



# **National Competency Framework for Primary Care Pharmacy Technicians**



# CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	2
2.0 PURPOSE AND USE OF THE FRAMEWORK .....	4
3.0 SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK.....	5
4.0 THE COMPETENCIES .....	6
4.1 COMPETENCIES WITHIN THE DOMAINS .....	7
Domain 1 – Clinical Governance .....	8
Domain 3 – Medicines Optimisation.....	13
Domain 4 – Leadership .....	17
4.2 MAPPING OF COMPETENCIES TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS .....	18
5.0 APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK .....	20
5.1 APPLICATION AND ENTRY CRITERIA.....	21
5.2 MANAGEMENT PLAN AND LEARNING AGREEMENT .....	22
5.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION .....	23
5.4 PROGRAMME/COURSE DESIGN AND DELIVERY .....	24
5.5 ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT .....	26
5.6 ASSESSMENT STRATEGY INTRODUCTION .....	27
5.7 ASSESSMENT.....	28
Roles and Responsibilities of the Education Supervisor.....	28
Focus of Assessment .....	28
5.8 SOURCES OF EVIDENCE .....	30
Work-based Observation of Practice .....	30
Witness Testimony.....	30
Reflective Accounts (RA) .....	31
Case Studies.....	31
Case Based Discussion .....	31
Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) .....	32
5.9 SUPPORT.....	33
GLOSSARY.....	34
REFERENCES .....	36
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	37



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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APTUK is the national professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians working in all pharmacy sectors across all countries in the UK: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. APTUK was founded in 1952. APTUK are committed to:

1. Influence change for the advancement and safeguarding of the pharmacy technician profession
2. Represent the opinions of our members and respond to the professional needs of pharmacy technicians
3. Provide developmental support for the delivery of patient centred professionalism
4. Actively pursue the sharing of knowledge and experience through professional networking and collaborative working
5. Promote the pharmacy technician profession, foundation and advanced roles, within the pharmacy team and to shape its future development

Healthcare professional leadership bodies play an important part in promoting best practice, providing guidance, directing and maintaining safe and competent practice. National Competency Frameworks alongside regulatory standards are an important aspect of supporting patient safety. APTUK has a key role to play in providing the tools and resources to support the profession in delivering excellence throughout their roles and services provided.

The Primary Care Pharmacy Association (PCPA) was established for the benefit of all primary care pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with an active interest in primary care pharmacy. It is the largest and longest standing independent organisation dedicated to supporting pharmacy professionals working within primary care. PCPA have a key role in actively promoting the sharing of best practice and the advancement of innovation in primary care pharmacy.

This framework aims to support NHS England's Long Term Plan<sup>1</sup>; the Welsh Government's A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care<sup>2</sup>; the Scottish Government's Health and Social Care Delivery Plan<sup>3</sup>; and Northern Ireland's Making Life Better<sup>4</sup>, in delivery of a high quality health service with particular emphasis on patient safety, clinical effectiveness and patient experience.

These documents recognise the workforce challenges and state that the way forward for the primary care workforce is to develop the skills of the non-medical workforce. The benefits of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working within general practice have been recognised and identified as key contributors towards meeting service demands. The symbiotic relationship of the pharmacy technician and pharmacist complements and supports the work of the GP and the multidisciplinary team in primary care to focus on clinical care.



It is imperative that pharmacy technicians demonstrate the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required to meet the needs of primary care roles now and in the future.

The development of the National Competency Framework (NCF) for Primary Care Pharmacy Technicians has been led by APTUK in collaboration with PCPA. The National Competency Framework (NCF) for Primary Care Pharmacy Technicians Task and Finish Group, which provided professional representation from all sectors and home countries, were asked to provide comments, input and feedback throughout the process of development. (See page 37 for membership and acknowledgements)

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## 2.0 PURPOSE AND USE OF THE FRAMEWORK

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A competence can be described as a characteristic or quality of a person that is essential to fulfil and perform effectively in a scope of practice such as knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviours.

APTUK & PCPA believe that this National Competency Framework (NCF) outlines the core competencies thought to be central to support the safe and effective practice of pharmacy technicians in primary care roles. Its primary function is to provide a set of core competency standards within a framework that supports the quality, productivity, efficiency of training and competency assessment across the UK.

This National Competency Framework may also be of interest to the wider public, to people who use pharmacy and healthcare services, healthcare professionals working with pharmacy teams in primary care, employers, regulators and commissioners of pharmacy services.

