RCN Professional Development Framework – Levels of Nursing

Enhanced Level Nursing

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Introduction

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has worked with our members, including RCN Forums and Fellows, to define the levels of nursing beyond the point of registration: enhanced, advanced and consultant level nursing.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) sets the standards of proficiency for the registered nurse (NMC, 2018). These standards represent the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that all nurses must have.

The NMC also sets the standards framework for nursing (and midwifery) education, to ensure that the standards of proficiency are met in practice (NMC, 2024).

Beyond the point of registration, the levels at which nurses work are evolving within all settings, including primary, secondary, and tertiary care, the independent sector and social care.

The RCN has developed definitions and standards for the enhanced, advanced and consultant levels of nursing to provide clarity for those aspiring to practice at these levels, as well as for employers and higher education institutions (HEIs).

Whilst consultant and advanced clinical practitioners have been recognised within nursing, previously they have not been defined clearly for all health care settings and nursing roles.

The new and updated definitions and standards will further clarify nursing levels and bring together country-specific frameworks. It is intended that through the use of a shared language, ambiguity can be removed, and the levels of practice can be recognised by service users and professionals.

The RCN is now working on bringing the same consistency of approach to defining supportive and assistive (or associate) roles within the nursing workforce.

Enhanced level nursing

The concept of an enhanced level of nursing is a relatively new one. It emerged in 2019, from modelling by Professor Alison Leary MBE (RCN Fellow) to ensure that the established experienced, registered health and social care workforce between registered and advanced level were recognised and valued (Leary, 2019). This acknowledges nurses' attainment and application of new knowledge and skills and reflection on experience to enable them to work on a day-to-day basis in a specific area with increasing levels of complexity and unpredictability and associated risk. The proportion of the nursing workforce working at this level is considerably larger than for those at advanced or consultant level.

To inform the RCN position on enhanced level nursing, available definitions using the term "enhanced" were collated and reviewed.

Professor Alison Leary MBE (RCN Fellow) and Health Education England (HEE) have led the work in this area (Leary, 2022). This has been used as the basis for a new publication by NHS Wales *Professional Framework for Enhanced, Advanced and Consultant Clinical Practice* (2023). In parallel, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education published a standard for an *Enhanced Clinical Practitioner* in 2021 which is now being offered across England. This takes a different approach by describing an occupation at a specific level, rather than focusing on the level. It is noted that NHS Employers has an explanation on its website to address increasing numbers of queries about this new term. Overall, all publications on this subject to date have a multiprofessional focus. Many professions are now defining enhanced level practice, for example *Education and Career Framework for the Radiography Workforce* (4th edition) (College of Radiographers, 2022). There is currently no nursing specific definition.

Other publications referring to the level between registered and advanced level were also appraised noting that there is currently variation in terminology to describe this level across the UK. Skills for Health (2020) refers to generic descriptors of Level 6 practice as part of its career framework (while Level 7 describes advanced level and Level 8 describes consultant). NHS Education Scotland (2021) describes a generic Level 6 Senior practitioner in its *Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions (NMAHP) Development Framework.*

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the level for nurses between registered and advanced is currently described as "specialist" (DHSSPS/NIPEC, 2018; CNOD Scottish Government, 2021). However a report commissioned by the Department of Health Northern Ireland has recently recommended that their position is reviewed (DH Northern Ireland, 2023) . The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) published *Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses* and *Standards for Proficiency of Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications* in 2022 that apply as post-registration standards across the UK.

Use of the term “specialist” in nursing and allied health professions was debated at the Enhanced Practice Workforce modelling project for HEE, led by Alison Leary (2019), which included RCN representation and specialist professional groups. It was concluded that specialist knowledge and skills were applied at all levels, from supportive level through to consultant. For example, a nursing support worker can specialise in diabetes to support registered nurses in running a diabetes clinic, while an advanced nurse practitioner working in general practice could be considered a specialist in that area. The consensus of this project and the national modelling commissioned by HEE, was not to use “specialist” as a level of practice.

The RCN has confirmed this position, stating that “registered nurses work within specialties across all fields and levels within health and social care” (2023).

The following definition, standards and capabilities have been created through appraisal and synthesis of key content from pertinent publications by the four UK countries (HEE, 2020; Skills for Health, 2020; Department of Health Northern Ireland, 2020; NHS Education Scotland, 2021; College of Radiographers, 2022; NHS Wales, 2023) and integration of relevant academic descriptors for this level (SEEC, 2021; QAA, 2014; SCQF, 2022; Ofqual, 2023). An RCN Levels of Practice Workstream group further developed the content for generic application across all contexts in which nurses work.

