



Pharmacy National Occupational Standards Review

Context document and

Signposting to NOS – February 2016

1. Background

The NOS for Pharmacy were first developed by SEMTA and transferred to Skills for Health circa 2005. In 2007/8, the NOS were incrementally reviewed and additional NOS were developed to support the requirements of qualifications for Pharmacy support staff. In 2009/10, the Pharmacy NOS were used to inform the development of new qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 on the Qualifications & Credit Framework (QCF) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the SVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Scotland. These qualifications are based on the Pharmacy NOS and are aimed at Pharmacy/Dispensing Assistants and Pharmacy Technicians. Currently, on completion of the approved Level 3 qualifications that are derived from the NOS and a separate knowledge qualification and on meeting the practice requirements, the candidate is eligible to register with the General Pharmaceutical Council as a Pharmacy Technician.

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the regulatory body for Pharmacy across the UK, began a review of the education and training standards for the Pharmacy Technician starting in 2015. The Pharmacy suite NOS were reviewed in 2015/16. This project did not review the structure of the regulated qualifications as this will be undertaken by Awarding Organisations/Bodies following the NOS approval.

A tracking document of old to revised NOS can be found in Appendix 1.

2. What are National Occupational Standards?

NOS describe the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to undertake a particular task or job to a nationally recognised (UK wide) level of competence. They focus on what the person needs to be able to do, as well as what they must know and understand to work effectively. They cover the key activities undertaken within an occupation, across all the circumstances the job holder is likely to encounter.

NOS need to be 'standalone' as separate functions, which is why there are duplications in some of the knowledge and understanding statements across the suite. To use NOS, you need to put them together like a jigsaw to create a role profile or job description. If you are assessing someone against a number of NOS, you can do this holistically where knowledge is common across a number of NOS, therefore the individual being assessed will not have to produce additional or duplicate evidence for the NOS.

NOS can be used by any organisation (independent, NHS, third sector) providing the function being described is undertaken by an individual or individuals in that organisation. If the function or activity being described in the NOS is not relevant for you, there is no mandatory requirement for you to use it.

NOS are not assigned a level in the way that regulated qualification units are. The NOS are written in a generic way so as to apply to anyone who undertakes that function. When you wish to use the NOS in qualifications or education and training programmes, you can then decide upon the detailed breadth and depth of the knowledge individuals require to undertake a particular role.

SfH has a Competence Tools database which contains over 2000 NOS that could be relevant for health sector workers. The NOS range from communication, personal development, to carrying out health interventions, management and leadership and estates and facilities. Some of these NOS have been developed by other sector skills councils and imported into the SfH database for use by the health sector. An individual's role can be defined by using NOS from different suites and putting them together in a role profile. This can then be used for assessment, workforce planning, education and training programmes or for personal development. To view the Competence Tools, please click here https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence_search/

3. The project and governance structure

The NOS within the Pharmacy suite of NOS are applicable to pharmacy technicians. Some of the NOS within the suite are also applicable to pharmacy or dispensing assistants. The project reviewed all of the NOS within the Pharmacy suite with the exception of six 'PHARM prefixed NOS which were out of scope of the review (Pharm50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56) as these were reviewed in 2011 as part of the Chemotherapy NOS project and relate oncology pharmacy.

The scope of the recent project was to review the existing NOS and to update them based on current practice. If any new functions or activities were identified during the process, new NOS would only be developed were they were required by the GPhC as part of the regulation requirement for the role of pharmacy technician. It was not the intention to develop new NOS for pharmacy or dispensing assistants as part of this project.

There was a project governance structure in place to undertake this project. The Project Executive Group was responsible to Skills for Health senior management team and this Group ensured that the project did not go beyond the agreed project parameters. The project convened a Steering Group consisting of membership from GPhC, professional bodies, education leads, NHS leads and community representatives. The role of the Steering Group was to oversee the project process and provide advice on any risks to the project.

