

BioSpect

the business of Bio

24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

How international exposure and collaborations are reshaping pharmacy education in India

06 July 2026 | Views | By Dr Supriya Shidhaye, Principal, Vivekanand Education Society, College of Pharmacy

Pharmacy graduates must be equipped not only with the technical know-how, but also with a comprehensive understanding of global healthcare systems



A pharmacist's role has evolved substantially in the last few decades. It extends far beyond the conventional image of dispensing medicines, and has incorporated many more responsibilities. Pharmacists have emerged as integral members of multi-functional healthcare teams, with contributions to drug discovery, clinical research, regulatory science, pharmacovigilance, and public health. Healthcare is becoming increasingly interconnected, and thus, preparing pharmacists to address global challenges requires an education that reaches beyond borders.

The pharmaceutical industry mandates a global outlook. Medicines developed in one country may be manufactured in another, assessed through multinational clinical trials, and regulated under international standards, before reaching patients worldwide.

Pharmacy graduates, therefore, must be equipped not only with the technical know-how, but also with a comprehensive understanding of global healthcare systems, continuously evolving regulatory frameworks, and collaborative research practices. The advent of AI necessitates students to be well-versed in digital technologies. International exposure empowers students to hone their skills in these varied domains, while acquiring the confidence to work across borders.

Globally, leading pharmacy schools are calling for international collaborations through student exchange programmes, joint research initiatives, and collaborative publications. These partnerships consolidate conceptual understanding among students by encouraging them to think of multiple approaches to the pharmaceutical sciences, clinical practice, innovation, and healthcare delivery. Moreover, students become capable of deriving knowledge from various disciplines, including biotechnology, biomedical engineering, and data science, to solve prevailing challenges in healthcare.

India, having cemented its position as the 'Pharmacy of the World', is at the forefront of contributing to this ecosystem. Our nation possesses one of the world's largest pharmaceutical industries, a competent workforce, and an ever-expanding research landscape, driven by pioneering initiatives in domains such as biologics and novel medical devices. Recent reforms introduced by the Pharmacy Council of India under the National Education Policy 2020 framework are a significant step forward towards progress. These reforms incorporate artificial intelligence, machine learning, digital health, innovation, and entrepreneurship into the existing curriculum, thus preparing graduates for a dynamic healthcare landscape and enhancing their global competitiveness.

For international collaborations to be meaningful, they must go beyond formal agreements. Sustained academic collaboration is the need of the hour. Student exchanges, collaborative research, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and interactions with global experts provide valuable opportunities to broaden perspectives, encourage innovation, and strengthen academic excellence. Such initiatives foster the exchange of ideas across borders, enabling learners to develop a deeper understanding of healthcare systems and pharmaceutical sciences from a global perspective.

Such collaborations are in tandem with initiatives that are being taken by global organisations. The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), the worldwide body that represents pharmacy practice, education, and science, is actively involved in measures to tackle the problem of antimicrobial resistance. It coordinates its work through an AMR Commission and the 2025 Copenhagen Declaration, signed by 82 member organisations to strengthen international partnerships and antimicrobial stewardship. FIP has also worked to rectify gender-based imbalances in healthcare through FIPWiSE, its initiative supporting women in science and pharmacy education.

An international perspective and the exchange of ideas across the world have the potential to empower pharmacists to better understand the ground realities of India's healthcare systems. Affordability and accessibility remain key issues in India's healthcare landscape. Such global partnerships signal wide-reaching policy changes, which will positively impact patients and healthcare providers alike in the decades to come.

Dr Supriya Shidhaye, Principal, Vivekanand Education Society, College of Pharmacy