Appendix I provides key supporting background information taken from current RCN policy and relevant publications by the four countries of the UK.

Advanced Level of Nursing definition: https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/levels-of-nursing/advanced

Consultant Level of Nursing definition: https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/levels-of-nursing/consultant

RCN POSITION: Enhanced level registered nurses

The RCN strongly supports the on-going development of enhanced level registered nurses across all areas related to health and social care.

Enhanced level nursing can be a steppingstone to working at an advanced level, however for many registered nurses it will be a career destination in its own right, where they want to stay, forming a vital part of the workforce.

Much of the focus of work to introduce this level into organisations has been for clinical roles. However, the RCN has recognised that the concept of enhanced level can and should be applied across all contexts in which registered nurses work, including leaders, managers, educators, and researchers, to ensure that all are valued and their ultimate impact on the quality of patient care is acknowledged.

In all contexts, the *Principles of Nursing* (RCN, 2023) and *Standards of Proficiency for Registered Nurses* (NMC, 2018) are the professional foundation of enhanced level nursing.

To support this level of practice for nursing, the RCN has produced a definition and core standards that differentiate registered nurses working at this level. These are intended to inform and support all activities related to this subject.

Definition

Enhanced level nursing describes a level which can only be delivered by registered nurses who have gained additional post-registration education* and experiential learning** in a relevant subject area. This level can be applied to the full range of registered nurse careers. The enhanced level is differentiated from other levels by a registered nurse's expertise*** in applying specific knowledge and skills to a designated area, be it a client group, a skill set or in an organisational context. Registered nurses working at an enhanced level can manage discrete activities in complex, challenging and changing situations and environments, seeking further guidance when they reach the boundaries of their competence. This level is underpinned by a broad foundation of skills and capabilities across all four pillars of nursing, namely clinical practice, education, research, and leadership. These together with critical reflection, enable an enhanced level registered nurse to function to a high level of autonomy**** within their designated area and context of employment.

***Post-registration education** – this will be at Level 6 and/or Level 7 (SCQF equivalent Level 10/9 and Level 11 respectively). No volume of credit has been specified; however, this is likely to comprise of stand-alone modules and/or postgraduate awards such as a Postgraduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Diploma in relevant subject areas to enable the registered nurse to be able to demonstrate the core standards and capabilities listed in this document. A nurse wanting to achieve this level could use the content of this publication to map their existing learning to the criteria and then seek opportunities to address any gaps as part of their own Personal Development Plan and CPPD activities.

SEEC Descriptors – Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education (2021) Level 6 and Level 7 SEEC-Credit-Level-Descriptors-2021.pdf

These can assist with identifying the level of learning derived from the higher education and workplace (formal/informal, employed, or voluntary) as part of formal work-based or work-integrated learning programmes. Assessment is normally derived from evidence of learning generated through a range of strategies and the SEEC credit level descriptors can inform judgements about the level of learning achievement demonstrated.

Level 6 and Level 7 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland is explained by the Quality Assurance Agency QAA The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (qaa.ac.uk)

The equivalents in Scotland are defined as Level 10/9 and Level 11 in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Home | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (scqf.org.uk)

****Experiential learning** describes an engaged learning process whereby people "learn by doing" and by reflecting on the experience. This term is used here to emphasise the fact that a Registered Nurse cannot progress to an enhanced level as described in this definition and core standards, based purely on knowledge and skills acquired through education. Similarly meaningful learning from experience does not take place automatically according to the time served as a registered nurse (Rolfe et al., 2001). Rather, development of the expected level of expertise will require **critical reflection** incorporating testing, integration and refinement of theoretical and practical knowledge, skills, and behaviours in real-life situations, including those with that are less familiar, complicated, complex, unpredictable, challenging, and high risk (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1980). While Dreyfus and Dreyfus developed this perspective within the field of Social Work, Benner researched and verified its application to nursing in her seminal work (Benner, 1984). From this she concluded that through relevant experience, the key nursing attributes can be developed along the Novice to Expert continuum such as appreciation of the whole situation, the capability to establish priorities within this, and mastery from establishment of a comprehensive knowledge or skill in a particular subject or activity (Benner, 1984). Choperena et al., (2019) have echoed the importance of looking back to past experiences, creating space for dialogue, and bringing the worlds of theory and practice

closer together, promoting nursing narratives as an effective vehicle to support this activity. In addition, please refer to the RCN resources on Clinical Supervision. RCN position on clinical supervision | Royal College of Nursing

***Expertise – can be defined as a hybrid of practical and theoretical knowledge which develops when a nurse tests and refines both aspects in actual situations to influence nurses' judgement (Benner, 1984; McHugh and Lake, 2010). Knowledge and skills employed by the expert reflect a thorough understanding of the work context and situations that arise. Conversely, understanding practice shapes and organises knowledge (Hutchinson et al., 2016).