A Working Group was also convened and consisted of membership from hospital and community pharmacy, education and the MOD from across the four nations of the UK. The Working Group was responsible for amending the NOS and ensuring that they reflected current practice. The Working Group was also tasked with reviewing the feedback received via the online consultation and agreeing any further amendments to the NOS.

4. Areas to highlight

a) Feedback about the assessment and/or delivery of the qualifications received during online consultation

On review of the online consultation feedback, Skills for Health noted that some of the feedback was related to the assessment and/or delivery of the current pharmacy qualifications. This feedback will be kept on file for when the pharmacy qualifications are reviewed to be in line with the updated GPhC education and training standards.

b) Perceived gaps in the Pharmacy suite of NOS

During the project Skills for Health asked for feedback on the pharmacy specific functions that stakeholders felt were missing from the current suite of NOS. This feedback was collected through suggestions from the Working Group and via the online consultation. The perceived gaps were reviewed by Skills for Health. Where the suggestions related to generic functions and were not specific to pharmacy, Skills for Health suggested existing generic NOS which could be signposted to. These were shared with the GPhC and the Working Group. A list of generic NOS which could relate to providing pharmacy services can be found in Appendix 2.

Where the suggestions were not broad enough to warrant a new NOS or described part of a function as underpinning knowledge or performance criteria, this was discussed with the Working Group members to see if the perceived gap could be, or already was, included within the revised pharmacy NOS.

Where it was felt there were true gaps, this was discussed with the GPhC and the Working Group as any new NOS could only be developed where it was required by the GPhC to meet the requirements for regulation of pharmacy technicians. One new NOS has been developed as part of this project. This is for a function undertaken by pharmacy technicians and relates to the ordering of medicines for individuals.

c) Including range/scope within the NOS

During the consultation it was suggested that the NOS could benefit from the inclusion of scope or range within the NOS. However, in 2009, Skills for Health changed the template for the presentation of NOS. This updated template removed any reference to scope or range within the NOS. Scope or range would need to be added to the qualification units or qualification guidance materials when the qualifications are reviewed.

d) Issues with merging some NOS and the impact on Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)

During the consultation, it was suggested by respondents that a number of the existing NOS could be merged. Skills for Health wishes to highlight that where there is feedback from the consultation that particular NOS should be merged, we have had to consider the impact of doing so on the SVQs in Scotland. This is because the NOS are a 1:1 match for the units in the SVQ qualifications and changes to the number of NOS would impact on whether learners are able to achieve units if the NOS were merged. There is more flexibility in developing units for qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that are based on NOS as the units in these qualifications are not a direct match with the NOS.

Appendix 1

Pharmacy suite of NOS – old to new tracking table

Old NOS prefix and title	Revised NOS (2016) prefix and title	Hyperlink to NOS
PHARM01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy service to meet individual needs	PHARM01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy service	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4196/
PHARM02 Provide an effective and responsive pharmacy service	PHARM02 Provide an effective and responsive pharmacy service	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4197/
PHARM03 Process pharmaceutical queries	PHARM03 Respond to pharmaceutical queries and requests for information	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4198/
PHARM04 Provide advice on symptoms and the actions and uses of medicines	PHARM04 Provide advice on non-prescribed medicines and products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4199/
PHARM05 Assist in the sale of medicines and products	Merged with PHARM04	
There is no Pharm 06 in this suite		
PHARM07 Receive prescriptions from individuals	PHARM07 Receive prescriptions	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4200/
PHARM08 Confirm prescription validity	PHARM08 Confirm prescription validity	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4201/
PHARM09 Assemble prescribed items	PHARM09 Assemble prescribed items	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4202/
PHARM10 Issue prescribed items	PHARM10 Issue prescribed items	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4203/
PHARM11 Prepare extemporaneous medicines for	PHARM11 Prepare extemporaneous medicines	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4204/



