days before your application is re-released.
4. Placed - You have been accepted and host association has arranged their SEP programme in its entirety. You have made it!

Please note- After you have completed your placement you are required to write a short article reflecting on your placement. This need be no longer than one page, should include images and should be sent to seo@bpsa.ac.uk within **one month** of your return to the UK. Once you have provided your article and completed a SEP evaluation form your placement will then be marked as successful and you will be sent a certificate of your achievement.

6.4 Visa

Take into consideration that if the country for which you are applying require a visa, the responsibility of applying for visa and all the costs are down to you. However in order to make the process easier and smoother you can ask for an Invitation Letter from your host SEO. This letter must state all the detailed information regarding your SEP placement: Address of the accommodation, type and address where the internship takes place and any other information requested by the embassy. The Invitation Letter will be sent to you by email once you will be “reserved” or “placed” and already in contact with the host SEO.



7. Types of exchanges

7.1. General Exchange

With this type of exchange, you are just applying to go to another country for SEP. There is no requirement for you to find a placement for an international student in the UK.

7.2. Bilateral Exchange

This is a traditional exchange, where you find a host e.g. through university, community or hospital pharmacy who can offer a placement to an incoming international pharmacy student. Applicants are also required to find accommodation alongside finding the placement for the international student. Additionally, whilst the student is staying in the UK, you will be expected to help arrange social activities and show them around the local area. By completing all of the above a student increases their chances of being selected. For SEP 2017 we encourage all our applicants to apply for this type of exchange.

7.2.1. Cost of hosting a student

The incoming students are responsible for all travel expenses and insurance. The host may also provide accommodation and/or pocket money in addition to the training site in order to support the student however this is not a necessity. SEP host sites are encouraged to find accommodation for their exchange students at little or no cost. In some countries, accommodation costs are subsidised by the home association.

7.2.2. Finding a host

Community pharmacy

- Small chain pharmacies or independent pharmacies are more likely to host students.
- Check if your university sets up regular student placements with community pharmacies. It may be worth utilising this resource and working together with your University or Pharmacy school.

Hospital pharmacy

- Speak to the Head of the Department or Pre-registration tutor about the programme.
- Approach contact lecturers who might be working as a hospital pharmacists

University

- Research opportunities are plenty in Universities. The majority of your lecturers will be undertaking their own research over the summer break. Speak to your professors or lecturers to ask about the possibility of them hosting an incoming international student.



Tips:

- Approach potential hosts at Pharmacy conferences or expos where the majority of the pharmacy profession will be present (but make sure you inform the SEO in advance!)
- Utilise the University's Pharmacy Alumni to search for hosts.
- Personally approach potential hosts and discuss about how SEP can benefit them!
- If you know someone who has graduated and is currently working in a community/hospital pharmacy, approach them!

Requirements for SEP

- For a SEP to be marked successful, the minimum number of working hours is 60 hours per exchange.
- You can discuss with the host when and how the hours are being spent
- The student can spend a part of the working hours in one pharmacy/company/university, and the other part in another pharmacy/company/university.

