

# NSCP Pharmacy Technician Assessment (NSCP-PTA) ASSESSMENT TOOL

# Introduction

The specific competencies targeted in the assessment are set out in the NAPRA *Professional Competencies for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians at Entry to Practice in Canada*<sup>1</sup> (2024) document. The layout of the assessment mirrors that of the NAPRA competency document:

**Competency Domain** 

» Key Competencies

>> Enabling Competencies

Assessors will focus on 14 Key Competencies captured under 4 Competency Domains. The Key Competencies represent broadly defined competencies required of all pharmacy professionals. The Enabling Competencies that fall under the Key Competency are sub-elements and denote more defined expectations of all pharmacy professionals or are specific to the role of a pharmacy technician<sup>2</sup>.

In the NSCP-PTA, Behavioural Indicators are listed under the Enabling Competencies and are intended to assist the assessor in evaluating the candidate. They represent examples of specific activities or actions that could be used to demonstrate competence of the related element. Not all Behavioural Indicators need to be observed, and they may differ depending on the practice site (e.g., community vs hospital). Assessors may use their judgment to identify other activities at their practice site that would demonstrate competence of a particular element.

# RATING SCALE

The NSCP-PTA includes a 4-point rating scale and includes 1-unsatisfactory, 2-needs improvement, 3-satisfactory, and 4-exemplary. A score of 3 or 4 is required to reflect adequate demonstration of competency. An assessor cannot assign half-scores; if the candidate's performance falls somewhere between two ratings, the lesser rating must be applied.

For all but one key competency, the 4-point rating scale criteria are identical and take into consideration an assessment of the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and the level of guidance required by the candidate versus more independent practice.

The rating scale criteria for Key Competency 3.1 (Use Effective Communication Skills) are different in that they directly reference the related behavioural indicators. This is intended to assist the assessor in objectively evaluating this nuanced competency. As pharmacy technicians serve as a key point of contact between patients, pharmacy team members and other healthcare providers, and the ability to successfully communicate underpins virtually all practice activities, having strong communication skills is essential in delivering safe and effective pharmacy care. An assessment of communication skills needs to consider not just what was seen or heard, but also the effectiveness and impact of communication in different contexts.

The final assessment for each key competency takes into consideration the candidate's demonstration of that competency throughout the entire assessment period.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.napra.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/NAPRA-Entry-to-practice-Competencies-October-2024-EN.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Pharmacy technician role-specific competencies are denoted by an "a" following the competency number.

# DOMAIN 1A - PROVIDING CARE: CLINICAL CARE

# **KEY COMPETENCY: 1.1 OBTAIN RELEVANT PATIENT INFORMATION**

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.1.1 Gather information from the patient using appropriate communication and interview techniques.

1.1.2 Gather information from other sources, including patient health records and other health professionals.

1.1.3 Complete best possible medication histories.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Gathers information required to provide pharmacy-related services, creates a complete patient record/profile, and/or verifies current data on an existing patient record/profile.

Obtains accurate and comprehensive personal and health information required for medication reconciliation from multiple sources, including the patient/caregiver interview and prescription vials, multi-medication compliance aids, other healthcare providers, etc.

Investigates to clarify patient details and/or to obtain patient information.

Uses appropriate communication skills when gathering information from patient/caregiver and other healthcare providers.

	1	2	3	4
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary
RATING	KSAs <sup>3</sup> to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.
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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Knowledge, skills and attributes

# KEY COMPETENCY: 1.2 ASSESS THE PATIENT'S HEALTH STATUS AND UNIQUE NEEDS, GOALS, AND PREFERENCES, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PATIENT

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.2.2 Recognize and respect the patient's cultural, social, economic, linguistic, demographic, and other unique attributes, which may influence the patient's needs and the way the patient interacts with pharmacy care.

1.2.4a Identify and share information about patient health needs related to medical devices or medication access and use (dosage forms, special packaging, or labelling, etc.).

1.2.5a Perform point-of-care tests that have been recommended for the patient by an authorized health professional.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Recognizes and respects the patient's cultural, social, economic, linguistic, demographic, and other unique attributes, which may influence the patient's needs and the way the patient interacts with pharmacy care.

Actively involves patients, caregivers and healthcare providers in decision-making.

Refers actual and potential medication, device or care-related issues to the pharmacist in a clear, concise and timely manner, ensuring effective communication within the healthcare team.

Conducts point-of-care tests (POCT) in accordance with NSCP Standards of Practice: Testing, including correctly operating POCT equipment, conducting tests in a suitable environment, and adhering to proper sample collection and handling procedures.

	1	2	3	4		
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary		
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.		
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# KEY COMPETENCY: 1.4 IMPLEMENT A PLAN FOR THE PATIENT'S CARE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PATIENT AND THEIR CIRCLE OF CARE

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.4.1 Administer medication by injection and other routes, using aseptic technique.

