

Levels 2 and 3
NVQ
Pharmacy Services
November 2002

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Authorised by Peter Goff

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CONTENTS

Section 1: General information about NVQs	1
Introduction	1
What are NVQs?	1
Explanation of levels	2
What is the structure of an NVQ?	3
Who is involved in NVQs?	7
Section 2: The Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services	9
Which Pharmacy Services NVQs are available?	9
What is the structure of the Level 2 NVQ in Pharmacy Services?	10
What is the structure of the Level 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services?	12
Section 3: Assessment	15
Introduction	15
What is assessment?	15
Roles in assessment	15
Approaches to assessment	16
Timing	16
The five steps to assessment	16
Step 1: Plan and organise assessment	16
Step 2: Decide on the assessment methods	18
Step 3: Judge the evidence	22
Step 4: Record	23
Step 5: Provide feedback	23
Section 4: How should evidence be presented?	25
Example 1: Index of evidence	28
Example 2: Unit assessment plan	29
Example 3: Unit progress record	30
Example 4: Evidence achievement record	32
Example 5: Knowledge evidence record	34

Example 6: Personal statement	36
Example 7: Observation record	37
Example 8: Witness testimony	38
Example 9: Record of questions and candidate's answers	39
Section 5: Further information	41
How does an organisation become a centre?	41
Review and evaluation	41
Registration	41
Candidate entries	42
Certification process	42
Payment of fees	43
Anti-discriminatory practices	43
Special assessment arrangements	43
What else you should read	43
Where are the standards available from?	44
Section 6: Assessment strategy for the NVQs in Pharmacy Services	45

Section 1: General information about NVQs

Introduction

This section provides an overview of NVQs. If you are already familiar with the concept of NVQs, you may wish to go straight to *Section 2*.

What are NVQs?

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are work-based qualifications that assess the skills and knowledge people need to perform their job role effectively. The qualifications are based on national occupational standards, which define what employees, or potential employees, must be able to do and know, how well they must do these things, and the circumstances in which they have to use the skills or carry out the activities.

The standards are usually defined by national training organisations (NTOs), which are made up of representatives from the relevant industrial sector.

The organisation responsible for the standards in Pharmacy Services NVQs is:

Science, Technology and Mathematics Council
20-22 Queensberry Place
London
SW7 2DZ

Telephone: 020 7225 1155
Fax: 020 7225 1997
E-mail: enquiries@stmc.org.uk
Website: www.stmc.org.uk

Each NVQ is designed to fit into a broad qualifications framework, which allows for the comparison of different qualifications in the UK and throughout Europe.

NVQs are open to all. There are no entry requirements, no prescribed methods of delivery, no time constraints for completion and no age limits. Candidates do not have to achieve their NVQ all at once, unit accreditation is available for those wishing to achieve an NVQ unit by unit over a period of time.

On occasions, special assessment arrangements may be needed in order to provide equal opportunities to candidates with special needs. Further information on special assessment arrangements can be found in *Section 5*.

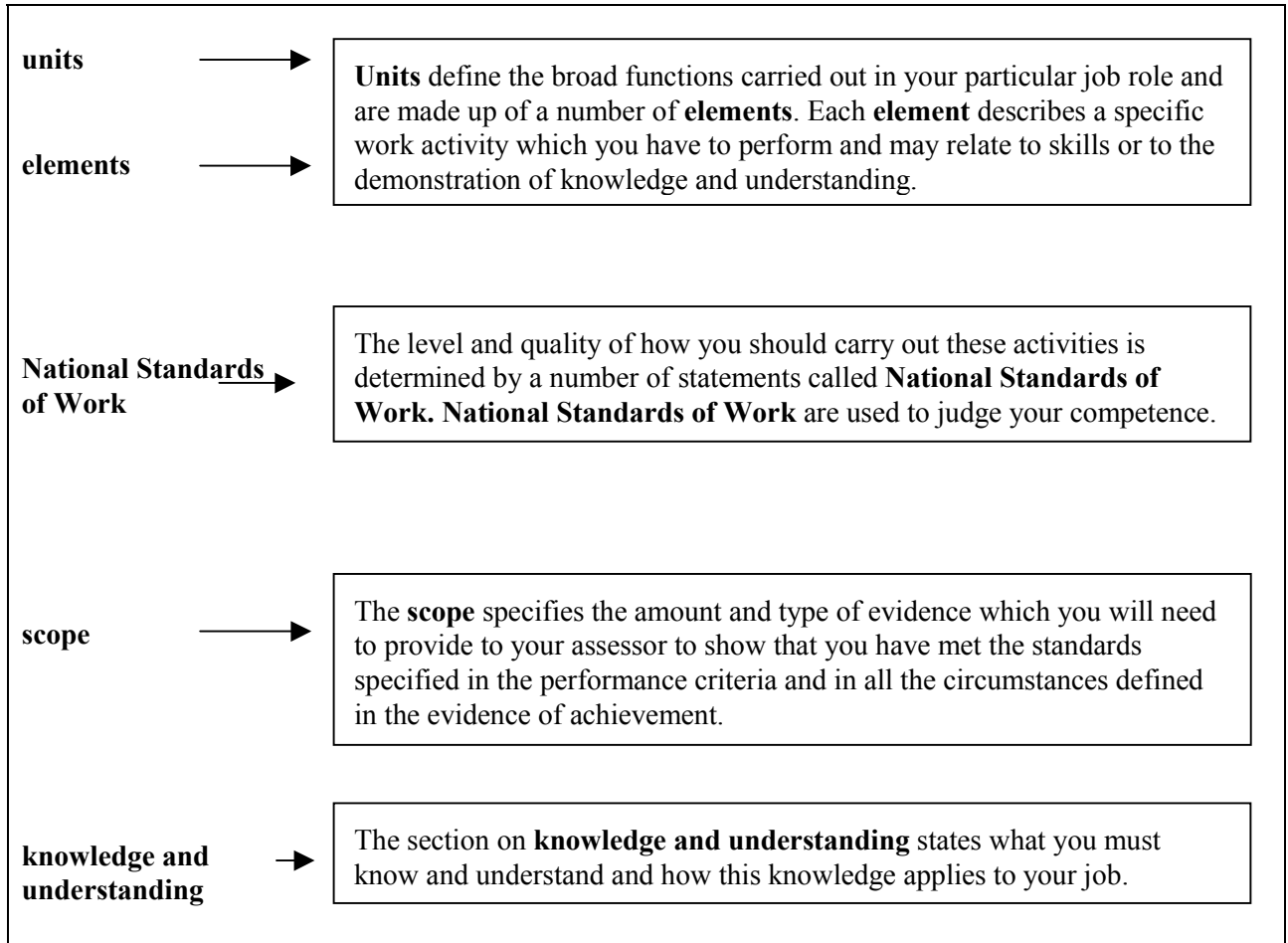
NVQs are available at five levels, which reflect the range of technical and supervisory skills, knowledge, and experience that employees should have as they progress in their industry. An explanation of the levels is provided on the following page.

Explanation of levels

Level	Candidates must show their competence:
Level 1	in a range of activities that are largely routine and predictable.
Level 2	in a broader range of work activities that are less routine and predictable. Their job role will need to have some autonomy and responsibility and may require them to work as part of a team.
Level 3	by applying their knowledge and skills while carrying out a broad range of varied work activities, most of which are complex and non-routine. Their job role will have considerable autonomy or responsibility, and often require them to manage others.
Level 4	through complex work activities which that require technical knowledge. Their job role requires substantial personal autonomy and often requires them to take responsibility for the work of others and for allocating resources.
Level 5	when carrying out activities in a wide range of situations, which are often unpredictable. Substantial responsibility and autonomy is involved in the job role, which requires deciding on the allocation of resources and the work of others. It requires the use of complex skills such as analysis, design and evaluation.

What is the structure of an NVQ?

All NVQs have a common structure. They consist of standards that can be broken down into the following parts:



If you are not yet clear about how we define standards, remember that the standards have been developed by experts with experience in management and that all candidates aiming for this particular NVQ are being assessed against the same standards.

You will find an example of an NVQ unit overleaf.

An example of an NVQ unit in Pharmacy Services at level 2

Evidence achievement record

Unit title
The title describes a role or task.

