



GP Assistants

Spread and Adoption across the South West

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) What Modules are covered in the GPA Course?

There are 5 Domains making up the Competency Framework. These are the Care Certificate, Managing Health Records, Administration, Communication and Clinical.

Q) Are any prior qualifications required to apply for the course?

No prior qualifications are needed. Each candidate will need a GP Mentor to agree to support them through the course and be happy to assess their competence at the end of the course. The GP Mentor and Practice need to be happy the candidate is capable of completing the course in the timeframe allowed.

Q) Does the candidate need to be already employed by the practice?

Thus far, all GP Assistants trained in the South West have been pre-existing employees at the practice where they have trained. This has many benefits and we envisage this being the case for the vast majority of future candidates.

Q) How long does the course take to complete?

The GPA Course can be completed within 6 months. In exceptional circumstances, candidates may be allowed up to a maximum of 9 months but it is expected they try and get it completed within 6 months, to allow for any unforeseen circumstances. Trainees will need to dedicate **one full day a week** to the course, which can be achieved flexibly whilst remaining in their place of work, so practices need to be aware of this commitment that they are signing up to. Half a day will be spent working on an online portal to provide evidence of their learning, and half a day gaining hands-on experience with a GP mentor or appropriate member of the workforce.

Q) Where does the training occur?

All the training is done within the candidates own practice and all training/tutorials is delivered by other members of staff at the practice. The course is a framework for practices to up-skill their own team members. **There is no external training delivered.** If practices on the course want to work together and deliver training together, this is welcomed and encouraged.



As part of the programme, Devon Training Hub will host a WhatsApp group for learners to collaborate and support each other and there will be monthly online drop-in sessions where learners can speak to the Project Lead and the lead GP for the programme to ask questions and share ideas.

Q) Is there a formal Qualification?

The GPA Course is a certified course, worth 10 credits at University Level 4. It is certified by Chester University. All domains must be completed in entirety to be eligible for the certificate.

Q) Are there any Exams?

There are no exams. It is up to the GPA Candidate to provide evidence of their competency and the responsibility to assess that evidence and assess the competency of the candidate and sign the candidate off as competent across all areas. As a training hub, we then verify 10% of successfully completed portfolios. Chester University then review and verify a further 25% of portfolios. After this has been completed, certificates are awarded. The GP Mentor assessing competency is the mainstay of assessment on this course.

Q) How much are GP Assistants paid?

We do not offer specific guidance on this and it is for the practice and candidate to discuss. GP Assistants may come from multiple different backgrounds, such as HCAs, Reception staff, Secretaries, Practice Managers etc. They will therefore have different starting salaries. It also would depend on how a GPA works within a practice, as this may vary significantly from practice to practice. However, it is reasonable that if a member of staff is performing a more skilled role, they may reasonably expect an uplift in pay to reflect that.

Q) How much does the GP Assistant Course Cost?

There is no charge for participating in this programme. On completion of the GPA Certificate, the practice will be eligible for a **£1,700 training grant** (per candidate) in recognition of the time given to support learners in achieving their competencies.

Anything not clear?

If you have questions that are unanswered, please get in touch at **andy.smallshaw@nhs.net**.