Competency framework: General Practice Assistant

Contents

Introduction

This competency framework specifies a range of core capabilities expected of the General Practice Assistant (GPA) working within general practice/primary care.

The General Practice Assistant role (GPA) is an enhanced administrative role, with some basic, clinical elements. The role can be flexible to suit general practice requirements, however any clinical duties undertaken must be covered by the **employer via practice governance and associated liability insurance/arrangements.**

The framework is structured around 5 key domains:

- Care
- Administration
- Clinical
- Communications
- Managing Health Records

Within the domains are a total of 58 capabilities. The capabilities are numbered for ease of reference - this does not indicate a prescribed pathway, process or hierarchy. The capabilities set out what the GPA working in general practice/primary care settings should demonstrate.

To further support GP practices in identifying and reviewing capabilities, specific assessment criteria has also been included in the framework. This will help GPAs to build a portfolio of evidence and demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and behaviours essential to the GPA role, and promote clinical thinking and reflection.

Further guidance to support GP practices and GPAs can be made available, upon request.

Domain 1: CARE		Assessment Criteria	Approx time (mins)
Section A - Person centred care			
1. Understand the application of person-centred approaches in health and social care but specifically in general practice.	1.1	Explain how and why person-centred values must influence all aspects of health and social care work	30
	1.2	Give examples of how to support the use of care planning and digital records upkeep	30
2. Be able to work in a person-centred way	2.1	Work with an individual and others to find out the individual's history, preferences, wishes and needs	20
	2.2	Give examples of ways to put person centred values into practice in a complex or sensitive case	30
	2.3	Describe how actions and approaches may need to be adapted in response to an individual's changing needs or preferences	30
3. Be able to promote individual's well-being	3.1	Explain the links between identity, self-image and self-esteem for an individual	10
	3.2	Analyse factors that contribute to the well-being of individuals	20
	3.3	Give an example of where you have supported an individual in a way that promotes their sense of identity, self-image and self esteem	10
	3.4	Describe ways to contribute to an environment that promotes well-being	30

4. Understand the role of risk assessment in enabling a person-centred approach	4.1	Compare different uses of risk assessment in health and social care	30
	4.2	Explain how risk-taking and risk assessment relate to rights and responsibilities	30
	4.3	Explain why risk assessments need to be regularly revised	10
Section B – Care Plans			
5. Be able to support the **implementation** of care plans	5.1	Carry out assigned aspects of a care plan generated by the practice or wider team	20
	5.2	Support others to carry out aspects of a care plan for which they are responsible	20
	5.3	Give an example of where the practice has had to adjust the plan in response to changing needs or circumstances	20
6. Be able to **monitor** a care plan	6.1	Agree methods for monitoring the way a care plan is delivered	10
	6.2	Collate monitoring information from agreed sources	20
	6.3	Record changes that affect the delivery of the care plan	10
7. Be able to facilitate a **review** of care plans and their implementation	7.1	Seek agreement with the individual and others about: • Who should be involved in the review process • Criteria to judge effectiveness of the care plan	30

	7.2	Seek feedback from the individual and others about how the plan is working	10
	7.3	Use feedback and monitoring/other information to evaluate whether the plan has achieved its objectives	10
	7.4	Work with the individual and others to agree any revisions to the plan or an action plan	10
	7.5	Document the review process and revisions as required	20
Section C – Infection control			
8. Understand roles and responsibilities in the prevention and control of infections	8.1	Explain employees' roles and responsibilities in relation to the prevention and control of infection	30
	8.2	Explain employers' responsibilities in relation to the prevention and control of infection	30
9. Understand legislation and policies relating to prevention and control of infections	9.1	Outline current legislation and regulatory body standards which are relevant to the prevention and control of infection	30
	9.2	Describe local and organisational policies relevant to the prevention and control of infection including COVID-19	20
10. Understand systems and procedures relating to the prevention and control of infections	10.1	Describe procedures and systems relevant to the prevention and control of infection	20
	10.2	Explain the potential impact of an outbreak of infection on the individual and the organisation	20