Unit 2.01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service

Element 2.01.1 Identify the needs of the customer

National standard of work

You must always:

- 1 Deal with your **customers** promptly even when working in **different situations**
- 2 Ensure you adapt to the **verbal and non-verbal signals** offered by your customer
- 3 Identify the needs of your **customer** accurately through sensitive questioning
- 4 Ensure you check with your **customer** your perceptions of their **needs**
- 5 Make realistic commitments to your **customers** regarding the delivery of products or services
- 6 Refer your **customer** to the appropriate person as identified in the SOPs

Element
Each unit is made up of a number of elements. Each element describes a specific work activity that employees have to perform and the skills, knowledge or understanding required.

National Standards of Work
This sets out what candidates must do to show they can perform the work task competently. Assessors judge candidates' performance against these standards. All of the National Standards of Work need to be met.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence achievement record

Unit **2.01** **Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service**

Element **2.01.1** **Identify the needs of the customer**

Scope of standard	Assessor to insert date each time competence is achieved
You must demonstrate dealing with customers with different needs from the following groups:	
a customers with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
b customers with a clear idea of their needs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
c customers with a general idea of their needs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
d customers with no idea of their needs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
You will need to show that you are able to deal with customers in different situations :	
e busy periods	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
f quiet periods	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
g when systems or resources are not available	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal and non-verbal signals:	

Knowledge evidence record

Unit 2.01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service

Evidence key:					
EI	Evidence Index No.	O	Observation	P	Personal Statement
WT	Witness Testimony	APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning	Q&A	Questions and Answers

Knowledge, understanding and skills for this unit:

Knowledge and understanding
This states what candidates must know and understand, and how this knowledge applies to their jobs.

You must show that you know and understand:		Type of Evidence					
		EI	O	P	WT	APL	Q&A DATE
For the whole unit							
K1	The importance of SOPs what they contain and why it is important that they should be followed at all times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K2	The importance of retaining customer loyalty and confidence to the organisation and how you contribute towards it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K3	The organisation's policy on customer service and customer relationships and how this applies to your job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K4	The organisations procedure for handling complaints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying customer needs							
K5	The importance of establishing your customers requirements clearly and accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K6	Why verbal and non-verbal signals are important when communicating with customers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide information							
K7	How to give clear and accurate information and check the customer's understanding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K8	Knowledge of relevant products for which information is required	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: You will be given advice on how much of evidence of achievement you need to prove through performance evidence. The remaining parts of the evidence of achievement may be covered through questioning by your assessor.

Who is involved in NVQs?

A number of individuals and organisations are involvement in NVQ assessment. Their roles have been designed to guarantee fair, accurate and consistent assessment.

	Who are they?	What is their role?
Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisations that offer NVQs on behalf of Edexcel. They may be a school, college, university, training provider or employer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the quality of the qualification. They must work within Edexcel's policies and guidelines, one of which is to provide a realistic working environment (RWE). Centres appoint assessors and internal verifiers. Once a year, centres must review the operation of the course and candidates' performance (see <i>Review and evaluation</i> in <i>Section 5</i>).
Candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The people who want to achieve the NVQ, eg an employee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to show they can perform to national standards in order to be awarded an NVQ or unit(s).
Assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The person who assesses the candidates and decides if they have met the required standard, eg a supervisor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judge candidate's evidence of performance, knowledge and understanding against the national standards and decide whether candidates have demonstrated competence.
Internal verifiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals appointed by the centre who ensure that assessors apply the standards consistently, eg supervisor, line manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise and support assessors and maintain the quality of assessment in a centre. They sample assessments systematically to confirm the quality and consistency of assessment decisions.
External verifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals appointed by Edexcel to ensure that standards are being applied uniformly and consistently across all centres offering the NVQ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the quality and consistency of assessments, both within and between centres by systematically sampling evidence. Make regular visits to centres to ensure they continue to meet the approval criteria.
Edexcel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your awarding body, approved by the government to offer qualifications and awards. Edexcel provides qualifications throughout the world and was formed in 1996 by the merger of the Business and Technician Education Council (BTEC) and London Examinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue candidates' certificates so that employers can be sure the qualification has been gained after a rigorous and effective assessment process.

Assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers should have occupational expertise in the NVQs they are assessing and verifying. The NTO will normally specify the level of occupational expertise required, within the assessment strategy for the standards.

Assessors and verifiers are also expected to obtain an appropriate qualification in assessment and verification. This can take the form of the 'A & V units' (the national standards for assessment and verification) or an alternative qualification that the NTO recognises.

Edexcel expects all assessors, internal verifiers and external verifiers to obtain the appropriate A or V units or the NTO-recognised qualifications within **18 months** of starting to assess or verify.

You can contact us at:

Edexcel Foundation,
Stewart House,
32 Russell Square,
LONDON WC1B 5DN

Telephone: 0870 240 9800

E-mail: enquiries@edexcel.org.uk

Fax: 020 7758 6960

www.edexcel.org.uk

Section 2: The Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services

The NVQ in Pharmacy Services recognises the skills, knowledge and understanding of candidates and allows them to gain a qualification in the workplace that relates to their job area and promotes good working practice.

The standards on which these NVQs are based have been developed by TOPSS, the national training organisation for this industrial sector.

The NVQ is designed to be assessed in the workplace, or in conditions resembling the workplace, for example:

Practical tests – a test of (usually) manual skills involving realistic tools, equipment, materials and working methods, but conducted in a non-work environment. This produces a physical outcome or artifact which can be examined. In addition, some parts of the process may be observed by a qualified assessor or recorded by an expert witness. Examples of this in pharmacy services would be extemporaneous dispensing of products or assembly of orders.

Work-based projects – a complex activity usually involving a number of associated outcomes and processes. Projects normally involve: data collection, investigation, analysis, calculation, interpretation, synthesis, presentation of findings and formatting of written reports. Projects usually result in a document that can be examined but some parts of the process may be observed or recorded – particularly verbal presentations. Work based projects use the facilities, processes, data and information of the normal work environment. An example of where work-based projects may be used in the pharmacy services qualifications is in relation to health promotion/education for individuals or groups.

In a further education or training situation, assessment is often achieved through simulation. Simulation must be carried out in conditions resembling the workplace. These conditions are described as being a ‘realistic working environment’ (RWE). For guidance on the use of simulation, see *Section 3*.

Which Pharmacy Services NVQs are available?

The NVQs in Pharmacy Services are presently available at Levels 2 and 3.

What is the structure of the Level 2 NVQ in Pharmacy Services?

To achieve the whole qualification a candidate must prove competence in **all three mandatory** units and **three optional** units.

Mandatory units for the Level 2 NVQ in Pharmacy Services

Candidates must achieve **all three** of the units listed.

Unit number	Title	Element	Title
Unit 2.01	Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service	Element 1	Identify the needs of the customer
		Element 2	Provide information to customers
		Element 3	Help customers to resolve queries and complaints
Unit 2.02	Ensure your own actions reduce the risk to health and safety (<i>ENTO Health and Safety at work unit A</i>)	Element 1	Identify the hazards and evaluate the risks in your workplace
		Element 2	Reduce the risks to health and safety in your workplace
Unit 2.03	Support the work of your team (<i>Council for Administration Unit 201</i>)	Element 1	Work effectively with other team members
		Element 2	Help to improve the work of your team

Continued overleaf...

Optional units for the Level 2 NVQ in Pharmacy Services

Candidates must achieve **three** of the units listed.

Unit number	Title	Element	Title
Unit 2.04	Assist in the sale of OTC medicines and provide information to customers on symptoms and products	Element 1	Assist in the sale of OTC medicines
		Element 2	Provide information and advice on symptoms and OTC medicines
Unit 2.05	Assist in the supply of prescribed items	Element 1	Take in a prescription
		Element 2	Issue and deliver prescribed items
Unit 2.06	Assist with the assembly of prescribed items	Element 1	Assemble prescribed items
Unit 2.07	Order, receive and store pharmaceutical stock	Element 1	Order stock
		Element 2	Receive stock
		Element 3	Store stock
Unit 2.08	Assist with the supply of pharmaceutical stock	Element 1	Assist with the maintenance of stock
		Element 2	Issue stock
Unit 2.09	Prepare to make pharmaceutical products	Element 1	Assist with the preparation of the equipment and environment
		Element 2	Assemble ingredients and consumables
Unit 2.10	Assist with the manufacture and assembly of medicinal products	Element 1	Assist with the preparation and packaging of medicinal products
		Element 2	Assist with the completion of the manufacturing and assembly process
Unit 2.11	Assist with the preparation of aseptic products	Element 1	Assist with the preparation and packaging of aseptic products
		Element 2	Assist in the completion of the aseptic process

What is the structure of the Level 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services?

