Why I would like to join the new Society

Anshu Bhimbat, a fourth-year pharmacy student at King’s College London, explains why she welcomes the proposal for student membership of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and describes the benefits and services RPS could offer.

Recently, I had an opportunity to visit the Royal Pharmaceutical Society’s London headquarters to hear about the benefits of joining the new professional body. I believe that the launch of the RPS has initiated a wave of enthusiasm among pharmacy students. They hope that the RPS will take a novel and active role in bettering the profession for tomorrow’s pharmacists. Now, students becoming part of the profession could come true, with the recent proposal to introduce a free student membership category.

This year has seen a revolution in the profession with the separation of the regulatory and professional functions of the Society, and students are keen to participate in this new era for pharmacy. We would take pride in becoming student members of the professional body. We are certainly attracted to the array of services available.

As a pharmacy student, I have wondered about the types of support available from the professional body once I register. Having been surrounded by the secure networks of schools and universities, the step from pharmacy student to pharmacist is an anxious prospect. Support from the RPS during student life, as well as during preregistration training, would provide us with much needed guidance.

This guidance would come in a number of ways. The career and research support services, as well as Tomorrow’s Pharmacist, give advice on career pathways. The library and historical services provide information that is useful for university work. The support team offers updates on legal and ethical issues relevant to pharmacy students. Additionally, access to PJ Online allows students to keep up to date with the latest happenings in the pharmacy world.

From a first-year student to a preregistration trainee, throughout our development, we want acknowledgment from our fellow peers. Being able to join the RPS would offer students appreciation of their efforts by superiors in the profession.

One of the most important aspects of career progression is networking. Whether one wants to meet like-minded students or individuals higher up on the professional ladder, the RPS would provide a platform for such connections. The newly introduced local practice forums are one such platform. Whether it is a reception evening at a restaurant or a meeting on drug interactions, LPFs provide a backbone for making key connections and continuing professional development for pharmacy students.

As a professional body, the RPS has a leadership role in pharmacy. Student membership of the RPS would allow a maintenance of momentum surrounding our careers. Developmental support and access to publications would sustain our desire to become high achievers. Additionally, the free membership and discounts to events and publications are great for students on a tight budget.

More importantly, I believe student membership can support the growth of the pharmacy profession. Students should be a vital component of the new professional body. We are the future of pharmacy and will endeavour to deliver what is required of us if we are given the opportunity. Please vote in our favour.