



Changing lives through learning

End-point Assessment Report for Level 2 ST0299 Pharmacy Services Assistant and Level 3 ST0300 Pharmacy Technician

January 2024

Lead Independent End-point Assessor Report

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Introduction

Welcome to our Lead Independent End-point Assessor (LIEPA) report.

The purpose of this report is to provide our stakeholders with valuable and informative feedback emerging from End-point Assessment activities completed for apprentices registered and assessed against the **ST0299 Pharmacy Services Assistant** and **ST0300 Pharmacy Technician (Integrated)** apprenticeship standards. The review covers apprentices who have been registered and/or completed their End-point Assessment between September 2022 and September 2023

Our intention through these reports is to provide you with the tools and insight to prepare apprentices for future End-point Assessments with Open Awards. We are committed to publishing these reports across all the Apprenticeship Standards we assess, a minimum of annually.

Meet the Open Awards End-point Assessment Delivery Team

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Standard Overview – ST0299 Pharmacy Services Assistant

Level 2 apprenticeship standard with a minimum duration of 12 months

External Quality Assurance Provider: Ofqual

The End-point Assessment consists of three (3) distinct assessment methods which are separately graded.

- Knowledge Test (must be passed first)

A 90-minute test with a structure of 40 multiple choice questions (1 mark each) and 5 scenario-based multiple-choice questions (2 marks each). The pass mark for the test is 65%.

- Simulated observation with question & answer session

Two simulated observations lasting 20 minutes each, followed by a 10-minute Q&A session.

- Professional discussion

The Professional discussion is a two-way dialogue between the IEPA (Independent End Point Assessor) and the apprentice, lasting 30 minutes.

General Pharmaceutical Council On-programme Requirements

Please may we take this opportunity to remind training providers and employers that it is their responsibility to ensure that they comply with the requirements stipulated by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), outlined in the document entitled “Requirements for the education and training of pharmacy support staff”. Available from the GPhC website, this document sets out the GPhC regulatory requirements effective from October 2020, that Pharmacy Support staff must hold a GPhC approved qualification at Level 2. Open Awards will not check whether these GPhC requirements have been met as part of the End-point Assessment provision.

Standard Overview – ST0300 Pharmacy Technician (Integrated)

Level 3 apprenticeship standard with minimum duration of 24 months.

External Quality Assurance Provider: **Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.**

A temporary dispensation has been applied to the current assessment plan for this Pharmacy Technician apprenticeship. The dispensation will last from February 2022 until the assessment plan is revised or the dispensation is no longer necessary.

The key implication is that apprentices access a fully integrated EPA - the End-point Assessment is fully integrated into Open Awards GPhC approved Level 3 qualification. Apprentices are required to complete the mandatory units of the Level 3 approved qualification - Level 3 Diploma in Principles and Practices for Pharmacy Technicians (RQF) (Integrated Apprenticeship) and have it externally quality assured in advance of gateway checks. This qualification forms the entire assessment for the Level 3 apprenticeship in line with the temporary dispensation.

Once the gateway checks have been completed, the apprentice's evidence will be presented to a Final Awards Board (FAB) for validation (*there is NO additional assessment requirement post-gateway for this integrated apprenticeship, i.e., a Professional discussion and Observation as per the published assessment plan*).

Please note that apprentices will not achieve the integrated qualification without completing the Gateway requirements and having their achievement confirmed by a panel at the FAB.

Following the FAB, Open Awards will issue a transcript of completion and claim the apprenticeship certificate from ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency) alongside issuing the qualification certificate.

You can find the dates of our monthly FAB meetings, including Gateway submission deadlines and results release dates on our website.

[Open Awards Level 3 Diploma in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians \(Integrated Apprenticeship\) \(RQF\) | Open Awards](#)

Evaluation of Registration, Gateway and Bookings

Registration with Open Awards

Following an internal review, there has been a sizeable number of apprentices registered around 4-8 weeks before submitting the apprentice through Gateway.

Please can we remind employers to ensure you register apprentices with Open Awards, through their chosen training provider as soon as possible. The expectation is that registration takes place at least six (6) months before the apprentice reaching Gateway.

This ensures that we can provide a more efficient End-point Assessment experience. A further benefit to registering apprentices in a suitable time is that you will have access to a growing range of practice and preparation materials to support and prepare your apprentice for their end-point assessment.