To achieve the whole qualification a candidate must prove competence in **all four mandatory** units and **four optional** units.

Mandatory units for the Level 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services

Candidates must achieve **all four** of the units listed.

Unit number	Title	Element	Title
Unit 3.01	Dispense medicines and products	Element 1	Receive prescription
		Element 2	Validate prescription
		Element 3	Assemble and label required medicine or product
		Element 4	Prepare extemporaneous medicine for patient use
		Element 5	Issue prescribed medicine or product
Unit 3.02	Control stock of pharmaceutical materials and equipment	Element 1	Order stock
		Element 2	Receive and store stock
		Element 3	Maintain stock
		Element 4	Issue stock
Unit 3.03	Providing pharmaceutical information and advice	Element 1	Receive a pharmaceutical query
		Element 2	Prepare a response
		Element 3	Respond to a pharmaceutical query
Unit 3.04	Ensure your own actions reduce the risks to health and safety (Employment NTO Unit A)	Element 1	Identify the hazards and evaluate the risks in your workplace
		Element 2	Reduce the risks to health and safety in your workplace

Continued overleaf...

Optional units for the Level 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services

Candidates must achieve **four** of the units listed.

Unit number	Title	Element	Title
Unit 3.05	Manage your work and development (Council for Administration Unit 303)	Element 1	Plan your work to meet requirements
		Element 2	Organise your work to meet requirements
		Element 3	Develop your own work
Unit 3.06	Provide an effective pharmacy services for customers	Element 1	Respond to the needs and feelings expressed by customers
		Element 2	Meet the ongoing needs and expectations of your customers
		Element 3	Identify and respond to customer service problems and complaints
Unit 3.07	Support the use of pharmacy information technology	Element 1	Start up your computer equipment
		Element 2	Enter and save data
		Element 3	Retrieve and supply information
		Element 4	Close down your computer equipment
Unit 3.08	Manufacture and assemble sterile and non-sterile batch medicinal products	Element 1	Prepare environment, equipment and ingredients for assembly or manufacturing process
		Element 2	Prepare, process, assemble and pack manufactured product
		Element 3	Complete the assembly or manufacturing process
Unit 3.09	Prepare pharmaceutical products aseptically	Element 1	Prepare the environment, assemble the equipment and ingredients for the aseptic process.
		Element 2	Prepare and pack aseptic products.
		Element 3	Complete the aseptic process

Continued overleaf...

Unit 3.10	Assist in the sale of OTC medicines and provide information to customers on symptoms and products	Element 1	Assist in the sale of OTC medicines
		Element 2	Provide information and advice on symptoms and OTC medicines
Unit 3.11	Assist in the provision of community specialist activities	Element 1	Assist in the provision of services outside the pharmacy
		Element 2	Assist in the supply of appliances
		Element 3	Endorse and process prescriptions to ensure the appropriate payment
Unit 3.12	Facilitate learning through demonstration and instruction (Employment NTO Training and Development Unit C42)	Element 1	Demonstrate skills and methods to learners
		Element 2	Instruct learners

Section 3: Assessment

Introduction

This section offers practical advice on all aspects of assessment, from planning assessment opportunities to recording evidence. The guidance should help you to ensure that your assessment is effective, rigorous and appropriate. The section outlines an approach to assessment based on good practice. You may develop your own approach if you wish.

This guidance is written primarily for assessors, but it may also be helpful to candidates.

What is assessment?

Assessment is the key to achieving NVQs. As an assessor, your role is vital in helping your candidates to achieve their award and in ensuring that the requirements of the occupational standards are met. You will need to be clear about what is meant by assessment and what you are assessing.

In deciding whether a candidate should be awarded an NVQ, you will need to go through the following stages:

- becoming familiar with the standards
- planning for assessment
- collecting evidence of the candidate's performance
- judging the candidate's evidence against the NVQ standards and making an assessment decision
- recording the assessment decision.

Roles in assessment

Before beginning the assessment process, both you and the candidate should be clear about your roles.

Assessor's role

The assessor must:

- ensure that candidates understand what is expected of them, what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed
- ensure that the conditions and materials required for assessment are available
- observe and record candidates carrying out the activities described in the standards – records should say what has been observed, how it was carried out, and what it demonstrated
- know who will act as an internal verifier
- question candidates and record results
- help candidates to gather and provide evidence
- judge evidence
- authenticate the evidence candidates provide
- record achievement
- identify gaps or shortfalls in candidates' competence
- provide feedback to candidates.

Candidate's role

The candidate must:

- prepare for assessment by familiarising themselves with the standards, what is to be assessed and how it will be assessed
- carry out activities and/or answer questions
- gather and present evidence for assessment
- receive and act on feedback from the assessor.

Approaches to assessment

Candidates may approach assessment for NVQs through a variety of routes. Two of the main ways are through work (paid or voluntary) or through a training programme.

Work (paid or voluntary) – when a candidate approaches assessment through work, it will probably be your job to help them plan the sequence of assessment, give feedback on how they are performing and arrange for them to acquire any competence that is missing.

Training programmes – in these cases a series of educational or training events, linked to assessment opportunities, will already have been planned. It will be your job to monitor how the candidate is performing, assess their evidence and provide feedback on their progress.

Timing

A candidate may begin their NVQ at any time provided the necessary preparations and plans have been made.

There is no limit on the time a candidate may take to gain the whole qualification or individual unit(s). Some candidates will take longer than others, depending on their understanding of the award, their work setting and personal circumstances. An assessor should therefore organise and arrange assessment appropriate to each candidate, although there must be an agreed target date for completion.

However, it is important that the evidence submitted demonstrates current competence of the task being assessed, particularly if the evidence is from the past.

The five steps to assessment

If you follow the five steps identified, you should be able to ensure that your candidates move efficiently and effectively towards achievement of their NVQ.

Step 1: Plan and organise assessment

You should make sure that candidates receive guidance before starting an NVQ. They need advice to ensure that their existing job remit, skills, experience and plans for progression are matched to the NVQ selected. It does not have to be you, as the assessor, who carries out the matching exercise. In fact, this part of the process is often carried out during induction, but whoever has responsibility for it should ensure that the assessment opportunities available to the candidate are also considered.

You will need to work out how much time you and your candidate are able to devote to the NVQ. This is likely to be limited by the demands of a busy workplace, or by time tabling. If possible, try to agree sessions in advance and stick to them and remember that you need to allow for review and evaluation sessions in addition to assessments. Once this is agreed you can begin planning.

There are two levels of planning:

- the overall plan when you and your candidate look at the whole qualification and set targets for achievement
- individual plans for assessment.

Overall assessment planning

It is good practice for you to agree an overall assessment plan with your candidate. An overall assessment plan should include:

- the overall programme for assessment, identifying how and when each part of the NVQ will be assessed
- target dates for completing each unit. There are no time limits on the amount of time a candidate can take to complete a unit or an NVQ, but target dates will motivate candidates and help you to monitor progress
- how you are going to give feedback
- what happens if there is a disagreement between the candidate and yourself.

Producing an overall assessment plan is the ideal time for you and your candidate to identify opportunities for **integrating assessment**. This is when a piece of evidence generated from one activity is used to prove competence across different elements, performance criteria and/or units. To reduce the assessment burden on you and your candidate you will need to maximise the opportunities for integration.

Through producing the overall plan you may also identify job activities the candidate currently performs that match the standards and can plan to assess them immediately. You may also identify evidence from past achievement that can be used (see *Accreditation of prior learning* on page 21). If the candidate is providing evidence from the workplace, their job role may mean they are not able to cover all the standards during the normal course of their work. You may need to create new opportunities, such as arranging for your candidate to move to a different department so that different activities can be performed or different skills used. The candidate might also need to attend a college or training course to fill in any gaps.

You may need to reassure your candidate at this stage. Many feel overwhelmed by the apparent amount of evidence they will have to produce, but they will need to realise that with effective planning the process can be made much easier and they will be more likely to succeed.

