



RCN

Professional Services

RCN Credentialing for Advanced Level Nursing Practice

Handbook for applicants



Royal College
of Nursing





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Introduction

Nursing continues to develop and change: modern nursing practice has built on its traditional skills and knowledge base to enable it to be responsive to society's changing health care needs. The RCN, as the United Kingdom's professional body for nursing, helps promote, support and further develop the profession and assists nurses to obtain the recognition they deserve.

That is why the RCN is introducing a credentialing approach – formal recognition for each nurse, their colleagues, employers and most importantly, patients and the public, of the advanced level of expertise and skill that nurses

awarded the credential have achieved. This will be evidenced across the four pillars of: clinical practice, leadership, education and research. This is not about a job title; it is about recognising the level of practice a nurse is working at.

Advanced practice is characterised by the following principles:

- autonomous practice
- critical thinking
- high levels of decision-making and problem-solving
- values-based care
- improving practice (NES 2007).

Eligibility

Any nurse who works at an advanced level of clinical practice, has non-medical prescribing rights and has an active registration with the NMC can apply.

Applications are open to members and non-members of the RCN.

Eligibility is linked solely to an applicant's ability to demonstrate that they meet our requirements for qualifications, experience and competence.

The initial credential is for three years.

The definition of advanced practice set out below, together with the advice provided, should help individuals to identify whether they meet the requirements for the credential.

RCN definition of advanced practice:

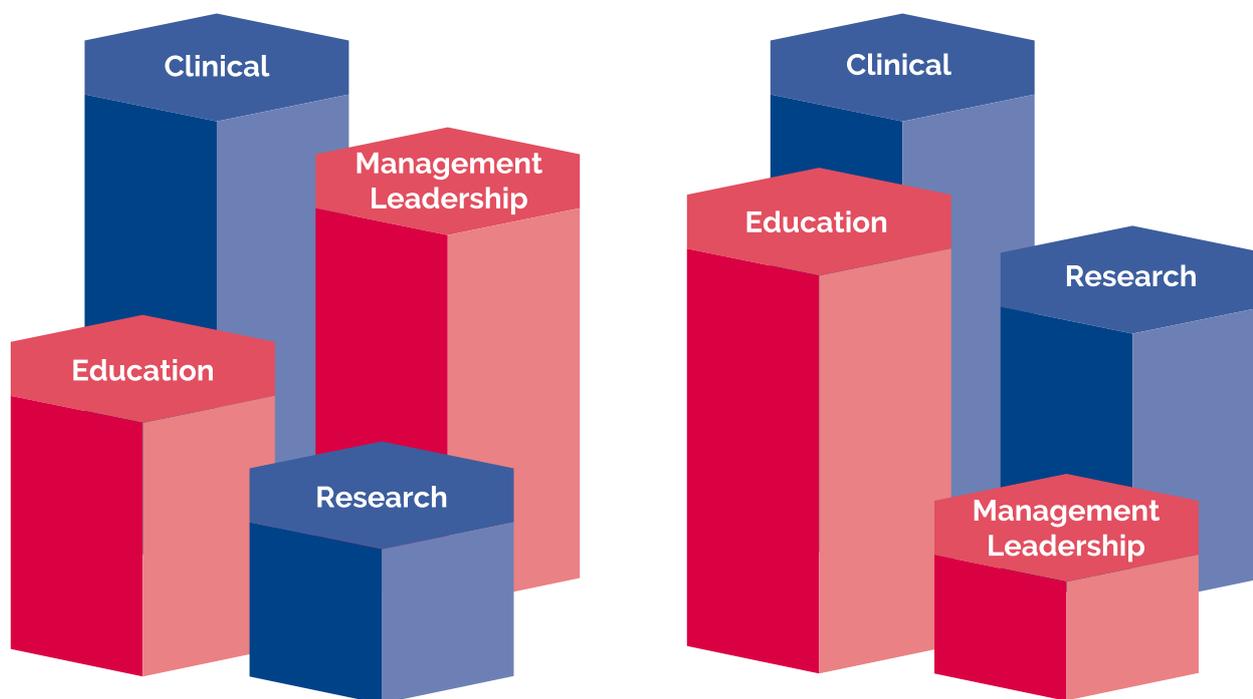
“Advanced practice is a level of practice, rather than a type of practice. Advanced Nurse Practitioners are educated at master's level in advanced practice and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert knowledge and skills. They have the freedom and authority to act, making autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

There are many practitioners who function at an 'advanced' level but may not be working in a specifically clinical role. The RCN, and frameworks of the four countries of the UK, see advanced practice as a level of practice rather than a role or title; as well as clinical practice, a practitioner may be working in research, education or managerial/leadership roles. These four domains are the pillars of advanced practice and all advanced practice posts will contain some elements of each pillar.

