

# The Centre for Advancing Practice

## ePortfolio Route

Guidance document

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# Centre for Advancing Practice

## ePortfolio (supported) Route.

The purpose of this document is to set out the eligibility criteria, screening process and portfolio evidence to help guide organisations and practitioners to identify who may be eligible for the ePortfolio (supported) route.

The Centre of Advancing Practice will be opening the application portal shortly, during this initial process applications will be allocated on a first come first serve basis, prioritised according to the Centre's nationally agreed allocations, therefore the portal may be closed early if application numbers are high.

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## ePortfolio Route

### Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the ePortfolio (Supported) Route practitioners must:

- a) be working within an NHS commissioned service
- b) be in a recognised advanced practice role currently.
- c) have endorsement and support of their employer, as confirmed by their organisation lead for advancing practice or equivalent, for example, a senior manager in a GP practice
- d) have commitment from their employer that appropriate supervision/support will be provided following the learning needs analysis, as confirmed by their organisation lead for advancing practice or equivalent
- e) be able to provide evidence that demonstrates they meet the capabilities across all four Pillars within HEE's (2017) [Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice in England](#); OR be able to do so with minimal additional evidence that is attainable within 12 months of completing the learning needs analysis.
- f) be prepared to sign a learning agreement with their employer and the relevant education provider.

If an applicant has completed an MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice after 2017, it is likely that the programme will become accredited by the Centre, and practitioners will be able to gain recognition via this route. Therefore, the decision has been made that during this initial application process practitioners that fall into this category will not be eligible to apply at this point in time.

## Application Process

1. Practitioners will be required to submit their application via the link on the Centre for Advancing Practice website
2. Practitioners who meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be invited to start preparing their portfolio on the Centre Portal in readiness for their Learning Needs Analysis.
3. Those unsuccessful at this point are advised to talk to their line managers or regional faculty leads
4. Practitioners will be notified when they are matched to an Education Provider and who their Education Provider ePortfolio Assessor will be.
5. The Education Provider ePortfolio Assessor will arrange a Learning Needs Analysis interview.
6. Following the Learning Needs Analysis, individuals will be informed of the outcome of their application.

## Portfolio Evidence

### What do we mean by evidence of advanced level practice?

The Multi-professional Framework for Advanced clinical Practice in England, (2017) defines advanced clinical practice as:

*“delivered by experienced, registered health and care practitioners. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making.”*

*“underpinned by a master’s level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education and research, with demonstration of core capabilities and area specific clinical competence.*

*“the ability to manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families and carers. It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to enhance people’s experience and improve outcomes”.*

The evidence included in the portfolio therefore needs to demonstrate the characteristics highlighted above: high degree of autonomy, complex decision making, analysis and synthesis of complex problems, providing innovative solutions.

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In addition, there are characteristics which are embedded in a master's level award<sup>1</sup> including:

- a critical awareness and systematic understanding and in-depth knowledge of advanced practice and allied areas, informed by current theory and independent thinking and working
- independent critical analysis of current research and knowledge
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research and originality in the application of knowledge
- a practical understanding of how established techniques of enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- knowledge of how to evaluate methodologies/approaches, develop critiques of them and where appropriate propose new hypotheses
- an ability to communicate and present clearly and confidently to specialist and non-specialist audiences, tightly structured, stimulating and rigorous arguments and conclusions that show a high level of academic ability.

The portfolio therefore must include evidence that also shows these characteristics. Looking at the third part of the definition of advanced clinical practice above, the portfolio must also clearly demonstrate the practitioner's ability to manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families, and carers.

### The Portfolio

The portfolio will need to comprises of a critical narrative and supporting evidence, some of this evidence is essential and must be included in the submission.

### Critical Narrative

The purpose of the critical narrative is to:

- guide the reader through the portfolio:
  - explaining and critically reflecting on how the applicant believes they demonstrate fulfilment of the ACP Framework capabilities in the context of their profession, role, scope of practice, contribution to service delivery, service development and quality improvement

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies(2014,p 28) <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

- explaining why the applicant has included the evidence provided and how it meets the capabilities in the ACP Framework across the four pillars
- demonstrating the application of previous learning to show currency and how it being used as an advanced practitioner
- demonstrate the characteristics of advanced practice underpinned by a master's level award including analysis; synthesis; critical reflection; clear, logic and concise communication; using specific and appropriate examples to illustrate the points being made; providing reasoned opinion based on sound evidence/research)

### Supporting Evidence

The portfolio needs to include a range of high-quality evidence which clearly demonstrates how the applicant meets the capability(s) it is being linked to. Swamping the portfolio with lots of evidence which only has tenuous links to the capabilities is not beneficial.