Individual assessment planning

You and your candidate will need to plan each individual assessment carefully. You will need to decide the methods you will use to carry out the assessment, where and when the assessment will take place and who will be present. You should agree a **unit assessment plan** that specifies the tasks to be carried out, the time they will take and the parts of the standards that will be covered. (See page 29 for an example of a **unit assessment plan**.)

Although you need to plan carefully what you are expecting to assess, always be prepared to allow candidates to provide additional evidence if the opportunity arises.

There is no limit to the time it takes for a candidate to complete a unit or NVQ. However, you and your candidate should still set target dates for completing each unit. In reaching agreement, take into account the candidate's job or training programme and clearly mark out the points of decision for each element and unit.

Step 2: Decide on the assessment methods

The methods of assessment you use should be valid, reliable and practicable.

By ‘**valid**’ we mean that the assessment should be appropriate to the standards.

By ‘**reliable**’ we mean that the assessment method should ensure consistent results when used with different candidates, different assessors and on different occasions.

By ‘**practicable**’ we mean that the method should ensure the assessment takes account of available resources, equipment and time.

As an assessor, it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the standards you will be assessing. In doing so, you will be able to identify what skills need to be demonstrated and the types of evidence that a candidate needs to generate in order to complete the all units of the NVQ.

Once you are familiar with the national standards of work, scope, knowledge and understanding requirements in all the units of the NVQ you will find it easier to decide what is acceptable evidence and how it should be produced by the candidate.

You and your candidate must agree the methods of evidence collection that are most appropriate to the candidate’s work setting and patterns. Evidence must be precisely and directly relevant to the particular standards for which a candidate seeks credit; it cannot be just a general indication of acceptable practice.

Assessment methods

All methods of assessment fall under one of three categories: **observation**, **product evaluation** and **questioning**.

Observation

Observing performance will be the most common method used in assessing the NVQ. Observation can be organised in a variety of ways:

- continuously working alongside the candidate
- arranging to work alongside the candidate at specific times
- planning to visit when particularly relevant activities are scheduled
- arranging for particular activities to take place.

The candidate will be able to supplement direct observation of performance with other types of evidence, eg **personal statements** or **witness testimonies**. It is also possible to use tape recordings or other technologies to record performance, should your presence as an assessor not be possible.

Observation by an assessor is considered to be the most valid and reliable method of assessment and there will be many naturally arising opportunities for you to use this technique.

You should complete an **observation record** to show the internal and external verifier how you reached a decision on the candidate’s competence. You can find a completed **observation record** in *Section 4* and we suggest you use the example as an indication of what information we need. For example, details of the activity, date observed, and how the observation relates to the standards.

Product evaluation

This involves judging products candidates produced during the course of their work. Product evidence will be used a great deal. The exact nature of this evidence will depend on what the candidate's job entails. Examples of product evidence include letters, memos, lists and reports.

Questioning

Candidates have to prove that they have the required knowledge and understanding for each unit. They will often demonstrate it through the production of evidence, though in some cases this will not be possible.

Questioning is the ideal way of proving whether or not the candidate has the necessary knowledge and understanding. Questions can be given in many forms such as short-answer questions, projects, multiple-choice tests, case studies, or assignments.

There may be more emphasis on questioning to prove knowledge in areas where evidence is generated through practical working activities, and where there may be no product evidence. If you are a visiting assessor, you might use questioning to prove the candidate's competence and the authenticity of the evidence.

Questioning is a powerful means of checking the knowledge and understanding that lies behind performance. It is also a useful tool for exploring why a candidate acted in a certain way, or to identify what they would have done if circumstances had been different.

Questions, whether oral or written, should not require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding in ways that are either more complex or more simplistic than is necessary to achieve the standards.

Supporting evidence

On most occasions the candidate will be able to support your observations with other types of evidence, such as witness and personal testimony, work products, assignments and projects.

Testimony – personal and witness

It is inevitable that you will not be able to observe everything your candidate does. On such occasions, statements from other people (witness testimonies) who have seen your candidate working can be useful sources of evidence for the NVQ as they can describe each activity in detail. Generally, testimonies are used to support other evidence produced. You should bear in mind that the strength of evidence will vary, depending on the knowledge and expertise of the person providing the testimony and you will have to take several factors into account when you make a judgement. It may help if you think of a line from strongest to weakest.

Strongest	Stronger	Weaker	Weakest
Professional worker in senior position in same type of work with knowledge of the standards	Professional worker in senior position but with no knowledge of the standards	Colleague with equal experience but no knowledge of the standards	Person with limited experience of the workplace or knowledge of the standards

Work products

A number of items could be produced by candidates as evidence, for example: copies of records or reports that the candidate has compiled, letters and memos, minutes of meetings, leaflets or booklets that provide information to clients, photographs, audio or videotape recordings of work which the candidate has carried out. Work products will normally be located in the candidate's portfolio and they should be cross-referenced to the performance criteria/elements to which they apply.

Work products **must** be wholly or partially the result of work undertaken by the candidate. To ensure authenticity, the products should be countersigned by a person in a position of responsibility who is able to vouch that the products are the unaided work of the candidate.

Assignments and projects

Assignments and projects are also useful ways to collect evidence. However, you should ensure you are not asking for a competence that is not required by the standards. For example, it may not be necessary for the candidate to be able to write or design a project report in order to satisfy the competence requirements.

Assignments and projects might be a particularly useful way for a candidate to track the course of their work over a period of time and this could be structured to serve the purposes of specific elements of competence. This method of collecting evidence is particularly appropriate for units that link a series of activities such as planning, implementation and evaluation.

However, care must be exercised when judging whether competence in actual practice or knowledge specifications has been demonstrated.

Using simulation

Within the pharmacy services standards and qualifications, **simulation** takes one of the following formats:

Practical tests – a test of (usually) manual skills involving realistic tools, equipment, materials and working methods, but conducted in a non-work environment. This produces a physical outcome or artifact which can be examined. In addition, some parts of the process may be observed by a qualified assessor or recorded by an expert witness. Examples of this in pharmacy services would be extemporaneous dispensing of products or assembly of orders.

Work-based projects – a complex activity usually involving a number of associated outcomes and processes. Projects normally involve: data collection, investigation, analysis, calculation, interpretation, synthesis, presentation of findings and formatting of written reports. Projects usually result in a document that can be examined but some parts of the process may be observed or recorded – particularly verbal presentations. Work-based projects use the facilities, processes, data and information of the normal work environment. An example of where work-based projects may be used in the pharmacy services qualifications is in relation to health promotion/education for individuals or groups.

Simulations have been indicated when there are limited opportunities for demonstration in the work environment (see Assessment and Evidence Requirement Document). These occur for such reasons as:

- hazards to the candidate or others in the work environment – for example, cleaning procedures, cross infection hazards

- infrequent events where insisting that candidates wait for their occurrence would be unreasonable or create blockages in the assessment system which might carry the risk of demotivating candidates – for example, handling hazardous spillages, bomb alerts
- critical outcomes where a high degree of confidence is required for the transferability and repeatability of performance – for example, aseptic manipulations
- situations in which it is unacceptable to observe or record as this would be obtrusive and unacceptable for reasons of confidentiality – for example, counselling a distressed client.

In addition there will be times when individual candidates are not able to provide workplace evidence **because their workplace offers no opportunity to collect the evidence required**, or it only offers limited opportunities for the collection of workplace evidence, or the cost of collecting the evidence is prohibitive.

The main reasons why it is difficult to substitute workplace evidence in pharmacy services is that it is essential that individuals can interact effectively with patients and clients, other members of the pharmacy and other health care professionals in real life situations.

It is anticipated that some NVQ/SVQ assessment centres will be able to develop such forms of simulation themselves given the proper guidance from awarding bodies. The Standards Setting Body is concerned to ensure that:

- the **competence demonstrated** by the candidate in a simulation **will transfer** to the workplace – if a simulation is not realistic, then the response of the candidate will be different from the response that would be expected in the workplace. If the candidate perceives the simulation to be unrealistic and lacking relevance, then it will not provide a true reflection of their actual competence. So the planning and design of simulations will need to include the support and guidance given to the candidate to help them recognise the relevance and potential transfer of the evidence – not just a concern with the ‘hardware’ which might be needed to set up the simulation.
- the **competence demonstrated** in a simulation **can be sustained over time** – this relates to the fact that simulations can involve extremely ‘contracted’ versions of what actually happens in the workplace. It is essential that sustained practice in the workplace must be taken into account when simulations are designed.