Each of the pillars may be demonstrated in a variety of ways. With respect to research, for example, practitioners may not have a formal research remit, but may demonstrate how to identify research questions or implement research in practice. Similarly, practitioners may manage staff, services or resources. Education can be a formal part of practice linked to a higher education institution (HEI) or it may be less formal education in practice. However, for advanced practice clinical roles the clinical pillar will always be the most prominent.



Fig 1. The four pillars can combine in different ways depending on how and where you practise.



Source: NHS Wales Advanced Practice Framework (2010).

Credentialing criteria

The RCN seeks to credential nurses who fulfil the criteria for advanced level practice, to recognise this level of practice, and to continue to develop the profession. Therefore a set of criteria that represents the very best in advanced level nursing practice has been developed:

- a relevant master's degree
- non-medical prescribing qualification
- experience and expertise mapped against the four pillars of advanced nursing practice
- a job plan that demonstrates current advanced level practice verified by a senior nurse/ employer
- a clinical reference verifying the applicant's clinical competence
- evidence of continued professional development related to advanced nursing practice over the previous three years.

This stringent set of criteria will enable the nursing profession to be better recognised for excellent practice, endorse exceptional practice and create a development route for those nurses aspiring to work at an advanced level.

The RCN recognises that these requirements may exclude many nurses who currently adopt the title ANP/NP but are unable to meet the requirements of the credential. We have therefore created pathways (models) to enable these nurses to demonstrate their expertise and equivalencies for the criteria, or to acquire the additional skills and knowledge required. The transition pathways will be time-limited and available between January 2017 and December 2020.

Those nurses achieving the credential through the transitional pathway will NOT be required to achieve a full master's degree following cessation of the transitional arrangements in December

2020, as they will be deemed to have already met the criteria for the credential.

However, from January 2021 only full master's awards will be acceptable, as is already mandated in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and is an international standard.

The following pathways to credentialing (models A-E) set out below will assist you in deciding whether you meet the requirements. If you do not have the required evidence you should not submit an application, as it is unlikely to be successful and we are unable to refund your application fee.

You are advised to ensure your reference maps against the four pillars of advanced practice and is signed by a senior person. Templates for this purpose can be found in the appendices.

You must ensure that your job plan gives a detailed account of your daily work and not a brief description. For example, "working in surgery" or "working on medical ward" is not sufficient. The job plan must be verified by a senior clinical lead or your employer. In either case, the signatory must know your work and agree to be contacted if required. For transitional pathways, you may need to supply two referees' names. A template can be found in the appendices. The reference and job plan must not be signed by the same person.

Please submit documentary evidence if your name differs on transcripts or certificates.

If you need help understanding the requirements or the acceptable forms of evidence for each, you can contact us at credentialing@rcn.org.uk with your questions.



Pathways to achieving the RCN Advanced Level Nursing Credential

MODEL A: RCN Accredited MSc in Advanced Practice (or comparable, e.g. nationally commissioned Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh Master's award)

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
MSc/Master's Advanced Practice	Successful completion of final year of MSc ANP is the consolidation and experience period whilst in clinical practice and is minimal level of experience.		Transcript/certificate of successful achievement. NMC PIN	
NMC recordable prescribing qualification			NMC statement of entry/certificate of successful achievement.	
	Currently employed/self-employed as advanced level nurse working in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.		Completed, current, detailed job plan signed by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)	
	Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice within previous three years.		Evidence for NMC revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable, or reflective pieces related to ALNP-level practice.	
		Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment by clinical lead using country-specific framework.	Completed, current, detailed job plan signed by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.) Clinical reference signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).	

Model B: Master's degree related to advanced clinical practice, not accredited by the RCN

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
Master's degree transcripts			Transcripts or certificates of successful completion of programme mapped against the RCN-accredited HEI criteria and country-specific published framework. NMC PIN	
NMC recordable prescribing qualification			NMC statement of entry. Certificate of successful achievement.	
	One year post master's. Currently employed/self-employed as advanced level nurse working in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.		Current, detailed completed job plan verified by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)	
	Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice within the previous three years.		Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable, and/or reflective pieces related to ALNP-level practice.	
		Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment by clinical lead using country-specific framework.	Completed, detailed, current job plan signed by employer/clinical leader. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.) Clinical reference signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).	



MODEL C1: Transitional criteria until December 2020

PG Dip/Master's level study (achievement of 120 M level credits in a related field which reflects the four pillars of advanced practice)

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
PG Dip/ Master's-level study Must be related to clinical nursing			<p>Transcripts/certificates of successful completion.</p> <p>NMC PIN</p> <p>Portfolio of evidence mapped against RCN-accredited criteria and country-specific published framework.</p> <p>Framework that includes a reflective statement of 1,000 words demonstrating that the descriptor for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework) has been met in full.¹</p> <p>The descriptors can be found below.</p>	
NMC recordable prescribing qualification			NMC statement of entry/ certificate of successful achievement.	
	<p>One year post master's or PG Dip.</p> <p>Currently working at advanced level in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.</p>		<p>Completed, detailed, current job plan verified by employer/ clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)</p>	
	<p>Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice in previous three years.</p>		<p>Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced clinical practice is acceptable, or two reflective pieces related to advanced clinical practice.</p>	

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A.

