

Advanced Level Nursing Practice

## Section 3: RCN accreditation and credentialing

RCN Standards for advanced level nursing practice,  
advanced nurse practitioners, RCN accreditation and  
RCN credentialing

CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE



A word cloud graphic on a dark background. The words are in various colors (orange, purple, pink, red) and orientations. The words include: nurse, treatment, advanced, innovation, authority, assessment, making, counselling, clinical, experienced, responsibility, prescribing, diagnosis, referral, highly, professional, leadership, holistic, educated, ANP, practice, skills, and accountability.



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# Introduction

This document sets out the standards which higher education institutions must meet for their advanced level nursing practice educational programmes to be eligible for RCN Accreditation. It also sets out the RCN Credentialing framework.

**Accreditation** is a way of recognising a particular course of study or institution providing the programme.

**Credentialing** is a way of recognising an individual nurse's ability to practice at an advanced level.

Each is discussed below along with the standards for RCN accreditation of advanced nursing practice educational programmes.

This document, Section 3 on advanced nursing practice forms part of a larger RCN resource. Further detail, including the standards can be found at [www.rcn.org.uk/ANP](http://www.rcn.org.uk/ANP)

# Part 1: RCN Standards for the credential of advanced level nursing practice (RCN ALNP)

The RCN has a credentialing process to recognise a nurse's ability to practice at an advanced level. Credentialing is an opportunity for nurses to have their knowledge and skills formally recognised and show their expertise and skill in their clinical practice, their leadership, their education and their research. Credentialing enables nurses to enhance and develop their career prospects and to continue their personal and professional development. Credentialing provides formal recognition for each nurse, their colleagues, employers and most crucially patients and the public, of the level of expertise and skill of the individual advanced level nurse.

In order to gain the credential, nurses must provide evidence they work to the four pillars of advanced practice.

The criteria for the RCN credential are:

- qualifications
- experience
- competence
- active registration with the NMC
- relevant master's degree qualification
- non-medical prescribing rights
- experience and expertise mapped against the four pillars of advanced nursing: clinical practice, leadership, education and research
- 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.

Until December 2020, there will be transitional arrangements in place so that any nurses who don't currently meet the criteria for credentialing who are undertaking advanced level practice, can apply for the credential on submission of a

portfolio of evidence demonstrating that the RCN criteria for advanced level nursing are met.

Applications are assessed and moderated. Successful applicants are entered in an online directory. In addition, they will receive a certificate and a badge to acknowledge their achievement.

The credential is renewable every three years on submission of a fee, updated work plan, evidence of CPD and a clinical reference from the employer.

RCN advanced level nurses will enjoy access to additional development and practice discussions, debates and events and participate in development work for the continuation of credentialing for other nurses on the career pathway.

For further information please see [www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing](http://www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing)

For any queries about eligibility, please email [credentialing@rcn.org.uk](mailto:credentialing@rcn.org.uk)

