



# Pharmacy Technicians Entry-to-Practice Competency Assessment Framework

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## PURPOSE

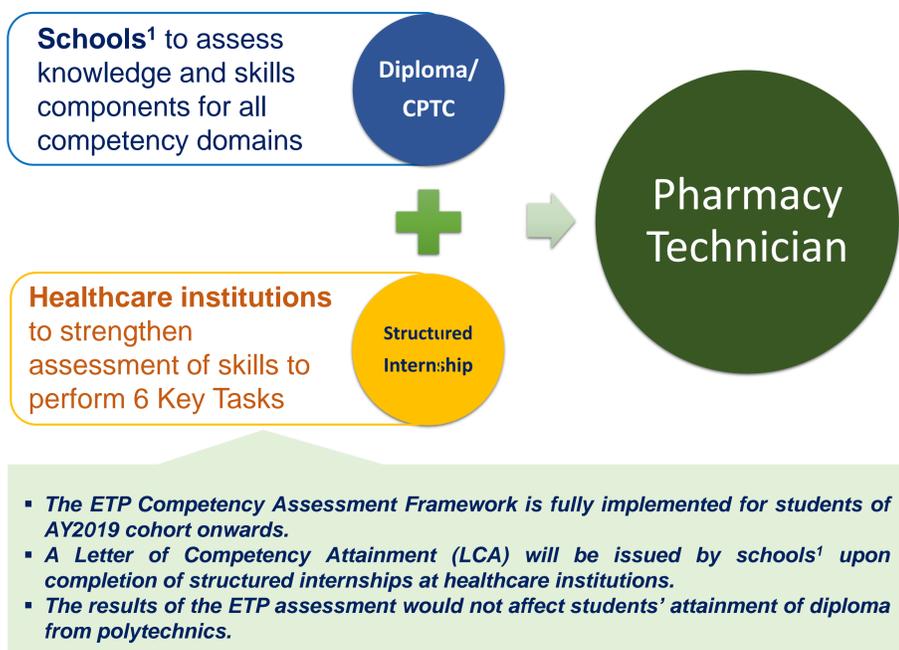
With the introduction of the National Competency Standards for Entry-Level Pharmacy Technicians in 2015, a competency assessment framework was developed to ensure graduates who are planning to join the health care sector achieve the minimum competency requirements at recruitment. This framework seeks to promote better alignment of schools<sup>1</sup> curriculum and assessment strategies with the competency standards of entry-level pharmacy technicians. For students, this framework aims to help them to be more job-ready for practice as pharmacy technicians upon graduation.

<sup>1</sup>schools: Local polytechnics/ Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore (PSS) for the Diploma in Pharmaceutical Science Programme/ Certified Pharmacy Technician Course (CPTC)

## METHODS

The development of the competency assessment framework (Figure 1) for pharmacy technicians was led by the ministry-appointed Pharmacy Technicians Training and Development Committee consisting of members from healthcare institutions and schools. International experts were also engaged to review the strategies and assessment framework. The curriculum and assessment strategies of schools and healthcare institutions were aligned based on the competency standards of entry-level pharmacy technicians. A set of assessment tools were co-created by educators and practitioners to facilitate this shift. During the transitional implementation period, results from trial assessments were reviewed and surveys were conducted to gather feedback from preceptors and students.

Figure 1: Scope of the Entry-to-Practice Competency Assessment Framework



## DISCUSSION

Survey returns from 35 preceptors and 62 students from 13 healthcare institutions informed the user experiences on the assessment tools and suggestions for improvement. There were limited opportunities for assessment of Key Task 5 (Perform physical medication reconciliation) and Key Task 6 (Assist pharmacist in the sale of GSL/ pharmacy-only medications) in various settings. The use of training and assessment plan could help to improve efficiency and avoid missed opportunities for assessments during internships. Schools could also perform assessment of the ETP key tasks in-course. Continuous fine-tuning of the assessment tools is required to enhance user experience and to ensure currency of practice.

## RESULTS

The ETP assessment tools (Figure 2) were published within the Implementation Guide of the revised Pharmacy Technicians Entry-To-Practice Competency Standards.

Figure 2: Assessment tools for preceptors

	<b>Assessment Blueprint</b>	Lists <b>passing criteria</b> and <b>assessment methods</b> for each performance criteria
	<b>Assessment Checklist</b>	Checklists for competency assessments of the <b>6 key tasks</b> to help preceptors efficiently keep track of students' progress
	<b>Multisource Feedback</b>	Supports assessment of <b>behavioral and professional</b> competencies <i>MSF forms are specific to schools from AY2019 cohorts onwards</i>
	<b>Training and Assessment Plan</b>	Examples of <b>training and assessment plan</b> for healthcare institutions to plan for ETP assessments to be efficiently
	<b>Sample Questions</b>	Sample questions on <b>4 categories of drug-related problems</b> to help scope the ETP assessments
	<b>Scan this QR code to download the tools</b>	Training workshops were conducted to facilitate adoption and to gather feedback for further refinement of the assessment framework.

## Purpose and benefits of the ETP Assessment Framework<sup>2</sup>

- An aligned standard of expectations of the (entry-level) pharmacy technicians
- Students can have a more structured learning and understand what is expected from them
- Ensuring entry-level pharmacy technicians have the required competencies and make it easier for institutions to focus on the (training) gaps to fill
- Employers can better gauge their employee's competency upon employment and bridge any gaps, where applicable
- A more prepared (pharmacy technician) workforce for new hires with some practical experience

<sup>2</sup>Inputs from participants of Workshop for Implementation of Pharmacy Technicians ETP Assessment Framework in Feb/Mar'21

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the developmental phase, engagements with multiple stakeholders resulted in enhancement of the assessment framework and a common purpose for the development of a competent pharmacy technician workforce at entry-to-practice. Continued collaborations among key stakeholders would be key to achieve the desired outcomes.

### Acknowledgement:

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