In the context of assessing candidates for NVQs and SVQs, ‘realism’ means the contexts, environments and conditions described in the standards against which the assessment is taking place.

Realism in the assessment of pharmacy support staff, will relate to the extent to which the simulation is able to:

- faithfully capture the essence of the pharmacy team-patient/client interaction
- make use of the same materials and equipment which would be found in an up-to-date pharmacy
- ask the pharmacy support staff member to carry out activities which they would normally undertake, in a non-intimidatory environment.

Accreditation of prior learning (evidence from past achievement)

In assessing candidates for an NVQ, evidence relating to past performance can be used as well as that relating to current performance.

In recent years, the concept of accrediting prior learning (APL) has developed as a way of ensuring that the past experiences and learning of mature people is recognised and validated. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that NVQs are awarded on the basis of assessment of performance against standards.

The competence basis of NVQs means that evidence must always relate to performance, not just knowledge. The evidence of such performance must always be valid and relevant to specific standards.

Step 3: Judge the evidence

The following criteria must be used when evaluating if a piece of work can be put forward as evidence, including supporting evidence.

Relevance: the degree of ‘match’ between the item of evidence and the required competence, scope statement and underpinning knowledge for a unit. If the evidence does not match, it is not relevant.

Validity: the evidence must relate to a specific part of the NVQ standards.

Authenticity: the evidence must be the work of your candidate as an individual and not someone else or a group of people. You may require confirmation of this from the candidate’s professional colleagues.

Currency: the evidence must show the present ability of the candidate to perform to the national standards. The assessor should judge the acceptability of evidence from the past by the length of time that has elapsed since the performance described took place. Such judgements should take into account the ‘perishability’ of the skill involved, as well as ‘watershed’ or ‘landmark’ occurrences in the sector, such as changes in the law, philosophy of practice. (If the competence is demonstrated in a skill test or simulation, then it becomes evidence of current competence rather than evidence from the past.)

Quantity: the evidence must cover all the performance and knowledge requirements laid down in the standards.

Variety: there must be evidence of performance in differing contexts or situations.

Sufficiency: performance to the required standard must be consistent, ie it should be achieved on more than one occasion.

You have to be certain that the candidate has demonstrated competence. Even though all the performance criteria have to be met, you should concentrate on the elements and units when making judgements about sufficiency as they describe what is required. It is not necessary to observe each performance criterion several times but it is necessary to record all evidence that has been taken into account so that it can be identified by internal and external verifiers if necessary. Evidence will have different values – some will leave you in no doubt about competence, while in other cases, you may need to ask for further evidence before you are confident about consistency of performance.

In short, you must be satisfied that your candidate can consistently work to the required standard and that evidence is not simply an isolated event that is unlikely to be repeated.

The standards also specify that candidates prove they have **knowledge evidence** (what the candidate needs to know about). Candidates’ knowledge might be determined either by questioning them on the subject matter, or through validated evidence from recognised educational and training courses. It can also be revealed in performance evidence generated by your observations of the candidate.

You should feel confident that candidates have a broad and firm enough understanding to be able to sustain competence demonstrated through performance evidence.

Candidates will need to be clear about the knowledge requirements for each unit. You should encourage your candidates to read and study each unit as a whole so that they become familiar with the standards expressed in the elements, national standards of work, scope statements, knowledge and understanding requirements.

Candidates should also be able to cross-reference their evidence, providing examples and definitions where necessary.

Some candidates may need considerable support and guidance to interpret the standards, especially in the early stages of preparing for assessment. Once they become familiar with the format of the standards, candidates should find it much easier to progress through their qualification.

The judgement of whether or not your candidate understands and applies the knowledge evidence is linked to your judgement of their performance.

Step 4: Record

For each unit, you should ensure that there is a verifiable record of:

- the assessment activities carried out, showing the methods used and evidence produced
- the date and people involved in the assessment
- your judgement of the candidate's competence
- the location of each piece of evidence within the candidate's portfolio.

The record sheets provided in the candidate's log book will allow all of this information to be recorded and we recommend their use. However, your centre may use its own recording documentation. This is acceptable as long as it contains all the required information and is passed by your external verifier as fit for purpose.

Insufficient evidence

Where insufficient evidence has been presented or the candidate has not met the performance criteria at the end of the targeted assessment period, you should indicate that the candidate is not yet competent. Feedback to the candidate must provide the reason why the decision has been made and this should be recorded.

Step 5: Provide feedback

Your candidate will need to be clear about your judgements and the reasons for them. Time should be set aside for feedback that conforms to the following general principles:

- feedback should relate the evidence provided to the national standards
- you should agree what form the feedback will take – written notes are always useful as a record but candidates should be given time to reflect on your comments
- you should ensure that your comments have been understood and listen to the candidate's view
- finally you should agree what happens as a result of the feedback – its purpose is to help candidates make the necessary adjustments, whether this means supplying more evidence, trying again or taking steps to develop the competence that is missing.

Disagreement

Your centre will have an appeals procedure to be used by candidates if they disagree with an assessment decision you have made. Make sure you are familiar with the procedure and that candidates know how to use it.

The appeals procedure should make it clear how complaints will be dealt with and what the outcomes might be.

As an assessor, you should make sure that you have a route through which you can express your concerns and reservations, whether these are about working with a particular candidate or an aspect of the standards and assessment method.

Section 4: How should evidence be presented?

The candidate's evidence is normally kept in a file, often called a portfolio. We produce a document called *Candidate guidance and log book*, which provides all the forms candidates need to record their progress and to help them index their evidence.

This section explains how and when to use the recording forms in the log book and provides worked examples.

Example 1: Index of evidence

The index of evidence should be placed at the front of a candidate's portfolio. As candidates produce pieces of evidence, they should give each piece a unique number. They should then complete the index of evidence so the evidence can be located easily. Every piece of evidence should be numbered and referenced on the index, including evidence that is not located in the portfolio, such as products that need to be kept at temperatures above or below ambient temperature. This might include microscopic preparations, stained with fluorescent dyes or electrophoresis gels. Even if such products cannot be retained within the portfolio, however, it is useful to incorporate photographs of them.

The final column of the sheet should be completed by the internal verifier if they sample the evidence.

Example 2: Unit assessment plan

Before candidates begin to collect any evidence it will be helpful for them to compile, with your help, a unit assessment plan. The plan will define the tasks to be carried out, how long the tasks will take and the evidence that will be generated. The tasks could be 'normal working activities' and part of the candidate's day-to-day job role, or 'activities needing to be performed', which means opportunities to carry out the tasks need to be generated.

Producing a unit assessment plan will help to identify suitable opportunities for integrating assessment of different units.

Example 3: Unit progress record

This form enables you and your candidate to see at a glance what stage the candidate is at in this qualification.

Each time your candidate achieves a unit of their NVQ, you should put your signature and the date next to the relevant unit title. Before signing next to a unit title, you will need to make sure that the candidate has completed the recording documents correctly and that their evidence can be easily located.

Example 4: Evidence achievement record

This lists the national standards of work and scope in an element that your candidate needs to prove competence for. Each time your candidate meets the requirements of an outcome, you should write the date in the relevant box. The standards will stipulate how many times the candidate needs to perform individual activities.

On completion of each element, you should give your candidate feedback about their performance, informing them if they have been successful in achieving the required level of competence for individual outcomes. There is space on the back of the form for you to make comments and/or notes from the feedback session. Make sure that your candidate is clear about your assessment decision and fully understands what you are saying. You should both then sign and date the form before filing it into the relevant section of the candidate's portfolio.

Example 5: Knowledge evidence record

This lists all the knowledge and understanding requirements a candidate needs to demonstrate for a unit.

While working through individual elements, the candidate should tick the appropriate boxes on the form to show which type(s) of evidence they have collected to prove they have the required level of knowledge and understanding.

Once you are satisfied that your candidate has achieved the knowledge and understanding requirements for the whole unit, you should, as with the element achievement record, note your comments from the feedback session on the form. You and your candidate should then sign and date the form before filing it in the portfolio.

Remember that on completion of the unit you should complete the candidate's **unit progress record**.

Example 6: Personal statement

A candidate uses a personal statement to record their experience of something, such as how they handled a specific situation. They should describe what they did, how they did it and why they did it. They can refer to other people who were present. This might provide the candidate with a **witness testimony** (see *Example 8*), which should be noted in the 'Links to other evidence' column on the statement form.