Benner's seminal research (1984) identified five possible expertise levels: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert building on the continuum proposed by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1981). Expert nurses recognise unexpected outcomes and can alert others to potential problems before they occur. Experts have an intuitive grasp of whole situations and can accurately identify the root of a problem and respond without wasteful consideration of ineffective possibilities. Because of their superior performance, expert nurses are often consulted by others and relied upon to be supervisors and mentors. A feature of expertise is the capacity to recognise subtle features of context and adapt accordingly.

A critical analysis of this concept for nursing by Hutchinson et al., (2016) suggested that the conditions required for development of expertise were time, experience and theory/knowledge and a conducive environment which facilitates perception and sensitivity to the reality, develops speed of reasoning and provides opportunities for complex performance.

****Autonomy – this word is widely used as a defining characteristic of a profession (Friedson, 1970) and it is notable that with the professionalisation of nursing in the 1980s the importance of their ability to demonstrate autonomous practice has featured widely in the literature, nursing policy and regulatory standards (Skar, 2010). The dictionary defines autonomy as "The right or state of self-government, freedom to determine one's own actions, behaviours etc". Laperriere (2008) added to this saying autonomy is not only freedom for action but also freedom for thought.

However, autonomy is a highly debated concept with arguments that no clinicians including consultant level doctors can truly work autonomously in a health and social care environment where clinical governance, evidence-based practice standards, ethical frameworks, organisational structures and management systems, and external quality assurance, regulatory, legislative and budgetary controls prevent true freedom to practice and self-governance. In addition, the shared decision-making model has challenged the power dynamic implied by the clinician's autonomy to acknowledge the importance of the patients own autonomy (Entwistle et al., 2010). Clearly at its extreme there is a

fine line between freedom to practice autonomously and total freedom of action, which can lead to unsafe, maverick practitioners.

Writers such as Cassidy and McIntosh (2014) have described a middle-ground where nurses autonomy can be expressed within conditions determined by their scope of practice and the set-up in which they work. Friedson (1994) called this the "zone of discretion" where the individual deploys their autonomy as micro-level power to utilise their knowledge and skills for making decisions and to enact their responsibilities in the complex context of health and social care. It would be impractical and highly inefficient for registered nurses to rely on others to sanction every decision and action that they take. Therefore, having the opportunity to utilise autonomy to the full within parameters set by the scope of practice, the organisation, their employment, professional code, and legislation amongst others, is key.

It is within this context that the word autonomy is used here.

Core standards for enhanced level nursing

The knowledge base and skills for this level of nursing is influenced by the context in which individuals practice but all registered nurses at an enhanced level will demonstrate the capability to:

- take full responsibility for and utilise their freedom to act within their scope of practice with commitment to, and evidence of, operating across all four pillars of enhanced practice.
- critical understanding of the professional, ethical, and legal implications with their greater level of responsibility and autonomy when working at an enhanced level, including the importance of working within the limits of their own competence
- apply a systematic understanding of current knowledge and enhanced skills and related issues in their specific area of work. This includes current and emerging technology. They will develop new skills and approaches in response to emerging knowledge and techniques.
- demonstrate the capability to see the overall picture, including short- and long-term implications, and how individual actions fit within it
- systematically apply problem-solving and decision-making skills to increasingly complex issues, individually and within a team, utilising a range of sources of information. This utilises their ability to interpret, analyse, synthesise, and infer.
- communicate complex issues clearly and effectively to a range of stakeholders.
- demonstrate vigilance by continually monitoring and assessing situations, actions, and behaviours, and acting to maintain safety and minimise risk, using judgement in deferring major decision making to those with greater expertise in complex, unpredictable situations.
- work in a collaborative, compassionate way, promoting equality, respecting diversity, and ensuring inclusivity, taking responsibility for challenging behaviour that does not align with these values.
- use reflection in action and on action and the expertise of colleagues to develop own practice to function in complicated, unpredictable, and complex environments.
- develop reflexivity by recognising how their own actions, thoughts, feelings and values effect other people and situations.