This National Competency Framework can be used to:

- Support existing pharmacy technicians in primary care to undertake learning needs analysis to identify gaps in their competencies
- Support education commissioners to set out the requirements for education and training for pharmacy technicians working in primary care
- Inform the design and delivery of the learning objectives and assessment methodology within training programmes/courses
- Support primary care employers to identify the competencies required for pharmacy technicians to undertake safe and effective practice in a primary care role
- Inform the development of job descriptions and role specifications for primary care pharmacy technicians
- Provide a basis for discussions around the development of pharmacy technicians to work at an advanced level in primary care, building on core competencies



## 3.0 SCOPE OF THE FRAMEWORK

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Primary care is the day-to-day healthcare available in every local area and the first place people go when they need health advice or treatment. Primary care includes GPs (general practitioners) – the family or local doctor, chemists (pharmacies), community and practice nurses, community midwives and health visitors, family planning or sexual health clinics, out of hours GP services, dentists, opticians and care homes.

Whilst recognising the diversity of primary care, this framework sets out competencies for pharmacy technicians undertaking roles within GP practices and care homes as this is primarily where pharmacy technicians are working within primary care and also reflects the expected model for the integration and employment of pharmacy technicians in primary care. The scope may be increased as more roles for pharmacy technicians in primary care evolve and the need to support their professional development by means of an extension to this framework is identified.

The scope of this framework does not incorporate the competencies within different levels of practice such as foundation and advanced practice. The criteria within the competency framework are referred to as 'core' criteria. The term 'core criteria' within this framework is used to define the set of competencies that represent a 'baseline' for pharmacy technician practice in primary care. The framework recognises that pharmacy technicians in primary care may be new to working in a primary care setting but are not necessarily new to registered practice. The framework takes into account the experienced pharmacy technician workforce that may have existing knowledge and skills from other sectors but it is the breadth of application of this knowledge that informs the scope and level of practice in this evolving sector for pharmacy professionals.

Pharmacy professionals are accountable for meeting the regulatory standards set by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC)<sup>5</sup> in Great Britain, and by the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI)<sup>6</sup> in Northern Ireland to provide safe and effective care to patients. Pharmacy technicians should use GPhC Guidance to support the standards for pharmacy professionals<sup>7</sup> to support and help them to meet professional standards. In addition pharmacy technicians should follow good practice guidance developed by professional leadership bodies, and other organisations/bodies, in order to develop, maintain and improve services provided to patients.

This NCF is designed to support safe practice and professionalism in primary care, inform the education and training requirements and further the professional development of pharmacy technicians working in these roles.



## 4.0 THE COMPETENCIES

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The competencies have been developed within four domains (illustrated below) each of equal importance. The domains reflect four areas of practice and are aligned to the GPhC Standards for Pharmacy Professionals<sup>5</sup> where possible to ensure this framework any subsequent learning provision meet the professional standards and is relevant to the GPhC revalidation process.

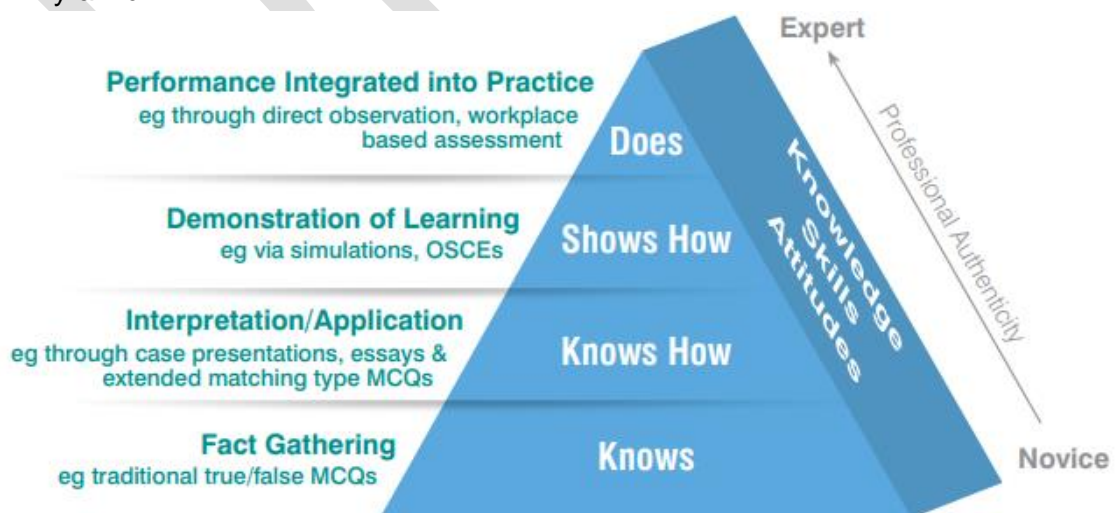


## 4.1 COMPETENCIES WITHIN THE DOMAINS

There are ten competencies across the four domains (illustrated below). Within each of the ten competencies there are 'core criteria' statements which describe the activity of outcomes that pharmacy technicians in primary care must demonstrate to support safe and effective practice.

