



Occupational Certificate: Pharmacist's Assistant (Basic) 2026

Introduction

Health Science Academy is a well-established and accredited provider of education and training in the South African healthcare sector. It is a private company fully owned by the Foundation for Professional Development and registered with the South African Pharmacy Council. Health Science Academy focuses on the private education and training of adults. It is also registered with QCTO, LG SETA, Services Seta, HW SETA and TETA.

The Occupational Certificate program for Pharmacist's Assistant (Basic) that will be offered by Health Science Academy will make an impact on education of pharmacist's assistants. HSA is active since 1994 in the pharmaceutical landscape and can ensure that the curriculum meets the highest standards and also resonates with the dynamic landscape of healthcare education.

At Health Science Academy, we are committed to nurturing potential and providing a platform for growth in the pharmaceutical sector. Our course lays the foundation for a successful career, empowering learners to make a meaningful impact in the world of pharmaceuticals.

WHO CAN ENROL?

Learners must be in possession of a Senior Certificate with matriculation exemption or an equivalent NQF 4 qualification.

Candidates who wish to enrol should have passed mathematics and life/physical sciences at NQF level 4 (matric level)

Computer literacy is essential, and candidates should have access to a computer or tablet to perform the activities required by the curriculum. Software requirements include Microsoft Office – Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook. A stable connection to the internet is also essential.

All learners should be able to communicate, read and write in English.

Once a learner has obtained this qualification by meeting all the necessary requirements, the learner will be able to register as a qualified Pharmacist's Assistant (Basic) with the South African Pharmacy Council.

COURSE DATES

Enrolment will take place on a quarterly basis – February, May, July and October annually. Applicants will be screened for eligibility and enrolment in the course.

Learners will be registered with SAPC after paying the relevant fees.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will be presented in two formats: Distance and class-based (virtual or in-person).

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learning, refers to a method of delivering education where learners and facilitators are separated by physical distance, often using technology to facilitate teaching and learning interactions

Training material is delivered remotely through online platforms and recorded slide shows, allowing learners to access instruction and resources from any location with internet connectivity. Distance learning typically provides flexibility in scheduling and pacing, enabling learners to engage in coursework according to their individual needs and preferences.

Learners will have to complete all formative assessments in their own time and will have a limited time with the facilitator to ask questions and clarify theoretical concepts that need further discussion.

CLASS-BASED LEARNING

Class-based learning (15 days), whether in-person or virtual, refers to an instructional format where learners and facilitators come together in a physical or virtual classroom setting to engage in teaching and learning activities. Learners attend scheduled classes or sessions led by a facilitator who delivers content, facilitates discussions, and guides learning activities.

In-person class-based learners will receive a class schedule indicating when classes will be presented in a physical venue. Formative activities will be presented by the facilitator in class and with participation of all learners present.

Virtual class sessions will follow the same format as in-person classes, except that learners and facilitators will meet in a virtual classroom. A stable internet connection is essential.

PRACTICAL SESSIONS

All practical sessions (11 days) have to be attended **in-person at our offices in Pretoria**. A class schedule will be provided as practical sessions will be linked to theoretical modules completed.

WORKPLACE LEARNING

Workplace learning have to take place in an A-grade pharmacy in any sector.

Learners can provide their own facilities and work for the full six months' duration of the course in this facility under the supervision of a registered pharmacist as a tutor. Learners will have to leave their primary workplace to spend the minimum of 32 hours in the secondary workplace.

Learners can also only work for the minimum 160 hours required for workplace learning in an A - grade facility. During this time, the learner will work under the supervision of a registered pharmacist as a preceptor.

A minimum of 32 hours in each of community and institutional sectors are required. HSA will provide access to the distribution and manufacturing sectors if not covered by other sectors or simulation.

DURATION

The Basic course has a duration of six months, offering learners a comprehensive understanding of pharmaceutical fundamentals. Learners will have a maximum of twelve months to complete the course, providing flexibility that suits changing schedules.

Should a learner not complete the course within the allotted twelve months, s/he will have to register again with SAPC. A re-registration fee paid to HSA will be due for the modules that still need to be successfully completed after the initial twelve-month period from enrolment.

COURSE CONTENT

This occupation-based learning programme at NQF 4 is aimed at building skills that have economic value, and which incorporate knowledge, practical and workplace modules.

Occupational Qualifications are divided into three parts - theory, practicals and a work-based component

This will allow the learner to gain essential experience and be ready to make a positive contribution in the workplace. Therefore, the purpose of this qualification is to prepare a learner to operate as a Pharmacist's Assistant (Basic) and to perform a range of assistive tasks in the various categories of pharmacy.

The course is structured on a modular basis based on the curriculum component specifications.

KNOWLEDGE MODULES

For these modules, contact sessions (face-to-face or virtual) will be used to transfer the knowledge to the learners. In the case of loadshedding interfering with virtual classes, learners will be provided with recordings of the lectures. In some cases, the recordings will also be provided for self-study before contact sessions.