All enhanced level registered nurses will demonstrate the capabilities listed under the following four pillars.

Clinical pillar

- Maintain and apply their nursing knowledge to a range of contexts.
- Utilise an understanding of the health and care policy, systems and structures, implications of changing population needs and the political, social, economic, legal, technical, and professional context of healthcare and respond to issues that they encounter.
- Apply knowledge and skills to a range of professionally challenging situations, within the team. This includes analysis of complex problems enabling creation of innovative solutions to improve outcomes.
- Act as a resource in their area of professional practice.
- Provide direct advice to individuals and the team within their area.
- Support patient and public involvement to enhance patient care and service delivery.
- Work, directly or indirectly, to improve the quality of services and care provided for people and/or populations.
- Contribute to the understanding of the impact of practice on global and/or planetary health by promoting and adopting environmental-friendly and sustainable approaches.
- Be proficient in use of digital technologies applicable in the workplace.
- Systematically applies an advanced awareness of professional and ethical values and NMC Code of Conduct to personal and strategic decisions, actions, responsibilities, outcomes, and dilemmas, whilst working with others to suggest appropriate solutions in unpredictably complex contexts.
- Advocate for people and nursing.

- Role model this level of nursing and nursing professionalism to people across the organisation.

Education pillar

- Identify their own personal development needs, proactively seek feedback, and take effective action to address them using a mix of strategies.
- Share knowledge, experience and expertise with nurses and others at all levels, through strategies such as formal and informal teaching, facilitated reflective practice, skills supervision, coaching, mentoring and preceptorship.
- Provides constructive feedback and opportunities such as peer review, to guide, support, motivate and develop others in the team.
- Act as a role model for this level of nursing.
- Assess learning needs and deploy a range of teaching and learning strategies and resources, to support the development of people.
- Evaluate the outcomes of teaching and learning activities and learner experience and adapt approaches accordingly.
- Design and develop projects and/or activities to enhance others learning, work or practice within complex contexts.
- Advocate for learning and development of the workforce, with effective succession planning.
- Participate in the supervision, evaluation and assessment of nurses aspiring to work at an enhanced level.

Research pillar

- Deliver and support others to deliver research-informed practice.
- Undertake activities that monitor and improve the effectiveness, impact, and value of their own and others work.
- Use a wide range of contemporary high-quality data, research, evidence-based professional practice, and valid and reliable tools and techniques, to proactively evaluate and sustainably improve current ways of working.
- Critically appraise the information from a variety of sources such as outcomes of relevant research, quality improvement projects, evaluations, and audits.
- Use a wide range of contemporary high-quality research, evidence-based valid and reliable tools, and techniques, to sustainably improve current ways of working.
- Participate in knowledge mobilisation and dissemination of research findings.
- Source advice on research governance processes to ensure compliance.

- Identify gaps in evidence and inform relevant parties.
- Participate in research when opportunities present themselves.

Leadership pillar

- Demonstrate individual leadership via self-awareness of the approaches taken to collaborating with others and aligning colleagues in collective work.
- Display self-leadership by managing own workload and competing demands.
- Make challenging decisions, seeking guidance where appropriate, and taking responsibility for outcomes.
- Demonstrate tactical leadership by working with a broad range of people and stakeholders in the direct and immediate work.
- Reflect on and contribute to improving ways of working and supporting a culture of safety.
- Use negotiating and influencing skills to facilitate efficient ways of working and optimise outcomes within their own area.
- Foster collaborative, productive relationships with colleagues in the wider team and other key stakeholders to optimise organisational provision and outcomes for the benefit of people and/or populations.
- Demonstrate operational leadership including leading individuals, teams and/or different groups, they may or may not manage. Might include operational management on day-to-day basis for their area.
- Systematically synthesise information and ideas and formulate and develop proposals to address issues or utilise opportunities in complex contexts.
- Support innovation and service development utilising evidence-based approaches to optimise effective, sustainable change.
- Participate in local networks and respond to local, regional and national initiatives within their subject area.
- Work within current evidence-based policies, processes, standards, and governance systems, alerting others when revisions are needed to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
- Work across professional and service boundaries.
- Be cognisant of factors that aspects that impact on productivity and cost effectiveness within their area.
- Facilitate development of leadership skills in others within their own area.