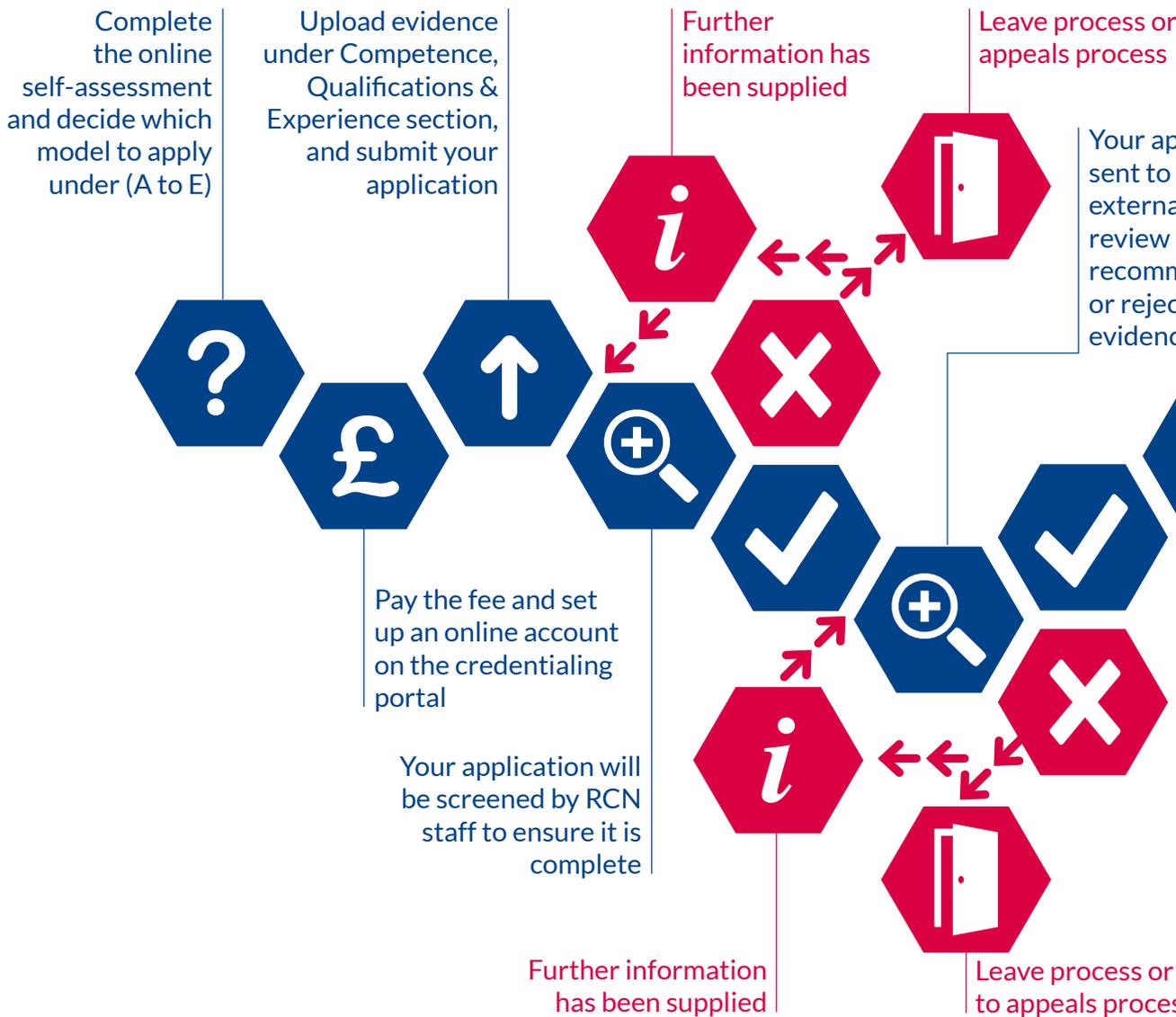
Applications are through [www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing](http://www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing) or to register an interest, provide any feedback on credentialing and apply to become a credentialing assessor.



