PRIMARY CARE
WORKFORCE ACADEMY GROUP

National Programme

General Practice Assistant Programme

Learner Prospectus

Your guide to the programme, assessment and support.

Credit Rated
10 Credits
Level 4

Duration
Est.
6 Months

Learning Time
Minimum 4
hours per week

In partnership with
UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH

Welcome

Welcome to the General Practice Assistant programme. It prepares you for the GPA role, and we hope you find it informative, engaging, and useful in your day-to-day work.

The Primary Care Workforce Academy (PCWA) coordinates and delivers the programme nationally on behalf of NHS England. Every GPA learner trains against the same National Competency Framework and receives the same teaching, wherever they work.

You will learn in two ways: taught sessions with the programme team, and work-based learning in your own practice. In practice, you will be supervised day to day by colleagues who are confident in the skills you are learning. For example, a practice manager or experienced receptionist might supervise administrative tasks, while a nurse or other clinician might supervise clinical tasks. These colleagues are your Practice Supervisors. Your GP Educator is the named GP who oversees your learning and makes the final (summative) decision on whether you have reached the standard to pass.

We will ask for your feedback throughout the programme. Please take these opportunities: your views help us make sure the programme meets your needs and your employer's.

Best regards,

The GPA Programme Team
Primary Care Workforce Academy

The programme at a glance

The programme is a 10-credit, Level 4 module accredited by the University of Greenwich. It runs for about six months and needs at least 4 hours a week of protected learning time.

Accreditation	University of Greenwich - 10 credits at level 4
Duration	About 6 months from Session 0 to submission
Protected learning time	Minimum 4 hours a week, whatever your working pattern: about 90 minutes for the taught session, plus time for work-based learning and your portfolio
Taught sessions	Live online sessions of about 90 minutes via MS Teams. A face-to-face skills session may be delivered in some regions where agreed/feasible.
Learning platform	Session materials, recordings and your competency framework
Assessment	Completed competency framework (pass/fail)

Who can join

You must be employed as a GPA, or in a joint role that includes GPA duties. You should hold the Care Certificate or functional skills in Math and English (GCSE grade C/4 or above, or equivalent). Your practice manager and a named GP must have agreed to support you and agreed protected time.

What you need for taught sessions

A quiet, private space, a working camera and microphone, and 90 minutes free from interruptions.

Programme aims & learning outcomes

The programme gives you the knowledge to develop the skills you need to work effectively as a GPA.

As a GPA, you are part of a multidisciplinary team, combining administrative tasks with basic clinical duties. This frees up GP time, helps appointments run smoothly, and improves patient experience.

The role is set out in a national GPA competency framework with five domains: Care, Administration, Clinical, Communication and Managing Health Records. The framework shapes the programmes content and assessment process.

Learning outcomes.

By the end of the programme, you will be able to:

01

Promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, showing understanding of the principles of holistic, person-centred care.

02

Apply the principles of patient confidentiality when documenting and sharing patient data and information.

03

Recognise what makes an appropriate environment for meeting patients' needs during assessment and sample collection.

04

Explain the principles of good communication and informed consent during a patient consultation and demonstrate them in practice.

Who's who

Each learner is supported by people in their practice who supervise, assess and release them, and by the PCWA programme team, who teach and quality-assure the programme.

Role	Who	In one line
Learner	The GPA on the programme	Takes part in learning, gathers evidence and owns their competency framework
Practice Supervisor (PS)	One or more experienced colleagues in the practice (e.g. practice manager, senior receptionist, nurse, HCA, pharmacist)	Supervises day to day, gives feedback and assesses competencies in their own area of expertise
GP Educator (GPE)	A named GP in the learner's practice	Oversees learning, coordinates the PSs and makes the final summative decision
Practice / line manager	The learner's manager	Releases protected time and confirmed given
Regional GPA lead and programme educators (PCWA)	The programme team for the learner's region	Teach the sessions, support learners and practices, and handle concerns and moderation
National Programme Director (PCWA)	The person responsible for overseeing the national programme	Reviews submissions, leads quality assurance and liaises with the University of Greenwich
National Programme Manger	The person responsible for managing national delivery	Manages and oversees the National programme delivery

Teaching and learning schedule

The programme has taught sessions, each mapped to the competencies it supports.