11. Understand the importance of risk assessment in relation to the prevention and control of infections	11.1	Define the term risk	5
	11.2	Outline potential risks of infection within the workplace	10
	11.3	Describe the process of and importance of carrying out a risk assessment	15
Section D – Mental Health and Wellbeing			
12. Understand the different views on the nature of mental well-being and mental health and the factors that may influence both during a patient's life.	12.1	Evaluate two different views on the nature of mental well-being and mental health	20
	12.2	Explain the range of factors that may influence mental well-being and mental health problems across the life span, including: • Biological factors • Social factors • Psychological factors	30
	12.3	Explain how the following types of risk factors and protective factors influence levels of resilience in individuals and groups in relation to mental well-being and mental health: • Risk factors including inequalities, poor quality social relationships, substance misuse • Protective factors including socially valued roles, social support and contact	30

13. Know how to implement an effective strategy for promoting mental well-being and mental health with individuals and groups	13.1	Explain the steps that an individual may take to promote their mental well-being and mental health	15
	13.2	Explain how to support an individual in promoting their mental well-being and mental health	15
	13.3	Describe a strategy for supporting a particular patient in promoting their mental well-being and mental health	20

Domain 2: ADMINISTRATION		Assessment Criteria	Approx time (mins)
1. Understand requirements for handling information in health and social care settings	1.1	Identify legislation and codes of practice that relate to handling information in health and social care i.e. confidentiality and information governance	30
	1.2	Summarise the main points of legal requirements and codes of practice for handling information in health and social care	15
2. Be able to implement good practice in handling information	2.1	Describe features of manual and electronic information storage systems that help ensure security	15
	2.2	Demonstrate practices that ensure security when storing and accessing information	15
	2.3	Give an example of where you have maintained records that are up to date, complete, accurate and legible	10
	2.4	Demonstrate an understanding of given consent by an individual to share information with another person or body.	15
	2.5	Demonstrate an understanding of consenting where mental capacity is in doubt or not present.	10
3. Know ways to support individuals to access information on services and facilities	3.1	Identify the types of services and facilities which patients may require access to and give examples where you have actively signposted them. Demonstrate a good knowledge of local service options	20
	3.2	Identify possible barriers to **accessing** and **understanding** information	10

	3.3	Describe ways to overcome barriers to **accessing** information	10
	3.4	Identify a range of formats, translations and technology that could make information more **accessible** for individuals	20
	3.5	Describe types of support individuals may need to enable them to **understand** information	20
4. Be able to work with individuals to select and obtain information about services and facilities	4.1	Give an example where you have helped an individual to communicate their needs, wishes, preferences and choices about the information they require to access services and facilities	15
	4.2	Work with an individual to identify relevant and up to date information on services and facilities that meet assessed needs and wishes	15
	4.3	Give an example where you have helped a patient to obtain selected information in their preferred format and language	10
5. Be able to work with individuals to access and use information about services and facilities	5.1	Demonstrate ways to check an individual's understanding of the information (for example if there is illiteracy of foreign language as 1st language)	20
	5.2	Share an example where you have worked with an individual to access a service or facility using the information, in ways that promote active participation	10
	5.3	Give an example where you have supported patients to deal with any issues or concerns that may arise from the content of information	10

	5.4	Understanding when to gain consent from the patient to share information with other services and facilities both in consultation and out of consultation (3rd party requests)	15
6. Familiarisation with hospital, out of hours and other communications, and key information to be extracted	6.1	Demonstrate an understanding of information sharing through outpatient letters	10
	6.2	Demonstrate an understanding of the information contained within AED and admission/discharge letters	10
	6.3	Describe the key information needed within medication requests from patients.	10
	6.4	Demonstrate an understanding of Out of Hours, extended hours and other GP to GP communication letters.	10
	6.5	Give examples of care home correspondence	10
	6.6	Outline other relevant communications that might be received in practices.	20
7. Be able to support the GP to complete common administrative tasks such as:	7.1	Forms linked to benefits – IB113, HAAS etc	10
	7.2	Mortgage & holiday insurance forms	10
	7.3	Private letters and short reports	10
	7.4	Referral templates	10
	7.5	Investigation forms – x-ray, blood forms, ECG etc	10