Old NOS prefix and title	Revised NOS (2016) prefix and title	Hyperlink to NOS
individual use		
PHARM12 Order pharmaceutical stock	PHARM12 Order pharmaceutical stock	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4205/
PHARM13 Receive pharmaceutical stock	PHARM13 Receive pharmaceutical stock	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4206/
PHARM14 Maintain pharmaceutical stock	PHARM14 Maintain pharmaceutical stock	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4207/
PHARM15 Issue pharmaceutical stock	PHARM15 Supply pharmaceutical stock	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4208/
PHARM16 Assist in the manufacture and assembly of sterile and non-sterile batch medicinal products	Merged with PHARM17	
PHARM17 Manufacture and assembly of sterile and non-sterile batch medicinal products	PHARM17 Manufacture and assemble medicinal products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4209/
PHARM18 Prepare aseptic products	Merged with PHARM19	
PHARM19 Prepare aseptic products and carry out in process checking	PHARM19 Prepare aseptic products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4210/
PHARM20 Prepare documentation, materials and other items for the manufacture and assembly of medicinal products	PHARM20 Prepare documentation and materials for the manufacture and assembly of medicinal products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4211/
PHARM21 Prepare documentation, materials and other items for the preparation of aseptic products	PHARM21 Prepare documentation and materials for the production of aseptic products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4212/
PHARM22 Assist in the preparation of documentation, materials and other items for the	Merged with PHARM20	



Old NOS prefix and title	Revised NOS (2016) prefix and title	Hyperlink to NOS
manufacture and assembly of medicinal products		
PHARM23 Check documentation, starting materials, components and other consumables for the production of aseptic products	PHARM23 Check documentation and materials prior to the preparation of aseptic products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4213/
PHARM24 Provide an effective service in a setting outside the pharmacy	PHARM24 Provide an effective pharmacy collection and delivery service	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4214/
PHARM25 Assist in the supply of appliances	PHARM25 Supply dressings and appliances	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4215/
PHARM26 Process prescriptions for payment	PHARM26 Process pharmacy information for appropriate reimbursement and remuneration	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4216/
PHARM27 Undertake an in-process accuracy check of assembled prescribed items, prior to final check	Merged with PHARM09	
PHARM28 Undertake the final accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products	PHARM28 Undertake the final accuracy check of dispensed medicines and products	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4217/
PHARM29 Take a medication history from an individual	PHARM29 Retrieve and reconcile information about an individual's medicines	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4218/
PHARM30 Prepare to conduct a review of an individual's medicines	Merged with PHARM29	
PHARM31 Determine the suitability of an individual's own medicines for use	PHARM31 Confirm the suitability of an individual's medicines for use and ensure sufficient supply	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4219/
PHARM32 Assist in the issuing of prescribed items	PHARM32 Assist in the issuing of prescribed items	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4220/



Old NOS prefix and title	Revised NOS (2016) prefix and title	Hyperlink to NOS
N/A	PHARM33 Order medicines and products for individuals	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/4221/

Appendix 2

The table below signposts users to other NOS that could be relevant to those working in Pharmacy Services

NOS prefix and title	NOS suite and originating Sector Skills Council	Hyperlink to NOS
Audit & research		
PHS08 Improve the quality of health and healthcare interventions through audit and evaluation	Public Health, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2470/
GEN67 Establish quality policy and quality assurance systems for the delivery of a service or function	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2311/
CFA_BAD323 Research information	Business & Administration, Skills CFA	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/CFA_BAD323.pdf
R&D8a Assist in the research work	Research & Development, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2451/
Basic life support		
CHS36 Provide basic life support	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/906/
Clinical skills		
GEN135 Support individuals to take their medication as prescribed	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/3928/
CHS74 Manage an individual's	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/1205/