1.4.3a Work with the pharmacist and other health professionals to support implementation of the activities in the plan for the patient's care.

1.4.4a Assist the patient with the selection of a medical device when its use has been recommended by an authorized health professional (medication administration aids, self-monitoring devices, etc.).

1.4.5a Provide information that does not required clinical or therapeutic knowledge to support the patient in successfully implementing the plan for their care.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Safely administers vaccines and other injectable medications (Note: candidate must have a valid NSCP Drug Administration by Injection Technical Permit).

Assists patients in making informed decisions regarding selection of medical devices (e.g., blood pressure, glucose monitoring), dose administration/compliance aids, medical products (e.g., ostomy, diabetic) and other health aids; supports the patient in accessing device/product.

Educates patients through demonstrations of devices, health and compliance aids.

Supports patients to be active participants in their own care, providing relevant resources and information that falls within their scope of practice (e.g., providing clear information about medications and devices, encouraging patient to ask questions, supporting language and accessibility needs).

Collaborates with pharmacy and healthcare team members for the benefit of the patient (e.g., helping to obtain medication, communicating medication-related concerns, supporting health services offered by the pharmacy).

	1	2	3	4
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary
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# KEY COMPETENCY: 1.5 MONITOR THE PATIENT AND COLLABORATE WITH THE PATIENT AND THEIR CIRCLE OF CARE TO REVISE THE PLAN FOR THE PATIENT'S CARE

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.5.1a Gather and share information on monitoring parameters with the pharmacist and other health professionals.

1.5.2a Follow up with the patient to evaluate their use of medical devices.

1.5.3a Identify and share concerns regarding patient adherence to therapy.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Gathers, documents and shares monitoring parameter information from patients/caregivers and other sources, bringing forth relevant or concerning information to the pharmacist for review. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical attributes (e.g., height, weight, blood pressure)
- Lab test results
- Assessment of proper use of medical devices
- Adherence information

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# DOMAIN 1B - PROVIDING CARE: DISTRIBUTION

# **KEY COMPETENCY: 1.6 REVIEW AND PROCESS PRESCRIPTIONS**

## ENABLING COMPETENCIES

1.6.1 Determine the validity, authenticity, clarity, and completeness of a prescription and collaborate with the pharmacy team and other health professionals to address concerns.

1.6.2 Process prescriptions, including inputting data into the computer system, making appropriate substitutions, and completing the adjudication through third-party payors.

1.6.3 Perform accurate calculations required in pharmacy practice.

1.6.4 Transcribe verbal orders and ensure their accuracy.

1.6.5a Identify and share information with the pharmacist regarding changes to the patient's therapy (new drug or device, new dose, discontinuation of therapy, etc.) and concerns related to adherence or appropriate use.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Verifies patient information, accurately interprets prescriptions/orders, and ensures prescriptions/orders are authentic, valid and complete. Clarifies any confusing or incorrect information in collaboration with the pharmacist, prescriber or patient.

Cross-references medication information and patient data for accuracy and safety.

Applies knowledge of formulary and interchangeable products as needed.

Perform accurate pharmaceutical and compounding calculations.

Accurately transcribes verbal orders, involving the pharmacist when required (e.g., difficulty with understanding order, outside scope of practice).

Communicates relevant information and identified concerns to the pharmacist, including pharmacy software generated drug alerts.

	1	2	3	4	
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# **KEY COMPETENCY: 1.7 PREPARE PRODUCTS AND PREPARATIONS FOR DISPENSING**

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.7.1 Select the right product and measure the correct amount using appropriate equipment and technology.

1.7.2 Safely compound quality non-sterile, non-hazardous preparations according to regulatory standards and requirements.

1.7.5 Package products and preparations in a manner that maintains quality and integrity, and that is safe and appropriate for the patient.

1.7.6 Label products and preparations to promote understanding and safe use by the patient.

1.7.7 Handle biohazardous and hazardous materials, ingredients, products, and preparations safely to minimize exposure and environmental contamination.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Selects appropriate product and dosage forms.

Selects appropriate packaging (vials/bottles/jars, blister packs/compliance packing, unit-dose, IV admixtures).

Prepares and affixes appropriate labels, including auxiliary labels.

Measures products accurately using appropriate techniques, equipment, supplies and technology.

Prepares non-sterile compounded products in accordance with the NSCP Standards of Practice: Non-Sterile Compounding.

Handles hazardous products safely by minimizing personal exposure and reducing environmental contamination (e.g., PPE, destruction, storage etc.)

	l	2	3	4	
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# KEY COMPETENCY: 1.8 VERIFY THE ACCURACY AND QUALITY OF DISPENSED PRODUCTS AND PREPARATIONS.