Available from: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
		Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment using country-specific framework assessed by clinical lead.	<p>A clinical reference, including reference to the published advanced practice framework used in the assessment in the workplace or in the programme transcript and the four pillars of advanced practice.</p> <p>This should be signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).</p>	



MODEL C2: Transitional criteria until December 2020

PG Dip/Master's-level study (achieved via a modular approach, NOT a full programme but equating to 120 M level credits in a related field that reflects the four pillars of advanced practice)

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
PG Dip/ Master's- level study Must include evidence of clinical nursing			<p>Transcripts/certificates of successful completion.</p> <p>NMC PIN</p> <p>Portfolio of evidence mapped against RCN-accredited HEI criteria and country-specific published framework.</p> <p>Framework to include a reflective statement of 1,000 words demonstrating that the descriptor for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework) has been met in full. The descriptors can be found below.</p>	
	NMC recordable prescribing qualification.		NMC statement of entry/certificate of successful achievement.	
	<p>One year post master's or PG Dip.</p> <p>Currently working at advanced level in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.</p>		<p>Completed, detailed, current job plan verified by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)</p>	
	Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice in previous three years.		Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced clinical practice is acceptable, or two reflective pieces related to ALNP-level practice.	
		Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment by clinical lead using country-specific framework.	<p>A clinical reference, including reference to the published advanced practice framework used in the assessment in the workplace or in the programme transcript and the four pillars of advanced practice.</p> <p>Signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).</p>	

Model D1: Transitional criteria until December 2020

RCN “family” of historic NP/ANP qualifications, including PG Cert (60 L 7 credits)/RCN NP Award/RCN NP Diploma/BSc Hons

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
PG Cert (60 L 7 credits) or RCN NP Award or BSc Hons nurse practitioner or RCN Diploma nurse practitioner			Transcripts or certificates of successful completion. NMC PIN Reflective statement of 1,000 words demonstrating that the descriptor for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework) has been met in full. ² The descriptors can be found below. The statement must also reflect the four pillars of advanced practice.	
NMC recordable prescribing qualification			NMC statement of entry/ certificate of successful achievement.	
	One year post NP qualification. Currently working at advanced level in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.		Completed, detailed, current job plan verified by employer/ clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)	
	Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice in previous three years.		Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable, or two reflective piece related to ALNP-level practice.	
		Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment using country-specific framework in relation to the four pillars of advanced practice.	A clinical reference, including reference to the published advanced practice framework used in the assessment in the workplace or in the programme transcript and the four pillars of advanced practice. Signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).	

² The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A.

Available from: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf



Model D2: transitional criteria until December 2020

RCN Accredited programme – PgDip ANP or PgDip Advanced Clinical Practice

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
Post- Graduate Diploma Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Advanced Clinical Practice			Transcripts or certificates of successful completion. NMC PIN	
NMC recordable prescribing qualification			NMC statement of entry/ certificate of successful achievement.	
	One year post NP qualification. Currently working at advanced level in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.		Completed, detailed, current job plan verified by employer/ clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)	
	Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice in previous three years.		Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable, or two reflective piece related to ALNP-level practice.	
		Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment using country-specific framework in relation to the four pillars of advanced practice.	A clinical reference, including reference to the published advanced practice framework used in the assessment in the workplace or in the programme transcript and the four pillars of advanced practice. Signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).	

Model E: Transitional criteria until December 2020

Historic NP/ANP qualifications including PG Cert (60 L 7 credits)/BSc Hons /Graduate Diploma

Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
PG Cert (60 L 7 credits) or PG Dip (120 L 7 credits) or RCN NP Award or BSc Hons nurse practitioner or Grad Diploma nurse practitioner			Transcripts or certificates of successful completion of programme mapped against RCN-accredited HEI criteria and country-specific published framework AND a reflective statement of 1,000 words demonstrating that the descriptor for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework) has been met in full. ³ The descriptors can be found below. NMC PIN	
NMC recordable prescribing qualification			NMC statement of entry/ certificate of successful achievement.	
	One year post NP qualification. Currently working at advanced level in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.		Completed, detailed, current job plan verified by employer/ clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.) Mapped against the four pillars of advanced practice.	
	Two examples of evidence of CPD in relation to advanced clinical practice in last three years.		Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable, or two reflective pieces related to advanced level practice.	

³ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A.
Available from: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf



Qualification	Experience	Competence	Evidence	Check
		Assessed as competent in practice with local assessment using country-specific framework, assessed by clinical lead or demonstrated in the programme transcript.	<p>A clinical reference, including reference to the published advanced practice framework used in the assessment in the workplace or in the programme transcript and the four pillars of advanced practice.</p> <p>Signed by a senior clinician (not the same person who signs the job plan).</p>	

Mapping to the Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework)

For those applicants who have not completed a full master's degree programme, you have the opportunity, for a transitional period only, to write a 1,000-word reflective statement demonstrating how you believe you meet the descriptors outlined below for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework).

We are particularly interested in how you demonstrate the following achievements:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate your conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance your knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level
- have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability necessary for continuing professional development (CPD).

FOR INFORMATION

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at the forefront of, or informed by, their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice

- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
 - critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
- the independent learning ability necessary for CPD.



REFERENCES

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A.
Available from: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf

Renewing the credential

The initial credential period is three years.

After this time, renewal is required for a further three years; there is a fee for renewal.

The RCN credentialing team will notify the advanced level nurse by email eight weeks before the credential is due to expire that they must renew, so that their name can remain on the database.

In order to renew the credential for a further three years the ALNP will be required to produce the following:

- a current, detailed job plan signed by a senior clinician/employer who can verify that this is a true reflection of the ALNP's clinical practice in a typical week
- a clinical reference signed by a different senior clinician /employer verifying that the ALNP is working at a level of practice commensurate with the requirements of the four pillars of advanced practice
- evidence of CPD in the previous three years related to the advanced level nursing role (two pieces)

For those applicants who are unable to provide transcripts of qualifications due to the HEI Nurse Practitioner programme no longer being available a letter to the university is attached at appendix eight.

- a statement to the effect that the ALNP is not under investigation/disciplinary procedures from the NMC and/or their employer.

It is expected that the ALNP practises, at all times, in accordance with the NMC Code (2015) and will notify the RCN credentialing team at credentialing@rcn.org.uk

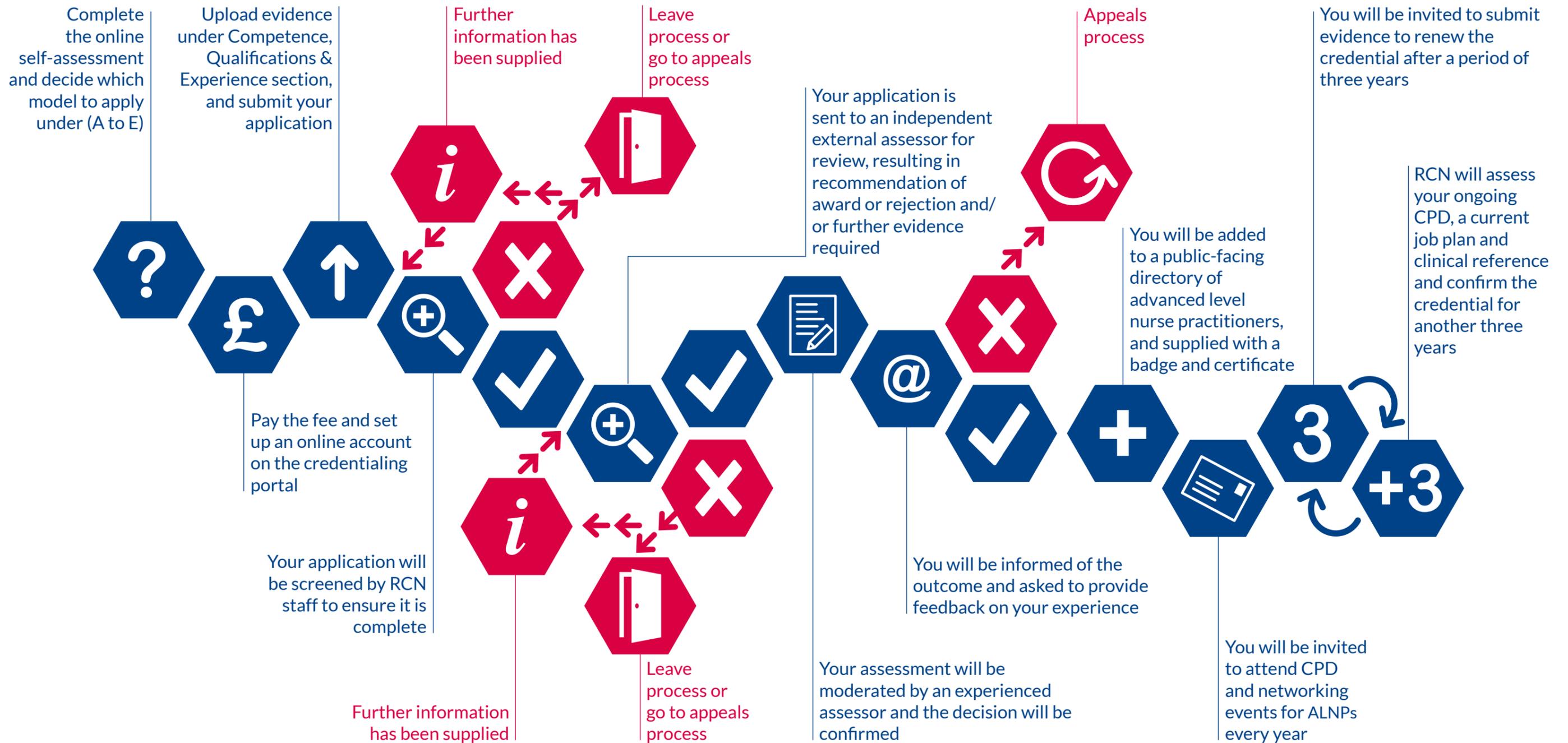
The material submitted for the re-credential will be scrutinised by an external assessor from the RCN's Approved List of Credentialing Assessors. The assessor's decision will be final.