Additional capabilities to those in the four pillars

Registered nurses who primarily provide direct-patient care at an enhanced level may demonstrate additional capability to:

- Manage part of an episode of care or a caseload within a dedicated clinical pathway. This may include management of a service or ward.
- Recognise potential signs, symptoms and indicators of ill health and act and refer on in a timely, effective manner.
- Apply underpinning nursing and area-specific knowledge, skills, and behaviours to provide safe, effective assessment and care, including recognition of the causes, signs, symptoms, demographic variables, impact of physical and mental health conditions with their scope of practice and relevant pathophysiology, pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics.
- Source and operate in accordance with the current high-quality evidence-based resources and local and national guidelines where these exist.
- Utilise skilled therapeutic, holistic, person-centred nursing care which recognises the importance of seeing the whole person.
- Use a range of assessment methods, potentially including:
    - nursing assessment using an appropriate model and approach
    - comprehensive holistic history taking
    - physical examination
    - mental health assessment
    - identification of risk factors and early signs of disease
    - evaluation of existing clinical conditions
    - requesting, undertaking, interpreting diagnostic tests and investigations.
- Apply clinical reasoning to individual presentations and complex situations, utilising information from different sources to make timely, appropriate, and evidence-based judgements.
- Optimise safety through assessment and management of risk.
- Work in partnership the nursing team and multidisciplinary team and with individuals, families, and carers, to make clinical decisions.
- Initiate, administer, monitor, evaluate and modify a range of evidence-based therapeutic interventions within their area of practice including treatments, therapies, and care. This may include prescribing dependent on the scope of practice.
- Monitor health outcomes and act accordingly and/or alert others in a timely manner.
- Coordinate care within their area of practice to optimise patient outcomes and the patient, family, and carers experience.
- Work across teams and professions.
- Educate a patient and their families/carers using strategies that optimise their understanding of their condition and short- and longer- term management options and/or support the multidisciplinary team to do so.

- Involve patients, families, and carers in co-production of and making informed decisions regarding strategies to manage their own health and wellbeing.
- Utilise opportunities for health promotion and health education, being cognisant of a patient's current health status, motivation, health beliefs, developmental stage, literacy, and capacity.
- Refer appropriately to other services as part of a patient care plan.
- Where appropriate, support patients, families, and carers to understand the plan for ongoing care or rehabilitation.
- Advocate for patients, families and carers, colleagues, and services.
- Delegates work with other members of the nursing and multidisciplinary team and take accountability for the delegated activity.
- Participate in development and updating of practice protocols/guidelines and procedures using high-quality contemporary evidence-based resources.
- Participate in evaluation of significant events, capturing the learning from these experiences to improve patient care and service delivery.
- Seeks and applies emerging high-quality clinical evidence-based resources and technology, such as genomics, to underpin and inform decisions made about care and treatment.
- Critical understanding of their greater level of responsibility and autonomy, such as professional, ethical, and legal implications, when working at an advanced level, including awareness of the limits of their own competence.
- Can critically appraise when to defer or refer appropriately to experts and seniors, when decisions or actions are beyond their limits of competence and/or agreed scope of practice.

Appendix I: Supporting background information

The following summarises key current publications that were used to inform this paper and to support RCN decision making related to the Levels of Practice workstream and in creating associated documents.

Prevision RCN position

The RCN has not previously published a definition of enhanced level nursing practice, however, this term was referred to as a level of practice within the *Career Pathway and Education Framework for Cancer Care* (RCN, 2022).

Other related publications

Leary A (HEE funded) (2022) *Enhanced Level Practice*

Enhanced practice | Health Education England (hee.nhs.uk)

Enhanced practice is a level of practice evident in the healthcare workforce. It is delivered by experienced often registered professionals (first level statutory regulation or a managed voluntary registration) who do complex work and manage day-to-day risk, including risks on behalf of, or with patients.

Enhanced practice workers have many job titles and roles across many different professions. The tend to have undertaken post registration education relevant to their area of practice and role. They usually work as part of a multidisciplinary team and apply their skills, education, and experience to substantially contribute to episodes of care. Although they work across different settings or spheres of practice, they will often have a skillset and depth of knowledge related to their individual specific sphere of practice where it intersects with professional knowledge. They occupy a space before advanced practice in terms of the management of complexity and uncertainty. Enhanced practice is a level of practice beyond being competent. On the continuum of novice to expert (Dreyfus, 1981) enhanced practice would be more aligned to being proficient than being competent.

