

Appendix A – Dispensing staff competencies

Customer service

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should be able to:

- Identify who, or give details of who, their customers are:
 - o Internal
 - o External
- Describe organisational policies and procedures relating to customer care, their importance and why they should be followed
- Describe their role in customer service provision:
 - o Developing and maintaining customer relationships
 - o Retaining customer loyalty and confidence and their contribution to this
- Meet, identify and understand customer needs
- Understand the needs of difficult customers
- Deal with customers in different situations and with different needs, including special needs
- Provide information to customers
- Describe organisational complaints procedures
- Describe information sources
- Have a good understanding of basic communication skills, covering:
 - o Communication skills – speaking, listening, writing and reading
 - o Telephone techniques
 - o Face-to-face contact
 - o Electronic contact
 - o Written messages
 - o Checking understanding
 - o Providing clear and accurate information
 - o Non-verbal communication – body language, facial expressions, use of space
 - o Barriers to effective communication
 - o Dealing with
 - conflict
 - difficult situations
 - difficult working relationships
 - anger
 - stressful situations

Assistants need to know the limits of their role and to whom to refer.

Health and safety

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should be able to:

- Understand the main points of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1999

- Describe the legal and professional duties for Health and Safety (H&S) in the work place as required by the HASAW Act
- Identify other legislation relating to safe practices within their organisation and outline their responsibilities to each:
 - o The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
 - o Manual handling
 - o Visual display unit (VDU)
 - o Fire
- Describe workplace procedures relating to controlling risks to H&S, eg, staff rules, H&S policy
- Outline safe working practices
- Identify potential hazards and H&S risks
- Identify precautionary measures that could be taken in the workplace to reduce risk
- Understand the procedures reporting risks, accidents and incidents
- Understand their role, scope and responsibility in reporting risks, accidents and incidents
- Identify persons with responsibility for H&S matters, eg, fire officer, H&S officer, first aider, line manager
- Understand the need to adhere to suppliers' and manufacturers' instructions when using equipment, materials and products
- Discuss the importance of:
 - o Safe working practices
 - o Personal conduct
 - o Personal hygiene
 - o Use of protective clothing
- Discuss the importance of:
 - o Storage and handling of hazardous materials, including:
 - correct storage
 - cleaning storage area and making it safe if stock is damaged
 - maintaining safe storage environment
 - checking refrigerators work
 - checking walkways are free from obstruction
 - safe handling of stock
 - safe storage
 - o Storage and disposal of waste

Teams and teamwork

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should be able to:

- Identify the key responsibilities of the team
- Identify their role in the team and in the effectiveness of the team
- Explain the limitations of their role
- Identify key members of the team
- Understand the team's contribution to the organisation's work

- Work with the team and understand the importance of:
 - o Communication with other team members
 - o Supporting the team, helping others with their work
 - o Working relationships
 - o Developing working relationships within the team
 - o Problems with teams and how the dynamics of teams impacts on the work
- Improve the work of the team, continuing to improve, suggesting improvements
- Understand the importance of dealing with both positive and negative feedback

Assist in the supply of prescribed items (includes prescription receipt and collection)

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should be able to understand the following:

- Procedures for receipt of prescriptions working within standard operating procedures (SOPs)
- Prescription exemptions, charges, prepayment certificates, how to claim refunds, claim forms legal requirements
- Legislation of fees and exemptions
- Transactional and administration procedures (local and governmental)
- Procedures for issuing dispensed items, working within SOPs
- Understand importance of maintaining a clean working environment and equipment
- Appropriate standards of behaviour and personal hygiene required for working in a pharmacy.
- Principles of issuing medicine in respect to:
 - o storage
 - o repeat supply
 - o expiry date
 - o outstanding balance
 - o why this information is important
- Provision of information in both oral and written format, eg, patient information leaflets
- Importance of checking the client's understanding of information provided
- Why you must always identify and confirm patient's name
- Why it is important to assess patient's needs for referral
- The reasons for referral — if confused, problems with prescription, client requests
- Who the patient should be referred to, eg, the relevant GP
- Procedures for delivery of prescribed items working within SOPs
- Different types of prescriptions and their use
- The basic structure and function of the constituent parts of the NHS and their relation to the pharmaceutical services and aspects relevant to dispensing