Should the ALNP no longer meet the criteria for the credential, or if there is sound reason for doing so, the ALNP's name will be removed from the database.



The assessment process

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO RCN CREDENTIALING



References

DHSSPS (2016) *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework, Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care Trusts*.

NHS Scotland *Advanced Practice Toolkit*
www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk

NLIAH & GIGC/NHSW (2016) *Framework for Advanced Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Practice in Wales*.

RCN (2010) *Advanced Nurse Practitioners, An RCN Guide to Advanced Nursing Practice, Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Programme Accreditation*.

Northern Ireland Supporting Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (2014)
www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-level-of-practice.aspx

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015) *The Code: Standards of practice and behaviours for nurses and midwives*, London: NMC.

Appeals and complaints

If you are unsuccessful in your application for the RCN Advanced Level Nurse Credential, you may appeal within 14 days if you believe the assessors have failed to assess your application correctly. If you appeal, we will ask you to complete a “grounds for appeal form” (www.rcn.org.uk/contact/complaints-form). This, along with your original application, will be considered by a new assessor, and moderated by a third assessor whose decision will be final. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the RCN’s complaints policy.

www.rcn.org.uk/contact/rcn-customer-promise



Appendix one: RCN Advanced Nurse Credential Application: clinical referee

All RCN ANP Credential applicants need to identify a clinical referee who is a doctor (Registrar level or above) or qualified Advanced Nurse Practitioner or equivalent, who has been working in the same organisation and setting as you for a minimum of one year, and who is willing to confirm your advanced clinical practice. This template must be used along with the reference template and sent electronically with your application form to rcn.org.uk/credentialing

Applicant's name	
NMC PIN	
Clinical referee's name	
Clinical referee's role	
Clinical referee's work address	
Telephone number	
Email	
Length of time working in the practice setting with this applicant	
Professional registration details, qualifications and experience	
I confirm that I am happy to act as clinical referee for..... in support of their application for the RCN Advanced Level Nursing Practice Credential. I understand that I may be contacted for further information if required.	
Signed	
Designation	
Date	

Appendix two: Reference template

ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING, ADVANCED LEVEL NURSING PRACTICE

The Royal College of Nursing (2012) defines Advanced Practice as:

“a level of practice, rather than a type of practice. Advanced Nurse Practitioners are educated at master’s level in advanced practice and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert knowledge and skills. They have the freedom and authority to act, making autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

Advanced level nursing practice must encompass all aspects of this definition, in order to be credentialed by the RCN. The Department of Health (2010) states that:

“Advanced level practice encompasses aspects of education, research and management but is firmly grounded in direct care provision.”

This statement reflects the four pillars of advanced practice, which are integral to advanced level nursing and are manifest to varying extents depending on the nurse’s responsibilities and work setting. However, clinical care must be the main focus. This reflects the themes and the underpinning principles in the NHS Wales Advanced Practice Framework (2010), Department of Health Advanced Level Practice: A Position Statement (2010), Northern Ireland Supporting Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (2014) and NHS Education for Scotland (NES 2007), all of which strengthen the case for benchmarking of this level of practice:

- autonomous practice
- critical thinking
- high levels of decision-making and problem-solving
- value-based care
- improving practice.

Source:

www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-‘level’-of-practice.aspx



CLINICAL REFERENCE FOR:

Applicant's name:

NMC PIN:

Applicant's professional registration and academic achievements:

Please describe the applicant's work in relation to each of the following pillars of advanced nursing practice:

Clinical (please outline how the applicant works at an advanced level using the criteria in the definition above):

Leadership/management (please describe how the applicant demonstrates the leadership role):

Facilitation of learning (please describe how the applicant is involved in the facilitation of learning, for example teaching and training, supervision):

Evidence, research and development (please demonstrate how the applicant is involved in evidence-based practice, research and practice development):

To be signed by organisational clinical lead

I hereby confirm that

is competent to work at an advanced level of nursing practice in accordance with the criteria set out above.