Gateway

Gateway is the point at which the employer reviews their apprentice's knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) and formally confirms the apprentice has reached occupational competency. It is also the point where the apprentice is confirmed to have completed all the mandatory elements of their apprenticeship programme and is ready for the End-point Assessment.

For the Level 2 Pharmacy Services Assistant standard, we require the following to be submitted by the provider through our secure portal:

- Fully completed and signed Gateway agreement and authenticity form from the training provider, employer, and apprentice.
- Evidence of achieving English and Mathematics*.
- Portfolio of Evidence (Evidence Reference Sheet and Authenticity statement).

*Achieved English and mathematics qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules and GPhC entry requirement. All level 3 standards must achieve a L2 in English and Maths.

For the Level 3 Pharmacy Technician (integrated) standard, we require the following to be submitted by the provider through our secure portal:

- Fully completed and signed Gateway agreement and authenticity form from the training provider, employer, and apprentice.
- Confirmation of 24 months' work placement completed.
- Evidence of achieving English and Mathematics at Level 2.
- Open Awards Level 3 Diploma in Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Technicians – evidence of achievement of the mandatory units.

From our internal review of the Gateway stage, there are some common themes concerning Gateway rejections, which impact on the End-point Assessment scheduling, delaying progression through the Gateway stage.

Common themes include:

- **Incomplete gateway documentation**

There have been instances where the Gateway form has been submitted to us on the secure portal, which was incomplete by all the required parties – the apprentice, training provider, and employer. There have also been some inconsistencies in the date of the Gateway meeting compared to the date(s) the form was signed. This has led to some delays due to having to request additional information/ amendments. Please can we remind all providers and employers that we do require signatures (preferably wet signatures) and dates to be present to confirm that a **Gateway meeting** has taken place with all parties collectively. The form must not be signed before the meeting has taken place and be completed following the date the unit certificate was awarded.

- **English and Maths**

Please ensure that acceptable evidence is presented for the English and maths requirements which is clear and readable. ESFA provides a list of acceptable evidence, available on the government [website](#).

- **Portfolio of evidence**

Some Portfolios are not shared with us as part of the Gateway submission process which can lead to delays where our Assessment Delivery Team needs to request this information from providers. Where possible, if the Portfolio or links can be uploaded along with the **Evidence Reference Sheet** and **Authenticity Statement**, this will speed up the process for you.

In addition, there have been some instances where the format of the portfolio is not in line with the requirements of the assessment plan. It is important to ensure that the structure and amount of evidence are presented in line with the guidance provided in our EPA handbooks and are outlined below. You may also find using **the Criteria Mapping Sheet** we have produced particularly useful, however, is not mandatory.

Level 2 Pharmacy Services Assistant standard – Portfolio structure
Section 1: Dispensing and supply of medicines and medicinal products. Section 2: Teamwork. Section 3: Communication, pharmacy law, and ethics. Section 4: Person centred care. Section 5: Health and safety in the workplace.
Each section must contain four pieces of evidence. (20 pieces of evidence in total)

Overall performance – ST0299 Pharmacy Services Assistant & ST0300 Pharmacy Technician

From the period reviewed (September 2022- September 2023)

Standard	Fail	Pass	Distinction
Pharmacy Services Assistant	0%	90%	10%
Pharmacy Technician (integrated)	0%	100%	N/A

From the period reviewed (August 2021 to August 2022)

Standard	Fail	Pass	Distinction
Pharmacy Services Assistant	4%	85%	11%
Pharmacy Technician (integrated)	0%	100%	N/A

Comparison

Pharmacy Services Assistant

- **Fail rate** improved from 4% to 0% which demonstrates the hard work our Providers are undertaking to improve overall results.
- **Pass rate** increased from 85% to 90% which demonstrates a better engagement level from the learner and the hard work everyone is putting into the qualification.
- **Distinction rate** decreased slightly from 11% to 10%. More emphasis needs to be placed on the distinction criteria to improve the results in this area.

Pharmacy Technician (integrated)

- The **fail rate** remained constant at 0%.
- The **pass rate** remained constant at 100%.
- There were no distinctions in either period (N/A).

It is great to review the results and identify there has been no drop in Quality of work from 2021-2022 results.

We are pleased to announce that all apprentices achieved their end point assessment.

