

The French reform of pharmaceutical teaching

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The Degree-Master-Doctorate (DMD), or Licence-Master-Doctorat (LMD), reform is the consequence of the harmonisation of French law with the European higher education system. Begun in 1998, this new system has applied to health professionals since October 2004 and will apply to pharmaceutical education from October 2010. The general scheme of pharmaceutical degrees is summarised in Figure 1.

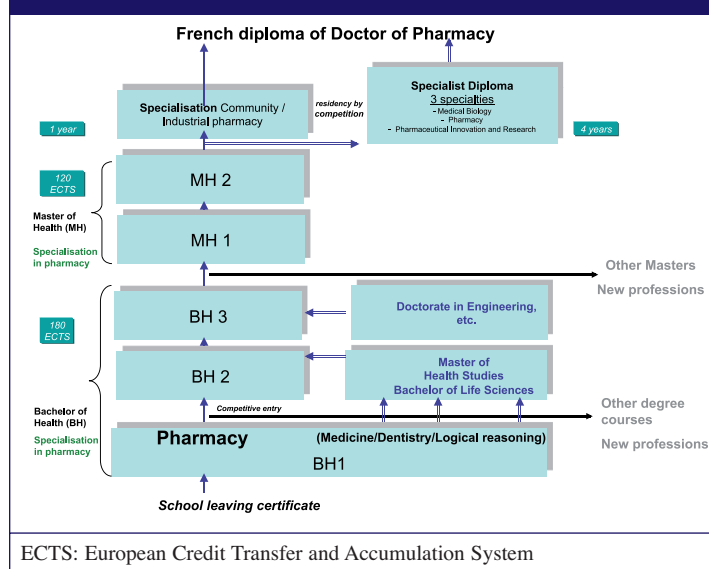
Bachelor's Degree

The first year of Bachelor of Health (BH1) is common to medical, pharmacy, dental and midwifery students. The student acquires a 'common field of knowledge' and optional knowledge depending on pre-specialisation (medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, midwifery). At the end of BH1, students face a common entrance examination (limited places for each specialisation). For students entering pharmaceutical studies, the BH2 and BH3 courses cover general scientific knowledge and some specific pharmaceutical subjects: community pharmacy, industrial pharmacy, medical biology, hospital pharmacy and research. So at the end of BH3 (degree) students have a good idea of future pharmaceutical professional avenues.

Master's Degree

During the first half-year of M1, teaching proceeds in the same way as the Bachelor's course but during the second half-year of M1 specialist subjects (community pharmacy, medical biology, hospital pharmacy, industry and research) are introduced.

Figure 1: New French system for pharmaceutical studies



The second year (M2) includes an obligatory period in a teaching hospital (half-time for the whole year for all students, except the industry specialisation: full-time only for six months). This hospital/university year is found only in France. The goal is immersion in a hospital environment, in particular experiencing clinical pharmacy and making first contact with other healthcare professionals.

French diploma of Doctor of Pharmacy

At the start of the sixth year, students can either complete their studies in one or four years. The 1-year PharmD comprises taught and practical studies, for example: orthopaedics, homeopathy or veterinary pharmacy for community pharmacists, quality management, production for industrial pharmacists.

Intending hospital pharmacists can take the entrance exam for a 'residency', a period of advanced practical training needed to become a hospital pharmacist

or a medical biologist. A hospital-based 4-year specialist PharmD can be obtained either in Medical Biology, Hospital Pharmacy (practical or research options) or Pharmaceutical Innovation and Research.

The introduction of the DMD system is intended to harmonise the health education system in Europe. This reform allows bridges between different types and levels of health studies. For pharmacy students, we hope the reform will improve the quality of education, encourage specialisation and facilitate the mobility of students and pharmacists in Europe.

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