

**National Pharmacy Association pharmacy support
staff course reaccreditation event report,
Medicines Counter Assistant, part 3, November
2021**



Contents

Event summary and conclusions	1
Part 3: Role-specific learning outcomes (National Occupational Standards) .	2
PHARM03 - Respond to pharmaceutical queries and requests for information	2
PHARM04 - Provide advice on non-prescribed medicines and products	3
PHARM07 - Receive prescriptions	4
PHARM32 – Assist in the issuing of prescribed items	5

Event summary and conclusions

Provider	National Pharmacy Association
Course name	Medicines Counter Assistant
Event type	Reaccreditation
Event date	11-12 November 2021
Approval period	January 2022 – January 2025
Relevant requirements	Requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff, October 2020
Framework used	National Occupational Standards
Outcome	Please refer to parts 1 and 2.
Standing conditions	A link to the standing conditions can be found here .
Recommendations	Please refer to parts 1 and 2.
Minor amendments	Please refer to parts 1 and 2.
Registrar decision	Please refer to parts 1 and 2.

Technical knowledge and skills

The technical knowledge and skills content of the course/qualification must be derived from, and mapped to, an appropriate national framework for pharmacy knowledge and skills recognised in the UK.

Part 3: Role-specific learning outcomes (National Occupational Standards)

PHARM03 - Respond to pharmaceutical queries and requests for information

How and where does the course/qualification support trainees to achieve this NOS outcome?

Provider's commentary

The course supports the trainee to achieve this outcome by firstly ensuring that they understand the importance of good communication at the start of the course. This is done by providing them with the underpinning knowledge of the topic of communication via theory. Trainees are taught about effective communication, different types of communication, listening skills, effective questioning techniques and how to overcome barriers to communication.

The introductory chapters also teach the trainee about the WWHAM questioning method, Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) and the Sales of Medicine Protocol. Which are all essential to responding to pharmaceutical queries and requests. The textbooks also advise about when to refer to a pharmacist, in a general context and then throughout both textbooks, in relation to specific conditions and queries.

Both books cover advice on medicines that are liable to misuse and how to deal with requests of this nature. Trainees are taught to know how to look out for signs of abuse and neglect and how to deal with such situation, as well as relevance of knowing this, in terms of their role.

K10: the psychological, occupational and social aspects and implications for individuals living with conditions has been omitted from the qualification and does not map. PHARM03 was not previously mapped on the MCA qualification. This aspect of the PHARM03 we feel is difficult to include and perhaps beyond what should be expected of a MCA.

How and where does the course/qualification assess the trainee's achievement of this NOS outcome at the stated competency level?

Provider's commentary

The course assesses whether the trainee has achieved this outcome through inter text activities in Chapter 1, that help assess their understanding. There are also end of chapter Multiple choice questions which further assess the trainees knowledge on the topic. This is applicable for this topic in Chapter 1 and in the chapters for each minor ailment/condition. This topic is further tested in the end of Book summative assessments.

The competency booklet further assesses the trainee by assessing the application of their knowledge gained from textbooks. The supervisor is required to assess their competency on various aspects of their role throughout the course and sign off the competency for the number of times indicated. It is assessed in Learning Outcome 1 of the competency booklet – where the trainee is asked to be observed communicating and advising patients over 10 assessment criteria.

GPhC use only.

NOS met/will be met? Yes No

This learning outcome was discussed at the event. The provider consulted its board on the inclusion of

this NOS. It was included as Medicines Counter Assistants will need to respond to pharmaceutical queries and will need to know when to refer things outside their competency to another member of the team. The section on person-centred care has been excluded but is included in the Dispensing Course.

The assessment for this NOS is heavily based on observation, but is also covered in some of the multiple choice questions.

PHARM04 - Provide advice on non-prescribed medicines and products

How and where does the course/qualification support trainees to achieve this NOS outcome?

Provider's commentary

The course starts by teaching the trainee the importance of SOPs, in chapter 1 and then goes onto other important guidelines such as health and safety, in Chapter 2. This helps them meet the learning outcome and set the right foundation for their training. Chapter 1 also addresses local guidelines and organisational policies that are relevant to the trainee's role.

The whole of the Part B textbook and some of the Part A textbook teaches the trainee how to provide advice on non-prescribed medicines and products. The areas that are covered are, Pain (Chapter 3), Colds, coughs and hay fever (Chapter 4), Indigestion, heartburn and constipation (Chapter 5), Women's health, family planning and child health in Chapter 6, Skin, feet and men's health (Chapter 7), Eyes, ears and mouth (Chapter 8), Holiday healthcare and healthy living (Chapter 9), Veterinary medicines (Chapter 10).

The books teach the trainee how to do this by first providing them with the knowledge of each condition and then how to advise on medication/treatment using WWHAM or suggested questions to ask for the condition. This addresses performance criteria 3, 4 and 5 of this learning outcome.

Trainees are also advised when they should refer the customer to the pharmacist to provide advice, where it is not appropriate for the trainee to give advice. This addresses performance criteria 7.