Each piece of evidence included in the portfolio should have a rationale for why it has been included, what it is demonstrating, and a brief description with a reflective or summary account. This information must be included in the 'summary section' that appears when the applicant uploads a piece of evidence into the portal. Where applicable, the applicant must make clear their role in the activity being described in the evidence, for example where they the lead, or contributing to, or observing.

The submission of a certificate of attendance or completion of a course on their own, for example, are not enough and must be accompanied by some reflection on the learning gained and its application to the applicant's advanced practice or role. Applicants should also be encouraged to include a brief description of how the experience helped them in achieving a particular capability, or what further training might be necessary, or what ongoing learning opportunities are being pursued.

### Essential Evidence

All essential evidence listed below must be submitted as part of the portfolio and must be confirmed as current and authentic by a colleague who meets the criteria set out in appendix 1. This confirmation process can be completed in the portal.

- An up-to-date curriculum vitae
- An up to date job description.
- Certificates confirming successful completion of, or attendance on modules or short courses accompanied by a reflection on the learning points and application into practice as a result. Inclusion of transcripts and/or details of the module content and assessments undertaken is useful.
- Certificates from recognised education providers or professional, statutory, or regulatory bodies (PSRBs).
- Reflective accounts of activities relating to each of the four pillars
- At least three reflective case studies – demonstrating explicit decision making and learning points – the case studies should use different

presentations/disease processes/ lifespan data to show breadth and depth of the applicant's capability

- A record that the applicant's competence/ capabilities have been assessed as being met, by an appropriate health professional (see appendix 1). Such assessment might be completed in a formal or informal workplace or other educational setting or a (re)validation or accreditation by a professional, statutory regulatory body. Where appropriate, evidence of competency should be mapped against specialist framework.
- At least two pieces of feedback from a colleague and from a patient/service user or carer who can provide feedback on, for example, the applicant's practice at advanced practitioner level, contribution to clinical practice, service delivery, service development, quality improvement, research at the advanced level, or the learning and professional development of others.
- An up to date 360-degree feedback report or equivalent covering working at an advanced practice level across the four pillars of Framework.
- Evidence of leadership skills, for example, self-assessment of transformational leadership and development plan; facilitation/co-creation of shared direction/purpose; peer review, observations of practice, reflection or summary account of a team leadership episode; initiation, involvement, implementation of business case or change proposal demonstrating leadership skills as an advanced practitioner; critical incident / significant event analysis demonstrating leadership skills; clinical supervision.
- Evidence of delivering education/training either formal or informal (i.e., non-certificated) including examples of patient/carers education, and staff education example – informal or formal
- Evidence of applying research in practice, for example knowledge translation activities in relation to national standards, local policies research, identifying gaps in evidence -curiosity, contributing to developing a research culture, participating in research, reflective reviews and blending different types of evidence.
- Providing a short critical appraisal of a research article or similar exercise to demonstrate analysis and appraisal skill.
- Evidence of undertaking or significant involvement in/contribution to audit, service improvement, practice development and quality improvement.

### **Examples of other evidence that could be included**

The portfolio should be made up of different types of high-quality evidence which clearly demonstrates how the capabilities it is linked to are met. The list below is not exhaustive and is here to provide examples of evidence that could supplement the essential evidence:

- Contribution to conference proceedings (e.g., presentation or poster).
- Critical incident analysis / leading on significant clinical event



- Involvement in developing documentation such as standard operating procedures, national guidelines/policies (to demonstrate leadership / research)
- Employer appraisals.
- Job plan
- Online communications (e.g., blogs).
- Teaching/education materials produced by the applicant and accompanied with feedback from recipients for example
- Professional body activity, including committee membership, network leadership etc.
- Reports or papers which are publicly available that the applicant has contributed to.
- Abstracts from publication(s) in a peer review journal.