	7.6	Demonstrate an understanding of the need for the GP to "sign off" such requests for individual patients	10

Domain 3: CLINICAL		Assessment Criteria	Approx time (mins)
Section A – Background, policies and procedures			
1. Understand relevant legislation, policy and good practice in relation to obtaining, carrying, testing and storing specimens	1.1	Explain current legislation, national guidelines, organisational policies and protocols which affect working practice	30
	1.2	Describe current legislation, national guidelines, local policies, protocols and good practice guidelines which relate to obtaining venous blood samples	30
2. Understand how to prepare and manage environments and resources for use during healthcare activities within the GP practice	2.1	Explain how the environment is prepared, maintained and cleaned to ensure it is ready for the healthcare activity	15
	2.2	Describe the roles and responsibilities of team members in the preparation and management of the environment and resources	15
	2.3	Explain how to investigate, make the necessary adjustments to and report problems with the environment	15
	2.4	Describe the impact of environmental changes on resources including their storage and use	15

3. Preparing environments, medical equipment, devices and resources for use during healthcare activities	3.1	Apply health and safety measures relevant to the healthcare activity and environment	20
	3.2	Apply standard precautions for infection prevention and control	20
	3.3	Ensure conditions within the immediate environment are set at levels which maintain individual comfort	20
	3.4	Ensure that all essential resources are available in advance of planned healthcare activities	10
	3.5	Ensure all medical equipment, devices and resources are in a suitable, safe condition for the activity to be carried out	10
	3.6	Report any problems with medical equipment, devices and resources as required	10
	3.7	Demonstrate the relevant equipment and medical devices are selected, prepared and functioning within the agreed parameters prior to use	10
	3.8	Prepare resources for the activity in line with clinical governance	10
	3.9	Demonstrate an understanding of the storage of vaccines and other drugs for use by health care professionals and the need to audit compliance with storage guidance e.g. fridge cold chain audit	10

4. Be able to ensure that environments and resources are ready for their next intended use	4.1	Describe the importance of ensuring that environments are ready for their next use	20
	4.2	Outline the factors that influence the readiness of environments for use in health care activities	10
	4.3	Clean and make safe re-useable items (e.g. blood pressure machines, sats monitors etc.) prior to storage in accordance with agreed policies	10
	4.4	Dispose of used, damaged or out of date items safely	10
	4.5	Return un-opened, unused and surplus resources to the correct location for storage	10
	4.6	Monitor the available levels of consumable materials used in healthcare activities – such as stock check	20
	4.7	Replenish consumable materials used in healthcare activities in accordance with protocols	20
	4.8	Ensure all information is accurately recorded as specified in local policies	20
5. Be able to prepare individuals to undergo healthcare activities	5.1	Confirm the individual's identity and gain valid consent	10
	5.2	Describe any concerns and worries that an individual may have in relation to healthcare activities	10
	5.3	Describe ways of responding to these concerns	20
	5.4	Explain the procedure to the individual	10

	5.5	Agree the support needed with the individual in a way that is sensitive to their personal beliefs and preferences	10
	5.6	Refer any concerns or questions to others if unable to answer	10
	5.7	Support an individual to prepare and position for the procedure ensuring that privacy and dignity is maintained at all times	10
	5.8	Understand the practice chaperoning policy, guidance and implementation within the practice, including record keeping where appropriate	10
	5.9	Give 3 examples of where you have acted as a chaperone	10
6. Be able to support individuals undergoing healthcare activities	6.1	Inform and reassure individuals	10
	6.2	Apply standard precautions for infection prevention and control	10
	6.3	Apply health and safety measures relevant to the healthcare activity and environment	10
	6.4	Recognise any ill effects or adverse reactions	10
	6.5	Take actions in response to any ill effects or adverse reactions	10
	6.6	Ensure that an individual's privacy and dignity is maintained at all times	20