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.8.1 Verify the technical aspects of the prepared product or preparation against the prescription, using a systematic approach, which may include an independent double check process.

1.8.2 Verify the quality of the prepared product or preparation.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Consistently verifies the accuracy of prepared medications across various prescription/order types (e.g., prescription drug list / controlled substances, new/refill, STAT) and dosage forms (e.g., tablets, injectables, liquids, topicals, inhalers, compounded preparations); ensures proper packaging (e.g., unit dose, multi-dose, compliance packaging), while reliably identifying and addressing any errors in the preparation process, including those related to high-alert or hazardous medications.

Recognizes situations when an independent double check should be performed.

Ensures the quality, safety, and integrity of prepared products or preparations (e.g., visual inspection, proper storage requirements, maintenance of sterility).

	1	2	3	4
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.
Comments:				

## **KEY COMPETENCY: 1.9 RELEASE VERIFIED PRODUCTS AND PREPARATIONS.**

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

1.9.1 Confirm that all therapeutic and technical verifications have been completed.

1.9.2 Confirm that all required consultations and education have been completed.

1.9.3 Release the product or preparation to the correct patient after verification of their identity.

### BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Prior to releasing the product or preparation, confirms:

- the technical accuracy and completeness of product or preparation has been verified
- the pharmacist has reviewed the therapeutic appropriateness of the drug therapy or product prior to release
- the identity of patient or authorized person to whom it is being released

Identifies when consultation with the pharmacist may be required by the patient or healthcare professional.

	1	2	3	4
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.
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# DOMAIN 3 - COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

# **KEY COMPETENCY: 3.1 USE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

\*\*Note change in assessment rating scale criteria specific to this competency

## ENABLING COMPETENCIES

3.1.1 Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

3.1.2 Demonstrate effective written communication skills.

3.1.3 Adapt communication and education for the intended recipient (patient, other health professional, interested parties, etc.) and confirm understanding.

3.1.4 Demonstrate sensitivity, respect, empathy, and inclusivity.

3.1.5 Manage conflict in a constructive, respectful, and collaborative manner.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Communicates effectively with attention to tone, speed, and audience.

Demonstrates a caring attitude in conversations with or about patients (e.g., compassionate, empathetic, respectful of diversity, supportive).

Uses non-verbal skills appropriately (e.g., eye contact, posture, hand gestures and personal space).

Adapts communication to specific contexts and situations.

Writing is clear, organized, and concise.

#### 1 - Unsatisfactory

Communication is frequently unclear or inappropriate in tone, speed, or audience adaptation. Lacks a caring attitude towards patients. Uses non-verbal skills ineffectively or inappropriately. Fails to adapt communication to different contexts and situations. Written communication is unclear, disorganized, or lacks conciseness.

#### 2 - Needs Improvement

Communication is inconsistent; tone, speed, and audience adaptation require improvement. Shows some care for patients but lacks consistency. Uses non-verbal skills inconsistently or in a way that does not always align with the situation. Struggles to adapt communication effectively to different contexts. Written communication is sometimes unclear, disorganized, or lacks conciseness.

#### 3 – Satisfactory

Communicates clearly and effectively with appropriate tone, speed, and demonstrates audience awareness. Demonstrates a caring attitude towards patients. Uses non-verbal skills appropriately and effectively. Adapts communication well to different contexts and situations. Written communication is clear, well-organized, and concise.

#### 4 - Exemplary

Consistently communicates with excellent tone, speed, and audience adaptation. Consistently demonstrates a strong caring attitude towards patients. Uses non-verbal communication seamlessly and effectively. Adapts communication effortlessly to various contexts and situations. Written communication is exceptionally clear, well-organized, and concise.

#### Comments:

# KEY COMPETENCY: 3.3 COLLABORATE WITH PHARMACY COLLEAGUES, OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AND OTHER INVOLVED PARTIES.

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

3.3.1 Collaborate with pharmacy colleagues, other health professionals, and other involved parties to ensure appropriate care and optimal use of healthcare resources.

3.3.2 Participate in information exchange and shared decision making with pharmacy colleagues and other health professionals.

3.3.3 Facilitate continuity of care when patients transition between healthcare settings and care providers.

3.3.4 Make a formal referral to pharmacy colleagues or other health professionals when the patient requires care beyond their personal level of competence, capacity, or authorized scope of practice.

3.3.5 Act on formal referrals or other requests from health professionals when they fall within their personal level of competence, capacity, or authorized scope of practice.

# BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Establishes and maintains positive relationships with patients, pharmacy teams members and other health care providers.

Recognizes and respects the unique and shared roles and responsibilities of pharmacy and health care team members. Can negotiate shared and overlapping responsibilities.

