



Literacy and numeracy profile:

Pharmacy Assistant

This profile identifies the literacy and numeracy tasks that are part of the role of a Pharmacy Assistant. In this profile literacy includes reading, writing, speaking, listening.

Reading tasks

Read implies that a person reads and understands

Pharmacy Assistants are required to read and understand some specialised technical vocabulary and abbreviations.

Read signs and short texts (including pictures, symbols, abbreviations and codes)

- Short notes from colleagues, e.g. pharmacy diary, whiteboard, notice board, messages
- Task lists (handwritten and computer generated)
- Merchandise labels and packaging
- In-store signage and labels
- Health and safety signs

- Dangerous goods and hazardous materials signage
- Alphanumeric codes, e.g. merchandise codes, store or inventory locator codes, PLU, SKU, serial numbers, expiry dates
- Information on credit cards, debit cards and customer cheques
- Customer identification and subsidy cards
- Lists, e.g. customer, merchandise, store location and suppliers
- Read measurements in metric and imperial units
 - Capacity and volume (µl, ml, L, fluid oz, pints, gallons)
 - Weight (mg, g, kg, oz, lbs)
 - Temperature (Fahrenheit, Celsius)

Read tables and graphs

- Activity and wellness programme records
- Rosters
- Company, team and individual performance tables and graphs, e.g. sales results, POS reports
- Induction checklist or training matrix

Read forms

- Supply order forms, invoices and purchase orders
- Packing slips from product suppliers
- Maintenance forms
- Records of work
- Time sheets and leave forms
- Job application forms
- Pay slips

Read plans and diagrams

- Shop and stock layout plans
- Site evacuation plans
- Plans, drawings and specifications, e.g. diagrams with assembly instructions for product display units
- Road maps for deliveries and pick ups

Continued →



Reading tasks *continued...*

Read memos and notices

- Health and safety guidelines
- Evacuation procedures and emergency responses
- General company information
- Policy and procedure changes
- Company newsletters

Read instructions and more detailed job information

- Catalogues and advertisements
- Standard operating procedures, e.g. for stocking and replenishing items, customer interactions, health and safety, risk management
- Manufacturers' manuals or instructions for using, storing and shelving specific product lines
- Product and merchandise information labelling, brochures or specification sheets
- Supplier warranty processes

- Email messages from customers, colleagues and suppliers
- Job description
- Employment contract
- Code of conduct, company rules, standards and procedures
- Performance reviews
- Company intranet

Read excerpts from legislation, regulations or industry standards

- Franchise documentation, e.g. cosmetic house
- Industry reports
- Legislation
 - Pharmacy Code of Ethics
 - Consumer Guarantees Act
 - Fair Trading Act
 - Lay-by Sales Act
 - Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act
 - Employment Contracts Act

- Privacy Act
- Sale of Goods Act
- Health and Safety in Employment Act
- Human Rights Act

Read training material

- Company induction handbook, including store policies and practices
- Health and safety guidelines, e.g. first aid, Site Safe, emergency and security procedures
- Brochures and leaflets from briefings by sales representatives
- Supplier websites and written material
- Qualification training materials, e.g. record of work, resource books, assessment tasks, unit standard workbooks, training guides and assessor checklists

Writing tasks

Fill in and sign off on documents to confirm read and understood

- Delivery dockets
- Induction checklists
- Health and safety
- Training records
- Employment agreements

Write brief notes

- Customer records
- Instructions for colleagues
- Enter data via electronic keypad or keyboard, e.g. product codes, security codes
- Telephone messages
- Email messages to customers and colleagues
- Task lists
- Notes to pharmacist or supervisor regarding job progress, problems or materials needed

Complete forms independently

- Product delivery dockets (record type, quantity of product delivered and where stored)
- Product order forms
- Invoices
- Receipts
- Refund notes
- Equipment damage reports
- Parts, equipment and maintenance requests
- Time sheets
- Job sheets
- Leave forms
- Job application forms
- Employee details
- Tax code declarations

Complete forms with the assistance of others

- Accident, incident or hazard reports
- Performance appraisals
- Complaint forms or records

Write short documents

- Sales reports, e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly
- Activity plans, e.g. window display, merchandising, stock rotation
- Handover notes for colleagues
- Letters, e.g. invitation, thank you
- Meeting minutes

Write for training purposes

- Complete workbooks
- Keep notes during training
- Write answers to unit standard assessment questions and other industry related training

Speaking and listening tasks

Note: There is a significant dependence on oral communication to deliver work instructions and training