7. Understand the importance of using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the prevention and control of infections including COVID-19	7.1	Demonstrate correct use of PPE	20
	7.2	Describe different types of PPE	10
	7.3	Explain the reasons for use of PPE	10
	7.4	State current relevant regulations and legislation relating to PPE	10
	7.5	Describe employees' responsibilities regarding the use of PPE	10
	7.6	Describe employers' responsibilities regarding the use of PPE	10
	7.7	Describe the correct practice in the application and removal of PPE	10
	7.8	Describe the correct procedure for disposal of used PPE	10
8. Understand the importance of good personal hygiene in the prevention and control of infections	8.1	Describe the key principles of good personal hygiene	10
	8.2	Demonstrate good hand washing technique	10
	8.3	Describe the correct sequence for hand washing	10
	8.4	Explain when and why hand washing should be carried out	10
	8.5	Describe the types of products that should be used for hand washing	10

	8.6	Describe correct procedures that relate to skincare	10
9. Understand the causes of infection	9.1	Identify the differences between bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites	20
	9.2	Identify common illnesses and infections caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites	10
	9.3	Describe what is meant by "infection" and "colonisation"	5
	9.4	Explain what is meant by "systemic infection" and "localised infection"	5
	9.5	Identify poor practices that may lead to the spread of infection	15
	9.6	Describe what is meant by pandemic and relate this to COVID-19 and its impact upon general practice	15
10. Understand the transmission of infection	10.1	Explain the conditions needed for the growth of micro-organisms	5
	10.2	Explain the ways an infective agent might enter the body	5
	10.3	Identify common sources of infection	5
	10.4	Explain how infective agents can be transmitted to a person	5
	10.5	Identify the key factors that will make it more likely that infection will occur	5

11. Be able to establish consent when providing care or support to a patient	11.1	Analyse factors that influence the capacity of an individual to express consent	10
	11.2	Establish consent for an activity or action	10
	11.3	Explain what steps to take if consent cannot be readily established	15
12. Understand the processes involved in obtaining and testing specimens from individuals	12.1	Identify the different types of specimens that may be obtained	10
	12.2	Describe the tests and investigations that may be carried out upon the specimens	10
	12.3	Identify the correct equipment and materials used in the collection and transport of specimens	10
13. Preparing to obtain specimens from individuals	13.1	Confirm the individual's identity and obtain valid consent	10
	13.2	Ensure the individual's privacy and dignity is maintained at all times	10
	13.3	Identify any aspects of the individual's ethnic and religious background which might affect the procedure	10
	13.4	Communicate with the individual in a medium appropriate to their needs and preferences	5
	13.5	Demonstrate that the required preparations have been completed, including materials and equipment	10

14. Obtaining specimens from individuals	14.1	Provide the correct container for the individual to be able to provide the specimen for themselves	5
	14.2	Collect the specimen where the individual cannot provide the specimen for themselves	5
	14.3	Describe possible problems in collecting specimens and how and when these should be reported	10
	14.4	Demonstrate the correct collection, labelling, transport and storage of specimens	10
	14.5	Complete and attach relevant documentation	10
	14.6	Identify the potential hazards and other consequences related to incorrect labelling of specimens	10
15. Testing specimens from individuals	15.1	Demonstrate the appropriate tests for a range of specimens obtained	10
	15.2	Demonstrate appropriate health and safety measures relevant to the procedure and environment to include: • standard precautions for infection prevention and control • use of personal protective equipment	20
16. Be able to report on the outcomes on the test of specimens to the GP and patient	16.1	Show the correct process for reporting and recording test results	10
	16.2	Describe the actions to be taken when the results are outside the normal range	10
	16.3	Communicate test results in accordance with agreed ways of working	10

	16.4	Describe why it is important to understand the implications the test results may have on the individual	10
Section B – Blood samples			
17. Understand the anatomy and physiology relating to obtaining venous blood samples	17.1	Describe the structure of venous blood vessels	5
	17.2	Explain blood clotting processes and the factors that influence blood clotting	5
	17.3	Describe the position of venous blood vessels in relation to arteries, nerves and other structures	10
18. Preparing to obtain venous blood samples	18.1	Confirm the individual's identity and obtain valid consent	5
	18.2	Communicate with the individual in a manner which: • Provides relevant information • Provides support and reassurance • Addresses needs and concerns • Is respectful of personal beliefs and preferences	10
	18.3	Select and prepare appropriate equipment for obtaining the venous blood sample	5
	18.4	Select and prepare appropriate equipment for obtaining the venous blood sample	5