The candidate might also use the personal statement to put a piece of evidence in context for you so you can help them decide if it is relevant to their NVQ. For example, the candidate may refer to paperwork that is used in the organisation to pass information to a colleague. It may not be clear to you why they are communicating in this way and a brief explanation from the candidate of its relevance may be required.

Example 7: Observation record

You should use this form to record your observations of the candidate as they work. The form allows you to:

- describe the skills you have seen the candidate use
- describe the activities you have seen the candidate perform
- specify the parts of the units that are covered by the observation
- provide details of the knowledge and understanding apparent from the candidate's performance
- list the other units/elements to which the evidence may contribute (integration of assessment).

There is space on the form for you to note your comments or feedback to the candidate. Once completed, the form should be referenced as evidence and included in the candidate's portfolio.

Example 8: Witness testimony

There may be occasions when you are not able to observe the candidate carrying out certain aspects of their job. In such instances, it may be appropriate for another person to comment on the candidate's performance by completing a statement called a 'witness testimony'.

Witness testimony should only be used to support other forms of evidence such as a product. It should:

- be provided by a person who is not related to the candidate and is in a position to make a valid comment about their performance, eg a supervisor, line manager, a client or customer
- contain comments that specifically relate the candidate's performance to the NVQ standards
- be authenticated by the inclusion of the witness's signature, role, address, telephone number and the date.

Example 9: Record of questions and candidate's answers

This form is used to record any questions you ask the candidate to establish they have the underpinning knowledge and evidence required by a unit. The candidate's answers should also be noted. Both you and the candidate should sign and date the form.

Example 1: Index of evidence

NVQ title and level: Pharmacy Services Level 2

Evidence number	Description of evidence	Included in portfolio (Yes/No) <i>If No, state location</i>	Units/elements evidence links to (give specific numbers, eg 5.2.1)	Internal verifier signature and date of sampling

Example 2: Unit assessment plan

Unit :				
Candidate:			Assessor:	
Normal working activities performed				
	Typical evidence	Work area	Expected completion date	Links to other units/elements
Element:				
Element:				
Element:				
Activities needing to be performed				
Element:				
Element:				
Element:				
Additional comments				
Assessor's signature:			Date:	
Candidate's signature:			Date:	

Example 3: Unit progress record

Qualification and level: Pharmacy Services Level 2

Candidate: Ian MacBean

To achieve the whole qualification, you must prove competence in **all three mandatory units** and **three optional** units.

Unit checklist: circle the reference number of each unit as you complete it.

Circle the reference numbers as you complete each unit. You can then easily see what stage you have reached in your NVQ.

Mandatory	2.01	2.02	2.03					
Optional	2.04	2.05	2.06	2.06	2.09	2.09	2.10	2.11

Mandatory units

You must achieve **all three** of the units listed.

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date
Unit 2.01	Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service	<i>Chris Frost</i>	14/02
Unit 2.02	Ensure your own actions reduce the risk to health and safety (<i>ENTO Health and Safety at work unit A</i>)	<i>Chris Frost</i>	14/02
Unit 2.03	Support the work of your team (<i>Council for Administration Unit 201</i>)	<i>Chris Frost</i>	14/02

Continued overleaf...

This section of the form is for your assessor to sign each time you successfully achieve a unit.

Optional units

You must achieve **two** of the units listed

Unit number	Title	Assessor's signature	Date
Unit 2.04	Assist in the sale of OTC medicines and provide information to customers on symptoms and products		
Unit 2.05	Assist in the supply of prescribed items		
Unit 2.06	Assist with the assembly of prescribed items		
Unit 2.07	Order, receive and store pharmaceutical stock		
Unit 2.08	Assist with the supply of pharmaceutical stock		
Unit 2.09	Prepare to make pharmaceutical products		
Unit 2.10	Assist with the manufacture and assembly of medicinal products		
Unit 2.11	Assist with the preparation of aseptic products		

Example 4: Evidence achievement record

Unit 2.01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service

Element 2.01.1 Identify the needs of the customer

National standard of work		Assessor to insert date each time competence is achieved				
You must always:						
1	Deal with your customers promptly even when working in different situations	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Ensure you adapt to the verbal and non-verbal signals offered by your customer	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Identify the needs of your customer accurately through sensitive questioning	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Ensure you check with your customer your perceptions of their needs	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Make realistic commitments to your customers regarding the delivery of products or services	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Refer your customer to the appropriate person as identified in the SOPs	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evidence achievement record

Unit 2.01 **Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service**

Element 2.01.1 **Identify the needs of the customer**

Scope of standard	Assessor to insert date each time competence is achieved					
You must demonstrate dealing with customers with different needs from the following groups:						
a	customers with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	customers with a clear idea of their needs	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	customers with a general idea of their needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	customers with no idea of their needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You will need to show that you are able to deal with customers in different situations :						
e	busy periods	12/2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	quiet periods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	when systems or resources are not available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal and non-verbal signals:						

Example 5: Knowledge evidence record

Knowledge evidence record

Unit 2.01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy customer service

Evidence key:

EI	Evidence Index No.	O	Observation	P	Personal Statement
WT	Witness Testimony	APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning	Q&A	Questions and Answers

Knowledge, understanding and skills for this unit:

You must show that you know and understand:		Type of Evidence					
		EI	O	P	WT	APL	Q&A DATE
For the whole unit							
K1	The importance of SOPs what they contain and why it is important that they should be followed at all times	15, 32	✓		✓		18/12
K2	The importance of retaining customer loyalty and confidence to the organisation and how you contribute towards it	14, 23	✓		✓		18/12
K3	The organisation's policy on customer service and customer relationships and how this applies to your job	14, 23		✓	✓	✓	18/12
K4	The organisations procedure for handling complaints	17, 18		✓	✓	✓	18/12
Identifying customer needs							
K5	The importance of establishing your customers requirements clearly and accurately	23		✓	✓	✓	18/12
K6	Why verbal and non-verbal signals are important when communicating with customers	14,15 32	✓	✓	✓		18/12
Provide information							
K7	How to give clear and accurate information and check the customer's understanding						
K8	Knowledge of relevant products for which information is required						

Note: You will be given advice on how much of evidence of achievement you need to prove through performance evidence. The remaining parts of the evidence of achievement may be covered through questioning by your assessor.

**Unit 2.01 Assist with the provision of a pharmacy
customer service**

Feedback/comments

The candidate has satisfied the assessor and internal verifier that the national standards of work, scope, knowledge and understanding have been achieved.

Candidate:	Ian MacBean	Date: 19/02/02
Assessor:	Chris Frost	Date: 19/02/02
Internal Verifier:	Doreen Brady	Date: 19/02/02

Example 6: Personal statement

Date	Evidence index number	Details of statement	Links to other evidence (<i>enter numbers</i>)	Units, elements, national standards covered

Candidate's signature: *Ian MacBean*

Date: *14/05/02*

Example 7: Observation record

Unit/element(s)

Candidate:

Date of observation:

Evidence index number:

Skills/activities observed:	National standards covered:

Knowledge and understanding apparent from this observation:

--

Other units/elements to which this evidence may contribute:

--

Assessor comments and feedback to candidate:

--

I can confirm the candidate's performance was satisfactory.

Assessor's signature: *Chris Frost*

Date:

Candidate's signature: *Ian MacBean*

Date:

Example 8: Witness testimony

NVQ title and level:	Pharmacy Services – Level 3
Candidate name:	Ian MacBean
Evidence index no:	23
Where applicable, evidence no to which this testimony relates:	41
Element(s):	Scope:
Date of evidence:	
Witness name:	
Relationship to candidate:	
Details of testimony:	

I can confirm the candidate's evidence is authentic and accurate.

Witness signature:

Name:

Date:

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box.

D32/D33 Award

Familiar with the NVQ standards to which the candidate is working

Example 9: Record of questions and candidate's answers

Unit :	Element(s): Whole unit
Evidence index number: 19	
Circumstances of assessment: Ensuring all knowledge and understanding is covered. Much had been covered during direct observation sessions, on previous occasions.	
List of questions and candidate's responses:	
Q: A: Q: A:	
Assessor's signature: <i>Chris Frost</i>	Date:
Candidate's signature: <i>Ian MacBean</i>	Date:

Section 5: Further information

How does an organisation become a centre?