Domain 1 Clinical Governance	Domain 2 Person-Centred Care	Domain 3 Medicines Optimisation	Domain 4 Leadership
a) Professional Practice	a) Communicating Effectively	a) Access, Use and Maintenance of Patient Records	a) Demonstrating Leadership
b) Risk Management	b) Supporting Structured Medication Review	b) Medication Supply Processes	
	c) Polypharmacy and Deprescribing	c) Clinical Knowledge and its Application	
	d) Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making		

In alignment with the GPhC Initial Education and Training Standards<sup>8</sup> the competencies in these standards are based on levels of established competence and assessment using 'Miller's Pyramid'.







## Domain 1 – Clinical Governance

Pharmacy Technicians must undertake their role in primary care as part of a safe system of work that protects patients from avoidable harm

<b>Competency a</b>	<b>Does</b>
<b>Professional Practice</b>	

<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Practices effectively within the organisation's standard operating procedures, protocol and policies (national and local)</li><li>ii. Practices within the scope of the role and recognises the limits of own knowledge and skills</li><li>iii. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of health and safety issues</li><li>iv. Demonstrates application of clinical governance issues and reporting methods</li><li>v. Uses a reflective approach to inform and improve practice</li></ul>



<b>Competency b</b> <b>Risk Management</b>	<b>Does</b>
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<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Reports errors, near misses and incidents following local and national processes</li><li>ii. Uses reflective practice and audit processes to investigate and prevent medication safety incidents and suggests changes to systems and processes to prevent recurrence</li><li>iii. Minimises risk to patients by effective handover of accurate, factual and legible information relating to medication safety incidents</li><li>iv. Identifies the cause and consequences of errors and potential for risk in the optimisation of patients medicines</li><li>v. Identifies and manages situations of clinical risk within scope of own competence and escalates if appropriate</li><li>vi. Recognises the responsibilities to inform patients/carers of errors under duty of candour</li></ul>



## Domain 2 – Person-Centred Care

Pharmacy Technicians must provide person-centred care in their role

Competency a	Does
<b>Communicating Effectively</b>	

Core Practice Criteria
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Uses a range of appropriate communication skills:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Verbal communication</li><li>▪ Non-verbal communication</li><li>▪ Active listening</li><li>▪ Effective questioning techniques</li><li>▪ Effective negotiation skills</li><li>▪ Appropriate use of language (i.e. avoiding jargon) and clear explanation where needed</li><li>▪ Assessment of understanding and reaching a shared decision</li><li>▪ Encouraging the individual/carer to ask questions, raise concerns and seek information or advice to provide personalised care</li></ul></li><li>ii. Identifies individuals with particular communication needs and adapts communication to meet these needs</li><li>iii. Provides the patient/carer with the relevant information in a way they can understand to support effective use of medicines and access other appropriate services to improve health outcomes</li><li>iv. Respects the patient in relation to diversity, values, beliefs and expectations about their health and treatment with medicines</li><li>v. Responds sensitively with patients/carers emotions and concerns</li><li>vi. Recognises and manages any emotions experienced personally from consultations with patients/carers</li><li>vii. Communicates effectively within the multidisciplinary team</li><li>viii. Communicates effectively within the context of challenging situations</li></ul>



<b>Competency b</b> <b>Supporting Structured Medication Review</b>	<b>Does</b>
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<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Identifies and prioritises patients requiring medication review and medicines reconciliation</li><li>ii. Uses appropriate and validated sources of information to support medication review and medicines reconciliation</li><li>iii. Identifies unnecessary duplicate or similar repeat medication items and takes appropriate action</li><li>iv. Identifies duplicate or missing prescription request and/or issue and takes appropriate action</li><li>v. Identifies medicines not ordered for a specific length of time or ordered excessively and takes appropriate action in line with standard operating procedures</li><li>vi. Identifies medicines with missing or ambiguous dose directions and takes appropriate action</li><li>vii. Takes appropriate action relating to necessary monitoring requirements</li><li>viii. Communicates any relevant issues to the practice dispensary, community pharmacy, GP practice, care home or relevant healthcare professional/team</li><li>ix. Identifies the appropriate person to refer to when necessary and liaises with the appropriate people to resolve queries and discrepancies</li><li>x. Ensures timely and relevant update of patient documentation and records</li></ul>



<b>Competency c</b> <b>Polypharmacy and Deprescribing</b>	<b>Knows How</b>
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<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<b>The Pharmacy Technician</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Explains the terms polypharmacy and deprescribing</li><li>ii. Understands how shared decision making and person-centred care supports patients to get the best possible outcomes when they are taking multiple medicines</li><li>iii. Lists the causes and consequences of polypharmacy and potential triggers</li></ul>

<b>Competency d</b> <b>Effective Problem Solving and Decision Making</b>	<b>Does</b>
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<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<b>The Pharmacy Technician</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Makes appropriate decisions using professional judgement and ensures that the care of the person is the first concern</li><li>ii. Identifies and prioritises queries and tasks within scope of competence and practice</li><li>iii. Recognises limits of authority and knowledge, refers and escalates appropriately when necessary</li><li>iv. Uses evidence-based reference texts</li><li>v. Prepares concise, relevant and logical responses that meet the needs of the enquirer and documents responses appropriately</li></ul>