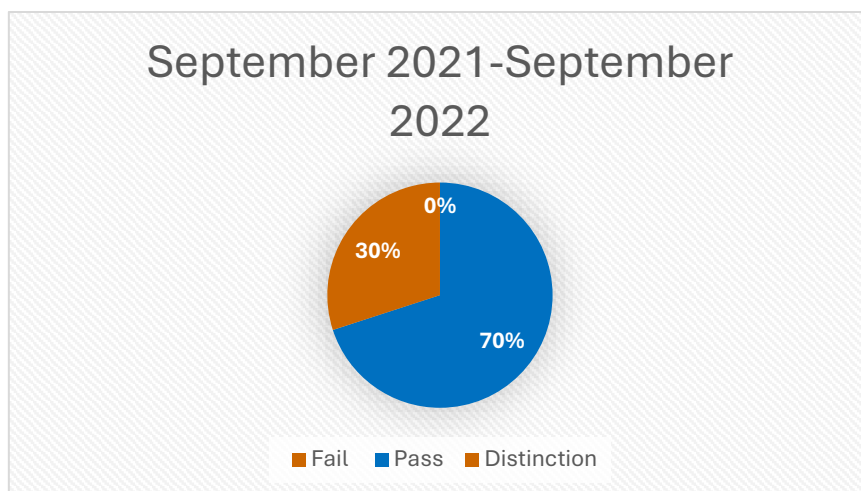
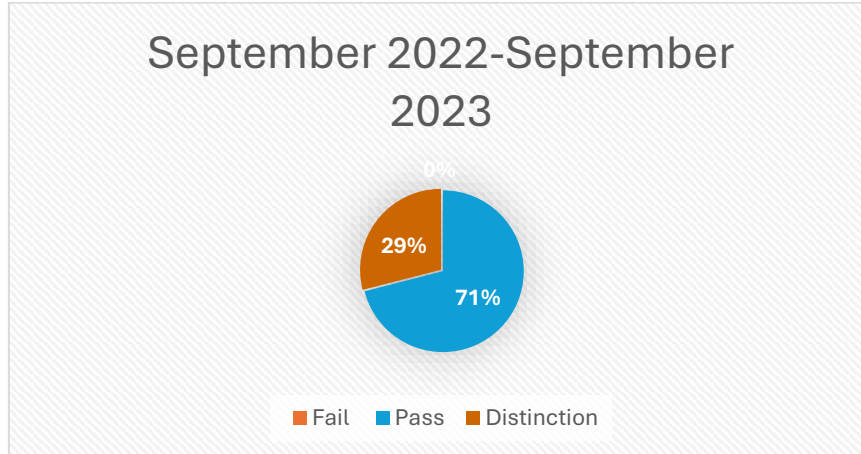
For the **Level 2 Pharmacy Services Assistant Standard (STO299)** qualification, the overall grade is derived from the individually assessed components: a knowledge test, a simulated observation with a question-and-answer session, and a professional discussion. We are pleased to announce that all apprentices were successful. Among them, 10% achieved a distinction, while the remaining 90% earned a pass grade, with only 10% of those needing a resit or retake to achieve a pass.

In comparison to the previous year, the Pharmacy Services Assistant qualification showed an improvement in both the fail and pass rates, though there was a slight decrease in the distinction rate. The Pharmacy Technician (integrated) qualification maintained a perfect pass rate with no fails in both periods.

Assessment against the **Level 3 ST0300 Pharmacy Technician (Integrated)** Standard, all have successfully achieved the pass grade. There is no distinction grade available for this Standard.

ST0299 Pharmacy Services Assistant – Performance by Component

Knowledge Test



Comparison

Fail Rate: No fails in either period (0%).