Assist in the assembly of prescribed items

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should have a basic understanding of:

- Laws that protect the public such as Weights and Measures Act 1985, Data Protection Act 1998
- What is meant by and why it is important to keep patient confidentiality
- The quality of pharmaceutical products
- The broad role of the Dispensing Doctors Association, the General Practitioners Committee, the General Medical Council and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and other organisations relevant to the sector of practice
- The basic structure and function of the constituent parts of the NHS and their relation to the pharmaceutical services and aspects relevant to dispensing

Assistants should have a basic understanding of how the following impact on the provision of a dispensing service:

- The Medicines Act 1968
 - o Containers and packaging
 - o Prescription only medicines
 - o Persons exempt from the restrictions
- The Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- The Medicines (Labelling) Regulations 1976
 - o Requirements for general labelling provision
 - o Warnings and special requirements for different medicines and products
- The Poisons Act 1972
 - o The legal requirements for the retail sale and supply of poisons
- Legislation relating to Health and Safety at Work
 - o The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
 - o The Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2002
 - o The Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
 - o Controls imposed on the supply of industrial and mineralised methylated spirits to the public and persons authorised to purchase them

Assistants should be able to:

- Identify the relevant standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the assembly and checking of prescribed items and understand the importance of working within SOPs
- Identify the reasons for accuracy and neatness when assembling prescribed items, including labelling
- Understand the limits of their role in dispensing

- Understand the importance of: maintaining dispensing records including use of computer systems, prescription annotation
- Identify and use the correct equipment when assembling prescribed items
- Understand the importance and the necessity to maintain a clean environment and equipment
- Describe appropriate standards of behaviour and personal hygiene required for working in a pharmacy
- Understand potential consequences of dispensing errors
- Understand common abbreviations used on prescriptions
- Understand the importance of use of protective clothing
- Demonstrate an understanding of:
 - o Drug forms
 - o Drug strengths
 - o Generics and branded products
 - o Units of measurement
 - o Transfer of medicines from bulk
 - o Quantity calculations
- Identify the purpose of the different types of prescription received within their organisation
- Understand why and how prescriptions must be endorsed
- Discuss the filing and storage of prescriptions

Order, receive and store pharmaceutical stock

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should be able to:

- Describe stock control systems:
 - o Procedures for ordering from pharmaceutical companies and wholesalers, sources and suppliers
 - o Principles of stock rotation and monitoring shelf-life
- Understand the basic requirements for receiving stock and what should be done if they are not met, this will include the following:
 - o Condition of items
 - o Signature
 - o Checking order, discrepancies
 - o Checking expiry dates
 - o Reporting problems
 - o Completing documentation - electronically and paper
- Understand why certain items require special storage, these may include:
 - o Low temperature
 - o Special orders, named-patient supplies, trials
 - o Secured, CDs
 - o Room temperature
 - o Refrigerated items
 - o Isolated
- Discuss how and why it is important to store stock safely and tidily

- Discuss the importance of expiry dates
- Understand what is meant by damaged stock and how you would deal with such stock

Assist with the supply of pharmaceutical stock

To demonstrate competence in this area, assistants should be able to:

- Discuss why it is important to supply the correct stock in the correct formulation and the correct quantity
- Understand the health and safety issues in respect of storage and issuing of stock
- Understand the difference between branded and generic drugs
- Discuss why different stock is stored under different conditions
- Understand the principles of stock rotation
- Describe the action to be taken when dealing with:
 - o Out-of-date stock
 - o Damaged stock
 - o Contaminated stock
 - o Stock that has been stored incorrectly
- Discuss how to deal with the following situations:
 - o Urgent requests
 - o Unavailable stock
 - o Issuing stock with short expiry dates
- Be aware of the correct packaging for the safe distribution/delivery of stock
- Understand the importance of security when distributing stock
- Understand why it is important to keep accurate records