### Domain 3 – Medicines Optimisation

Pharmacy Technicians must contribute to effective and safe optimisation of patients medicines in the primary care role

<b>Competency a</b>	<b>Does</b>
<b>Access, Use and Maintenance of Patient Records</b>	

<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Demonstrates awareness of the requirements set out under the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act on how they relate to practice</li><li>ii. Accesses appropriate and relevant resources and systems that support tasks and record information relevant to the patients' care</li><li>iii. Makes accurate, legible, factual and timely entry of information and endorsements relevant to patients' care into electronic and written patient records in accordance with standard operating procedures</li><li>iv. Identifies necessary changes and amends patients' electronic records and /or medication seeking approval where required</li><li>v. Works within scope of job role and individual competence when making changes and amendments to patients' electronic records and/or medication</li><li>vi. Manages the transfer of patient information from different care settings</li><li>vii. Resolves queries and unexplained/unintentional issues working within the scope of job role and individual competence</li><li>viii. Maintains patient/person confidentiality and understands the procedure that must be followed should patient confidentiality be compromised</li><li>ix. Obtains consent from the patient (or carer) where appropriate and takes appropriate action if consent is not obtained, not available or declined in accordance with the standard operating procedure</li></ul>



<b>Competency b</b> <b>Medication Supply Processes</b>	<b>Does</b>
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**Core Practice Criteria**

**The Pharmacy Technician**

- i. Manages requests to supply medication and/or medication issue according to local standard operating procedures
- ii. Manages different methods of prescription request and issue from a range of sources
- iii. Identifies, documents and takes appropriate action with any discrepancies between medicines required and the medicines on the patient's electronic record
- iv. Ensures that medicine quantities are synchronised and aligned with local/organisational policy
- v. Takes appropriate action with missing or ambiguous dose directions
- vi. Ensures that the medicines or products are provided for the patient in a way that optimises the clinical and cost-effective use of medicines
- vii. Applies understanding of local formularies including 'over the counter' medicines and 'hospital/specialist prescribing only'
- viii. Applies understanding of shared care guidelines related to medication issue and supply
- ix. Identifies the risks associated with medication issue processes
- x. Identifies inappropriate use of medicines suggesting possible medication issues, including excessive usage or under usage
- xi. Takes appropriate action regarding follow up and interpretation of patient specific results in line with standard operating procedures
- xii. Identifies the appropriate person to refer to when necessary and liaises with the appropriate people to resolve queries and discrepancies
- xiii. Liaises with community pharmacy or other relevant providers to identify and resolve any prescription and/or medication supply issues
- xiv. Communicates with the patient /carer or representative to identify and resolve any medication related queries
- xv. Recognises practice that can contribute to medication waste and maintains systems and processes that aim to reduce medication waste



- xvi. Manages medicines no longer required or not suitable for use
- xvii. Demonstrates appropriate use of practice systems to identify patients requiring monitoring relating to their medicines

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<b>Competency c</b> <b>Clinical Knowledge and its Application</b>	<b>Does</b>
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<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Demonstrates knowledge of medicines appropriate to the tasks being undertaken</li><li>ii. Identifies sources of information and applies knowledge and understanding relating to formularies, medicines supply chain, licensing of medicines and homely remedies/OTC</li><li>iii. Identifies sources of information and applies knowledge and understanding relating to the covert administration of medicines</li><li>iv. Acts appropriately in response to patients' allergies and intolerances</li><li>v. Identifies and uses appropriate information and reference sources to support medicines knowledge</li><li>vi. Understands antimicrobial resistance and the roles of infection prevention, control and antimicrobial stewardship measures</li><li>vii. Takes into account the additional precautions and prioritisations required for high-risk medicines and patients, in accordance with local/organisational procedure</li><li>viii. Identifies and takes appropriate action relating to specific monitoring requirements for patients</li><li>ix. Identifies patients requiring escalation due to clinical risk and manage/refer these appropriately</li></ul>



## Domain 4 – Leadership

Pharmacy Technicians must demonstrate professional leadership

<b>Competency a</b>	<b>Does</b>
<b>Demonstrate Leadership</b>	

<b>Core Practice Criteria</b>
<p><b>The Pharmacy Technician</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Demonstrates the use of audit and quality improvement activities to inform and improve processes</li><li>ii. Provides leadership on person centred medicines optimisation</li><li>iii. Demonstrates ability to support and train other members of the multidisciplinary team</li><li>iv. Demonstrates effective team working</li><li>v. Contributes to an open and transparent culture in relation to legal, organisational and policy requirements</li><li>vi. Describes national priorities and drivers for change in the NHS, pharmacy services and medicines optimisation and their implications at a local level</li><li>vii. Actively seek opportunities and challenges for personal learning and development</li></ul>