Name:

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

Appendix three: Job plan

ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING ADVANCED LEVEL NURSING CREDENTIALING: JOB PLAN

Please complete the table below showing your work for a typical week. The job plan **MUST** be detailed and **MUST** reflect the four pillars of advanced level practice. E.g.: clinical practice, education, management/leadership, and research/evidence-based practice. The work you do in relation to these pillars will vary from day to day and in relation to the work you are doing; however, clinical practice needs to be the main focus.

References

NHS Wales Advanced Practice Framework (2010)

Department of Health Advanced Level Practice: A Position Statement (2010)

Northern Ireland Supporting Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (2014)

NHS Education for Scotland (NES 2007)

Source:

www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-'level'-of-practice.aspx

Monday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	Comments
Tuesday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	
Wednesday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	
Thursday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	
Friday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	
Saturday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	
Sunday	morning	afternoon	evening	night	



Would you like to make any further comments about your job plan?	
I confirm that this is a true reflection of my work for a typical week:	
Name	
Signature	
Date	
Verification: By a line manager, clinical lead or senior colleague who understands the nature of your work.	
I confirm that this is a true reflection of (insert above's name) work for a typical week	
Name	
Signature	
Designation	
Date	

Appendix four: RCN Accredited Advanced Nurse Practice (ANP/NP) programmes as at November 2016

Name of university	Course title
Anglia Ruskin University	PG Dip/MSc Advanced Nursing Practice
University of Bradford	PG Dip/MSc Advanced Practice
City University London	MSc Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Adult, Child and Neonate)
University of Cumbria	PG Dip/MSc Advanced Practice (Clinical)
University of Hertfordshire	MSc Contemporary Nursing (Advanced Practice)
London South Bank University	PG Dip/MSc Advanced Clinical Practice PG Dip/MSc Children's Advanced Nurse Practitioner PG Dip/MSc Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner PG Dip/MSc Advanced Nurse Practitioner (Mental Health)
Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen	MSc Advancing Nursing Practice



Appendix five: Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7

DESCRIPTOR FOR A HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION AT LEVEL 7 ON THE FHEQ AND SCQF LEVEL 11 ON THE FQHEIS: MASTER'S DEGREE

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at the forefront of, or informed by, their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
 - critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability necessary for continuing professional development.

Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees is at the forefront of, or informed by, an academic or professional discipline. Successful students show originality in the application of knowledge, and they understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They are able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they show originality in tackling and solving problems. They have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement).

Masters degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this framework level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity

and density of study. Master's degrees, in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas, typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf



Appendix six: Mapping against RCN Accredited Advanced Practice Programme Standards

RCN ADVANCED PRACTICE PROGRAMMES

The RCN accredits Advanced Level Nursing Practice programmes and has produced a guidance document, *Advanced nurse practitioners – an RCN guide to advanced nursing practice, advanced nurse practitioners and programme accreditation* (2012). This guidance document, in partnership with the specific UK country frameworks, promotes the value and potential of advanced practice and supports the educational development of Advanced Nurse Practitioners at higher education institutions. Applicants for the Advanced Level Nursing Practice Credential under transitional arrangements (until December 2020) are required to demonstrate compliance with the RCN-accredited programme standards.

MAPPING YOUR PROGRAMME

In order to complete your application to be credentialed by the RCN you will need to map your master's programme to the following aspects of the RCN Accreditation standards. A graduate's certificate and transcript, student handbooks and programme specifications will provide evidence that these requirements have been met. Please tick the appropriate columns below.

Criteria	Yes	No	Not known	Evidence
Curriculum content				
1. The ANP course team includes nurse lecturers who are qualified ANPs and who maintain ongoing links with clinical practice (at least one member of the team).				Evidence of ANP course team's research and scholarly activity.
2. The programme is based on a ratio of 50% theory and 50% practice, with strategies for integration of theory into practice evident.				
3. Part-time programme is no shorter than two years.				
4. The ANP programme outcomes are explicitly mapped against the country-specific competences for advanced nursing practice.				Evidence that programme outcomes are explicitly linked to the country-specific competences. Specify which country.