# RCN Credentialing

Recognising advanced  
level nursing practice

## A step by step guide



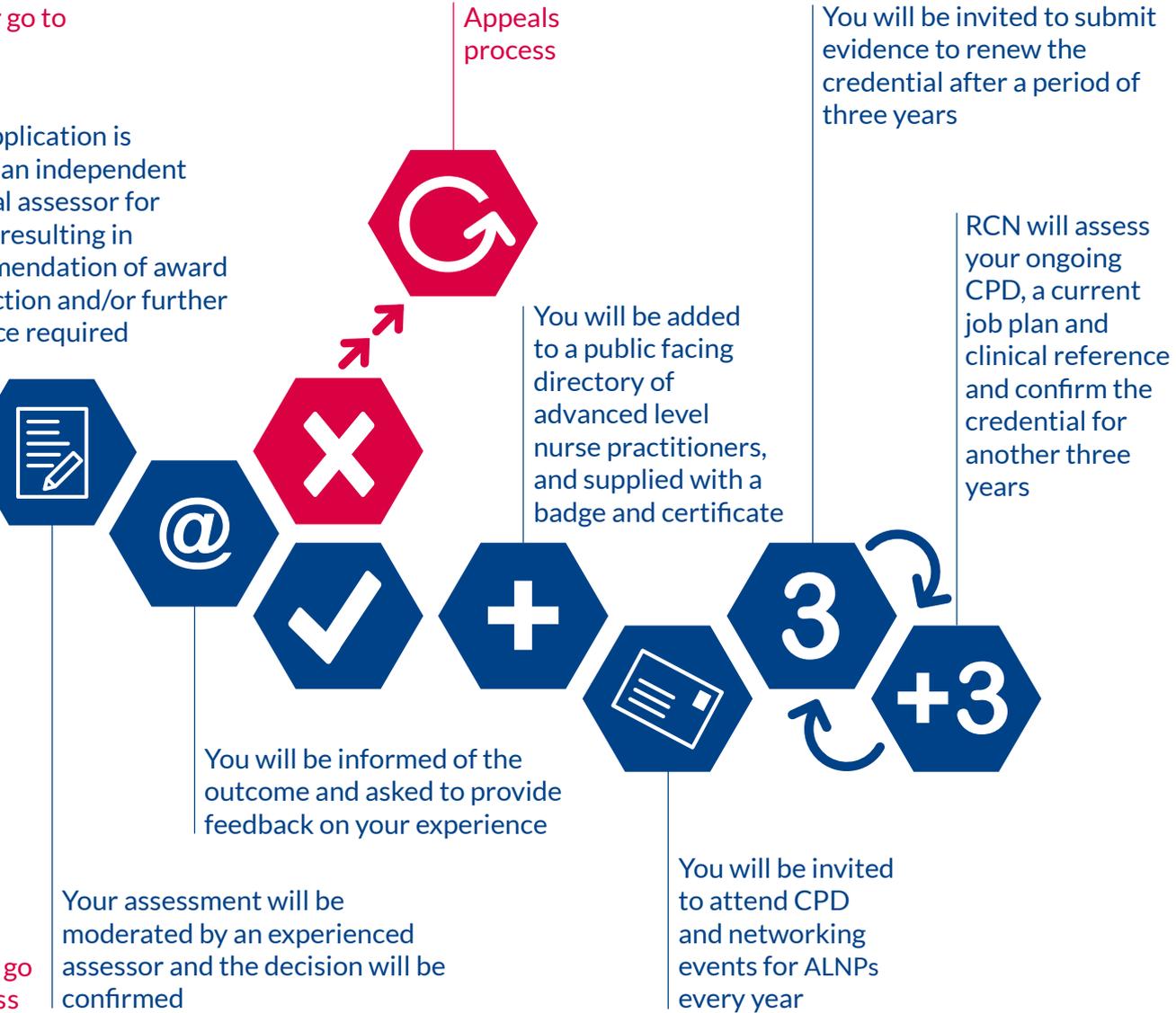
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Royal College of Nursing

# Guide to RCN Credentialing



RCN

Professional Services

# Part 2: RCN Accreditation Standards

## Standards for RCN accreditation of advanced nursing practice educational programmes

This section sets out the standards and criteria which collaborating higher education institutions (HEIs) must demonstrate in order to be eligible for RCN accreditation. The HEI must meet the Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice (2010) to demonstrate the organisation-wide quality assurance framework is open to scrutiny.

In this section there are details of the programme standards against which HEI advanced practice programmes can be accredited by the RCN. A programme in an HEI has to undergo validation before it can be offered to students. This academic and administrative process assures that a programme is fit for award at the level at which it is offered. The learning experience is also measured to see if it is similarly appropriate.

RCN accreditation often takes place alongside validation to judge if the competences are both taught and assessed – and also to see if the programme meets the RCN's 15 Quality Assurance standards. This ensures the programme is fit for purpose and practice. Once a programme has been accredited it can be advertised as RCN accredited.

Nurses who successfully complete an RCN accredited programme are eligible to receive an RCN certificate to say that have successfully completed an RCN accredited programme.

Nurses who successfully graduate with a full master's degree from an RCN accredited university will also automatically gain the RCN Credential Advanced Level Nursing Practice for free, for a period of three years, after which they will need to pay to renew their credential.

### Benefits of RCN accreditation

- Fills the gap that a lack of a regulatory framework for advanced practice leaves.
- Emphasises the importance and value of advanced nursing practice.

- Provides a strong benchmarking and quality assurance framework.
- Promotes a uniformity among advanced practice programmes.
- Support for developing and monitoring advanced practice programmes.
- Supports the marketing of RCN accredited programmes to stakeholders.
- Individual students value attending an RCN Accredited programme and also automatic RCN Credential.
- Promotes the importance of advanced nursing practice to the nursing profession.
- Employers value it.
- All RCN accredited programmes are delivering to the same standard and quality across the UK.
- Supports the credentialing framework.