## 4.2 MAPPING OF COMPETENCIES TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

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Education and training providers should align their programmes/courses to the GPhC Standards for Pharmacy Professionals<sup>5</sup> and the domains in these standards. These have been mapped with the competencies within the framework and the standards as below:

### Domain 1 - Clinical Governance

Pharmacy Technicians must undertake their role in primary care as part of a safe system of work that protects patients from avoidable harm

#### Mapped to GPhC Professional Standards

**Standard 4:** Pharmacy professionals must maintain, develop and use their professional knowledge and skills

**Standard 5:** Pharmacy professionals must use their professional judgement

**Standard 8:** Pharmacy professionals must speak up when they have concerns or when things go wrong

### Domain 2 – Person-Centred Care

Pharmacy Technicians must provide person centred care in their role

#### Mapped to GPhC Professional Standards

**Standard 1:** Pharmacy professionals must provide person centred care

**Standard 2:** Pharmacy professionals must work in partnership with others

**Standard 3:** Pharmacy professionals must communicate effectively

**Standard 5:** Pharmacy professionals must use their professional judgement

**Standard 6:** Pharmacy professionals must behave in a professional manner

**Standard 7:** Pharmacy professionals must respect and maintain a person's confidentiality and privacy



### **Domain 3 – Medicines Optimisation**

**Pharmacy Technicians must contribute to effective and safe optimisation of patients medicines in the primary care role**

#### **Mapped to GPhC Professional Standards**

**Standard 1:** Pharmacy professionals must provide person centred care

**Standard 2:** Pharmacy professionals must work in partnership with others

**Standard 3:** Pharmacy professionals must communicate effectively

**Standard 5:** Pharmacy professionals must use their professional judgement

### **Domain 4 – Leadership**

**Pharmacy Technicians must demonstrate professional leadership**

#### **Mapped to GPhC Professional Standards**

**Standard 1:** Pharmacy professionals must provide person centred care

**Standard 2:** Pharmacy professionals must work in partnership with others

**Standard 5:** Pharmacy professionals must use their professional judgement

**Standard 8:** Pharmacy professionals must speak up when they have concerns or when things go wrong

**Standard 9:** Pharmacy professionals must demonstrate leadership



## 5.0 APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

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The key aims in the application of the framework are:

- To provide a consistent approach to the quality, productivity, delivery and efficiency of primary care pharmacy technician training and assessment programmes across the UK
- To ensure quality assurance is embedded in the design and delivery of training and assessment
- To ensure the pharmacy technician has the skills, knowledge and competence to undertake the tasks associated with a primary care role and to provide safe, effective and person-centred care in primary care
- To enable practice to be transferable across sectors of primary care (e.g. GP practice and care homes)

Pharmacy Technicians undertaking training to work in primary care roles must have appropriate supervision of activities to ensure patient safety and should work within the parameters of an education and training programme/course. On successful completion of a programme meeting the NCF, the pharmacy technician will have achieved the competencies as outlined in section 5.0 to support safe and effective practice.

The requirements for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programme/Course providers in the application of the National Competency Framework are described in the following sections:

- 5.1 - Application and entry criteria
- 5.2 - Management plan and learning agreement
- 5.3 - Monitoring and evaluation
- 5.4 - Course/Programme design and delivery
- 5.5 - Access to assessment
- 5.6 - Assessment strategy introduction
- 5.7 - Assessment
- 5.8 - Sources of Evidence
- 5.9 - Access to Support



## 5.1 APPLICATION AND ENTRY CRITERIA

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Education and training providers of Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must:

- Ensure the applicant is a registered pharmacy professional (GPhC or PSNI)
- Ensure the applicant has pharmacy work-based experience completed in the UK under the supervision, direction or guidance of a pharmacy professional to whom they have been directly accountable
- Confirm that the applicant has authorisation and support from their employer(s) to undertake the training including access to a workplace education supervisor
- Confirm that the necessary governance structures are in place in the applicants' place of employment, to enable pharmacy technicians to be adequately supported throughout the training programme. It is essential that there are safe processes in place and the pharmacy technician has access to current Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and or protocols that detail their roles and responsibilities



## 5.2 MANAGEMENT PLAN AND LEARNING AGREEMENT

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Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must have a structured and transparent programme/course management plan that includes:

- Clarity of the roles, responsibility and accountability of all those involved in all aspects of the programme delivery
- Systems and processes that will be used to deliver training
- Systems and processes that will be used to identify and manage any risks

Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must:

- Deliver a learning agreement for the pharmacy technician that covers all aspects of the learning environment and includes the support available for the pharmacy technician and allocation of a workplace supervisor who monitors progress
- Ensure pharmacy professionals with appropriate current experience in primary care pharmacy roles are involved in the design and delivery of the programme/course

Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must ensure all learning and training environments have:

- Sufficient appropriately trained and experienced staff to deliver the programme/course
- Sufficient resources and facilities to deliver the programme/course



## 5.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must monitor and maintain the quality, consistency and integrity of the delivery and assessment and must:

- Include a system for evaluating the standard of teaching materials, learning and assessment
- Confirm who is responsible for reporting, reviewing and taking action when appropriate
- Include a system for raising concerns so they are resolved in a timely manner and documented
- Include the pharmacy technician as part of the monitoring, review and evaluation process

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## 5.4 PROGRAMME/COURSE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

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Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must design and deliver programmes/courses in any way which:

- Use coherent teaching and learning strategies which bring together knowledge, competence and practice activities that reflect the primary care pharmacy technician role
- Use the GPhC's standards for pharmacy professionals or PSNI professional standards of conduct, ethics and performance for pharmacists in the design and delivery of programmes/courses (see section 4.2 for mapping of domains to GPhC standards for pharmacy professionals)
- Have a programme/course teaching and learning strategy which sets out how pharmacy technicians will achieve the competencies in section 4.1 of the framework
- Develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and professional behaviours required to meet the competencies in section 4.1 of the framework
- Use initiatives which are known to reduce the incidence of inadvertent and/or deliberate plagiaristic activity
- Take into account the views of a range of stakeholders – including pharmacy professionals, other primary care health care professionals, patients, the public and employers
- Align with the responsibility and accountability of the primary care pharmacy technician role
- Meet the requirements of this framework
- Are responsive to significant changes in practice to ensure the programmes/courses remains current and fit for purpose
- Ensure a workplace education supervisor is assigned to supervise pharmacy technicians in all aspects of the programme/course local delivery and implementation to ensure patient safety at all times
- Ensure that education supervisors have a full understanding of programmes/courses and their roles and responsibilities
- Ensure that on successful completion the pharmacy technician has a transferrable skill set



- Ensure that the pharmacy technician, the education supervisor and the appropriate manager are informed when the pharmacy technician has successfully completed a programme/course and met (or not met) the assessment strategy
- Provide certificates to pharmacy technicians who successfully complete a programme/course and meet the assessment strategy

When designing and delivering programme/courses, education and training providers and employers might wish to incorporate other teaching and learning that is not assessed as part of the assessment strategy included in this framework. This could include the following:

- Literacy, language and/or numeracy
- Personal learning and thinking/judgement skills
- Enhanced clinical knowledge and skills related to practice

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## 5.5 ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT

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Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must:

- Embed equality and diversity into the programme/course design
- Ensure that the needs of under-represented groups should be addressed including those from ethnic minority communities, those experiencing disability, and those experiencing sensory impairment
- Make reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessments, when necessary, to help pharmacy technicians who require specific needs without altering the competences that need to be demonstrated
- Make reasonable adjustments to the training duration for pharmacy technicians with authorised periods of absence
- Ensure that pharmacy technicians have equal access to assessment regardless of geographical location, work setting and patterns of work
- Ensure all individuals involved in the process demonstrate their commitment to equality of opportunity



## 5.6 ASSESSMENT STRATEGY INTRODUCTION

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To complement the competency framework an assessment strategy has been developed

The assessment strategy aims to encourage the pharmacy technician to take an active part in their own training and to apply their knowledge to practical situations related to their role in primary care. The assessments are also designed to show that the pharmacy technician has achieved the competencies defined in section 4.1 of this framework.

The assessment strategy also takes into account the strengths and benefits of reflective practice in building resilience, improving wellbeing and deepening professional commitment as identified in the joint regulators statement on the benefits of becoming a reflective practitioner.<sup>9</sup>

This assessment strategy has been produced to ensure that the assessment of competence for pharmacy technicians undertaking education & training programmes are applied in a standardised approach thus providing consistent outcomes for the knowledge, skills and competencies for pharmacy technicians working in primary care.

The assessment strategy also sets out the mix of methods used for assessing knowledge and competence and outlines a mix of assessment methods that are robust and appropriate for assessing knowledge and competence for pharmacy technicians working in primary care roles. The assessment strategy must also assess whether a pharmacy technician's practice is safe.

The assessment strategy outlines assessment and evidence under the following headings:

### 5.7 - Assessment

- Roles and Responsibilities of the Education Supervisor
- Focus of Assessment

### 5.8 - Sources of Evidence

- Work Based Observation of Practice
- Witness Testimony
- Reflective Accounts
- Case Studies
- Case Based Discussion
- Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)



## 5.7 ASSESSMENT

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### Roles and Responsibilities of the Education Supervisor

“Education supervision” in pharmacy involves overall supervision and management of education progress during a programme (or series of periods of training), as opposed to a single period of training. Education supervisors are appropriately selected and trained to be responsible for ensuring that pharmacy technicians are making the necessary practice-based and education progress, through the use of appraisals and review meetings. The ability to effectively review a pharmacy technician’s entire portfolio will also be necessary. This will require a holistic approach, rather than assessing single pieces of evidence.