19. Obtaining venous blood samples	19.1	Apply health and safety measures relevant to the procedure and environment	5
	19.2	Apply standard precautions for infection prevention and control	5
	19.3	Use the selected blood collection equipment correctly, in a manner which will cause minimum discomfort to the individual	5
	19.4	Use the agreed procedure to obtain the venous blood sample, to include: • Utilisation of containers • Required volume of blood • Correct sequence when obtaining multiple samples • Application and use of tourniquets at appropriate stages • Stimulation of blood flow or selection of alternative site where necessary • Utilisation of anti-coagulant with sample when necessary	10
	19.5	Respond to any indication of adverse reaction, complication or problem during the procedure	5
	19.6	Explain the correct procedure to deal with an arterial puncture when it occurs, and any escalation to the GP or GPN.	5
	19.7	Terminate the blood collection procedure following guidelines and/or protocols to include: • Removal of blood collection equipment	10

		• Stopping blood flow • Stopping bleeding • Application of suitable dressing • Personal care advice to the individual	
20. Be able to prepare venous blood samples for transportation	20.1	Label, package, transport and store blood samples correctly and use appropriate attached documentation ensuring: • Legibility of labelling and documentation • Temperature control of storage • Immediacy of transportation	5
Section C – Other clinical procedures			
21. Common examination procedures. Give examples of your delivery (or understanding of) the following	21.1	Undertaking a series of blood pressure tests	30
	21.2	Completing pulse rate and character tests	30
	21.3	Measuring height, weight & BMI	30
	21.4	Measuring temperature	10
	21.5	Taking peak flow measurements	30
	21.6	Undertaking Oxygen level tests	10

	21.7	Completing urine dip stick tests and MSU.	20
	21.8	Undertaking ECG tests	60
	21.9	Completing blood sugar finger prick tests	30
	21.10	The process to arrange 24 blood pressure monitor tests performed by the practice, or appropriate referral procedure	20
	21.11	Swabs - Basic wound and vaginal swabs	10
	21.12	Other tests in your practice	10
22. Significant events and incident reporting	22.1	Demonstrate an understanding of the practice's significant events and incident reporting policies.	20

Domain 4: COMMUNICATION		Assessment Criteria	Approx time (mins)
1. Consultation modalities	1.1	Describe the different types of consultation used in clinical practice • Face to face in surgery • Face to face at home/care home • Telephone • Video • Email • Text • Group • Supported consultation with translator or signer • Consultations supported by photographs sent by patient to aid diagnosis by the GP	30
	1.2	Identify which types of patient might benefit from the different modalities.	10
	1.3	Discuss which clinical scenarios might be optimally delivered by each modality.	20
	1.4	Provide evidence of use of patient interaction using each modality.	10
	1.5	Discuss the value of home visiting consultation.	10
	1.6	Demonstrate awareness of personal safety issues for home visiting.	10
2. The basic consultation	2.1	Record identity	5
	2.2	Provide an introduction of self and role	5

	2.3	Present complaint	5
	2.4	Past history, family history and drug history	5
	2.5	Undertake basic clinical observations	10
	2.6	Prepare for GP assessment	5
	2.7	Provide post assessment actions to support GP management	5
	2.8	Provide signposting services	5
	2.9	Provide chaperoning services	5
3. Common key lines of enquiry	3.1	Demonstrate an understanding of the history of the presenting complaint	5
	3.2	Demonstrate an understanding of smoking, alcohol & exercise and other lifestyle factors e.g. Drug misuse	5
	3.3	Understand the impact of past medical history on the presenting complaint	5
	3.4	Give an example where family history was relevant	5
	3.5	Share two cases where a drug/medication history has been of benefit to the case.	5
	3.6	Explain how social history can impact upon a case.	5

