

The IPSF Student Exchange Program

Once you have created an IPSF committee at your APhA-ASP Chapter, you are ready to begin participation in the IPSF Student Exchange Program. What is the Student Exchange Program (SEP)? It is a mobility program that gives students from all over the world the opportunity to experience pharmacy practice in a different country.

SEP is just as much professional education as it is cultural education; it is a great opportunity for students to gain a more global perspective. 127 member organizations in 92 countries arrange host sites to accept students and prepare students to participate by sending them to other organizations across the world.

There are two ways to do it; you may create a host site for international student pharmacists to come visit or you may send students at your chapter to other countries for the exchange!

The program usually conducts its planning operations from September to April, whereas 4–6-week exchanges commonly occur between May and September (though there are some exceptions). Possible host sites include community pharmacies, clinical pharmacies, wholesale companies, pharmaceutical industry, pharmacy schools, government, and private health agencies. Exchange students are typically responsible for most of the exchange expenses, though some sites may provide free or discounted room and board.

Establishing a Host Site at Your Chapter

Hosting international students is a great way to give these students an opportunity to learn about U.S. pharmacy and culture, but also gives people at the host site international exposures. It is very important that APhA-ASP continues to expand the number of international students hosted every year, as the number of U.S. exchange students sent out is limited by the number of international students hosted the previous year. Please consider starting a host site or expanding one that you already have!

Basic Timeline:

September – December: Create Host Site

January – May: Student Placement Process

May – September: Exchanges Occur

Basic Requirements:

1. 40 hours in professional pharmacy experience minimum requirement. This is considered a “shadowing experience” as students **CANNOT** be paid for their time spent at the professional site.
2. Social/cultural events, networking with U.S. students. This is a very important part of SEP as it is considered as much a cultural experience as a professional experience. Always make sure that there are plenty of socializing opportunities and opportunities for the student to explore your area of the country.

Steps to Establishing a Host Site:

1. Obtain necessary approvals from Chapter Advisors and/or school administrators.
2. Review the APhA-ASP Guide to Establishing a SEP Site on the APhA-ASP IPSF Page:
<http://www.pharmacist.com/apha-asp-ipsf-information>
3. Notify the APhA-ASP IPSF Student Exchange Officer (SEO) of your interest in starting a host site: **usaipsfseo@gmail.com**
4. Elect a Local Exchange Officer (LEO). The International Vice President may also fill this role.
5. Review the LEO Training Manual on the APhA-ASP IPSF Page.
6. Decide on a timeline.
7. Research local and state laws for any liability/license requirements for foreign students.
8. Establish housing.
9. Contact potential preceptors who are willing to participate (it is good to start with IPPE/APPE preceptors).
10. **Complete the Host Site Registration Form** (available on APhA-ASP IPSF Page or by reaching out to USA SEO) by January 1st.
11. Create a Welcome Packet for the exchange student.

If you already have established a host site, it is important to consider both improving the program and expanding it. First, work on getting feedback from both preceptors and the exchange student after each SEP. It is important to look at the weaknesses in the program to improve the program as a whole.

In regard to expanding the program there are a couple of ways to do it. First, if there are multiple rotations during the SEP, consider hosting multiple students at one time, and have them rotate through the various preceptors opposite of each other. This is a good option for offering exchange student companionship, as multiple exchange students can be present at once. Alternatively, you could simply repeat the same SEP throughout the summer. For instance, you may host a student in May, another in June, and another in July, all doing the same program at different times in the summer.

Becoming an Exchange Student

All APhA-ASP members are members of IPSF, and therefore eligible to apply for SEP. The updated pre-application through APhA-ASP is available during the fall every year at <http://www.pharmacist.com/apha-asp-ipsf-information>. Please select the “pre-application form.” You may also view our SEP FAQs document for your information. Please read the directions carefully and contact the SEO with any questions. Applications can be submitted between September 15th and November 1st.

After all pre-applications are received, APhA-ASP will select students that have been approved to participate in SEP. Only those students will be instructed to create an application via the IPSF SEP Database. There is a \$65 fee associated with this application.

Exchanges are then worked out via e-mail and the database from about January until April when most planning is finalized. There is a partial refund of the application fee for students who are not placed (\$25).

Who are we looking for? Students with a passion for international pharmacy, and who will best represent the United States and APhA-ASP. We are also interested in students who want to bring their experiences back home with them to make an impact locally.

For more information about participating member organizations go to <http://sep.ipsf.org> and select “countries” on the left side. This will give you a chance to review information about various IPSF member organizations that you can complete SEP with around the world.

Do not apply to SEP through the IPSF database unless you are instructed to by the SEO!

You have just reviewed the main points and instructions of participating in the SEP program! Please feel free to contact you APhA-ASP/IPSF Student Exchange Officers with any questions at usaipsfseo@gmail.com.

Please note: Contacting student international exchange officers, local exchange officers, potential preceptors, worksites, or universities to prearrange SEPs is not allowed. Only students who are “reserved” or “placed” by a member organization may contact these entities after the APhA-ASP IPSF Student Exchange Officers have given them permission.