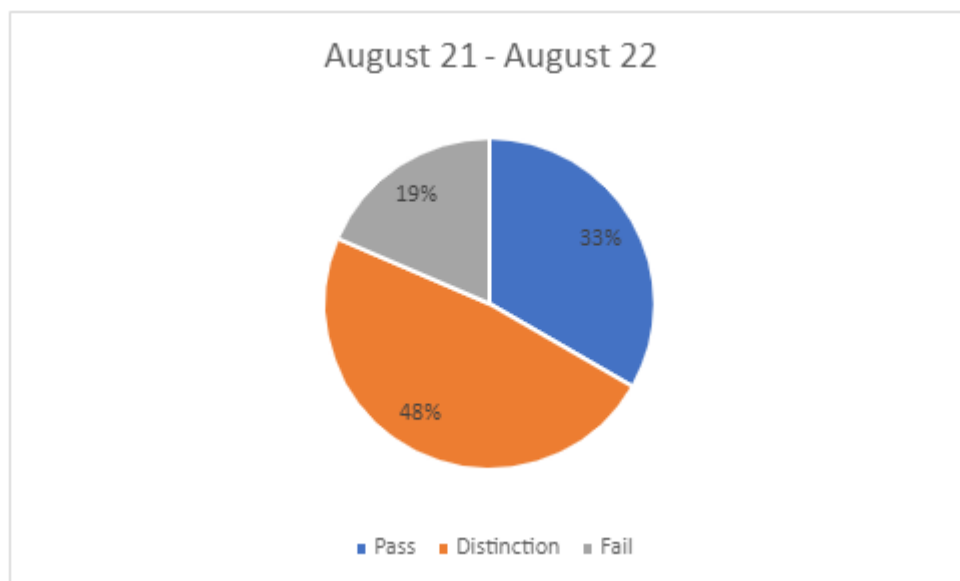
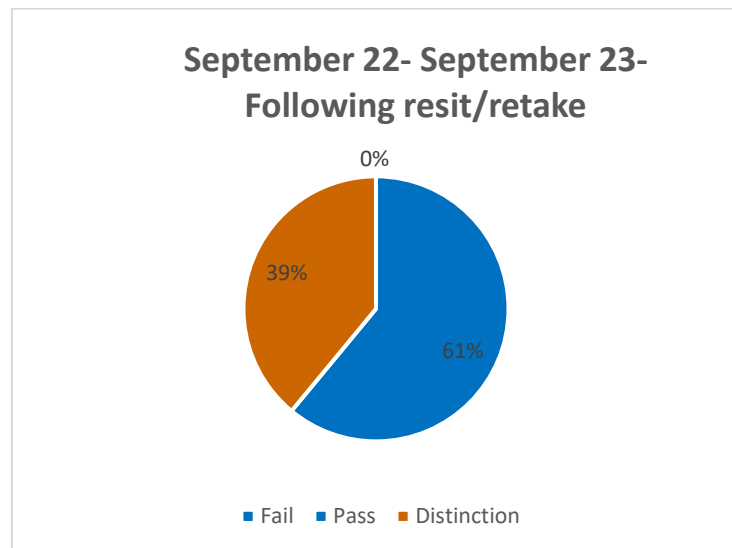
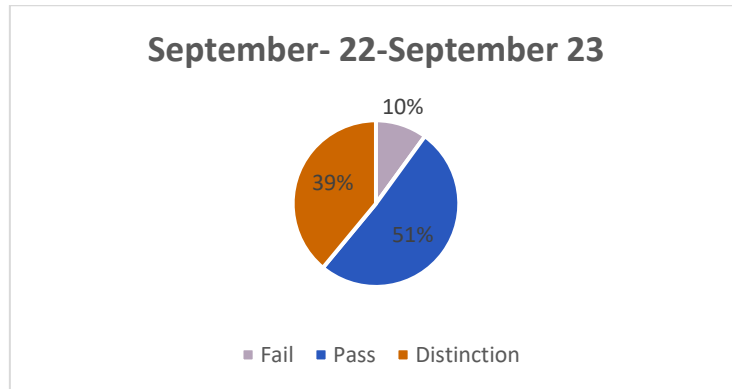
Pass Rate: There was a slight increase from 70% to 71%.