Education supervisors are responsible for the pharmacy technician’s educational/learning agreement or plan. This will include the formal assessment and sign off of the pharmacy technician as competent and meeting the assessment strategy. The education supervisor should have an understanding of the range of learning, assessment and support opportunities for learning in the workplace, work collaboratively with colleagues and the multidisciplinary team to monitor and support the pharmacy technician’s progression and foster learner autonomy. They should also be able to identify and support candidates in difficulty, including interfacing with employment performance management procedures<sup>10</sup>.

Education supervisors for Pharmacy Technicians undertaking training and education programmes/courses must:

- Be a registered and practising pharmacy professional (registered with the GPhC or PSNI) who has sufficient experience within practice base to be considered occupationally competent in the area of primary care pharmacy practice
- Have a working knowledge of pharmacy and/or GP dispensing settings, the regulation, legislation and codes of practice for the service (where applicable), and the requirements of NCF at the time any assessment is taking place
- Have credible experience which is clearly demonstrable through continuing learning and development

### Focus of Assessment

The framework outlines the requirements for inclusion of assessment methods for each domain of the competency framework. This guidance is categorised as ‘must include’ and ‘could include’. Where guidance ‘must’ be included, assessment of these core practice criteria in these domains must feature in the programme/course assessment strategy. Where the framework states ‘could include’, this recognises the varying scope of practice in primary care and provides flexibility for training providers to develop their programmes/courses to meet the requirements of their delivery models and learners.



Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must ensure the assessment strategy is robust, reliable and valid and guarantees patient safety and includes:

- Assessment of all of the competencies in Section 4.1
- The methods that will be used to assess competence.
- A system for monitoring the assessment processes
- An independent quality assurance system of the assessment process that is carried out by an appropriately experienced person
- The methods in which the pharmacy technician will receive feedback on their performance in a timely manner

There should be a system in place to allow pharmacy technicians to appeal against any decision or conduct of any assessment process associated with any programme/course that meets this framework.

Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must ensure that programme/course assessment strategies include:

- A requirement for assessments to be carried out by appropriately trained and qualified health care professionals who are competent to assess the performance of a pharmacy technician working in primary care.
- A portfolio of evidence which is completed under normal working conditions, and spans a maximum training duration of 18 months and must include information on the pharmacy technician's scope of practice in primary care (e.g. job description / role specification)
- Assessment of the pharmacy technicians understanding of local standard operating procedures and protocols relating to their primary care role
- Assessment of the pharmacy technician's professionalism and ability to accept responsibility as a primary care pharmacy technician
- A requirement for the pharmacy technician's progress to be reviewed at regular intervals by their education supervisor and on a minimum of three occasions
- A review of the pharmacy technician's portfolio of evidence to ensure that the assessment strategy has been met



## 5.8 SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

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Sources of evidence submitted for assessment should demonstrate the appropriate application of knowledge and skills through the quality and types of evidence in an e-portfolio and to the core practice competencies as outlined in Section 4.1

### Work-based Observation of Practice

Evidence should be gathered wherever possible from the work place. Direct observation must be undertaken by the education supervisor or a registered healthcare professional with occupational competence in the area being assessed. Performance observed is formally recorded by the education supervisor/assessor and used as part of the overall assessment for the competency and/or wider competencies within the domains. The observation of performance could relate to a specific activity or provide a more holistic view of the pharmacy technicians performance as it covers a range of work responsibilities.

Work based observation of practice **MUST** be included in the assessment methodology and **MUST** be included within the following domains:

**Domain 2 – Competency a** – Communicate Effectively

**Domain 2 – Competency b** – Supporting Structured Medication Review

**Domain 3 – Competency b** – Medication Supply Processes

### Witness Testimony

Witness testimony in this framework is defined as a form of observation, but differs from work based observation of practice in that performance is observed by an individual other than the education supervisor or other registered health care professional. Witness testimony therefore allows for members of the practice team with experience in the task being assessed (e.g. prescription clerks) to undertake observations of practice. In recognition of a person-centred approach, witness testimony also enables the option for a patient to act as an expert witness and feedback from patients to be used to support demonstration of competence in domains where this is evident.

Witness Testimony **MUST** be included in the overall assessment methodology and **COULD** be included within **ANY** of the competency domains



## Reflective Accounts (RA)

Reflective accounts can support the assessment of competence and contribute to knowledge and understanding by providing an insight to the thoughts and considerations associated to behaviour. Including reflective accounts into an assessment methodology supports pharmacy technicians to continually improve the way they work or the quality of care they give to people and aligns with the General Pharmaceutical Councils (GPhC) requirement for pharmacy technicians to include reflective accounts in their revalidation submissions

Reflective Accounts (RA) **MUST** be included in the overall assessment methodology and **MUST** be included within **ALL** of the competency domains

## Case Studies

Case studies must be based on workplace practice and should provide evidence of the use of different skills in appropriate situations. They should describe actions, findings, the significance of findings and any action plan. Case studies can support assessment of competence through narrative which demonstrates the application of a holistic skill set, professional decision making and reflection.