Criteria	Yes	No	Not known	Evidence
5. ANP programme content includes:				Reflected in programme documentation and transcripts of modules.
• autonomous and self-directed practice				
• comprehensive physical assessment of all body systems across the life span				
• health and disease processes, including physical, sociological, psychological, cultural aspects				
• comprehensive history-taking and clinical decision-making skills/clinical reasoning/problem-solving skills				
• competence in making differential and undifferentiated diagnosis				
• applied pharmacology and evidence-based prescribing decisions				
• advanced therapeutic communication skills				
• holistic health assessment of all patient groups				
• therapeutic independent prescribing				
• interpretation of investigative results				
• developing skills for management of complex patient care				
• public health, health promotion and patient/carer education				
• research understanding and application of evidence-based practice				
• organisational, interpersonal and communication skills				
• accountability – including legal and ethical issues				
• quality assurance strategies and processes				
• political, social and economic issues				
• leadership and teaching skills				
• advanced change management skills				
• consultation, audit and research skills and competence				
• leading innovation				
• competence in emergency life support, anaphylaxis, sepsis, unconscious patient				



Criteria	Yes	No	Not known	Evidence
6. Students are provided with information on:				Student handbook overview of physical and learning resources that support the ANP programme.
• the programme				
• resources available to support them				
• assessment methods.				
7. The programme educates the student to full master's level including the research module (180 credits at level).				Examples of information given to students on the ANP programme.
Assessment methods				
1. A designated facilitator supervises, supports and assesses the ANP student in the practice setting. This facilitator must be experienced and have appropriate professional and academic qualifications (for example, doctor or qualified ANP).				Examples of student learning contracts.
2. Facilitator feedback and/or clinical observation by the ANP course team are used to evaluate students' clinical performance in practice.				Information on practice-based assessment, with examples.
3. Summative assessment is based on a range of evidence to determine whether all the ANP programme learning outcomes have been met. Examples:				Information about assessor.
• normally a portfolio				Examples of methods used to record the clinical hours.
• normally a minimum of one, timed examination				Reflected in student handbook, programme documentation and transcript.
• case study				Reflected in scheme of assessment in student handbook.
• OSCE (or equivalent)				
• facilitator feedback				Scheme of assessment, with evidence that all ANP programme learning outcomes are assessed.
• patient feedback, when possible				

Criteria	Yes	No	Not known	Evidence
Practice learning				
1. The ANP programme is based on a ratio of 50% theory and 50% practice, with a minimum of 500 supervised clinical hours over the entire ANP programme (this supervision can be both direct and indirect and would include the hours that the ANP student is working clinically across the week in their workplace, where the facilitator – or appropriate substitute – is available for supervision as required).				Evidence within the programme documentation.
2. The arrangements for practice experience enable students to meet the ANP programme learning outcomes.				
3. Procedures are in place for the supervision of practice for ANP students, which include ethical aspects.				
4. ANP students have access to patient populations specific to their area of practice, and sufficient in number and variety to ensure that the programme learning outcomes are met.				Examples of student learning contracts.
5. Arrangements are in place for ANP students to have protected time to focus on developing their clinical practice.				
6. Facilitator feedback and/or clinical observation by the ANP course team are used to evaluate students' clinical performance in practice.				



Appendix seven: Frequently asked questions

WHAT IS CREDENTIALING?

Credentialing recognises a nurse's ability to practise at an advanced level. It is an opportunity for nurses to demonstrate their qualifications, expertise and competence in their clinical practice, their leadership, their education and their research. It also enables them to enhance and develop their career prospects and to continue their personal and professional development.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO CREDENTIAL?

Any nurse who works at an advanced level of practice, has non-medical prescribing rights and has an active registration with the NMC can apply, and will be successful if they demonstrate that they meet our requirements by supplying the necessary evidence.

Eligibility is linked solely to your ability to demonstrate that you meet our requirements for qualifications, experience and competence, and not, for example, your job title. The definition of advanced practice set out below should also help you identify if you meet the requirements.

The RCN definition is as follows:

“Advanced practice is a level of practice, rather than a type of practice. Advanced Nurse Practitioners are educated at master's level in advanced practice and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert knowledge and skills. They have the freedom and authority to act, making autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

I CURRENTLY HOLD A BSC NURSE PRACTITIONER AWARD – DO I NOW NEED TO STUDY FOR A MASTER'S IN ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE?

Until December 2020, there are transitional arrangements in place so that any nurses who don't currently meet the criteria for credentialing and are undertaking advanced level practice

can apply for the credential on submission of evidence demonstrating that the RCN criteria for advanced level nursing are met.

If you have a question about whether you are eligible, please email credentialing@rcn.org.uk

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO GAIN THE CREDENTIAL?

Nurses will need to show that they are operating at an advanced level of practice by demonstrating evidence and experience in four areas: clinical practice, leadership, teaching and research. However, clinical practice must be the main focus.

They will also need to show evidence of a job plan that demonstrates current advanced level practice and provides evidence of practice in the four areas above. This will need to be verified by a senior nurse or employer, who will provide a clinical reference confirming their clinical competence and showing evidence of CPD.

WHO ASSESSES WHETHER YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CREDENTIALING?

The RCN will assess credentialing. A team of people who have been involved in developing the credentialing process will assess the evidence to determine whether a nurse has sufficient evidence and expertise to gain the credential. Assessors are selected for their knowledge, skills and expertise in the subject area of the material submitted for credentialing.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I AM CREDENTIALLED?

