

HSC238 Obtain and test specimens from individuals (Level 2)

Elements of Competence

HSC238a Obtain specimens from individuals

HSC238b Test, record and report on specimens

About this unit

For this unit you need to be able to obtain specimens, test some specimens in the work area, and forward some specimens for laboratory investigation.

Scope

The scope is here to give you guidance on possible areas to be covered in this unit. The terms in this section give you a list of options linked with items in the performance criteria. You need to provide evidence for any option related to your work area.

Adverse reactions may include: fainting; feeling unwell; pain; discomfort

Clinical specimens may include specimens for: histology; haematology; microbiology; cytology; biochemistry

Equipment may include: swabs; receivers; cleaning solutions; specimen/sample containers; slides; gloves; request forms; clinical waste bags; needles; syringes

Specimens include: urine, including via catheter and mid-stream specimens; faeces; sputum; exudates; wound exudates; saliva; breath; aspirates; semen; skin scraping

Standard precautions and health and safety measures including: hand washing/cleansing before during and after the activity; the use of **personal protective clothing** and **additional protective equipment**; handling **contaminated** items; disposing of waste; safe moving and handling techniques and untoward incident procedures.

Your **knowledge and understanding** will be specifically related to legal requirements and codes of practice applicable to your job; your work activities; the job you are doing (e.g. domiciliary, residential care, hospital settings) and the individuals you are working with.

Values underpinning the whole of the unit

The values underpinning this unit have been derived from the key purpose statement¹, the statement of expectations from carers and people receiving services, relevant service standards and codes of practice for health and social care in the four UK countries. They can be found in the principles of care unit HSC24. To achieve this unit you must demonstrate that you have applied the principles of care outlined in unit HSC24 in your practice and through your knowledge.

This unit is directly transferable to Health national occupational standard CHS7

¹ The key purpose identified for those working in health and social care settings is "to provide an integrated, ethical and inclusive service, which meets agreed needs and outcomes of people requiring health and/or social care"
A6.13 level 2

Key Words and Concepts

This section provides explanations and definitions of the key words and concepts used in this unit. In occupational standards it is quite common to find words or phrases used which you will be familiar with, but which, in the detail of the standards, may be used in a very particular way. **Therefore, we would encourage you to read this section carefully before you begin working with the standards and to refer back to this section as required.**

Additional protective equipment Contaminated

Types of personal protective equipment such as visors, protective eyewear and radiation protective equipment

Includes: items 'contaminated' with body fluids, chemicals or radionucleatides.
Any pack/item opened and not used should be treated as contaminated

Individual

The person from whom the specimen will be collected, in the context of this unit that could be an adult or child

Personal protective clothing

Items such as plastic aprons, gloves - both clean and sterile, eyewear, footwear, dresses, trousers and shirts and all in one trouser suits and gowns.
These may be single use disposable clothing or reusable clothing

Standard precautions and health and safety measures

A series of interventions which will minimise or prevent infection and cross infection including: hand washing/cleansing before during and after the activity and the use of personal protective clothing and additional protective equipment when appropriate

HSC238a Obtain specimens from individuals

Performance Criteria

You need to show that,

1. you apply **standard precautions** for infection control and take other appropriate **health and safety measures**
2. you explain the procedure to the **individual** at the appropriate level and pace, and support them to provide the specimen themselves
3. you provide the individual with the necessary and appropriate containers
4. you answer any questions from the individual accurately and promptly according to your role and responsibilities, passing on questions to other staff when the request is out of your remit
5. you stop the procedure if the necessary preparations have not been followed by the individual or staff
6. you obtain specimens from clients when they cannot do this themselves, and place them in the appropriate container
7. you recognise and report without delay any condition or behaviour which may signify adverse reactions to the procedure, halt the procedure and take the appropriate action
8. you ensure privacy and dignity at all times, taking into account the individuals ethnic and religious background which might influence certain aspects of collecting specimens and ensure specimens are collected in the correct order, where necessary
9. you label specimens correctly, attach the relevant documentation, place in the relevant bio-hazard bags, and put them in the correct place for storage, collection or transportation
10. you record if you are unable to obtain the specimen and tell the appropriate member of the care team without delay

HSC238b Test, record and report on specimens

You need to show that,

1. you test specimens when required, using the correct process for the investigation to be performed, and according to the specimen being tested
2. you report immediately any findings which are outside of normal ranges and which demand urgent attention and your findings according to your role and the individuals care plan
3. you reassure and inform the individual of the results of the tests according to their needs and the care plan or pass this on to other staff members if this is beyond your role and responsibility

Knowledge Specification for the whole of this unit

Competent practice is a combination of the application of skills and knowledge informed by values and ethics. This specification details the knowledge and understanding required to carry out competent practice in the performance described in this unit.

When using this specification **it is important to read the knowledge requirements in relation to expectations and requirements of your job role.**

You need to show that you know, understand and can apply in practice:

Legislation and organisational policy and procedures

1. a factual awareness of the current European and National legislation, national guidelines and local policies and protocols which affect your work practice in relation to obtaining and testing specimens
2. a working understanding of your responsibilities and accountability in relation to the current European and National legislation, national guidelines and local policies and protocols

Theory and practice

3. a factual awareness of the importance of working within your own sphere of competence and seeking advice when faced with situations outside your sphere of competence
4. a working understanding of the importance of applying standard precautions and the potential consequences of poor practice

Anatomy and physiology

5. a working understanding of the basic anatomy and physiology relevant to type of specimen collections, including the:
 - gastro-intestinal tract
 - genito-urinary tract
 - skin
 - respiratory system

Care and support

6. a working understanding of the importance of giving clear explanations to individuals to enable them to collect their own specimens when appropriate
7. an in-depth knowledge of why it is essential to maintain the individuals confidentiality
8. a working understanding of the possible adverse effects that may occur when collecting specimens
9. a working understanding of how to respond in the event of an adverse effect

Materials and equipment

10. a working understanding of materials and equipment required for collecting the specimen
11. a working understanding of materials and equipment required for testing specimens in the work area

12. a working understanding of the different types of container, transport media and request forms for specimens for: histology, haematology, microbiology, cytology and biochemistry

Procedures and techniques

13. a working understanding of the types of specimens that you may obtain
14. a working understanding of specific preparation for individuals prior to specimen collection
15. a working understanding of the tests and investigations that may be carried out on the specimens you obtain, either by yourself or others
16. an in-depth knowledge of the normal findings when testing urine, and what abnormalities you might find
17. a working understanding of the implications the results of the tests will have on the individual
18. a working understanding of the possible adverse effects that may occur when collecting specimens
19. a working understanding of how to respond in the event of an adverse effect

Records and documentation

20. a working understanding of the importance of accurate record keeping
21. a working understanding of the importance of immediately reporting any findings which are outside of normal ranges and which demand urgent attention
22. a working understanding of the information that is required to ensure accurate labelling of specimens that are to go to the laboratory for testing
23. a working understanding of the potential hazards and other consequences related to incorrect labelling or dispatch of specimens
24. a working understanding of the importance of immediately reporting any issues which are outside your own sphere of competence without delay to the relevant member of staff