Pharmacists continually interact with patients who speak solely Spanish. The Spanish concentration will give me the confidence to clearly and effectively communicate with my patients and allow them to feel comfortable to disclose important information for optimizing their care. My Spanish communication skills from the Wilkes pharmacy program have prepared me to lead a team of student pharmacists to help serve a remote community in the Dominican Republic.

Mohamed A. Jalloh, Pharm.D. ’14, 
Drug Information and Evidence-Based Practice Fellow 
School of Pharmacy & Health Professions 
Creighton University

Pharmacists can contribute to positive outcomes by educating and counseling patients to follow drug regimens and monitoring plans. No matter the language, effective open-ended questioning and active listening are essential skills for obtaining and sharing information with patients. With having a Spanish language concentration, pharmacists can break the barrier that exists in many communities.

Jennifer Domzalski, Pharm.D. ’01 
Pharmacy Clinical Services Manager for Wal-Mart 
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Bilingual pharmacists gain an edge in the job market because they can better communicate with an increasingly diverse population in the United States, particularly among Spanish speakers. The number of Spanish speakers grew 233 percent from 1980 to 2013, according to the Pew Research Center. That’s why Wilkes University developed the nation’s only Spanish concentration specifically for pharmacy students.

REQUIREMENTS

The Spanish concentration requires a minimum 12.5 credits. Students are encouraged to use professional electives.

Required courses are:
• SP 203-204 Intermediate Spanish (typically offered in fall and spring semesters)
• SP 205 Spanish Conversation (typically offered every third semester)
• SP 211 Conversational Spanish for Health and Social Services (typically offered spring semester)
• PHA 560 Self-Directed Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience (SD-IPPE)
• Study abroad in Spain

The SD-IPPE course is a required service learning course that runs over a three-year timespan. Students in the Spanish concentration must have at least four of the 20 required hours of service in a Spanish-speaking community between the P1 and P3 years. Service-oriented spring break trips directed at Hispanic communities may satisfy this requirement, depending on the experience.

Students can declare the concentration any time before the end of the P3 year. Discuss your intent with your advisor. Early planning will allow the greatest flexibility in scheduling required courses.

Q&A

How is the concentration different from a minor in Spanish?
Pharmacy students can earn a concentration even with a minor or even a major in Spanish. A minor requires more credits than a concentration, but the concentration has a required experiential and health care focus that makes it a unique credential. It also requires language immersion via study abroad in Spain.

What type of study abroad program is required?
Students can choose either a four- or six-week summer study abroad experience in Spain, earning 6 or 9 credits. Learn more at foreignstudy.com. This program is usually completed before pharmacy rotations.

How difficult is it to fit courses for the concentration in with normal pharmacy courses?
It can be accomplished in a normal course schedule with careful planning and the right scheduling. The earlier you declare your intention to pursue the Spanish concentration, the better. Students are encouraged to take their faculty Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience in the summer before the P2 year, if offered, to reduce conflicts. Students should work with their advisors when necessary to complete an “IPPE Conflict Form,” which is sent to the Office of Experiential Learning to minimize Spanish class disruptions due to experiential requirements.

I took Spanish in high school. Can I count those courses toward the concentration?
If a student passed an AP exam with a 4 or 5, credits will be accepted. Students who did not take an AP exam may consider enrolling in Spanish 203 if they studied Spanish three or four years in high school and earned good grades.

Do Spanish 101 and 102 count toward the Spanish concentration?
No.

“Spending an entire month in Madrid forced me to immerse myself in the Spanish culture. On a daily basis I was surprised at how much Spanish I knew, and it only got better as the month went on. Being abroad for a month gave me the confidence I need to be able to help patients in my future pharmacy career.”

Jaclyn Palummo
P3 pharmacy major

“I have spoken Spanish weekly at the Wilkes-Barre Free Clinic for the last two and a half years. Most of the Spanish includes clarifying why the drug is being used and what to expect as well as translating for the pharmacists, doctors and staff. I have also provided instructions as to how patients should use his/her diabetic testing supplies. I look forward to using Spanish as a pharmacist.”

Darren Mensch
P4 pharmacy major with Spanish concentration

Darren Mensch, left, provided Spanish translation at a medical clinic hosted by the church of this Guatemalan priest.