

The North West Concordat agreement for the development of Advanced Practice 2009

Executive Summary

The aim of the agreement is to provide a summary of the key principles that apply to the development of the new role of the advanced practitioner.

The agreement includes the following:-

- Definitions of an Advanced Practitioner
- Examples of common characteristics of the advanced practitioner role
- The agreed level of education and development required for this role
- Guidance to the current level for the post
- An outline of some of the differences between Practitioner, Senior and Specialist Practice, Advanced Practitioners and Consultant Practitioners.
- An outline of the interface between the Advanced Practitioner role and prescribing.

Definition

Advanced Practitioner

There are two definitions, which apply to this new role. The definitions complement each other and add relevant different dimensions, which together provide the key components that underpin the new role.

1. The Advanced Practitioner has highly specialised or highly developed knowledge and skills **beyond** those, which are required for registration, encompassing the breadth and depth of current and future professional practice.

Advanced practice forms **the continuum from practitioner to emergent consultant.**

(Shared Framework, DOH developed by the University of Salford 04)

2. **Experienced non-medical** registered professional who has developed his or her knowledge to a very *high standard in a specific and often high level of practice. This high standard is such that not only is the individual the expert in the base domain: - but can also **accept the full responsibilities for providing those services hitherto undertaken by others, in defined circumstances.***

(J. Sargent Chair of the WDC national forum 03)

The Characteristics of an Advanced Practitioner

- Work across organisations and different agencies
- Provide advanced levels of practice, knowledge and skills
- Continues to develop skills, knowledge and practice in the context of service needs
- Undertake research mapped to service need
- Practice undertaken to meet the needs of services working as required to fulfil the full 24 hour and 7 day week
- Be self-directed, manage risk, have high levels of communication skills and be a member of a wider clinical/service team.
- In many cases manage medications including assessment, review and prescribing.
- In many cases the person will have their own patient/client caseload with decision
- Making responsibilities e.g. referral to others, discharge of patients etc.
- Undertake a physical examination and history taking, diagnosis and plan care and treatment.
- Coordinate, manage and signpost patients/clients according their assessed need
- Clinically accountable in the framework of clinical governance and risk management.
- Defines their scope of practice within the context of the wider clinical/service team.
- Client centred role.

- The A.P. is a clinical/service role based in practice/service for the majority of their time [Over 70% to a maximum of 80% of time in practice].

Note: The Advanced Practitioner development is aimed at any and all non-medical regulated professions, working in NHS organisations or those undertaking commissioned work on behalf of the NHS.

Level of Proficiency

The Advanced Practitioner framework for the North West includes three levels of proficiency:

- **Post Graduate Certificate**
- **Post Graduate Diploma**
- **Masters Qualification**

This framework will support development of such proficiency within practitioners providing that those roles are required by service, that they are clinically based and require the learning that comes with Post Graduate education. Therefore there will potentially be three tiers of advanced practice; however possession of a Masters Qualification will be essential to identify those practitioners working as advanced practitioners. The remit of their role will require the individual to work beyond their initial level of registration and to undertake skills; competencies and knowledge that are outside their own base profession. The role itself is determined by the needs of service and will be located at level 7 or 8 of the career framework.

Practice

Senior / Specialist Practice

Specialist / senior practice provides in-depth knowledge and experience within a specific clinical area that enhances the clinical practice and responsibilities of the role.

Specialisation can occur within primary practice [within the registrants required Standards for practice], or it can denote advanced learning beyond registration and denotes a level of practice in a speciality that is more advanced than the competencies associated with initial registration. The level at which this practice is then undertaken will vary and can be described as a horizontal development.

Advanced Practice

A person can undertake some competencies that are *advanced but this does not mean that the role is at the level of an Advanced Practitioner*. Advanced practice can be described as a vertical differentiation, a distinguishing set of competencies and their application in practice that exceeds those associated with initial qualification and registration. This would link to skills development *within* a role.