Although enhanced practice can be a route to advanced practice, it is also a legitimate career destination that contributes much to patient care, quality, safety, and efficiency.

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (2021) *Enhanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship standard.*

instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/enhanced-clinical-practitioner-v1-1

Enhanced clinical practitioners are qualified health and social care professionals who are working at an enhanced level of practice with specific knowledge and skills in a field of expertise. They manage a discrete aspect of a patient's care within their current level of practice, which will be particular to a specific context, be it a client group, a skill set or an organisational context. This is in contrast to advanced clinical practitioners who have developed their knowledge and skills to an advanced level of practice and would manage the whole episode of a patient's clinical care, from the time they first present, through to the end of the episode.

Enhanced clinical practitioners deliver complex clinical care in the context of continual change, challenging environments, different models of care delivery, innovation and rapidly evolving technologies using critical analysis and their underpinning knowledge to manage complex interventions. They teach and advise patients and their families/carers on how to manage their condition or support the multi-disciplinary team to do so. They participate in clinical audits and research projects and implement changes as required, including the development and updating of practice protocols/guidelines and procedures. They will work within national and local protocols where these exist. They continuously update their knowledge and enhance their clinical practice and provide support, mentoring and supervision of others. They recognise and work within the boundaries of their practice, knowing when and who to refer patients to. They may delegate work to other members of the multidisciplinary team and take accountability for the delegated activity.

NHS Employers – on website – article published August 2022

nhsemployers.org/articles/advanced-practice-and-enhanced-practice

Enhanced practice is a level of practice healthcare professionals can attain and is used to describe the practice of highly experienced, knowledgeable healthcare professionals. It can be the level of practice before advanced practice or a level practice in which people may choose to stay. Those working at an enhanced level of practice can work as part of a multi-disciplinary team across a wide range of health and care settings, including hospitals, community, primary care, social care, general practice, and dentistry and as with advanced practice come from all multi-professional backgrounds.

Practitioners working at an enhanced level of practice must make complex decisions using specific knowledge and skills in a field of expertise. They manage discrete aspects of a patient's care in their current level of practice,

which will be particular to a specific context. This contrasts with advanced practitioners who have developed their knowledge and skills to an advanced level of practice and would manage the whole episode of a patient's clinical care, from the time they first present, through to the end of the episode.

NHS Wales (2023) *Professional Framework for Enhanced, Advanced and Consultant Clinical Practice*, Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW)

heiw.nhs.wales/workforce/workforce-development/professional-framework-for-enhanced-advanced-and-consultant-clinical-practice

Career framework level descriptors for enhanced practice.

- Demonstrates an enhanced knowledge base, complex decision-making skills, clinical competence, and judgement in their area of specialist practice.
- Will exercise broad autonomy and judgement in their specialist area.
- Is able to use research and develop evidence to inform their practice.
- Is able to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information.
- Will initiate and lead tasks and processes, taking responsibility, where relevant, for the work and roles of others.
- Has a critical understanding of theoretical and practical knowledge.
- Will be working at CQFW level 6.

Generic definitions of Level 6 practice

NHS Education Scotland (2021) *Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions (NMAHP) Development Framework*

nmahpdevelopmentframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk

Level 6 - senior practitioner

People at level 6 require a critical understanding of detailed theoretical and practical knowledge within and/or their field and/or have management or leadership responsibilities. They demonstrate initiative and are creative in finding solutions to problems. They have some responsibility for team performance and service development, and they consistently undertake self-development.

This definition is in the *Framework by Key Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours* listed under Four Pillars of Practice: Clinical Practice, Facilitating Learning, Leadership and Evidence, Research and Development.

Skills for Health (2020) *Career Framework* (Version 2)

skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Career_framework_key_elements-1.pdf

People at level 6 require a critical understanding of detailed theoretical and practical knowledge, are specialist and/or have management and leadership responsibilities. They demonstrate initiative and are creative in finding solutions to problems. They have some responsibility for team performance and service development, and they consistently undertake self-development.

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Advanced Level of Nursing definition: rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/RCN-Levels-of-Practice/Advanced

Consultant Level of Nursing definition: rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/RCN-Levels-of-Practice/Consultant

Publication code: 011 129

May2024 | Review date: May 2026