	3.7	Give examples where open and closed questions help understand the patient history.	10
4. Be able to implement and promote active participation	4.1	Describe different ways of applying active participation to meet a patient's needs	20
	4.2	Work with an individual and others to agree how active participation will be implemented	10
	4.3	Give an example of a patient taking responsibility for their own health after your intervention.	10
	4.4	Demonstrate ways to promote understanding and use of active participation	10
5. Be able to support the individual's right to make choices	5.1	Support an individual to make informed choices - give an example where a patient made a positive choice to change, and an example where a patient declined appropriate care.	20
	5.2	Describe how you can manage risk in a way that maintains the individual's right to make choices	15
	5.3	Describe how to support an individual to question or challenge decisions concerning them that are made by others – promoting 'with me' not 'about me'.	10
6. Demonstrate the use of resources to support communication	6.1	Understand the need for appropriate consent to obtain further information from third parties e.g. Carers or families	15
	6.2	Know how to obtain translation services for patients whose first language is not English or is not able to understand English	10
	6.3	Demonstrate an understanding of how to record and utilise information provided by a third party.	10

	6.4	Explain the importance of maintaining confidentiality when dealing with a third party.	10
	6.5	Describe the additional resources available to patients with hearing and visual impairment in your practice.	10
	6.6	Describe additional resources needed in patients with speech impairments e.g. stroke patients	10
	6.7	Demonstrate awareness of mental capacity issues and their impact upon consultations.	15
	6.8	Understand the value of avoiding use of complex medical terminology and acronyms	10
	6.9	Demonstrate an awareness of literacy problems in your practice and how the practice supports patients with illiteracy.	10
7. Consultation skills	7.1	Provide evidence	10
	7.2	Provide evidence of 5 consultation entries on the clinical system corresponding to these consultations, as validated by the GP.	15
8. Practice communication	8.1	Describe the importance of communications within the practice team.	10
	8.2	Explain how your practice ensures important information is shared between staff members.	10
	8.3	Record examples of your practice meetings and their purposes (both clinical and non-clinical meetings).	15

	8.4	Describe how you work with your educational supervisor/mentor in terms of protected sessions and supervision.	15
	8.5	Describe how other members of the practice team have supported you through this process.	15
9. Complaints	9.1	Confirm your familiarisation with your practices complaints policy and system.	15

Domain 5: MANAGING HEALTH RECORDS	Assessment Criteria		Approx time (mins)
1. Be able to utilise GP clinical records to gain and add appropriate information.	1.1	Reading and understanding key health entries	10
	1.2	Demonstrate the ability to navigate the practice clinical IT system	10
	1.3	Make entries for appointments	10
	1.4	Make clinical entries	10
	1.5	Adding key information to the summary	10
2. Summarisation	2.1	Detail major, minor, current and past problems	10
	2.2	Record carer details	10
	2.3	Record allergies	5
3. Recording patient encounters	3.1	Recording clinical history into the clinical system	5
	3.2	Recording the clinical examination findings and tests into the clinical system	15

	3.3	Demonstrate an understanding of practice protocols and when to highlight a clinical examination or test finding that lies outside accepted limits, and who to escalate this to in an appropriately timely fashion.	15
	3.4	Demonstrate the appropriate recording of chaperoning activity in the records.	15
4. Harvesting information from letters	4.1	Identify actions	10
	4.2	Understand diagnosis and identifying new diagnoses	10
	4.3	Understand the requirement for further tests	10
	4.4	Provide appropriate follow up	10
	4.5	Escalating important information to the GP	5
5. Understanding drug history	5.1	Identify current medications lists	5
	5.2	Recognise allergies and their recording including adverse drug reactions.	10
6. Obtaining results of common tests on behalf of GP	6.1	Blood tests and other laboratory results	5
	6.2	Radiology tests such as MRI, Xray, CT	5
	6.3	Test results obtained during consultation examinations such as BP, O2, BM	5

	6.4	Reporting normal and escalating abnormal results	10
7. Be able to navigate the population manager facility within the clinical system to support chronic disease management.	7.1	Give an example of 5 patients you have followed up with a long-term condition to support QOF.	15
	7.2	Describe how you identify patients who have not yet been reviewed with a long-term condition.	20
	7.3	Demonstrate an understanding of specific QOF read codes.	10