One piece of evidence can be used to substantiate more than one capability and can be cross-referenced across more than one pillar. However, applicants must include both a range and balance of evidence. If they draw too much on one or two pieces or types of evidence, it is highly unlikely that they will be able to demonstrate complete fulfilment of the capabilities and the portfolio will have gaps.

### Appendix 1: Criteria for Peer Reviewer

Some of this evidence in the portfolio must be confirmed as being current and authentic by a colleague who meets the following criteria:

- must hold current registration with the relevant UK statutory regulator
- must have the relevant professional knowledge, skills and understanding to verify a submission
- has experience of training, assessment, and development at advanced practice level (taking account of the qualities and demands of learning and practice required at that level)
- be able to confirm their relationship with the applicant, such that any potential conflict of interest is managed transparently

## Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How do I apply for the ePortfolio (supported) Route?

You can apply through the online application form available via the link on the Centre for Advancing Practice website.

### 2. How do I know this is the most appropriate route for me?

If you consider yourself to be working at an Advanced Practice level in line with the *Multi-Professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice in England* (MPF) and you already have a portfolio of evidence that you believe provides the verification that you meet the MPF requirements but need confirmation of this. Also, if you feel you need support and guidance to identifying if there are any gaps in your evidence and help to complete what is required to fully evidence the framework.

The ePortfolio (supported) Route will give you the opportunity to go through your evidence with an education provider, to complete an on-line ePortfolio of evidence and to provide you with the opportunity to update any of your evidence if that's possible within the timeframe available. If it's deemed that you need more time to update your portfolio than is available i.e., normally within an academic year, you may be advised that the ePortfolio (supported) Route is not the best option for you at this time.

If you have successfully completed an ACP MSc programme that has already been accredited by the Centre, then you do not need to seek recognition through the ePortfolio (supported) Route; there is an application process via the Programme Accreditation process for this route. You can check whether your programme has been accredited by following [\[https://directory.advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/search/programmes\]](https://directory.advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/search/programmes).

The ePortfolio (supported) Route is for experienced practitioners, who have not completed an accredited programme who are practicing at an advanced level who feel they almost fulfil all the capabilities within the MPF's four pillars of advanced practice and need limited input to complete. The currency of your evidence will be judged as part of the Learning Needs Analysis – it is anticipated that you will be able to demonstrate currency as part of the requirements of your statutory registration. If you have already completed a master's degree you will need to be able to show currency, with the ePortfolio (supported) Route providing you with the opportunity to demonstrate how you apply and are still practising at advanced level of practice.

### 3. When will the application window be open and how long for?

The application process will open on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 (see the HEE Centre for Advancing Practice Website). Towards the end of January, applications received by that point will be reviewed and allocated to appropriate education providers who will review your portfolio and undertake a learning needs analysis with you to identify if there are any gaps in your portfolio of evidence.

If necessary, the application process will remain open until the Centre has received and allocated the number of individuals that we have been asked to support. However,

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should the limit on numbers be reached in the first couple of weeks of opening the application window, then the application window will close earlier than anticipated.

Our advice is that ensuring that you complete the application process as soon as possible, will enable your application to be considered in the first round.

### **4. What are the benefits of going through the ePortfolio (supported) Route?**

Successfully completing the process gives assurance to employers, patients and the public, that you have demonstrated educational equivalence of the standards identified by the MPF.

The HEE portfolio route will provide consistency and standardisation of the recognised advanced practice capabilities that apply across professional groups and areas of clinical specialism. This will aid transferability of knowledge and skills between employing organisations, support a greater level of shared understanding and development of a common set of expectations of advanced practice, linked to governance. This can offer a certain level of quality assurance for the individual and the employer. For the practitioner, it offers an opportunity to access additional education where required and recognition with the Centre for Advancing Practice.

### **5. How are places on the ePortfolio (supported) Route allocated?**

First, you must meet all the eligibility criteria within the application process, you will also only be permitted submit one application on this occasion. The allocation process will initially take place towards the end of January 2022 at which point, all applications received will be considered. There may be further allocations depending on demand, but we advise an early application, as soon as possible after the application window opens on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021, to avoid potential disappointment.