PRACTICAL SKILLS MODULES

Practical modules will be presented as **in-person classes**. It includes a review by the facilitator of the knowledge previously acquired that may be tested in a baseline overview questionnaire. This will be followed by a demonstration of the practical exercise required. The learners will perform a practice or discussion practical activity in groups with the assistance of the facilitator but will perform the practical activity for assessment on their own to achieve competence.

The practical activities will include taking part in simulations, role plays, compounding and manufacturing of products, presenting and discussing topics to the class, assignments, posters and questionnaires.

Presently, practical sessions are only presented in Pretoria.

WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE

Workplace learning for pharmacist's assistant (learner Basic) will take place under the mentorship of a registered pharmacist as a tutor or preceptor, who will oversee and guide the learner throughout their workplace experience. HSA will maintain communication with the learner, the tutor or preceptor in the workplace to ensure that the learners gain the specified level of exposure and experience outlined in the learner's Workplace Logbook.

The tutor or preceptor will also issue a report of competence after completion of the workplace sessions.

MODULE OVERVIEW

All modules at level NQF 4, credits 62						
KNOWLEDGE MODULES (CREDITS 25, 14 DAYS)						
Module	Title	Credit	Notional hours	Lecture days	Self-study (h)	Exams (h)
Module 1	Basic computer skills		Additional	1		
Module 2 (KM-15)	Housekeeping	2	20	1	11	1
Module 3 (KM-01)	Introduction to the pharmaceutical environment	10	100	5	58	2
Module 4 (KM-02)	Stock distribution and control	4	40	2	27	1
Module 5 (KM-08)	Compounding of non-sterile extemporaneous preparations	3	30	2	17	1
Module 6 (KM-05)	Non-sterile medicine manufacture	6	60	3	34	2
PRACTICAL SKILL MODULES (CREDITS 21, 11 DAYS)						
Module	Title	Credit	Notional hours	Practical days	Self-study (h)	Exams (h)
Module 1 (PM-18)	Basic computer skills	4	40	2	23	1
Module 2 (PM-12)	Housekeeping	2	20	1	11	1
Module 3	Introduction to the pharmaceutical environment			No practical skills module		
Module 4 (PM-01)	Stock distribution and control	4	40	2	27	1
Module 5 (PM-07)	Compound non-sterile extemporaneous preparations	5	50	3	29	1
Module 6 (PM-4)	Non-sterile medicine manufacture	6	60	3	34	2

WORK EXPERIENCE MODULES (CREDITS 16)				
Module	Title	Credit	Notional hours	
Module 1	Basic computer skills			No workplace experience
Module 3	Introduction to the pharmaceutical environment			
Module 2 (WM-12)	Housekeeping	2	20	For the Basic course, the work-based requirement is 160 hours. A minimum of 32 hours should be spent in community and institutional pharmacy each. Distribution practices will be covered in all sectors. Visits to the manufacturing sector will be scheduled or be done via simulation.
Module 4 (WM-01)	Stock distribution and control	5	50	
Module 5 (WM-04)	Compound non-sterile extemporaneous preparations	4	40	
Module 6 (WM-07)	Non-sterile medicine manufacture	5	50	

COURSE MATERIAL

KNOWLEDGE MODULES

Learners will receive a Resource Guide for each module containing the theory to be covered according to the curriculum. This information can be accessed on the electronic portal or as paper-based copy at additional cost.

The Learner Guide for each module contains the formative assessments, each of which need to be successfully completed.

PRACTICAL MODULES

The learner will be provided with a Learner Guide with the activities to be successfully completed during the practical sessions. Practical sessions are always attended **in-person** and presently are only presented in Pretoria.

WORKPLACE MODULES

The Workplace Logbook activities have to be signed-off by both the learner and the tutor or preceptor.

Additionally, a Document Booklet with reference material mentioned in the Knowledge Modules will be provided together with an extensive video list to complement the Knowledge Modules.

Although all the course material are available on the electronic portal, printed copies of the material can be obtained at an additional cost.

ASSESSMENTS

Learners must complete both formative and summative assessments successfully for each module.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Formative assessments will be class activities taking the form of small or big group discussions, questionnaires, presentations, assignments, posters, case studies and reflective activities.

The formative assessments for both the Knowledge and Practical modules are contained in separate Learner Guides.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Once competent in all the formative assessments, the learner will write the summative assessment. The summative assessment covers knowledge gained from both the knowledge and the practical modules.

The summative assessment will take the form of a multiple-choice questionnaire that will be conducted either on the HSA portal or under invigilation in class.

WORKPLACE ACTIVITIES

Workplace activities have to be signed-off by the tutor or preceptor. A report of competence has to be issued that will form part of the Statement of Results (SOR).

NOT YET COMPETENT (NYC)

If the learner is assessed on a module and deemed Not Yet Competent (NYC), then he/she can be re-assessed twice more to gain competency. If competency is not achieved after three attempts in total, he/she will have to repeat the theoretical part of the module again.