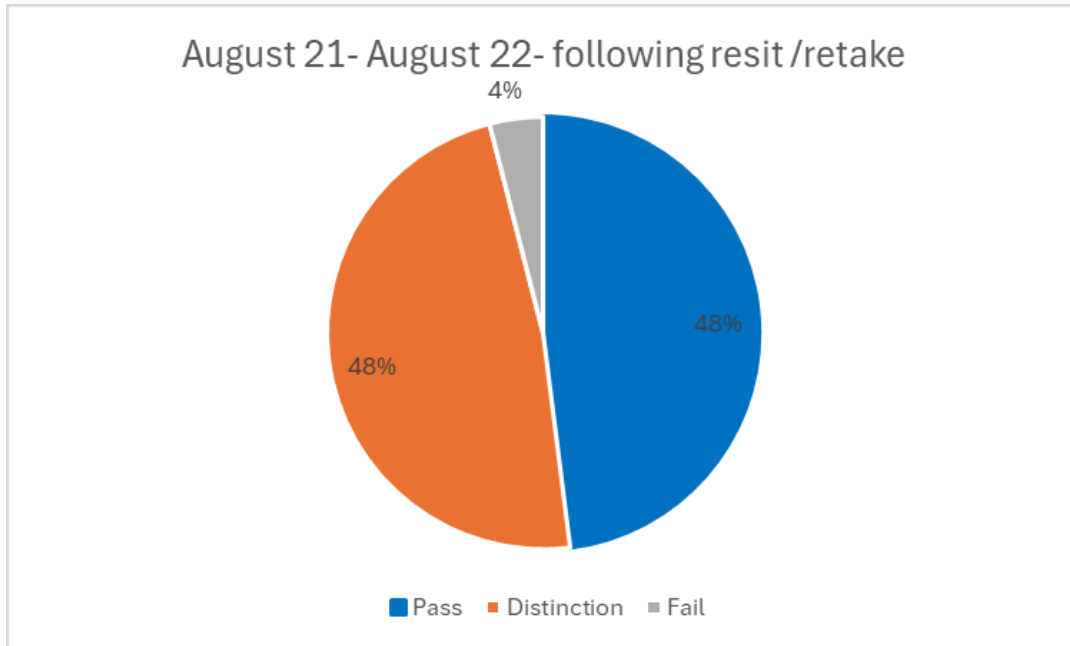
Distinction Rate: There was a slight decrease from 30% to 29%.

In summary, the pass rate increased slightly from the previous period, while the distinction rate decreased slightly. The fail rate remained consistent at 0%.

Simulated Observation with Question & Answer Session

Apprentices who have completed the Simulated Observation with Question & Answer session perform well with 39% achieving a Distinction grade. 10% of learners failed this component on their first attempt. Out of those that have then completed a resit, all managed to achieve a pass grade.





Comparison

Initial Results on first attempt

Fail Rate: Decreased from 19% to 10%.

Pass Rate: Increased from 33% to 51%.

Distinction Rate: Decreased from 48% to 39%.

After Resit/Retake

Fail Rate: Decreased from 4% to 0%.

Pass Rate: Increased from 48% to 61%.

Distinction Rate: Remained constant at 48% for 2021-2022 and 39% for 2022-2023.

In Summary

The Initial Fail Rate: Improved significantly, dropping from 19% to 10%.

The Initial Pass Rate: Improved substantially, increasing from 33% to 51%.

The Initial Distinction Rate: Decreased from 48% to 39%.

Post-Resit/Retake Fail Rate: Improved to 0% in 2022-2023 from 4% in 2021-2022.

Post-Resit/Retake Pass Rate: Improved from 48% to 61%.

Post-Resit/Retake Distinction Rate: Remained the same within each period but lower in 2022-2023 than in 2021-2022.

Overall, there were significant improvements in both the fail and pass rates, both initially and after resits/retakes, while the distinction rate decreased slightly in the 2022-2023 period.

Areas of Good Performance

From reviewing End-point Assessment activities, many apprentices perform highly in explaining processes for receiving stock, stock rotation and how to deal with discrepancies.