Education, Training and Development

The education required for advanced roles across the North West is at Post Graduate Masters level. This will be provided within a multi-professional modular portfolio, which in the majority of cases will be part of the three levels of proficiency described above. Individuals who already have a relevant Masters Qualification will not be required to undertake another Masters degree. They will be assessed against their new role and identify if any additional learning needs are required for the post.

The Advanced Practice Learner

- Students wishing to undertake advanced practice modules will be required to meet entry criteria set by service and the HEI which will include being:
- A practitioner who is from a statutorily regulated profession.
- An experienced senior practitioner / service provider; significant experience in practice required which is likely to equate to five years in practice or equivalent.

- A practitioner with a first degree, or, evidence they can study at this level.
- Students will come from different professional backgrounds depending upon the role required and their individual skills, knowledge, commitment and experience.
- This may also include direct entrants into Health related careers from non-Health related employment and professions.

Links to Other Career Framework Roles within the NHS

Practitioners

Practitioners are most frequently registered practitioners in their first and second post registration/professional qualification jobs. They will normally be located at level 5 of the NHS Career framework.

<http://www.nwwmhub.nhs.uk/developing-roles/career-framework/>

Specialist Practitioners

Senior or Specialist Practice or practitioners may include Practitioners who have a higher degree of autonomy and responsibility than Practitioners in the clinical/service environment. They will normally be located at level 5 or 6 of the NHS Career framework. These staff may have some elements of advanced practice within their roles; however this does not necessarily mean that they are fulfilling the role of an Advanced Practitioner.

Advanced Practitioners

Advanced Practitioners are experienced clinical/service professionals who have developed their skills and theoretical knowledge to a very high standard. They are empowered to make high-level clinical decisions and will often have their own caseload. They will normally be located at level 7 or 8 of the NHS Career framework. Organisations will already have some staff that either has the title or role that is considered to be that of an Advanced Practitioner.

Consultant Practitioners

Consultant Practitioners are staff working at a very high level of clinical/service expertise and/or have responsibility for the planning of services, normally employed at level 8 of Agenda for Change. The Advanced Practitioner role is as described in the definition, a continuum from emergent practitioner to Consultant. The difference between the two is that the Consultant role requires four key functions:

- Expert clinical practice (at least 50%)
- Professional Leadership and Consultancy
- Education Training and Development
- Practice and Service Development

The Advanced Practitioner would spend the majority of time (approximately 70 to 80%) in practice and the level of leadership and service development required of the Consultant role is beyond that of the Advanced Practitioner. The level of research activity and education of others is again beyond that of the Advanced Practitioner. The challenge for organisations is to recognise that the development of the new Advanced role will ultimately develop and prepare staff for new opportunities and roles at consultant level. The current consultant roles in many cases already have wider requirements than a single professional remit. This new development will extend the scope and potential for this and could provide an improved and extended platform for the consultant role of the future.

Prescribing

The aim is to have prescribing as part of many roles where it is deemed beneficial to patients / clients and service. Prescribing will be a skill for many staff and will in the majority of cases be one element of the role of the Advanced Practitioner. On its own prescribing does not make a role an Advanced Practitioner role.

Summary

The education required for Advanced Practitioner roles across the North West is at Masters Level. This will be provided within a multi-professional modular portfolio, which in the majority of cases will be part of the three levels of proficiency described above. Individuals who already have a relevant Masters Qualification will not be required to undertake another Masters degree. The APF is driven by the requirement to develop new roles and new ways of working that deliver safe, modernised and personalised services to patients/service users. The portfolio of education developed to support advanced practice should be delivered within a robust governance framework, which is intended to be both responsive to service needs and include a focus upon:

- **Flexibility** - Providing Service with choice and flexibility delivered through a modular portfolio of education shaped by service need
- **Accessibility** - Providing service with innovative systems of delivery including work based learning
- **Portability** - Enabling academic credit and shared skills and competencies to be transferred between HEI's and health and care organisations
- **Value for Money** - Achieved by robust auditing of module uptake, pass rate sand attrition rates combined with evidencing responsiveness to student and service feedback.