Any applicant who does not meet all criteria for the ePortfolio (supported) Route will not be allocated a place on this occasion but with further work an application could be made in subsequent years. Please refer to the eligibility criteria in the guidance document and if you still have questions about this, please refer in the first instance to your organisation's advanced practice lead, employer or supervisor.

### **6. Can I select which education provider I want to go to?**

No, we are not able to take this into account, but we will try to do our best to allocate you to an education provider within your region where one is available and appropriate. Please note not all education providers participated in the tender process to deliver the ePortfolio (supported) Route. For these reasons, it is possible that you may need to be prepared to travel to an education provider that is not local to you to attend any face-to-face taught module, should this be necessary for meeting the identified gaps from your learning needs analysis.

**7. Will there be a process to ensure appropriate checks are in place for those who self-refer rather than those supported by their employers and Education Providers?**

Each applicant needs to confirm that they have support from their employer, and you will be asked to confirm this in the application form. If you are self-employed you can select 'yes', but you must be providing an NHS commissioned service.

**8. What can I do if I *don't* meet the eligibility criteria and are not selected to participate in the ePortfolio (supported) Route?**

The eligibility criteria have been carefully and rigorously created to ensure that the ePortfolio (supported) Route is offered only to appropriate practitioners, working towards or who are already working at an Advanced Practice level

There are other avenues that you can pursue, your organisation's advanced practice lead, employer or supervisor should be able to provide you with information about this. If you are unsuccessful because you are deemed not to meet the eligibility criteria, then you are permitted to challenge the process but not the outcome of the decision.

**9. What happens if I believe I meet the eligibility criteria, but I am not selected and allocated a place for the ePortfolio (supported) Route?**

You will need to seek advice from your organisation's Advanced Practice Lead, employer, or supervisor.

**10. Will the ePortfolio (supported) Route continue in 2022/23?**

We are hopeful that there will be funding next year, so this year is acting as a valuable opportunity to help us with future planning. If you are not allocated places on the ePortfolio (supported) Route in 2021/22 (year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022) you will hopefully have an opportunity to reapply in the next round. It is anticipated that practitioners will take the opportunity to add to their evidence in the intervening period.

**11. Are Credentials additionally listed on the Centre for Advancing Practice Web Site?**

Yes, once the HEE credential specification is endorsed, this will be listed and will be accessed by the Centre's website.

**12. How does this route link in with the credential?**

Credentials can be studied separately to the ePortfolio (supported) Route. Part of the evidence you can submit in support of the ePortfolio (supported) Route may include elements of an HEE or professional body credential/accreditation, previously studied.

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It is your personal / professional choice as to whether you decide to apply for the ePortfolio (supported) Route and subsequent recognition.

### **13. What about area-specific competence?**

The MPF states that the capabilities apply to all models of advanced clinical practice across sectors, specialities and professions and can be applied in either unprofessional or multi-professional models of care provision. If there are subject-specific competences applicable to the individual practitioner's role and setting, evidence of this can be included in their ePortfolio.

### **14. Do I have to have a level 7 (Master's level) qualification, or have done a certain number of level 7 modules or have a certain amount of credit at that level?**

No, you do not need to have completed a minimum amount of level 7 learning, but experience

indicates that it is helpful if you have undertaken relevant prior learning. You need to be able to provide evidence of advanced practice mapped against the MPF, which you will be able to do through the Centre's ePortfolio.

### **15. What about those who are practicing following a PG Dip but do not want to 'top up' to full MSc?**

They can still apply to go through the ePortfolio (supported) Route. The practitioner will need to provide evidence of their practice that demonstrates they meet the 4 pillars of Advanced Practice identified within the MPF.

### **16. What happens after I have been allocated a place on the ePortfolio (supported) Route?**

Once you have been successful in being allocated a place at an education provider you will be given access to the Centre portal where you can start to build your ePortfolio. You will be able to start uploading your evidence and creating the accompanying critical narrative. You will be invited to undertake a full Learning Needs Analysis with a Portfolio Assessor from your allocated Education Provider. Your Learning Needs Analysis will form the first stage of your individual development planning and subsequent portfolio building, heading towards the final submission and assessment of your portfolio.

