

CORE COMPETENCE AND KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ASSISTANT PRACTITIONER HIGHER LEVEL APPRENTICESHIP

Introduction

The Core Competence and Knowledge Framework for the Assistant Practitioner Higher Level Apprenticeship has been developed in partnership with NHS Southwest and the Get Britain Working and Apprenticeship Group (GBW&AG) Chaired by NHS Employers.

The framework has been developed to set out the learning outcome requirements for qualifications included within the Level 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship for Assistant Practitioners.

Why a Core Competence and Knowledge Framework?

Assistant Practitioner is a job title applied to a very wide variety of roles that are generally at Career Framework Level 4. These roles have been developed locally by employers to meet individual service need. The specific technical competences required for the role will vary depending on the clinical area within which the Assistant Practitioner is working. There are numerous examples of Assistant Practitioner roles including Cancer Services, Physiotherapy, Genito-Urinary Medicine, Orthopaedics, Hospice Care, Mental Health, Occupational Therapy as well as hybrid roles that cross traditional occupational areas. The variety of roles continues to increase as employers re/ design the roles required to deliver healthcare services.

Attempts to define the technical competences required for Assistant Practitioner roles were abandoned by the Working Group following the initial consultation. It was agreed that attempting to define the specific technical competences required for each role was not possible due to the wide variations in functions undertaken and the competences required by individual employers. It was agreed that the focus should move to achieving as wide a consensus on the core requirements of the Assistant Practitioner role as possible in order to ensure standardisation and transferability of the core skills and knowledge required by the role.

The draft Core Competence and Knowledge framework was informed by the Core Standards for Assistant Practitioners (Skills for Health, 2010) and feedback from stakeholders on additional areas of competence and knowledge that should be transferable across the widest range of Assistant Practitioner roles as possible.

Consultation on the Core Competence and Knowledge Framework was undertaken between May and November 2012 via the GBW&AG. A number of workshops were also undertaken with employers in order to obtain feedback and inform the content of the framework.

The framework was agreed in November 2012.

The framework sets out the minimum competence and knowledge that should be delivered through qualifications for competence and knowledge in the Level 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship. The wider requirements of the Apprenticeship itself will be included in the Apprenticeship Framework document which is intended to be issued in late spring 2013.

The teaching and assessment of specific technical competences required by Assistant Practitioner roles is covered in the Appendix.

The qualifications included in the framework must comply with the requirements for Higher Level Apprenticeship combined qualifications set out in the Specification for Apprenticeship Standards England (SASE) published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Academic Level

FHEQ

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 5: Foundation Degree

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any Foundation Degree which should meet the descriptor in full.

Foundation Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively

- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Qualifications and Credit Framework Level 5

Summary

Achievement at level 5 reflects the ability to identify and use relevant understanding, methods and skills to address broadly-defined, complex problems. It includes taking responsibility for planning and developing courses of action as well as exercising autonomy and judgement within broad parameters. It also reflects understanding of different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Use practical, theoretical or technological understanding to find ways forward in broadly-defined, complex contexts
- Analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas
- Be aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work
- Understand different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them

Application and Action

- Address broadly-defined, complex problems
- Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods and skills
- Use relevant research or development to inform actions
- Evaluate actions, methods and results

Autonomy and Accountability

- Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of action, including, where relevant, responsibility for the work of others
- Exercise autonomy and judgement within broad parameters

QCF qualifications for inclusion in the Apprenticeship Framework must comply with the Skills for Health QCF Assessment Principles for Qualifications that Assess Occupational Competence.

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The framework sets out the outcomes that are expected to be delivered through the Level 5 Higher Level Apprenticeship Framework. These outcomes will be delivered through achievement of either a Foundation Degree or a Level 5 QCF qualification that are included within the Higher Level Apprenticeship in Healthcare (Assistant Practitioner) **NB Working title**.

Core Competence:

At the end of the programme the Assistant Practitioner will be able to:

- Communicate effectively including the use of IT skills, accurate record keeping, data entry, interpersonal skills, written and verbal effectiveness.
- Support the care, protection and wellbeing of individuals (adults & children)
- Support personal development for themselves and others
- Reflect on and evaluate own values, priorities, interests and effectiveness
- Promote Equality and Diversity
- Promote effective team working
- Promote, maintain and monitor health and safety in the work environment
- Apply Infection Prevention and Control measures within their area of responsibility
- Act within the limits of their competence and authority
- Able to conduct an assessment of the patient including routine admission
- Undertake clinical measurements – clinical measurements can be any measurements that are taken as part of either an assessment of an individual's healthcare status, measurements taken to monitor the individual's healthcare status or evaluate the effectiveness of a healthcare intervention
- Contribute to the identification of risks to individuals (patients) and others
- Manage quality within their sphere or responsibility
- Promote effective Nutrition and Fluid Balance – this competence is not restricted to those who are directly responsible for ensuring that individuals receive sufficient nutrition or fluids. All healthcare staff should understand the physiological changes that can affect the individual when they are not receiving sufficient nutrition and/ or fluids, how these changes could be observed through other healthcare interventions and what actions to take if you have concerns.

Core knowledge and understanding:**At the end of the programme the Assistant practitioner will know and understand:**

- The principles and philosophy of healthcare
- The structure, organisation and function of the human body
- Lifespan developments and healthcare needs
- Research and development in the health sector

Leadership:**At the end of the programme the Assistant Practitioner will:**

- Be able to lead and develop a work team

OR

- Understand the principles, theories and concepts related to leading and developing a work team

Role Specific Technical Competence:

The achievement of role specific technical competence is not required as part of the framework itself and can either be taught and assessed as continuing development once the Core Framework has been completed or concurrently. The technical competences required for the role are determined locally by the employer to meet local service need.

A significant number of the role specific technical skills required may have been achieved through learning and development undertaken prior to starting the Higher Level Apprenticeship e.g. QCF Level 3 Diploma in Clinical Healthcare Support or QCF Level 3 Diploma in Allied Health Profession Support but the depth and breadth of the knowledge required to underpin the technical skill is now greater or there is a change in the accountability of the individual in the Assistant Practitioner role.

In determining the role specific technical competences required a detailed assessment/ training needs analysis of the role/ individual should be undertaken using for example a competence profile, Transferable Role Template or job description in order to identify the required competence to undertake the role effectively.

Examples of specialist competences could be in areas such as critical care, primary care, palliative care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, cancer services, sexual health etc. This list of examples is only indicative.