



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AXIA DELIGHTED TO BE SUPPORTING PHARMACY TECHNICAL SERVICES.

Our latest solution once again confirms that the company is again at the forefront of developing innovative practice to support the assessment of competency. The company has helped meet the challenges of a speciality that crosses over professional boundaries, by enabling for the first time, an individual to create their own competency framework that reflects their existing work and the skills they aspire to develop.

Hospital Pharmacy Technical Services is a highly specialised part of the Pharmacy profession. It is focused on the preparation and manufacture of medicines and their quality assurance as opposed to the more well known community, dispensing, clinical and ward based roles. Those involved in Pharmacy Technical Services perform a wide range of specialist roles in a number of different disciplines such as Aseptics and Quality Control. This has presented challenges with respect to checking that staff members are competent to be able to perform these roles and also in providing clear career pathways to people wanting to progress in their respective professions within the discipline.

The Technical Specialist Education and Training Group (TSET) was originally founded to address manpower issues for the various pharmaceutical technical specialist roles in the NHS, the Group has developed a vital role in identifying training requirements and stimulating the provision of targeted education programmes.

Recently the work of the group has been extended and they have created a competency framework for this group of workers. This was a very ambitious project. All previous frameworks for pharmacy were for one profession and one speciality however the reality is that in pharmacy technical services the professional boundaries in relation to specific tasks are less firm. As a result the competency framework needs to extend across professional boundaries often at a very granular level.

This therefore became highly complex work and mapping the competencies on paper proved to be a major challenge. As a result TSET invited tenders to create an electronic solution and Axia Interactive Media was selected to deliver the solution.

Although the work is still in progress it is already proving to be one of our most interesting projects. The traditional approaches to competency assessment can be put into two broad camps. On the one hand you have the traditional professional body approach where there are relatively few broadly defined competencies and on the other hand you have the more complex competency assessment that is reflected in NVQs. There are limitations to both approaches.

The broad brush does not work for Pharmacy Technical Services because of the level of specialisation that often crosses over traditional boundaries and the NVQ approach whilst more granular, is still not flexible enough, even with the current changes to the qualifications as a result of the QCF (Qualifications Curriculum Framework) to satisfy continuing professional development needs in this field.

What this site will do is to offer the ability for those engaged in Pharmacy Technical Services, as individuals or in 'groups,' to create their own current and future competency profile at a very granular level and then to be 'assessed' against that profile. This has previously been unachievable because of the complexities involved, however by applying an electronic solution it actually becomes relatively simple.

Furthermore as each competency profile is developed it will be possible to publish these so that individuals working in other pharmacies can use that profile and then adapt it as their own, therefore sharing expertise.

Richard Etheridge the company's Technical Director who has been instrumental in developing this solution comments that,

'This work is further evidence of the fact that when organisations want simple electronic solutions to what appear to be complex processes they turn to this company for help. We believe that we are in the process of producing an innovative and creative solution that has transformed what is a highly complex, if not impossible process on paper into something achievable and that will appear to be intuitive and accessible to all those working in Pharmacy Technical Services.'