Those who are successful in credentialing will be included on a public-facing, searchable directory, and will receive a badge and certificate. The credential will be renewed every three years.

WHY ARE ONLY NURSES AT ADVANCED LEVEL ELIGIBLE?

At present credentialing is only open to nurses practicing at an advanced level, but if it is successful, the RCN will extend it to other nursing specialisms.

I ATTENDED AN RCN-ACCREDITED UNIVERSITY – DOES THAT MEAN I HAVE THE CREDENTIALS ALREADY?

From April 2017, nurses who successfully achieve the full master's qualification, including non-medical prescribing, from an RCN accredited university will have the credential awarded for the first three years. The re-credentialing process will accord with all other re-credentialing criteria.

HOW IS CREDENTIALING DIFFERENT TO ACCREDITATION?

Credentialing is a way of recognising an individual nurse's competence to practice at an advanced level. Accreditation is a way of recognising a particular course of study or institution providing the programme.

HOW DOES CREDENTIALING LINK TO NMC REVALIDATION?

NMC revalidation recognises your ability to practise as a registered nurse or midwife and maintain active registration on the NMC Professional Register of Nurses and Midwives. This is a statutory requirement. Credentialing is a way of recognising competence to practise at a particular level. It is an RCN initiative and is not mandatory for registration with the NMC, nor for revalidation. Evidence you use for your CPD in revalidation can also be used as evidence in credentialing and re-credentialing.

HOW MUCH DOES CREDENTIALING COST?

Inclusion on the database will incur a cost. The initial assessment will be £275, with renewal (after three year cycle) being £125. Prices include VAT.

WHY IS THERE A COST WHEN I ALREADY PAY NMC AND RCN FEES?

Like many other professional qualifications, the process of credentialing, including assessment and inclusion on the register, incurs a cost. Gaining a credential is separate to your registration with the NMC and your membership of the RCN. Moreover, credentialing is available to non-RCN members.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PASS THE CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT?

If you are unsuccessful in your application for the credential you will not be added to the database but you will incur charges. You can re-apply for credentialing at any time on submission of further evidence and payment of a credentialing fee.

IF I AM UNSUCCESSFUL IN MY CREDENTIALING APPLICATION BUT AM STILL EMPLOYED WITH A JOB TITLE AS AN ANP WILL THE RCN STILL PROVIDE INDEMNITY FOR ME?

Please refer to the RCN website regarding indemnity:
www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/indemnity-scheme

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT ME TO DEVELOP AS AN ADVANCED LEVEL NURSE?

The RCN website has useful publications to support nursing innovation and advanced practice. The RCN ANP Forum is a useful group to join.



Appendix eight: Letter of verification to higher education institution

Name of applicant:

University where programme was undertaken:

Programme title:

Year of completion:

Information provider and designation:

Dear Colleague,

You will have received this document because a nurse who has studied an MSc/BSc/PGDip programme in the past at your higher education institution (HEI) wishes to use the achievement of this qualification as part of the evidence submitted in the RCN Advanced Level Nursing Practice credentialing process.

This document has been developed to assist ANPs and HEIs to evidence that the content of the programme which the nurse undertook is appropriate to be used in the RCN advanced practice credentialing process.

The document has been produced in the knowledge that some of these programmes were developed and took place up to 20 years ago. Some of the programmes no longer exist and there may not be existing documentation remaining in the institution. We therefore ask that the HEI identify the most appropriate person to answer these questions. We do not expect all the questions to be answered fully and the information provided will only assist the RCN in deciding whether the nurse's application for credentialing is valid. It will form part of the assessment; other documentation will also be assessed.

The questions in this document are based on the four pillars of advanced practice which form the basis of RCN-accredited programmes. The four pillars are:

- clinical
- leadership/management
- education/ facilitation of learning
- research/evidence-based practice

Programmes may have contained all or only some of these elements – nurses may demonstrate that they have achieved these elements in other ways through their work. We only seek to establish how much of the programme is appropriate as part of the whole picture, which will include a job plan and clinical references. We also appreciate that without any documentation you may be answering from memory.

1. Was the Advanced Practice programme at master's level?

2. Did the programme use the RCN competences for advanced practice as a basis for development of the learning outcomes of the programme?

3. Clinical

Was the programme at least 50% clinical practice ?

Was there an assessed clinical placement/practice element to the course?

How was this evidenced/assessed?

Were students assessed by OSCE/some other method of objective clinical assessment (e.g. videoed consultations)?

4. Leadership/management

Did the programme include a leadership element?

How was this assessed?

5. Research/evidence-based practice

How was research/evidence-based practice demonstrated and assessed in the programme?

6. Teaching and learning

Was there a requirement for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in teaching and learning?

Any other useful information you can offer:

Declaration:

The information contained herein is true to the best of my knowledge

Signature:

Designation:

Date:





The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

RCN CREDENTIALING

www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing

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