RCN accreditation is available to HEI's providing advanced practitioner education, and under this model, their students will be graduates of an RCN accredited advanced practitioner programme. The RCN recognises the multi-professional nature of advanced practitioner education and are supportive of applicants developing a multi-professional programme as long as this meets our criteria and has nurses enrolled on the programme.

### Standards and criteria

There are 15 Quality Assurance standards and associated criteria to be met in order for an advanced nurse practitioner educational programme to be eligible for RCN accreditation. These have been reviewed in line with the RCN Quality Assurance Criteria in 2017.

These standards relate to:

- the higher education institution
- research and development
- meeting workforce requirements

- curriculum
- physical and learning resources
- recruitment and admission
- programme management
- leadership of the advanced nurse practitioner programme
- staff resources
- staff development
- student support
- practice experience
- assessment
- external examiners
- fitness for award.

The criteria for meeting each standard is set out in the following table, along with suggested evidence that HEIs applying for RCN accreditation can provide to show that they meet the standards.

# RCN quality assurance standards and criteria

## 1. The higher education institution:

**The policies and practices of the higher education institution (HEI) meet the RCN's requirement for the preparation of advanced practitioners**

	Criteria	Evidence
1.1	The HEI has a vision for nursing compatible with the RCN Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HEI mission statement and/or philosophy</li> </ul>
1.2	The HEI is committed to equal opportunities for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HEI equal opportunities statement related to this programme and other programmes offered</li> </ul>
1.3	The HEI is committed to providing programmes that enable students to meet current health care needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>programme documentation reflects nature of practice as described by the RCN's guidance on Advanced Practice</li> </ul>
1.4	The HEI has an organisation-wide quality assurance framework that is open to scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality assurance framework documentation</li> <li>outcomes of quality audit</li> </ul>
1.5	Mechanisms are in place to enable the HEI to exercise accountability for the quality of any satellite programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>annual monitoring reports covering satellite programmes</li> <li>outcomes of evaluation of satellite programmes</li> </ul>
1.6	The HEI has policies in place to ensure that the confidentiality and dignity of the clients of students are preserved during the learning and assessment activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>procedures for the supervision of practice for students, which include ethical aspects</li> </ul>
1.7	The HEI recognises the rights and obligations of students and has mechanisms to ensure they are upheld, such as a student charter and transparent appeal processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>written statement on rights and obligations of students</li> <li>overview of mechanisms to ensure that they are upheld</li> <li>examples of student feedback</li> </ul>

## 2. Research and development:

**The research and development of the higher education institution includes the development of professional knowledge, education and practice of advanced practitioners**

	Criteria	Evidence
2.1	The HEI has a research and development (R&D) strategy which reflects local and national health care priorities, and relates to ANPs advanced nursing practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in R&amp;D strategy</li> </ul>
2.2	The HEI's R&D strategy is indicative of an inter-professional and an inter-disciplinary approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in R&amp;D strategy</li> </ul>
2.3	The HEI's R&D activity informs curriculum development and staff contributions to programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>research and practice development activity of course team informs programmes</li> </ul>
2.4	Resources support advanced nursing practice research and/or scholarly activity. This includes locally determined, specially allocated paid-time for all lecturers (both part time and full time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of faculty/department resources</li> <li>overview of course team's research and scholarly activity (eg, including research for higher degrees, projects and published articles)</li> </ul>

### 3. Meeting workforce requirements:

**The higher education institution works pro-actively with education purchasers, workforce planners and employers to develop programmes to meet workforce requirements**

	Criteria	Evidence
3.1	Collaboration and partnership support practice-focused education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>summary of collaborative and partnership arrangements with health care organisations and individuals in practice settings (formal and informal)</li> </ul>
3.2	National and local workforce-related policies inform programme delivery and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of liaison with stakeholders</li> <li>employer's representation on appropriate committees</li> </ul>
3.3	Mechanisms are in place to ensure that the employer's perspective informs curriculum review and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employer's representation within curriculum development activities</li> <li>evaluation of programme includes employer feedback</li> </ul>
3.4	Evaluation strategies are in place to assess the impact of the programme on graduates' employment and practice, within one year of completing the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>results of evaluation</li> <li>conclusions inform annual monitoring report and associated action plan</li> </ul>

### 4. Curriculum:

**Curriculum design and development reflect contemporary educational approaches and health care practices, and current national standards for advanced practitioners**