Case Studies **MUST** be included in the overall assessment methodology and **COULD** be included within **ANY** of the competency domains

## Case Based Discussion

The Case Based Discussion (CBD) is a retrospective evaluation of the pharmacy technician's impact into patient care. It should assess professional judgement and decision-making and the application of appropriate pharmaceutical knowledge in the role. This form of assessment involves the education supervisor asking questions about the activity that was undertaken where competencies were demonstrated and allows the pharmacy technician to discuss why they acted as they did and to reflect on the application of their skills in situations. Case based discussion should also identify strengths and areas for development.

Case Based Discussion **MUST** be included in the overall assessment methodology and **COULD** be included within **ANY** of the competency domains





## Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) are objective test questions and are good for assessing lower order cognitive processes, such as the recall of factual information. They are included in the assessment strategy as they are an appropriate method to assess knowledge content. MCQs could be included in the assessment strategy of a programme/course where knowledge based competencies are delivered (e.g. Safeguarding or Polypharmacy)

Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) **COULD** be included in the overall assessment methodology and **COULD** be included within **ANY** of the competency domains

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## 5.9 SUPPORT

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Education and training providers for Primary Care Pharmacy Technician Training Programmes/Courses must ensure that a range of systems are in place to support the pharmacy technician to demonstrate achievement of the competencies in Section 4.1 including:

- Adequate introduction to learning by provision of induction to the programme/course
- Supervision from a work-based pharmacy professional registered with the GPhC or PSNI or another registered health care professional with knowledge and understanding of the pharmacy technician profession and their roles and responsibilities in primary care
- An appropriate and realistic workload
- Time to learn in the workplace but recognition that some commitment to learning outside of work is required
- Access to resources, opportunities for learning and exposure to relevant practice in the workplace to support the completion of the programme/course
- Provision of thorough training for the work-based education supervisor so they fully understand the programme/course components, their area of accountability and how to effectively support the pharmacy technician
- Ensuring that the employer has systems in place for the pharmacy technician to meet regularly with their work-based education supervisor to discuss their progress, to provide support, guidance and constructive feedback
- Clear procedures for the pharmacy technician to raise concerns. Any concerns must be dealt with promptly, with action taken when appropriate



## GLOSSARY

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<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Primary Care Network	A group of general practices working together with a range of local providers, including across primary care, community services, social care and the voluntary sector, to offer more personalised, coordinated health and social care to their local populations
Clinical queries	Queries which involve the therapeutic use of medicines and require expert knowledge to resolve
Consultation	A formal meeting with a patient to discuss their medicines (this may or may not be documented)
Healthcare professional	A person who is qualified and allowed by regulatory bodies to provide a healthcare service to a patient
Must	In the context of this framework the term 'must' is used to indicate a requirement for compliance to the standard
Pharmacy professional(s)	Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council in England, Scotland and Wales. Pharmacists registered with the Pharmaceutical Society in Northern Ireland. Pharmacy technicians working in Northern Ireland.
Should	In the context of this framework the term 'should' is used to provide an explanation of how to meet the requirement and may also indicate a recommendation
Competency	An ability to consistently successfully perform a task or activity to an agreed standard
Reflective practice	The process of reviewing a specific task or day-to-day practice, identifying successes and weaknesses, and planning and taking action to address areas for development
Polypharmacy	Polypharmacy is generally understood as referring to the concurrent use of multiple medication items by one individual.
Deprescribing	The process of stopping or reducing medicines with the aim of reducing problematic polypharmacy
Covert Administration of Medicines	Covert administration is when medicines are administered in a disguised format. For example; the medicines could be hidden in food, drink or through a feeding tube without the knowledge or consent of the person receiving them. As a result, the person is unknowingly taking a medicine
Homely Remedy	A homely remedy is a medicinal preparation used to treat minor ailments. it is purchased over the counter and does not require a



	<p>prescription. Homely medicines are kept as stock in the care home to allow access to products that would be available in any household. Policies for the administration of homely medicines should be in place and agreed by the GP(s) caring for the residents in the care home</p>
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The National Competency Framework for Primary Care Pharmacy Technicians has been a significant collaborative effort by many individuals whose contribution is greatly appreciated. APTUK and PCPA would like to formally recognise and thank all of the contributors and Health Education England for their support in the development of this framework.

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APTUK would also like to thank members of the APTUK Partners Engagement Group (previously known as the APTUK Advisory Board) for their support for the development of the publication of the new framework.

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