#	Session	You will
0	Introduction to the programme	Learn the housekeeping, ground rules and online etiquette; meet your cohort; understand your portfolio and Level 4 learning; see how you will work with your supervisors; know submission dates and expectations; ask questions
1	Clinical encounters	Understand consultation types; understand the purpose, skills and common lines of enquiry in a consultation; use GP clinical records to find, add, summarise and record information; prepare people, environments, equipment and resources for healthcare activities and make them ready for next use; support people during healthcare activities
2	Communications, customer service and challenging behaviours'	Communicate consistently, professionally and person-centred with patients and carers; know the skills and resources to engage patients, carers and colleagues; promote active participation; understand feedback and quality improvement; look after your own health and wellbeing
3	Moodle Guidance Session for Supervisors:	Set up your competency framework; use evidence-based practice; understand "Your framework, your responsibility" Separate sessions
4	The clinical examination	Identify and demonstrate common examination procedures
5	The surgery environment, policy and practice	Understand legislation, policy and good practice for obtaining, carrying, testing and storing specimens; understand the practice's significant event and incident reporting policies Separate supervisors' session

6a	Principles and practice of obtaining and testing specimens	Understand the process; prepare for, obtain and test specimens; report results to the GP and patient
6b	Principles and practice of informed consent	Understand consent and information sharing; establish consent when providing care
7	Infection control: policy and principles	Understand PPE, personal hygiene, and the causes and transmission of infection
8	Obtaining venous blood specimens (phlebotomy)	Understand the anatomy and physiology of venous blood sampling; prepare for and take blood samples; prepare samples for transport
9	Medical Terminology	-
10	Mental health and wellbeing	Understand views on mental wellbeing and the factors that affect it; promote mental wellbeing with individuals and groups
	Guidance Session for Supervisors:	Separate sessions
11	Information management	Handle information correctly in health and social care; help people find and use information about services; extract key information from hospital, out-of-hours and other communications; support the GP with common admin tasks
12	Managing written communications, including complaints	Use clinical records to find and add information; summarise written information; record patient encounters; extract information from letters
13	Risk assessment and care planning	Understand risk assessment in person-centered care; support, monitor and review care plans

14	Principles of chronic disease management	Understand drug histories; obtain results of common tests for the GP; use the population manager system to support chronic disease management
15	Review and evaluation Guidance Session for Supervisors:	Review your learning, clarify outstanding issues and evaluate the programme Separate sessions

Assessment

To pass, you must submit your competency framework with every competency signed off as Capable or Excellent, and the summative section signed by your GP Educator. The assessment is pass/fail.

Summative assessment	The GPA competency framework, covering all five domains
Formative assessment	Face-to-face supervision and feedback; reflective discussions with your Practice Supervisor and/or GP Educator
Learning outcomes assessed	1–4
Grading	Pass/fail (100% of the module)
Size	Equivalent to 3,000 words
Where	Uploaded to the online platform

Frequently asked questions

How much time do I need?
At least 4 hours a week of protected learning time, whatever your working pattern. This covers the 90-minute taught session plus work-based learning and portfolio time.

What if I miss a teaching session?
Tell your regional lead beforehand if you can. Watch the recording on Moodle and catch up on any activities. This will confirm your attendance.

What happens if I do not attend the sessions?
A minimum level of 80% attendance is required throughout the programme to be awarded 10 Level 4 credits from the University of Greenwich. If this attendance requirement is not met, the outcome will be reviewed by the Programme Director, who will determine the appropriate course of action based on the individual circumstances.

My role does not include one of the competencies. Can I still pass?
Yes. Your GP Educator will arrange learning so you can show the competency, for example, time with a colleague who does ECGs.

My practice is not giving me protected time. What should I do?
Speak to your GP Educator or practice manager first. If that does not resolve it, contact your regional lead. Your practice confirms at the end of the programme that the time was given.

What if I change jobs or practice during the programme?
Contact your regional lead straight away.

Is the certificate recognised elsewhere?
Yes. It is a University of Greenwich certificate of credit, transferable between GP practices, and can count as prior learning towards an undergraduate degree.

Contact us

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pcwa.co.uk

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