**17. It may be difficult for practitioners to select what evidence to provide; will Education Providers assist with this?**

Yes. Once your allocated Education Provider has reviewed your application form, the education provider will allocate a suitable Portfolio Assessor, who has appropriate experience of advanced practice and related education at master's level. They can offer support and guidance to you as an individual practitioner, helping towards development and submission of your portfolio.

In addition, The Centre for Advancing Practice will provide a list of typical documentation and example types of evidence that would be suitable to use within the portfolio.

**18. The ePortfolio (supported) Route may involve the completion of some academic work – Is it possible to release those individuals at the same time?**

As part of your application, you will need to confirm the support of your manager/employer and that you have identified a mentor/supervisor from your practice area, as necessary. It is anticipated that you will have had and will continue a dialogue with your manager (and organisation's Advanced Practice Lead if available) as you undertake the Learning Needs Analysis as this will identify what learning commitments are required to complete the ePortfolio (supported) Route. If your learning needs are such that this will require some dedicated time it is anticipated that this could be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Within the ePortfolio (supported) Route, you should need to complete no more than 30 or 40 credits (Credit ratings differ between HEI's) of academic study to demonstrate that you map fully to the MPF and this needs to be completed within a reasonable timeframe to be agreed with the education provider (normally a maximum of an academic year).

**19. What do I need to submit for the ePortfolio?**

The portfolio is made up of a range of different types of supporting evidence, some of which is 'essential evidence' and must be included, and a critical narrative of approximately 3,500 to 5,000 words.

**20. Can I submit a portfolio that I have already done and had assessed by another organisation?**

You can upload evidence from an existing portfolio, but you will need to use the HEE ePortfolio and map evidence to the capabilities in the MPF. Evidence from other portfolios can be submitted as screen shots or as a PDF.

### **21. Do I need to provide a critical narrative if I already have a Masters level degree?**

Yes. The critical narrative is the means of guiding the Portfolio Assessor through your evidence, to show them how you meet all the MPF capabilities by signposting them to each piece of supporting evidence. Where you have not completed a master's degree it is also a means of demonstrating the characteristics of advanced level practice, alongside academic level 7 (Masters) characteristics that are closely aligned.

It should show your capacity for critical reflection on practice at advanced level, drawing together how you meet the capabilities across all four pillars. It is recommended that you loosely structure your critical narrative under each of the four pillars. Guidance will be given by your Portfolio Assessor as you progress your portfolio.

### **22. How old can the evidence in the ePortfolio be?**

Academic related evidence can be of any age, but you will need to tell the reviewers why you have included the evidence and how you have kept the key knowledge, skills, and capabilities up to date.

Clinical practice evidence must be within three years of the date you submit your portfolio for review.

### **23. How long will this process take to pass through with education providers?**

This will depend on the experience and evidence of the applicant. A Learning Needs Analysis will be undertaken at the start of the process and will inform how long the process will take. It may take as little as 3 months if all the evidence is present, up to 12 months if more is required.

### **24. What start date is anticipated for those on the programme?**

It will start once the contracts have been awarded to participating partners (education providers) – it is anticipated to be early 2022.

### **25. Is there going to be a cap on number of places commissioned? Will we know Education Provider capacity?**

Currently there are 3,000 places nationally for this round of the ePortfolio (supported) Route (2021/22). In terms of Education Provider capacity, this is something the Centre can monitor closely and support where required.



**26. Is the Independent portfolio route still available alongside the ePortfolio (supported) Route?**

No, the independent portfolio route is not available at this time, following a study identifying that practitioners were more likely to submit a portfolio where there is support provided.

**27. Is it worthwhile to wait for Education Providers to become accredited rather than go down the ePortfolio (supported) Route?**

If you completed your master's advanced practice programme after 2017, the education provider that you studied at may decide to go through the programme accreditation process and if their programmes are accredited you can then apply to be recognised by the Centre. However, if you completed before 2017 you may apply for the ePortfolio (supported) Route, as the course you studied will not necessarily be accredited.

**28. How often do you need to renew your eligibility for Recognition?**

You will be asked to self-declare annually that you are current within the area of advanced level in which you practice, and that you remain statutorily registered with an appropriate regulator.