	Criteria	Evidence
4.1	The course team includes lecturers who are qualified advanced nurse practitioners and who maintain ongoing links with clinical nursing practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CVs of course team</li> </ul>
4.2	The course team have ongoing input into the development, evaluation and revision of the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence of how this is achieved</li> </ul>
4.3	The programme is based on a ratio of 50% theory and 50% practice, with strategies for integration of theory into practice evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.4	All programmes have a system of credit accumulation and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.5	Part-time programmes are no shorter than two years and no more than five years duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.6	Teaching/learning approaches reflect a patient-focused and student-centred approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> <li>examples of how this is achieved within the programme</li> </ul>
4.7	Learning opportunities reflect the principles of adult learning and contemporary health care provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>

4.8	The curriculum supports the student to achieve full 'Masters level' in line with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Masters Degree Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.9	The programme outcomes are explicitly mapped against the country-specific, and regional where applicable, competences for advanced practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mapping of programme outcomes against the country-specific, and regional where applicable, competences</li> </ul>
4.10	Mapping is provided to demonstrate that all of the programme's learning outcomes are taught, developed and assessed during the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mapping to demonstrate where the programme learning outcomes are taught, developed and assessed within the programme</li> </ul>
4.11	<p>Programmes includes the development of students in all four pillars of advanced practice: clinical; education; research; leadership and management.</p> <p>Minimum content for the clinical element includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>therapeutic nursing care</li> <li>comprehensive physical assessment of all body systems across the life-span</li> <li>assessing differential diagnosis</li> <li>health and disease, including physical</li> <li>sociological, psychological, cultural aspects</li> <li>history-taking and clinical decision-making skills/clinical reasoning</li> <li>applied pharmacology and evidence-based prescribing decisions</li> <li>management of patient care</li> <li>public health and health promotion</li> <li>research understanding and application</li> <li>evidence-based practice</li> <li>organisational, interpersonal, therapeutic and communication skills</li> <li>accountability – including legal and ethical issues</li> <li>quality assurance strategies and processes</li> <li>political, social and economic issues</li> <li>leadership and management skills</li> <li>educator and assessor skills</li> <li>advanced change management skills</li> <li>leading innovation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.12	The programme is modularised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.13	Logical sequencing of units within the programme is evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.14	Blended learning opportunities are integral and are informed by the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
4.15	The curriculum explicitly promotes safe and effective advanced nursing and clinical practice as an outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>programme documentation with additional commentary to make this explicit</li> </ul>
4.16	Knowledge and skills development to support the establishment of role identity, is integrated throughout the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>programme documentation with additional commentary to make this explicit</li> </ul>
4.17	Opportunities for inter-professional learning are provided, where appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>

4.18	Strategies are in place to ensure that the advanced practice curriculum is responsive to changes including demographics, technology, health care systems, globalisation and evolving health care/societal issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>programme documentation with additional commentary to make this explicit</li> </ul>
4.19	Advanced practice curriculum evaluation occurs annually as part of the annual monitoring cycle, which includes the patient and employer perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of quality assurance systems for the programme</li> <li>examples of annual monitoring reports and action plans</li> </ul>
4.20	Systems/structures are in place to ensure programme team responds to feedback and programme evaluation findings and the needs of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of process for evaluation and obtaining feedback</li> <li>examples of feedback and associated action plan</li> </ul>
4.21	The programme is formally reviewed/undergoes re-validation every five years, or within this time frame if necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> <li>evidence of review process and outcomes</li> </ul>
4.22	The programme undergoes an annual quality monitoring review during the period of accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme documentation</li> <li>evidence of review process and outcomes</li> </ul>

## 5. Physical and learning resources:

**Physical and learning resources support teaching and learning activities in the higher education institution setting or equivalent for the achievement of advanced practitioner educational programme outcomes**

	Criteria	Evidence
5.1	Physical and learning resources are secured for each programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the library has sufficient literature and computer facilities appropriate for education and practice with sufficient relevant on-line journals</li> <li>the skills laboratory (or equivalent) with appropriate equipment for health assessment and development of other skills (eg, recording equipment for consultation analysis).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of physical and learning resources that support the programme</li> </ul>
5.2	Students and everyone who contributes to the programme (including part-time staff) are provided with information and can access the resources available to support the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new staff orientation programme</li> <li>overview of how this is achieved</li> </ul>
5.3	Any collaborative and/or flexible distributed learning (FDL) arrangements are fully resourced in accordance with the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of learning resources that support the programme</li> </ul>
5.4	Where distance learning (DL) is used to support student learning, reliable secure systems for DL provision are provided, with appropriate contingency plans in place and in accordance with the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contingency plans for distance learning provision</li> </ul>

