



## UPDATED GUIDANCE – APRIL 2024

We have considered feedback and balanced this with upholding the integrity of the Pharmacy qualifications. In section 2.4 we have provided guidance to centres on how to apply exceptional circumstances for the use of observations.

Assessment guidance for the following Pharmacy qualifications.

- Open Awards Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff (RQF) **603/6809/3**
- Open Awards Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff (Apprenticeship Route) (RQF) **603/6810/X**
- Open Awards Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (RQF) **603/5153/6**
- Open Awards Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Integrated Apprenticeship) (RQF) **603/6988/7**
- Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff **603/6166/9**
- Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff (Apprenticeship) **603/6167/0**
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians **603/5160/3**
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians (Apprenticeship) **603/6304/6**

As Awarding Organisations, we have, in collaboration with Skills for Health, reviewed the assessment of competence-based units, specifically in relation to the suite of Pharmacy qualifications at Level 2 and 3 and the risk of the reliance on Expert Witness Testimony against the **three** observations of practice generated over a period to demonstrate consistent performance.

To uphold the integrity of the licence to practice qualification, we have collectively agreed on the continued application of the **Skills for Health Assessment Principles**, in particular the direct observation in the workplace.

We advise centres to ensure that the Skills for Health Assessment Principles (**Version 5 September 2022**) are being applied to the delivery of the qualification. Our quality assurance processes will review that the principles are being applied rigorously.

## 2. Assessment Principles

**2.4** Competence based units **must** include direct observation<sup>1</sup> in the workplace as the primary source of evidence.

*Awarding Organisations with Skills for Health have collectively agreed that remote observation for the **Pharmacy suite** of qualifications is **not appropriate** due to patient privacy, dignity, and confidentiality.*

*However, there may be **sufficiently justified exceptional circumstances**, which impact the learner observation and where alternative assessment methods may need to be considered. In such cases, changes must be agreed by the Awarding Organisation prior to the alternative assessment method being delivered. Each Awarding Organisation will keep a log of these exceptional circumstance cases and will meet quarterly to monitor and review these cases.*

**2.5** Simulation may only be utilised as an assessment method for learning outcomes that start with 'be able to' where this is specified in the assessment requirements of the unit. The use of simulation should be restricted to obtaining evidence where the evidence cannot be generated through normal work activity. Where this may be the case, the use of simulation in the unit assessment strategy will be agreed with Skills for Health.

Please refer to your Awarding Organisations Specification for guidance on when simulation may be permitted for assessment.

The Skills for Health Assessment Principles **DO NOT** apply to the End Point Assessment of the Pharmacy Services Assistant Apprenticeship Standard (ST0299), in relation to Assessment Method 2: Simulated Observation with question-and-answer session.

**2.6** Expert witnesses can be used for direct observation where they have occupational expertise for specialist areas, or where the observation is of a particularly sensitive nature. The use of expert witnesses should be determined and agreed by the assessor.

*Awarding Organisations and Skills for Health collectively agree that Expert witness testimony is **NOT** a substitute for the requirement of **three** observations by the assessor across the **Pharmacy qualifications**. Except in the case of exceptional circumstances by prior agreement with the Awarding Body.*

Please refer to your Awarding Organisation Specification for assessment guidance.

**2.7** Assessment decisions for knowledge only units must be made by an assessor qualified to make the assessment decisions as defined in the unit assessment strategy.

---

<sup>1</sup> Direct observation will typically involve the assessor being in the workplace with the learner.  
V1- Assessment Principles-Pharmacy Support Staff Certificate and Apprenticeship/Open Awards/Pearson- March 2024