'The main actions, side effects and cautions for the most commonly used non-prescription medicines', is covered in each section where medicines for treating conditions are covered (Chapter 3-10).

How and where does the course/qualification assess the trainee's achievement of this NOS outcome at the stated competency level?

Provider's commentary

The course assess the trainee through at the end of every chapter, as part of a formative assessment and at the end of each book as a summative assessment. There are also inter – text activities within each chapter to build on the knowledge of that chapter further and apply their knowledge.

The competency booklet further assesses the trainee by assessing the application of their knowledge gained from textbooks. The supervisor is required to assess their competency on various aspects of their role throughout the course and sign off the competency for the number of times indicated.

It is assessed in Learning Outcome 2 of the competency booklet – where the trainee is asked to be observed communicating and advising patients using SOPS and SOMP over 12 assessment criteria.

P8, place the medicine/product in the appropriate packaging before giving it to the individual has been omitted from the course and does not map. We do not feel this is relevant, as OTC medicines come pre-packaged and are subject to their own requirements. We do highlight the importance of the patient information leaflet (PIL), and important aspects that can be found on the packaging, within the course but mainly in Part A

GPhC use only.

NOS met/will be met? Yes No

PHARM07 - Receive prescriptions

How and where does the course/qualification support trainees to achieve this NOS outcome?

Provider's commentary

This course supports the trainee to be able to competently receive prescriptions, by giving the trainee the essential knowledge about prescriptions for their role in the Part A textbook. Chapter 1 teaches the trainee about the different types of prescriptions, types of prescribers and ways that prescriptions may be received. Chapter 1 also covers the importance of following SOPs, local procedures, legal and organisational requirements relating to their role in this activity and importance of complying with information governance procedures.

Methods of communication are also addressed in Chapter 1, which is essential for when receiving prescriptions from customers. The trainee is also advised on prices and exemptions relating to prescriptions, which is knowledge that is needed for when receiving prescriptions.

In Chapter 2 the trainee is taught about whistleblowing and safeguarding. It is important that they are aware of this so that they are able to report any acts that could be detrimental to others, as per the objectives of this learning outcome. When receiving prescriptions Medicines Counter assistants can be in a position to notice safeguarding issues to patients.

How and where does the course/qualification assess the trainee's achievement of this NOS outcome at the stated competency level?

Provider's commentary

The trainee is assessed in this outcome through inter - text activities in chapter 1. They are also assessed on this outcome in the end of Book MCQs, which is a summative assessment.

The competency booklet further assesses the trainee by assessing the application of their knowledge gained from textbooks. The supervisor is required to assess their competency on various aspects of their role throughout the course and sign off the competency for the number of times indicated.

It is assessed in Learning Outcome 3 of the competency booklet – where the trainee is asked to be observed receiving prescriptions in line with company SOP's and legal requirements. This is assessed over 8 assessment criteria.

GPhC use only.

NOS met/will be met? Yes No

PHARM32 – Assist in the issuing of prescribed items

How and where does the course/qualification support trainees to achieve this NOS outcome?

Provider's commentary

The trainee is taught about assisting in the issuing of prescribed items, in the context of supply over the counter medicines as well as handing out prescriptions. The course teaches them about WWHAM, SOPs and SOMP, in chapter 1, which are all relevant to selling medicines. These aspects are further covered in relation to each minor ailment throughout the chapters about each clinical topic. This includes how to advise customers about the medicine/product they are selling and when to refer to a pharmacist. It also teaches the trainee, how to process a transaction in Chapter 2.

Chapter 1 also covers handing out of prescriptions and referring to local procedures and SOPs for this, as well as Responsible pharmacist regulations, in relation to them being present for such activities.

How and where does the course/qualification assess the trainee's achievement of this NOS outcome at the stated competency level?

Provider's commentary

The course assesses this outcome through inter text activities, end of chapter MCQs and end of book assessments. Chapter 1 tests the understanding of SOPs and general knowledge of issuing pharmaceutical stock, whilst the chapters relating to minor ailments are more specific to products/advice in that topic.

The competency booklet further assesses the trainee by assessing the application of their knowledge gained from textbooks. The supervisor is required to assess their competency on various aspects of their role throughout the course and sign off the competency for the number of times indicated.

It is assessed in Learning outcome 1, 2 and 3 & 4 where learners have to demonstrate skills communicating, advising customers appropriately and receiving prescriptions. Learning Outcome 4 of the competency booklet is where the trainee is observed following SOPs and maintaining confidentiality when handing out prescriptions. Learning outcome 4 ensures learners correctly match the prescription to the items being handed out in accordance with SOPs. Within Learning outcome 4 learners must also demonstrate that they ask the correct questions before handing out medication including whether an individual has used a particular medication before & if they are taking any other medications which would warrant referral to the pharmacist. Finally learners must correctly confirm an individuals identify before handing out medication.

GPhC use only.

NOS met/will be met? Yes No