An organisation can offer NVQs either by becoming a registered centre in its own right or by working with an organisation that has this status.

A centre is responsible for ensuring that internal quality control mechanisms are in place. Specifically, a centre needs to:

- develop a physical resource within the centre that addresses the needs of candidates
- select and train assessors and internal verifiers according to the relevant NTO specifications
- provide appropriate assessment opportunities for candidates, eg a suitable number at suitable times
- provide candidates with copies of the Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services units appropriate to their qualification
- provide assessors and internal verifiers with copies of the Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services standards.

Details of approval procedures are available from Customer Services.

Review and evaluation

The effective development of the programme depends on a full review of its operation and candidate performance. The review should be structured to allow all interested parties (candidates as well as staff) to contribute. The review should evaluate:

- success in meeting and the continuing relevance of the aims of the programme
- previous action plans
- admission, induction, advice and exit arrangements
- the programme of activities and arrangements for all candidates
- the assessment strategies and methods
- resource needs and availability of the resources to candidates
- the relevance, currency and effectiveness of support materials
- the external verifier's/comments
- future resource requirements, including staff development.

A review should take place at least once during each programme. A report and an action plan describing the findings and actions to be taken should be produced after each review.

Registration

Every candidate must be registered with an assessment centre that has been approved to deliver the Levels 2 and 3 NVQ in Pharmacy Services.

To register, candidates should complete an Edexcel registration form (available from your centre contact, or Entries and Certification, Edexcel Foundation, Stewart House, 32 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5DN). The form should be returned to Edexcel via the candidate's centre contact. Edexcel will register candidates, and issue them with an enrolment number. Candidates should check this and ensure all their details are correct. The notification will show their name as it will appear on any award they receive. Any correction should be communicated to Edexcel immediately.

An initial registration fee has to be paid to Edexcel at this stage. Each assessment centre will have its own procedures for this, and will clarify with candidates what payments, if any, they will have to make, and when.

Candidate entries

Entries for NVQs will be accepted on a group award or unit-by-unit basis.

In most cases, candidates will be entered for a group award, as well as for the component units. If you enter a completion date for the group award, you need not enter the completion date for the component units (providing the completion date is the same) as verification will be carried out on the whole-group award.

All NVQ entries will need to be processed 10 weeks before the end of the month you have given as the completion date.

Please note that for NVQ units and group awards, there is no discretion in the application of the 10 week rule. We like all other NVQ and SVQ awarding bodies, are required to operate this rule to comply with the national criteria for accreditation as an awarding body. This means that no NVQ certification can take place until the 10-week period has elapsed.

Certification process

To enable candidates to receive their qualification efficiently, it is essential that you are familiar with the certification procedures used by Edexcel.

Once a unit has been achieved and the unit achievement form countersigned by the internal verifier, the centre contact should register this with Edexcel.

Details of the candidate's achievement will be entered in our records, and we will issue a 'Record of Achievement'. This will be sent to the centre contact to be passed on to the candidate.

When the candidate has achieved all the required units, we will issue the NVQ certificate.

Centre contacts should be aware of Edexcel requirements. For example:

- relevant forms and documents, and how to complete them
- the accredited centre number and relevant contacts
- appropriate Edexcel contacts
- how long qualifications take to process.

Your centre should inform assessors and internal verifiers on the administrative procedures used before assessment of candidates begins.

All assessors should ensure that there are full records of assessment and related evidence available for inspection by the external verifier. Such inspection is part of the external verifier's role, to ensure that the accredited centre is maintaining quality standards.

If there is a problem

Should a Record of Achievement or certificate not arrive when expected, the centre should contact Edexcel and have available:

- the candidate's enrolment number
- the centre's registration number
- the name and number of the scheme and qualification that the candidate has entered, eg NVQ Pharmacy Services Level 2.

This ensures that the correct records can be accessed as quickly as possible.

Payment of fees

Edexcel will invoice the assessment centre for all fees due, both for registration of new candidates and certification of candidates' achievement. The assessment centre is responsible for paying these fees to Edexcel and for making its own arrangements to claim any fees due from candidates or their employers.

Anti-discriminatory practices

As part of the approval process, centres are required to ensure that they have an equal opportunities policy that covers all aspects of assessment including access to assessment and taking into account the timing and frequency of assessments. Internal verifiers have a key role in their work with assessors to ensure that assessments do not discriminate against any candidates.

All centres should publish an appeals procedure, which is made available to staff and candidates.

Special assessment arrangements

Candidates with a physical disability, a sensory impairment, a specific learning difficulty, or a temporary disability at the time of the assessment may be eligible for special assessment arrangements.

Special assessment arrangements are intended to enable candidates to demonstrate their level of competence in relation to the qualification standards. They are not intended to compensate for lack of competence and should not:

- give an unfair advantage to candidates
- reduce the validity and reliability of the assessment or compromise the credibility of the award
- mislead users of Edexcel certificates about candidates' competence.

It is important to note that where special assessment arrangements are applied, they may result in an amended certificate being issued. Any requests for special assessment arrangements need to be submitted to Edexcel at the earliest possible date and separately from the entry itself.

What else you should read

The following publications provide additional information that is directly relevant to the provision of NVQs:

	Publication code
• <i>The Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)</i>	80-092-0
• <i>Edexcel Policy Framework</i>	revised annually
• <i>Edexcel Information Manual</i>	revised annually
• <i>Recording Achievement for NVQs</i>	80-094-2

To order these publications, please contact:

Edexcel Publications
Adamsway
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire
NG18 4FN

Telephone: 01623 467467
Fax: 01623 450481
E-mail: publications@linneydirect.com

For further information about these or any other qualifications, please contact Customer Services on 0870 240 9800.

Where are the standards available from?

The standards have been produced by the National Training Organisation for Levels 2 and 3 NVQs in Pharmacy Services and are available from:

Science, Technology and Mathematics Council
20-22 Queensberry Place
London
SW7 2DZ

Telephone 020 7225 1155
Fax: 020 7225 1997
E-mail: enquiries@stmc.org.uk
Website: www.stmc.org.uk

The standards have been written in a user-friendly way to give as much guidance as possible to candidates, assessors and centres. All centres **must** have a copy of the standards and these should be available to candidates, assessors and internal verifiers.

Section 6: Assessment strategy for the NVQs in Pharmacy Services

1 Introduction

In producing this assessment strategy, the Project Team has worked closely with the following:

- The Standards Setting Body (the Science Technology and Mathematics Council) via the Pharmacy Sector Committee
- the pharmacy sector via the Project Steering and Working Groups
- the accrediting bodies The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)
- the awarding bodies City & Guilds Affinity, Edexcel, and SQA as an awarding body.

2 Proposals for NVQs and SVQs

The existing S/NVQ Level 3 in Pharmacy Services is to be complemented by an S/NVQ Level 2 (under development). This assessment strategy covers both levels.

Pharmacy candidates will be expected to demonstrate competence in the required mandatory and selected optional units.

3 Focus of assessment

3.1. NVQs and SVQs are based On National Occupational Standards and assess the application of skills, knowledge and understanding in a specific occupation to the standards required in the workplace. It is anticipated that much of the evidence for the assessment for NVQs and SVQs will be gathered as candidates carry out their usual duties in support of the pharmacy team.

3.2. The pharmacy sector has independently developed an **Assessment and Evidence Requirements document** relating to the Pharmacy Services NVQs and SVQs. This sets out what constitutes sufficient and consistent evidence and indicates where simulation is and is not appropriate. It will **not** be appropriate for a candidate to use a majority of simulated evidence to achieve their NVQ or SVQ, but it may be acceptable for assessing competence in certain situations. The rationale for this is detailed below.

3.3. Within the pharmacy services standards and qualifications, **simulation** takes one of the following formats:

- 3.3.1. **Practical tests** – a test of (usually) manual skills involving realistic tools, equipment, materials and working methods, but conducted in a non-work environment. This produces a physical outcome or artifact which can be examined. In addition, some parts of the process may be observed by a qualified assessor or recorded by an expert witness. Examples of this in pharmacy services would be extemporaneous dispensing of products or assembly of orders.
- 3.3.2. **Work-based projects** – a complex activity usually involving a number of associated outcomes and processes. Projects normally involve: data collection, investigation, analysis, calculation, interpretation, synthesis, presentation of findings and formatting of written reports. Projects usually result in a document that can be examined but some parts of the process may be observed or recorded – particularly verbal presentations. Work-based projects use the facilities, processes, data and information of the normal work environment. An example of where work-based projects may be used in the pharmacy services qualifications is in relation to health promotion/education for individuals or groups.