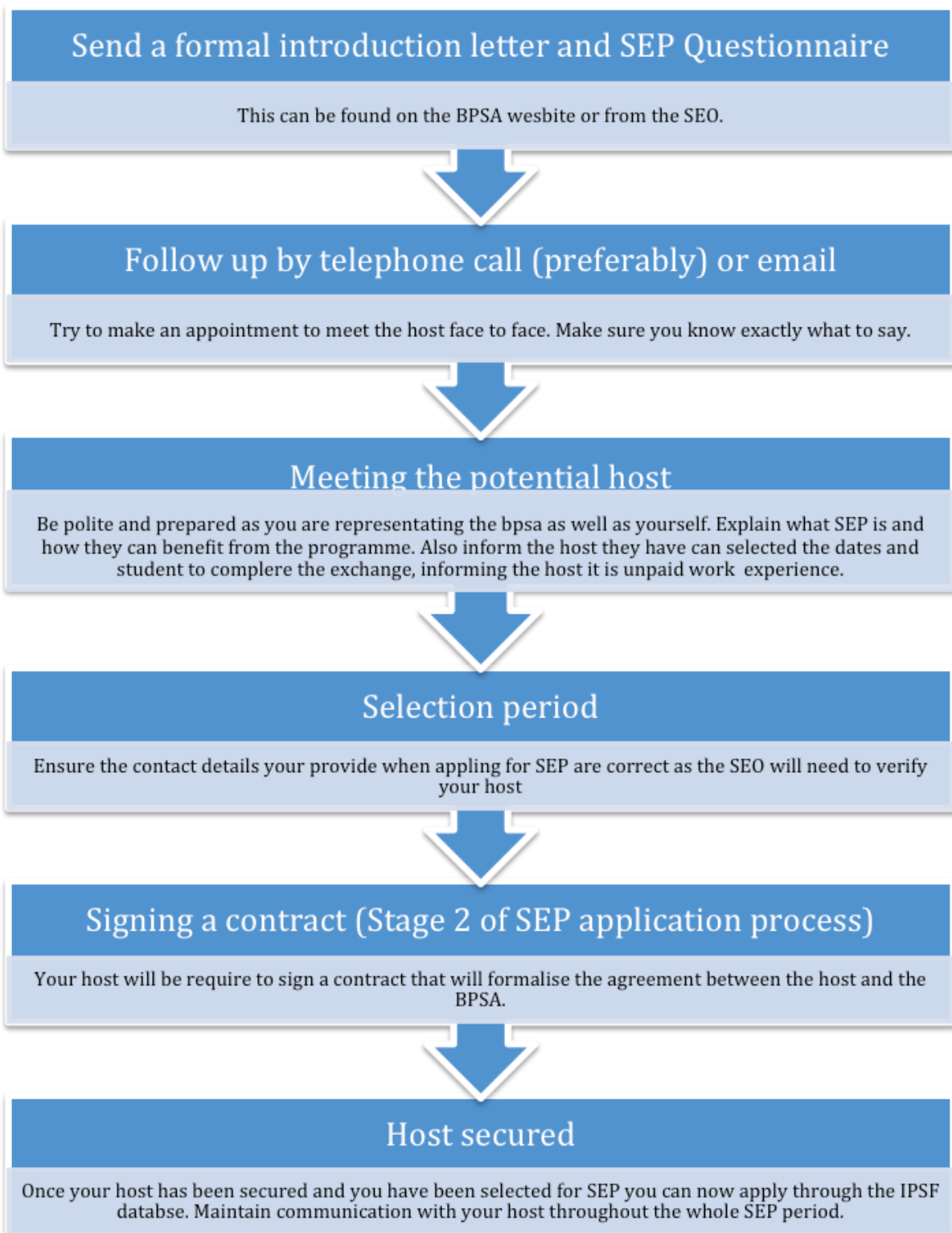
If a host cannot provide a placement for 60 hours per exchange but he or she wants to contribute to SEP:

- The host can try to find colleagues to collaborate on the placement or
- If the host does not know of any colleagues wanting to collaborate, you as an IR should try to find another pharmacy/university/hospital

Etiquette in approaching hosts- It is important that you approach hosts in a **professional and timely manner** as you are representing the BPSA.



Steps involved when approaching a host:



Please read up on IPSF and SEP on the following link:

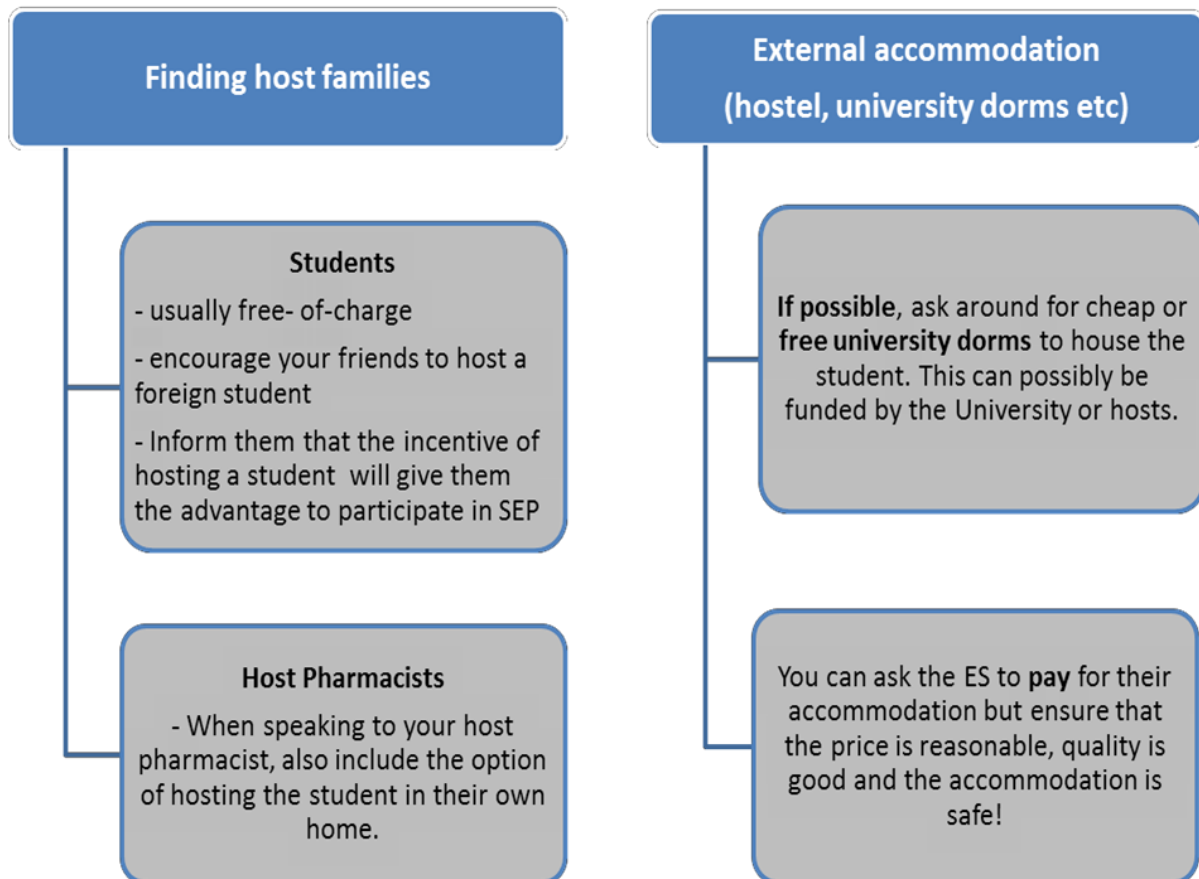
http://sep.ipsf.org/student_exchange_programme



All formal documents including the **Introduction Letter, SEP Questionnaire and the contract** will be provided by the SEO on request or can be found on the BPSA website.

7.2.3. Finding accommodation

It is necessary to organise accommodation for the Exchange Student (ES)! Options include:



*If the host is paying for the accommodation or providing pocket money, inform the SEO as this is to be included in the contract.

* Please include information on the accommodation arranged or how the ES can book accommodation in the “Bilateral Information Form” of your application process.

8. Funding for SEP

There are several ways to seek funding, here is just a few ways:

- IPSF SEP Grant
- School of Pharmacy
- Local pharmacies
- Pharmaceutical companies
- BPSA travel fund

Offering a report can be a good incentive along with your request for sponsorship.



9. Social Activities

Bring the exchange students to social activities including:

- Quiz night, pub crawls, visits to your university
- Tourist activities such as visiting the local tourist attractions
- Excursion trips
- Dinner and gatherings with other local pharmacy students

The exchange students are informed beforehand that they are responsible of all social expenses, so don't worry about paying for them! (Unless you are feeling generous).

Your role is to make sure they have a great time and most importantly, stay safe!

There may be social activities arranged by the SEO or your university BPSA international representatives during the time in which your student is in the UK.

Contact details:

Thank you for taking the time to read the SEP handbook. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us through the details provided below:

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