Actively manage communications with customers and others

- Greet customers and initiate or respond to general conversation and enquiries
- Observe and interpret body language to help understand the needs of customers and colleagues
- Use appropriate open questioning and active listening skills to identify and understand customer needs
- Communicate with difficult or angry customers, those who are in pain or discomfort and those who may be embarrassed or need to be treated with empathy and discretion, e.g. use effective language, questioning and active listening skills to help identify and resolve the problem
- Influence customers' purchase decisions
- Give information in a logical order and in a way that is appropriate to the audience
- Identify when cultural issues need to be considered and communicate appropriately
- Negotiate with customers on pricing, returned or damaged merchandise

Listen to and comprehend oral instructions, explanations and requests from a range of people

- Customers
- Colleagues, pharmacist and sales representatives about:
 - the day's work tasks and priorities
 - how to use merchandise and equipment
 - how a product or medication works
- Trainers or tutors
- Co-workers or pharmacist, e.g. for assistance

Ask questions

- Explanations about how a process or product works from pharmacist, colleague or supplier
- To clarify oral or written instructions, e.g. product information
- To identify and clarify customer needs
- Requests for help, information or assistance from pharmacist or co-workers

Orally report to pharmacist

- Any health and safety hazards, incidents or accidents
- Completion and progress of work
- Equipment malfunction

Participate in discussions with pharmacy team

- Participate in meetings, e.g. staff meetings, health and safety meetings
- Make suggestions on improving work processes
- Explain or demonstrate to teammates how tasks are performed
- Health and safety

Communicate with a range of people:

- Customers
- Pharmacy staff

- Healthcare workers, e.g. doctors, nurses, carers
- OSH representatives
- Union representatives
- First aiders
- Building or community wardens
- Suppliers and product representatives
- Head office staff

Give factual information orally and check for understanding

- Explaining the features of medication and merchandise, e.g. comparing the features or contents of two or more products
- Explain store policy to customers, e.g. damaged goods, returns, prescriptions, repeat prescriptions, loaned medicines, returned medicines
- Explain job tasks, workplace vocabulary and what to do in specific situations to junior staff and new employees
- Explain to customers how medication or products need to be used

Discuss training

- Trainers or tutors
- Other trainees
- ITO staff
- Give answers orally to assessors for unit standard assessments



Numeracy tasks

Make sense of number to solve problems

Count

- Products
- Wages/pay/leave
- Cash register float and petty cash
- Hours
- Attendance

Calculate

- Profit margins
- Perform calculations accurately, using a calculator when required
- Handle money transactions involving one or a combination of cash, credit card, debit card, cheque, and give correct change
- Calculate discounts and goods and services tax amounts using percentages, e.g. convert a percentage discount to get a dollar value

- Check the physical number of items sold matches the number of items scanned through POS system
- Check amount entered on EFTPOS machine matches the amount owed
- Round off numbers for cash transactions, e.g. to give correct change
- Reconcile till totals at the end of the day, including cash, cheques, EFTPOS sale totals
- Hours worked from timesheets
- Times for process activities
- Quantities of merchandise
- Best order to complete job

Measure and interpret space and shape

Understand measurement concepts

- Area, e.g. how much floor space a display unit will take up
- Capacity, e.g. how much product or number of doses a container will hold (dropper, measuring glass)

- Volume

Measure

- Weight, e.g. of faulty merchandise to return to supplier
- Length
- Be aware of differences between imperial and metric measurements
- Dimensions of goods boxes
- Materials, e.g. shelving
- Time needed to carry out the job
- Time using 12 and 24 hour clocks

Estimate

- Quantity, e.g. materials for window display
- Area and volume, e.g. shelving space needed for merchandise
- Length, e.g. of shelving
- Width, e.g. of product
- Weight, e.g. when lifting
- Time to do a job
- Quickest process

Critical thinking tasks

PLEASE NOTE: Critical thinking is not included in the Learning Progressions. Many critical thinking tasks can be categorised under the seven L&N headings. If possible, when we observe critical thinking or listen to a pharmacy assistant talk about critical thinking or problem solving, we then look at the context and incorporate it into the appropriate literacy or numeracy progression.

The following are critical thinking tasks that do not fit into literacy or numeracy, but may be of use to incorporate into training:

- Know when to ask the pharmacist for advice about a customer's health concern, chosen product or medication

- Work quickly and accurately through the day's tasks, understanding the principle that time is money
- Organise daily work schedule to prioritise customer service
- Manage interruptions to work tasks throughout the day
- Decide whether to accept returned goods or to exchange goods
- Deal with contingencies:
 - loss of power
 - problems with counter scanner or till
 - injury or accident
- Recognise equipment problems or faults

- Quickly and accurately identify problems (e.g. work not to standard) and develop potential solutions, including asking for assistance
- Work out best method to complete a job
- Plan and decide equipment required for job, e.g. PPE, tools
- Identify if colleagues need assistance and provide when required
- Maintain customer confidentiality