Collaborates with health care professionals to address patient care needs.

Accepts responsibility for referrals from the pharmacist.

Refers nursing staff, another healthcare professional or a patient to the pharmacist when a situation falls outside their scope of practice.

Actively shares knowledge and expertise with other team members within scope of practice.

Seeks guidance when uncertain about own knowledge, skills, abilities and scope of practice.

	1	2	3	4
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.
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# KEY COMPETENCY: 3.4 DOCUMENT PHARMACY CARE AND SERVICES AND MAINTAIN PHARMACY RECORDS.

### **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

3.4.1 Document care, services, actions, and decisions in the patient record in a timely and effective manner and using recognized formats.

3.4.2 Use effective record-keeping procedures and technology to maintain complete, accurate, secure, and easily accessible pharmacy records.

3.4.3 Contribute to the patient's provincial/territorial health records using appropriate technology.

#### **BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS**

Documents according to legal requirements and standards of practice.

Documents practice activities utilizing a paper-based system and/or an electronic health information system in a professional, timely, and easily retrievable manner.

Documents identified issues or concerns (and the resolution if applicable).

Documentation (handwritten and/or electronic) is accurate, complete, organized and legible.

	1	2	3	4	
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary	
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.	
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# DOMAIN 5 - PROFESSIONALISM

## KEY COMPETENCY: 5.1 ADHERE TO RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.

## ENABLING COMPETENCIES

5.1.1 Apply legislative and regulatory requirements to practice.

5.1.2 Practice within the authorized scope of practice of the applicable jurisdiction.

5.1.3 Respect and protect patient privacy and confidentiality.

5.1.4 Obtain informed and meaningful consent from patients prior to providing care and services or sharing patient information.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Practices in accordance with legal requirements and standards of practice.

Handles all patient information with the utmost care and discretion, strictly adhering to all confidentiality policies and seeking consent prior to sharing patient information.

Understands the full extent of their scope of practice.

Recognizes when own knowledge and skills are insufficient to manage a situation.

Actively fulfills own roles and responsibilities, accepting responsibility for activities within scope of practice.

Ensures informed consent has been provided prior to providing care.

	1	2	3	4		
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary		
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.		
Comi	Comments:					

# **KEY COMPETENCY: 5.2 APPLY ETHICAL PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE**

## **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

5.2.1 Act in the best interest of the patient.

5.2.2 Demonstrate accountability for their actions and decisions.

5.2.3 Act with honesty, integrity, and transparency in professional and business practices.

5.2.4 Treat others with fairness and respect.

5.2.5 Respect the autonomy, values, rights, and dignity of patients.

5.2.7 Recognize and address illegal, unethical, and unprofessional actions or situations.

5.2.8 Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Accepts responsibility and accountability for patient care needs within their scope of practice and appropriately consults the pharmacist when necessary.

Practices in accordance with the NSCP Code of Ethics. Applies ethical principles in daily work, including but not limited to, protecting the best interests of patients, striving to do no harm, respecting patient rights to quality care, and being accountable for their own actions and behaviours.

Takes appropriate steps to address actions and situations that are unethical.

Demonstrates honesty and integrity in all interactions within the healthcare environment.

Presents professionally and demonstrates appropriate work ethic.

Establishes and maintains professional boundaries with patients and the healthcare team.

	1	2	3	4	
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary	
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.	
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# KEY COMPETENCY: 5.5 PROMOTE A CULTURE OF PATIENT SAFETY AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

### **ENABLING COMPETENCIES**

5.5.1 Anticipate, recognize, and manage situations that place the patient at risk, including high alert drugs, high-risk processes, high workload, and distractions in the work environment.

5.5.4 Effectively manage pharmacy workflow to maintain or improve the safety of care and services provided.

5.5.6 Share information about problems, resolutions, system changes, and lessons learned with patients, pharmacy colleagues, and others.

## BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

Maintains organization and cleanliness in the workspace to reduce errors and enhance efficiency.

Demonstrates time management skills necessary to effectively prioritize and manage workflow.

Uses technology effectively to support efficient and safe delivery of care and services.

Ensures safety, quality and integrity of drugs and supplies during storage and transport.

Supports a culture of patient safety by appropriately:

- following established safety protocols and policies
- recognizing and taking proactive steps to mitigate risks associated with high-alert medications and high-risk processes
- identifying and reporting medication incidents / near misses or other safety issues in a timely and professional manner.

	1	2	3	4
	Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exemplary
RATING	KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours are below expectations. Requires assistance and extensive guidance to complete the task.	Has the KSAs to engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours and understands process but does not always apply them consistently and independently. Requires guidance frequently.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires minimal or only occasional guidance.	Can engage in activities / demonstrate behaviours independently and with confidence. Requires guidance rarely.
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