Areas for Development

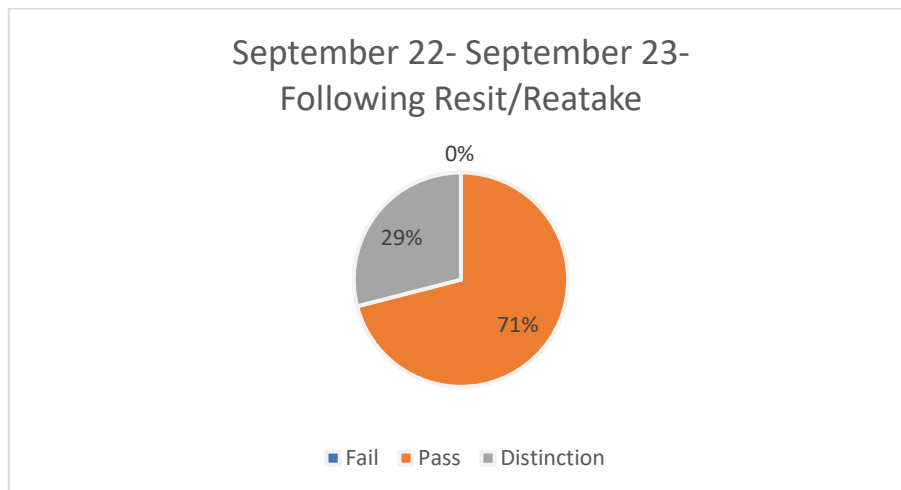
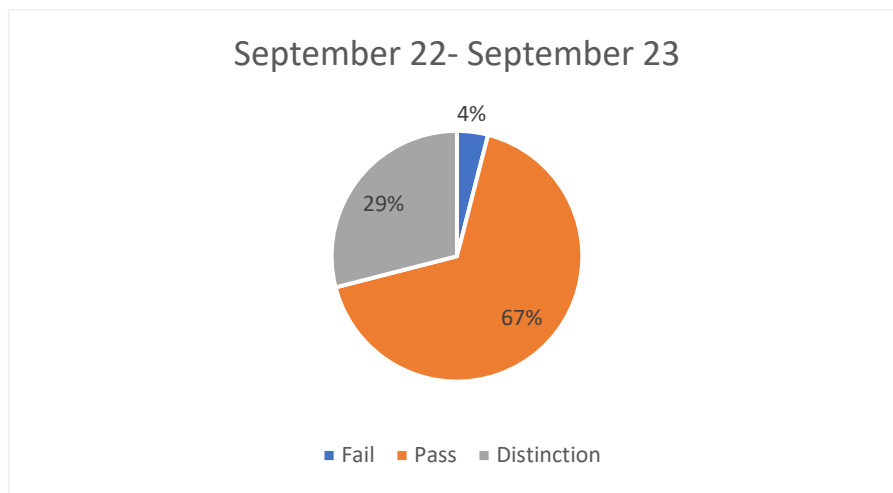
In both cases where apprentices failed this component it was down to lack of evidence to show full understanding and adherence to pharmacy Standard Operating Procedures when dispensing and issuing stock. A common occurrence was the candidate's failure to include a patient information leaflet when dispensing broken down or split packs. When issuing stock against a stock list, candidates must be aware of what action to take if stock is not available and the records that must be completed.

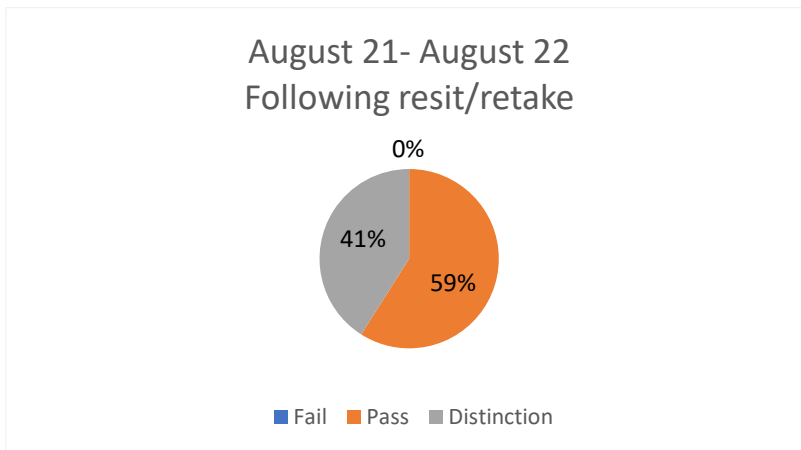
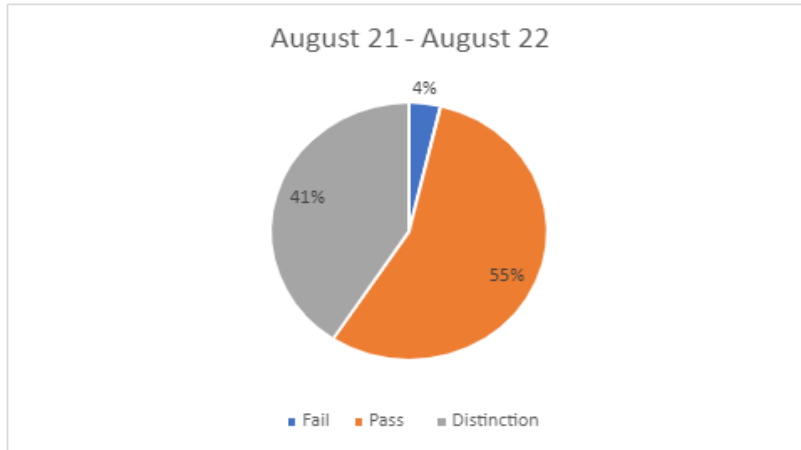
To enable the Simulated Observation with Q&A to commence, there must be a named person from the employer available for the full observation duration. This person should be identified by Open Awards using the Planning Form which is sent to you at least three days before the assessment is due to take place. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, the named contact is changed last minute, please inform the Open Awards Assessment Delivery team at assessment@openawards.org.uk. It is also important to ensure that the alternative named contact is sufficiently briefed on their role within the End-point Assessment process.