## 6. Recruitment and admission:

**Advanced practitioner course team is involved in recruitment and admission of students and ensures that entry requirements to the programme are met**

	Criteria	Evidence
6.1	Teaching staff are involved in the recruitment and admissions of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in programme recruitment policy and arrangements</li> </ul>
6.2	Mechanisms exist to ensure that applicants meet the entry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in application process</li> </ul>
6.3	Student needs (education, personal, professional) on entry to the programme are considered and addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in application process</li> <li>examples of how student needs have been addressed</li> </ul>
6.4	Arrangements for admission to FDL programmes comply with the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in admission process</li> </ul>

## 7. Programme management:

**An advanced nurse practitioner is involved in the leadership and management team of the programme to ensure that the programme is delivered efficiently and effectively**

	Criteria	Evidence
7.1	An advanced nurse practitioner is on the leadership and management team of the programme and holds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>first level nursing registration on the NMC Professional Register</li> <li>a master's degree in a relevant field (or equivalent)</li> <li>a recognised teaching qualification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CVs of leadership and management team</li> </ul>
7.2	Systems are in place to enable efficient and effective programme management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of the systems for programme management</li> </ul>
7.3	The course team has strategies in place to monitor student programme pathways, particularly where a choice of modules is offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>example of the strategy used to monitor student programme pathways</li> </ul>
7.4	The course team is involved in student progression/graduation decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of process on involvement</li> </ul>
7.5	Annual reports are provided to commissioners of education, which include information on uptake and attrition rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples of annual reports and distribution list</li> </ul>

## 8. Leadership of advanced practitioner programme:

The programme director is responsible for providing education in the higher education institution, participates in decision making concerning strategic planning and organisational policy for advanced practice programmes, both within their own HEI and externally

	Criteria	Evidence
8.1	The programme director has demonstrable expertise and contemporary experience in the area of advanced nursing practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CV of programme director</li> </ul>
8.2	The programme director contributes to strategic decision-making regarding programmes within their own HEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>roles and responsibilities of programme director reflect this criterion</li> <li>examples of how this contribution has been made</li> </ul>
8.3	The programme director contributes to national or international policy discussions and initiatives that affect advanced practice/education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>roles and responsibilities of programme director reflect this criterion</li> <li>overview of programme director activities undertaken to contribute to these areas</li> </ul>

## 9. Staff resources:

The staff resource supports the delivery of the higher education institution's advanced practitioner programme (RCN Quality Assurance Standards 2, 3, 6)

	Criteria	Evidence
9.1	Lecturers and associate lecturers to programmes are all suitably qualified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all lecturers should normally have a qualification at the minimum of a master's degree or equivalent</li> <li>other lecturers must be qualified in their specialist area of teaching</li> <li>all teaching staff should have recognised teaching qualifications (or be enrolled on a recognised teaching preparation programme)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>course CVs and staff development plans</li> </ul>
9.2	The whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff resource allocated to the programme is sufficient for the numbers of students recruited (normally a minimum of 1 to 15 FTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence in the programme documentation that the provision of academic and administrative staff at the HEI is sufficient for the number of students (new and continuing)</li> </ul>
9.3	Where collaborative provision and/or FDL is offered, staff delivering the programme comply with the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CVs for staff involved in collaborative and/or FDL provision</li> </ul>

## 10. Staff development:

**The staff development strategy of the higher education institution promotes the development of all staff concerned with advanced practitioner programmes**

	Criteria	Evidence
10.1	The HEI has a staff development strategy, which is monitored and reviewed annually, including paid, protected time for CPD for both full time and part time lecturers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>report on the staff development strategy for course team and administrative support</li> </ul>
10.2	An education needs analysis informs the advanced practitioner staff development programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>report on analysis and implementation of staff development, based on need and equality of opportunity</li> </ul>
10.3	Some members of the course team regularly work in clinical practice as advanced nurse/ clinical practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>details of specialist lecturers' clinical practice over the past academic year</li> </ul>
10.4	The HEI will facilitate appropriate staff development to achieve NMC revalidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>plans to support staff to achieve this</li> </ul>