NOS prefix and title	NOS suite and originating Sector Skills Council	Hyperlink to NOS
medication to achieve optimum outcomes	Health	
CHS118 Form a professional judgement of an individual's health condition	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/434/
Coaching/mentoring		
LSICM05 Undertake coaching or mentoring	Learning & Development, Learning & Skills Improvement Service	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/LSICM05
Discharge		
CHS122 Prepare a discharge plan with individuals	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/414/
Equality & diversity		
SCDHSC3111 Promote the rights and diversity of individuals	Health and Social Care, Skills for Care & Development	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/SCDHSC3111
IT/databases		
SFJCPS 8.12 Search databases and sources of information	Commissioning in the Public Sector, Skills for Justice	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/3272_SFJCPS812.pdf
Lone working		
PMWRV14 Manage lone workers	Prevention & Management of Work Related Violence, Skills CFA	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/PMWRV14
Management skills		
CFA_BAA413 Chair Meetings	Business & Administration, Skills CFA	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/CFA_BAA413
CFAM&LDD7 Represent your area of responsibility in meetings	Management & Leadership, Skills CFA	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/CFAM&LDD7
Management & Leadership suite of NOS	Management & Leadership, Skills CFA	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence_search/
Mental health		
MH14.2013 Identify potential	Mental Health, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/3825/



NOS prefix and title	NOS suite and originating Sector Skills Council	Hyperlink to NOS
mental health needs and related issues		
Procurement/commissioning		
Commissioning and Procurement suites of NOS	Skills for Justice & Skills for Care & Development	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence_search/
Professional development		
SCDHSC0033 Develop your practice through reflection and learning	Health and Social Care, Skills for Care & Development	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/SCDHSC0033
GEN13 Synthesise new knowledge into the development of your own practice	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/376/
LSILADD10 Reflect on, develop and maintain own skills and practice in learning and development	Learning & Development, Learning & Skills Improvement Service	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/LSILADD10
SCDHSC0043 Take responsibility for the continuing professional development of yourself and others	Health and Social Care, Skills for Care & Development	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/SCDHSC0043
Project management		
CFA_BAA151 Contribute to running a project	Business & Administration, Skills CFA	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/CFA_BAA151
Providing advice and information		
GEN14 Provide advice and information to individuals on how to manage their own condition	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/377/
Public Health		
AH3 Supply injecting and other relevant equipment to individuals who use	Drugs & Alcohol, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/3922/



NOS prefix and title	NOS suite and originating Sector Skills Council	Hyperlink to NOS
substances and facilitate safe disposal		
CHS79 Support individuals who express a wish to stop smoking	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/1982/
HT2 Communicate with individuals about promoting their health and wellbeing	Health Trainer, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2499/
HT3 Enable individuals to change their behaviour to improve their own health and wellbeing	Health Trainer, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2500/
CHS19 Undertake routine clinical measurements	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/3399/
CHS145 Provide support to individuals to manage their body weight	Clinical Health Skills, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2739/
AA1 Recognise problematic use of alcohol or other substances and refer individuals to services	Drugs & Alcohol, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/3916/
PE1 Enable individuals to make informed health choices and decisions	Patient Education, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2101/
PE3 Work with individuals to evaluate their health status and needs	Patient Education, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2103/
PE5 Develop relationships with individuals that support them in addressing their health needs	Patient Education, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2105/
Radiopharmacy		
Radiopharmacy suite of NOS	Radiopharmacy, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence_search/



NOS prefix and title	NOS suite and originating Sector Skills Council	Hyperlink to NOS
Safeguarding		
SCDHSC0024 Support the safeguarding of individuals	Health and Social Care, Skills for Care & Development	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/external/SCDHSC0024
Team and multidisciplinary team working		
GEN39 Contribute to effective multi-disciplinary team working	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2212/
GEN123 Work with others to facilitate the transfer of individuals between agencies or services	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/3889/
GEN44 Liaise between primary, secondary and community teams	General Healthcare, Skills for Health	https://tools.skillsforhealth.org.uk/competence/show/html/id/2222/