Professional Discussion

96% of apprentices have achieved a positive outcome for the Professional discussion component on the first attempt. When we have drilled into the grading profile per component, the Professional discussion consistently achieves positive results of either pass or distinction.

We are pleased to report that only 4% have failed the Professional discussion component in the period reviewed. In all cases, this assessment component was subsequently passed successfully on a resit.





Comparison

Initial Results on first attempt:

Fail Rate: Remained constant at 4%.

Pass Rate: Increased from 55% to 67%.

Distinction Rate: Decreased from 41% to 29%.

After Resit/Retake:

Fail Rate: Remained at 0%.

Pass Rate: Increased from 59% to 71%.

Distinction Rate: Remained constant within each period but lower in 2022-2023 than in 2021-2022.

In Summary:

The Initial Fail Rate: Remained unchanged at 4%.

The Initial Pass Rate: Increased significantly from 55% to 67%.

The Initial Distinction Rate: Decreased from 41% to 29%.

Post-Resit/Retake Fail Rate: Remained at 0% in both periods.

Post-Resit/Retake Pass Rate: Improved from 59% to 71%.

Post-Resit/Retake Distinction Rate: Stayed constant within each period but decreased in the 2022-2023 period compared to 2021-2022.

Overall, while the fail rate remained consistent, the pass rate showed a significant improvement both initially and after resits/retakes. However, the distinction rate decreased in the 2022-2023 period.

Areas of Good Performance

From reviewing End-point Assessments completed for the Professional Discussion, almost all apprentices perform to the pass level of the Standard and reflect confidently on examples to showcase their application of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours. The apprentice is often able to explain their own development in good detail as well as discuss confidently principles of GDPR and its importance in the role. Candidates working a community background in pharmacy often perform well in the healthcare promotion related topics.

Areas for Development

From reviewing End-point Assessments completed for the Professional Discussion, it was apparent that where candidates did not reach their desired level was due to a lack of examples. Particularly where two examples were required for the distinction criteria. There were also instances of where candidates ran out of time and were not able to sufficiently cover the assessment criteria. This was the case in a lot of the instances where a candidate only managed a pass rather than a distinction. It is vital that the provider must give them support so they are aware of the criteria and expectations to achieve a successful outcome.

Key Recommendations for Employers/ Providers

- Register apprentices as soon as possible with Open Awards and provide an early indication of the likely gateway date.
- Ensure apprentices receive a copy of the EPA Handbook.
- Ensure apprentices are familiar with the KSB's, understand how these will be assessed and that they are well prepared.
- Make use of the sample paper available for the Knowledge Test.
- Submit the portfolio to Open Awards when submitting mandated gateway documentation.
- Employers should be reminded that the employer brief is confidential and should not be shared with the apprentice.
- Ensure that the apprentice can perform in their normal working environment.
- Ensure that there is a named responsible person available during the entire End-point Assessment duration at the employer's site.
- Ensure that the apprentice has their ID on the day of the assessment, otherwise the End-point Assessment cannot go ahead, and cancellation charges may apply.
- For ST0300 – please ensure you are aware of the FAB dates and deadline for documents to be uploaded to the Secure Portal.
- Always use the documents and forms available in the Secure Portal to ensure using the most up-to-date version, this will reduce the risk of rejected paperwork at the gateway.

Upcoming Changes

- We have implemented new workflows for ST0299 and ST0300 to provide you with better visibility on where your apprentice is at, in the EPA journey through the Secure Portal. We will be providing further training on this from January 2024.
- We have recruited additional end point assessors to cope with the increased demand.
- Feedback – we are always looking to continually improve our End-point Assessment service and therefore will be looking to gather feedback on your experience so far, and how we can improve. Please look out for the survey link in your inbox.

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