## 11. Student support:

**Advanced practitioner students are supported in the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme (RCN Quality Assurance Standards 3)**

	Criteria	Evidence
11.1	Students are provided with information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the programme</li> <li>resources available to support them</li> <li>assessment methods and regulations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples of information given to students on the programme</li> </ul>
11.2	Students have a designated personal tutor to provide support as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information on the personal tutor scheme for students</li> </ul>
11.3	A learning contract is used to frame and support the students' development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples of student learning contracts</li> </ul>
11.4	Students are provided with feedback on their progress (academic and clinical) at regular intervals throughout the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>examples of student feedback</li> </ul>
11.5	Strategies are in place to protect the interests of students if the programme significantly changes or is discontinued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overview of the strategy which is used if the programme significantly changes or is discontinued</li> </ul>
11.6	Where collaborative and/or FDL arrangements are in place, the awarding institution has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>procedures to ensure the quality of student learning opportunities</li> <li>ensured that students have access to key documents (including use of online facilities)</li> <li>systems to provide learner support for this mode of learning</li> <li>organised for each student to have an identified contact for the period of their study</li> <li>strategies in place to provide opportunities for inter-learner discussions</li> <li>opportunities for students to provide feedback to the course team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflected in documentation for programme collaborative and/or FDL arrangements</li> <li>annual monitoring reports for collaborative institutions</li> </ul>

## 12. Practice experience:

### Practice experience provides learning opportunities that enable advanced practitioner students to achieve the programme learning outcomes

	Criteria	Evidence
12.1	The arrangements for practice experience enable students to meet the programme learning outcomesp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategy for selection, operation and monitoring of practice experience</li> <li>• results of evaluation of these arrangements</li> </ul>
12.2	The practice experience arrangements comply with the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• commentary to demonstrate compliance with this criterion</li> </ul>
12.3	An audit of the practice learning environment occurs before the start of the programme or placement (informed by criteria 2) and aspects of concern are addressed to optimise the learning experience, in collaboration between the representatives of the programme, the employer and the student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategy for audit of practice learning environment</li> <li>• examples of audits and how issues have been addressed</li> </ul>
12.4	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examples of audits</li> <li>• strategy for monitoring breadth of student experience</li> <li>• examples of how issues have been addressed</li> </ul>
12.5	The programme has explicit arrangements for supporting students' clinical development, and monitoring of the effectiveness of these arrangements occurs annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of arrangements for supporting students' clinical development</li> <li>• examples of written guidance provided for students on these arrangements</li> <li>• details of quality assurance systems for monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements, with examples of outcomes of such evaluations</li> </ul>
12.6	Arrangements are in place for students to have protected time to focus on developing their clinical practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflected in programme documentation</li> <li>• details of quality assurance systems for monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements, with examples of outcomes of such evaluations</li> </ul>
12.7	A designated facilitator supervises, supports and assesses the student in the practice setting. This facilitator must have appropriate professional and academic qualifications (for example, doctor or qualified ANP or ACP) and a minimum of one year's clinical experience commensurate with the context of care delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course team record of facilitators includes appropriate information.</li> <li>• information on operation and monitoring of this aspect of the programme</li> <li>• information on practice-based assessment, with examples</li> </ul>
12.8	Facilitators are adequately prepared for, and supported by the HEI, in their role for the whole of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information on selection, preparation and ongoing support for facilitators</li> <li>• examples of documentation given to facilitators</li> <li>• evidence of ongoing support and dialogue</li> </ul>
12.9	Students receive a minimum of 500 supervised clinical hours over the entire programme (this supervision can be both direct and indirect). (This would include the hours that the student is working clinically across the week within their workplace, where their facilitator – or appropriate substitute – is available for supervision as required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information on operation and monitoring of this aspect of the programme</li> <li>• examples of methods used to record the clinical hours</li> </ul>

12.10	Facilitator feedback and/or clinical observation by the course team are used to evaluate students' clinical performance in practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strategy used for evaluation of students' clinical performance in practice by facilitator and/or course team</li> <li>• examples of evaluation documentation</li> </ul>
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## 13. Assessment strategy:

**The advanced practitioner assessment strategy incorporates the requirements of the RCN and the regulations of the higher education institution (RCN Quality Assurance Standards 3, 9)**

	Criteria	Evidence
13.1	Formative processes guide student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflected in scheme of assessment</li> <li>• examples of formative assessments</li> </ul>
13.2	Summative assessment is based on a range of evidence to determine whether all the programme learning outcomes have been met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scheme of assessment, with evidence that all programme learning outcomes are assessed</li> </ul>
13.3	Summative assessment scheme is rigorous and includes each of the following (at appropriate stages of the programme): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• portfolio</li> <li>• normally a minimum of one timed examination</li> <li>• case study</li> <li>• OSCE (or equivalent)</li> <li>• facilitator feedback</li> <li>• patient feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflected in scheme of assessment</li> <li>• examples of facilitator and patient feedback</li> </ul>
13.4	Summative clinical examination arrangements should be externally moderated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programme assessment arrangements specify this</li> <li>• example of external examiner report</li> </ul>
13.5	Students must pass all modules that form the programme and all clinical assessments within these modules, to qualify, and cannot compensate for any referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stipulated in assessment regulations governing the programme</li> </ul>
13.6	All assessors for programmes are suitably qualified, both academically and professionally, and prepared for their role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CVs of course team and additional assessors (where applicable)</li> <li>• criteria for selection of additional assessors</li> <li>• arrangements for preparation of assessors</li> </ul>
13.7	Where collaborative and/or FDL arrangements are in place, the awarding institution has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• processes in place to monitor the outcomes of assessments</li> <li>• ensured that timely formative assessment is used to provide a development opportunity in FDL programmes</li> <li>• strategies are in place for web-based submission of work and confirmation of authenticity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflected in documentation for programme collaborative and/or FDL arrangements</li> <li>• annual monitoring reports for collaborative institutions</li> </ul>

## 14. External examiners:

**External examiners monitor the assessment process to ensure that professional and academic standards for advanced practitioner programmes are maintained**

	Criteria	Evidence
14.1	External examiners are approved by the HEI with no reciprocal arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of approved external examiners</li> </ul>
14.2	External examiners must be involved in advanced practice programme delivery within an HEI, to be appointed to this role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CVs of external examiners</li> </ul>
14.3	External examiners have orientation and preparation for their role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• external examiners' orientation information/handbook</li> <li>• overview of the preparation for the role</li> </ul>
14.4	External examiners provide annual reports in respect of each programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examples of external examiners' reports</li> </ul>
14.5	External examiners' reports are used in annual quality assurance processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examples of annual monitoring reports</li> <li>• examples of responses to external examiners' reports</li> </ul>
14.6	Where collaborative and/or FDL arrangements are in place, consistency of external examiners and procedures is evident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of external examiner arrangements for collaborative and/or FDL provision</li> </ul>

## 15. Fitness for award:

**Educational provision leads to fitness for purpose, practice and award, commensurate with the role of an advanced practitioner**

	Criteria	Evidence
15.1	The HEI and RCN requirements for the conferment of the award are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regulations and procedures for conferment of award</li> <li>• examples of graduating students' profiles</li> </ul>
15.2	Strategies are in place to ensure that all students who complete the programme are fit for purpose and fit for practice as advanced practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• commentary of how this criterion is achieved</li> <li>• samples of employer's/manager's feedback</li> <li>• feedback from graduates of the programme</li> </ul>
15.3	The programme award is consistent with appropriate external reference points, as described in the current QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>
15.4	Where collaborative and/or FDL arrangements are in place, the awarding institution holds sole authority for awarding certificates and transcripts, relative to the programme of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflected in programme documentation</li> </ul>

# Terminology

**Facilitator** is used to describe any individual who, as part of the ANP programme, has been designated to support/supervise the ANP student in their work-based learning – some programmes will use terms like mentor, preceptor or practice teacher.

**ANP course team** describes the group of lecturing staff who have a direct input into the delivery of the programme.

**ANP specialist lecturer** describes any qualified ANP lecturer who delivers the programme.

# References

Quality Assurance Agency (2010) *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning) – amplified version October 2010*, Gloucester: QAA. Available from [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

You can download further ANP information from [www.rcn.org.uk/ANP](http://www.rcn.org.uk/ANP)

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