3.4. Simulations have been indicated when there are limited opportunities for demonstration in the work environment (see Assessment and Evidence Requirement Document). These occur for such reasons as:

- 3.4.1. hazards to the candidate or others in the work environment – for example, cleaning procedures, cross infection hazards
- 3.4.2. infrequent events where insisting that candidates wait for their occurrence would be unreasonable or create blockages in the assessment system which might carry the risk of demotivating candidates – for example, handling hazardous spillages, bomb alerts
- 3.4.3. critical outcomes where a high degree of confidence is required for the transferability and repeatability of performance – for example, aseptic manipulations
- 3.4.4. situations in which it is unacceptable to observe or record as this would be obtrusive and unacceptable for reasons of confidentiality – for example, counselling a distressed client.

3.5. In addition there will be times when individual candidates are not able to provide workplace evidence **because their workplace offers no opportunity to collect the evidence required**, or it only offers limited opportunities for the collection of workplace evidence, or the cost of collecting the evidence is prohibitive.

3.6. The main reasons why it is difficult to substitute workplace evidence in pharmacy services is that it is essential that individuals can interact effectively with patients and clients, other members of the pharmacy and other health care professionals in real life situations.

3.7. It is anticipated that some NVQ/SVQ assessment centres will be able to develop such forms of simulation themselves given the proper guidance from awarding bodies. The Standards Setting Body is concerned to ensure that:

- 3.7.1. the **competence demonstrated** by the candidate in a simulation **will transfer** to the workplace – if a simulation is not realistic, then the response of the candidate will be different from the response that would be expected in the workplace. If the candidate perceives the simulation to be unrealistic and lacking relevance, then it will not provide a true reflection of their actual competence. So the planning and design of simulations will need to include the support and guidance given to the candidate to help them recognize the relevance and potential transfer of the evidence – not just a concern with the ‘hardware’ which might be needed to set up the simulation
- 3.7.2. the **competence demonstrated** in a simulation **can be sustained over time** – this relates to the fact that simulations can involve extremely ‘contracted’ versions of what actually happens in the workplace. It is essential that sustained practice in the workplace must be taken into account when simulations are designed.

3.8. In the context of assessing candidates for NVQs and SVQs, ‘realism’ means the contexts, environments and conditions described in the standards against which the assessment is taking place.

Realism in the assessment of pharmacy support staff, will relate to the extent to which the simulation is able to:

- faithfully capture the essence of the pharmacy team-patient/client interaction
- make use of the same materials and equipment which would be found in an up-to-date pharmacy
- ask the pharmacy support staff member to carry out activities which they would normally undertake, in a non-intimidatory environment.

4 Focus on underpinning knowledge

The Pharmacy Services National Occupational Standards describe the knowledge and understanding required to support competent performance in the workplace. The body of underpinning knowledge for pharmacy is substantial. The awarding bodies through their external verification arrangements are responsible for ensuring that all NVQ/SVQ centres make provision for candidates to successfully cover the underpinning knowledge requirements. It is expected that when a centre applies to an awarding body to offer a S/NVQ they will identify how the underpinning knowledge will be delivered and assessed, so that the external verifiers can ensure the underpinning knowledge is adequately covered.

5 Methods of achieving external quality control of assessment

5.1. It is proposed that external quality control of assessment is achieved through enhancing the external verification process. Where a candidate's competence is assessed against the standards as they carry out their normal duties in a pharmacy services team, or working under simulated conditions, **Enhanced External Verification** of the assessment process will be undertaken. This will include both assuring the quality of the centre that is responsible for making the assessment and sampling from the judgements made by assessors for a number of candidates to ensure they consistently meet the standards.

5.2. The Standards Setting Body acting on behalf of the pharmacy sector will work with those awarding bodies which are offering the pharmacy services NVQs and SVQs to ensure that:

- 5.2.1. there is a comprehensive strategy to ensure the level of sampling undertaken in external verification is sufficient to guarantee consistent standards between different NVQ/SVQ assessment centres and between different awarding bodies, based on the Awarding Body's Risk Assessment Mechanism
- 5.2.2. external verification takes place using scrutiny of documents and direct observation in NVQ/SVQ assessment centres (subject to the need for confidentiality of patient information). Each awarding body will arrange for its external verifiers to be brought together regularly to review the process
- 5.2.3. detailed scrutiny of the way that nominated units from the qualifications are being assessed, is undertaken on an annual rolling basis agreed between the Standards Setting Body and the awarding bodies. In year one of the accreditation of the S/NVQ, Units 1 – 3 of the standards will be scrutinised, followed by Units 4 – 6 in year two and Units 7 – 10 in year three.

This does not exclude the raising by an awarding body(s) of problems which may arise with **any units** during the verification process

- 5.2.4. any quality issues identified during the verification process will be fed back to the 'Awarding Bodies Forum Quality Group'
- 5.2.5. external verification is planned and linked to intelligence about assessment centre functioning and abilities – awarding bodies routinely look at and evaluate compliance and then alter the level of activity accordingly
- 5.2.6. the extensive targeted sampling strategies, statistical monitoring and risk rating and management of NVQ/SVQ assessment centres, being developed by awarding bodies, is supported.
External verifiers are independent of the NVQ/SVQ assessment centres in which they are verifying

5.3. The Standards Setting Body, in consultation with sector stakeholders and awarding body partners, believes that this is the best way of externally assuring the quality of assessment for the following reasons.

- i It recognises the range of employment settings in which pharmacy support staff are employed, which mirror those of pharmacists (ie generally small numbers in diverse pharmacies) and the inherent difficulties of gaining reliable assessments across this diverse employment context.
- ii It recognises public concerns about nationally accredited qualifications being judged solely by individuals who know the candidate.
- iii It recognises the improvements, which have been made in recent years to improve the rigour and robustness of the external verification process.
- iv It will enhance collaborative working between The Standards Setting Body and the awarding bodies in the interests of the public and the sector.

6 Occupational expertise of assessors and verifiers

6.1. It is proposed that pharmacy services S/NVQ assessors and verifiers (both internal and external) should have the following occupational expertise. **For those standards that are specific to pharmacy services**, assessors and verifiers should be either:

- a registered pharmacist who is competent in the area of practice to which the National Occupational Standards which are being assessed, apply.

or

- a qualified pharmacy technician (one who is qualified to S/NVQ Pharmacy Services Level 3 or its equivalent) with two years' post qualification experience and who is competent in the area of practice to which the National Occupational Standards being assessed, apply

6.2. **Assessors and internal verifiers** for pharmacy services S/NVQs, should also be or have been working in a pharmacy services environment during the last 24 months provided that they can provide evidence of 'Continuing Professional Development'.

Evidence of the current occupational competence of assessors and internal verifiers would need to be presented in the form of:

- a certificate of the relevant professional qualification

and

- evidence of current working in a pharmacy services environment with pharmacy support staff

and

- a demonstrable commitment to maintaining an appropriate level of occupational competence as a pharmacy assessor or internal verifier.

6.3. The occupational requirements for assessors of units that have been imported from other awards will be accepted, ie it is not essential that they are assessed by individuals with pharmacy services qualifications.

6.4. Assessors and internal verifiers will need to meet the nationally specified requirements for assessors and internal verifiers of S/NVQs, ie the assessor and internal verifier units from Employment NTO. QCA/SQA will, in line with current regulatory requirements, audit awarding bodies to ensure that assessors and internal verifiers meet the appropriate selection criteria.

6.5. **External verifiers** will be expected to hold the same professional qualifications as assessors and IVs. In addition they will be registered pharmacists or experienced pharmacy technicians with current working in the sector or they can provide evidence of ‘Continuing Professional Development’. They are likely to be drawn from experienced internal verifiers who have achieved relevant EV Unit(s) from the Employment NTO or who are working towards achieving these.

The rationale for these requirements is to ensure that the S/NVQs are only assessed/verified by those who are occupationally competent in pharmacy services.

7.0. **General.** The Standards Setting Body plans to work with its awarding bodies to evaluate the effectiveness of these occupational competence requirements and subject them to review as part of the overall management programme for the qualifications.

It is expected that the awarding bodies will report back to the Standard Setting Body on a regular basis.

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