Since only one assessment is included in the tuition fees, re-assessment fees will be applicable to all rewrites.

All assessments will be subject to moderation by a moderator from Health Science Academy.

PASS RATE

All formative and summative assessments have a pass rate of 50%. All sections of every module must be successfully completed and moderated before certification can take place.

EXTERNAL INTEGRATED SUMMARY ASSESSMENT (EISA)

The EISA is a national assessment based on Exit Level Outcomes, designed to ensure the Occupational Qualifications are standardised, consistent and reliable.

Entrance requirements for Pharmacist's Assistant (learner Basic):

- Completed a minimum of six months training at an accredited provider
- Completed knowledge, practical and work experience components of the training
- Received a statement of results from the training provider stating that they are ready for EISA
- Completed the practice EISA assessments
- Booked online for EISA four weeks before the exam date
- Payment of the applicable exam fee.

Assessment format

- Assessments can be done online or at a dedicated examination venue
- Duration: 3,5 hours
- The assessment will test knowledge, comprehension, application and analysis
- The assessment is open book and learners can use any reference materials, including online sources but not previous assessments
- The assessments will consist of general practice and calculation questions presented as 100 (calculations ≥ 16 and general ≤ 84) multiple-choice questions (MCQ)
- Each MCQ consists of a stem describing a problem or practice scenario and will have four answer options, one of which will be the most correct/appropriate answer
- Learners must achieve at least 50% for both sections to pass the assessment.

Re-assessment

- Learners who are unsuccessful in the assessment may re-attempt the assessment for a maximum of three attempts, provided they meet the necessary requirements
- Learners unsuccessful after the second attempt will be required to undergo remediation prior to the third attempt.

Further information can be found at

https://www.pharmcouncil.co.za/Media/Default/Documents/2024%20Pharmacist's%20Assistant%20Basic%20EISA%20Manual_Approved.pdf.

CERTIFICATION

Upon successful completion of all assessments and assignments across the various modules, learners will be eligible for certification

This certificate serves as formal recognition of the learners' achievement and signifies their competency in the subject matter covered within the course. It validates their proficiency in meeting the learning objectives and demonstrates their readiness to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world settings. Furthermore, it reflects their dedication and commitment to their education and serves as a testament to their hard work and perseverance throughout the learning process.

LEARNERS' SUPPORT

Health Science Academy is committed to providing comprehensive support to learners involving various dedicated individuals and teams. The head office staff, course and provincial co-ordinators play pivotal roles in ensuring a learner's success.

- Head office staff oversee the overall educational framework and infrastructure, offering administrative and technical assistance as needed.
- Course co-ordinators manage specific academic programs, guiding learners through curriculum content and addressing their academic queries.
- Provincial co-ordinators extend this support by facilitating regional engagement and addressing localised concerns.
- Additionally, facilitators, equipped with subject expertise, offer hands-on guidance and mentorship to learners, fostering a dynamic learning experience.

This collaborative effort ensures that learners receive personalised assistance, creating an environment conducive to their growth and achievement at Health Science Academy.

INDEMNITY

It is a requirement from the South African Pharmacy Council that you have personal indemnity while working in a pharmacy. This indemnity can be obtained from the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa (PSSA). The links to the information and the application form are:

All the information about the package for assistants is on the PSSA website here:
<https://www.pssa.org.za/professional-insurance.html>

Application form: <https://www.pssa.org.za/download/itoo-hollard-application-form-203-2024.pdf>

Assistants that are interested in this product must be PSSA members. The membership fees can be viewed here: <https://www.pssa.org.za/membership-fees.html>, and the online application form is here: <https://www.pssa.org.za/online-application.html>

PSSA does offer membership benefits to assistants (see here: <https://www.pssa.org.za/download/membership-benefits-comparison.pdf>).

VACCINATION

It is strongly recommended that all learners taking part in work-based learning should be immunised against the following diseases:

- COVID-19
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Influenza
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)
- Meningococcal meningitis
- Pneumococcal disease
- Polio
- Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis
- Varicella

COSTS

Tuition fees will include training manuals available on the HSA learning portal, one assessment per module, materials for practical activities, registered pharmacists as facilitators, assessors and moderators.

Excluded are printed training material, electronic devices and data, transport to all classes and industry visits for work-based learning.

Practical sessions have to be attended **in-person at our offices in Pretoria**.

Cost per learner	Contact - face-to-face class	Contact - virtual class	Distance (self-study with workshops)	Knowledge contact (class and virtual) (days)	Knowledge distance (days)	Practical (days)	Workplace (days)
Basic (6 months)	R 30 500	R 28 950	R 25 500	14	5	11	20

HSA as an educational institution is not registered for VAT

REGISTRATION

Please send completed application forms to:

Health Science Academy,
Knowledge Park,
173 Mary Street,
The Willows, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria, 0184
Tel: 087 821 1109 Fax: 086 502 5191
E-mail: hsaenquiries@healthscience.co.za